

The Role of International Aid in Pakistan's Education Sector

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to conduct a systematic review of the literature addressing international aid to education. Pakistan's education sector has a long history of receiving foreign money via various programs and initiatives. The country has relied on foreign funding in several social areas. This document aims to bring together all of Pakistan's significant donor organizations in the field of education and to emphasize their major contributions to this field. In this study, the top multi- and bilateral assistance organizations that have made the most contributions to Pakistan's education system are outlined. This research highlights the significance of evaluating pertinent material about foreign aid in Pakistan's education sector. This work is important and helpful to readers, academics, and researchers of the foreign aid phenomena in Pakistan's education sector, both domestically and internationally.*

Keywords: International Aid, Education, Pakistan

Introduction

Developing nations deal with a wide range of issues, including environmental deterioration, unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy. The primary issues facing these nations stem from their limited financial and economic resources. Developing nations thus require financial assistance from wealthy nations. For the aim of promoting economic growth, developing nations get financial assistance from the IMF and other financial organizations (such as the European Investment Bank, Islamic Growth Bank, etc.). Foreign assistance is typically provided to poor nations in order to close the gap between imports, exports, and savings investments. It also helps with economic growth, education development, industrial installation, and catastrophe management. The extent to which foreign aid successfully accomplishes its goal is yet unknown. This study looks at how foreign aid has affected Pakistan's education sector's growth in an effort to answer this issue.

Pakistan's educational system has two challenges in its efforts to give its people a high-quality education: an expanding population and financial limitations. The foreign world has risen to the occasion in response to these complications and has been instrumental in strengthening and reforming Pakistan's education system. This article delves into the complex functions of overseas aid, looking at how it tackles issues of inclusion, quality, and accessibility with the goal of building a stronger and more equal educational system in the nation. We see how international solidarity affects Pakistan's journey towards educational greatness as we examine the projects and partnerships that are forming the country's educational story.

In this article, we will focus on the initiatives and development of an educational system in Pakistan led by the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and European Union (EU).

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Literature Review

The relationship between foreign aid and education in developing nations like Pakistan has been a topic of discussion among academics. With the goal of offering a thorough assessment of the amount of research already done, this literature review seeks to shed light on the complex ways that foreign aid has shaped and transformed Pakistan's education system. The efficiency of aid is dependent on two factors, according to the paper's regression model analysis: the nation's degree of development and the level of education, whether it be elementary, secondary, or higher. In low-income nations, the impact of aid on basic and post-primary education varies. Aid works better in low-income nations for elementary education than for post-primary education (Asiedu & Nandwa, 2000). Aid has a negative impact on growth in middle-income nations when it is used for elementary and middle school education, but it boosts growth when it is used for higher education. Therefore, it is hypothesized that helping developing nations with their elementary education will have positive effects. As noted by Asiedu and Nandwa (2000), it boosts economic growth while simultaneously assisting developing nations in achieving the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education.

The past 20 years have seen an increase in the participation of donor organizations and nations in the education sector. Political economists assert that donor organizations and nations have the power to shape educational programs in accordance with their own interests in developing nations (Allard & Molina, 2008; Oya, 2006). Ranking seventh among the twenty nations that receive foreign funding for education in Pakistan. Although the government is in charge of primary education, it receives funding from donors to help pay for it because of resource constraints.

The sixth-most populated nation in the world right now is Pakistan. The nation's population increased from 31 million to 217 million between 1947 and 2019 (United Nations Population Division 2019). Public services are under strain as a result of Pakistan's population growth, which is growing at a pace 2.02 per cent faster than educational advancements, according to the World Population Review 2021. However, several attempts to boost student enrollment and educational resources have been undermined by Pakistan's rapid population increase (World Bank, 2022).

Pakistan still struggles with inadequate basic education availability, fairness, learning levels, and achievement even after decades of concentration on the subject and a significant devolutionary policy shift in education finance and decision-making to the province level with the 18th Constitutional Amendment (2010). Pakistan has more out-of-school children than any other country in the world, with almost a third of its school-age children (5–16 years old) not attending. The primary impediments to children's enrollment and academic advancement in schools are the lack of qualified teachers, which is followed by low educational standards, distance to schools (especially for middle school and higher education), and the high expenses incurred by households for their children's education, including transportation to and from school. These issues, which become worse as kids get older, are especially pertinent to females, rural schools, and all educational levels. (World Bank, *Impediments to Pakistani Girls' Education*, upcoming) (World Bank, 2022)

One important player in resolving Pakistan's educational inequality has been the World Bank. Its strategic efforts and financial support are intended to improve the education sector's governance, quality, and accessibility. Maqsood (2013) emphasize the World Bank's focus on capacity-building and policy changes, highlighting the breadth of its participation.

Pakistan's national objectives are in line with UNESCO's dedication to education. The organization's emphasis on fair and inclusive education is demonstrated by its backing of teacher preparation programs, curriculum

creation, and the promotion of a culture of lifelong learning. The knowledge-sharing platform that UNESCO provides is essential in influencing Pakistan's educational policy.

Pakistan's education system benefits from a bilateral strategy brought about by USAID and DFID. According to research by Brown and USIAD (2022), DFID's influence is defined by a dedication to social inclusion and gender equality, whereas USAID places more of an emphasis on community participation and targeted initiatives. A comparative study of their techniques illuminates the various methods used by various donor organizations.

The Asian Development Bank has been instrumental in the development of Pakistan's educational infrastructure. Research conducted by Naviwala (2016) highlights ADB's emphasis on constructing educational infrastructure and augmenting technical proficiencies. In order to close the gap in physical infrastructure and provide a favourable learning environment, ADB's participation is essential.

The comprehensive approach of the European Union's education sector activities in Pakistan has been noteworthy. EU projects with Pakistan (n.d) demonstrate how the EU prioritizes policy coherence by integrating educational interventions with more general development objectives. One unique aspect of EU participation is its role in promoting regional cooperation and information sharing (Arshad, 2016).

Notwithstanding the tremendous progress these foreign assistance organizations have achieved in improving Pakistan's educational system, difficulties still exist. Important topics for additional research include gaps in coordination, different methodologies, and the necessity of ongoing effect evaluation. In order to maximize the overall effect of foreign help, it is essential to comprehend the overlaps and conflicts that exist between various projects.

This study of the literature emphasizes the various ways that foreign aid organizations have shaped Pakistan's educational landscape. Through an analysis of the various approaches used by the World Bank, UNESCO, USAID, DFID, ADB, and the EU, this paper offers a thorough summary of the cooperative initiatives that are meant to promote sustainable development in Pakistan's educational environment (Shams, 2017).

Overview of Pakistan's Education Sector

The Pakistani Constitution stipulates that all children between the ages of five and sixteen must receive free, compulsory education and that adult literacy must increase. The 18th constitutional amendment eliminated the 47-subject concurrent list and moved topics, including education, to federating units in an effort to increase provincial autonomy.

With 1,535,461 instructors working alongside 260,903 institutions, Pakistan's education system is able to accommodate 41,018,384 pupils. There are 180,846 public institutions and 80,057 private institutions in the system. Therefore, the commercial sector manages 31% of educational institutions, while the state sector oversees 69%.

Basic, secondary, and post-secondary education are the three tiers that makeup Pakistan's educational system. Years 1–5 make up primary education, which is followed by years 6–10 in secondary education and grades 11–12 in upper secondary school. Colleges and universities are within the category of tertiary education. Despite the system's goal of empowering people via information, a number of issues raise doubts about its effectiveness. Obstacles include a severe lack of prepared teachers, continuing regional and gender imbalances, and inadequate infrastructure. A worrying dropout rate that jeopardizes many people's ability to continue their education is a result of the limited access that rural areas frequently experience (Zia, 2003).

Need for International Aid

The education sector in Pakistan receives 2.1% of the country's GDP (Government of Pakistan, Finance Division, 2018). This amount is far less than what other developing countries in the area spend. Pakistan requires external assistance in this area in order to close its fiscal deficit and increase expenditure on education. This essay details the contributions made by all significant assistance organizations to Pakistan's educational system. Pakistan has been the recipient of international help from several nations and organizations. The nations of Africa and South Asia have received the greatest aid from donors. Pakistan and India both gained independence in the same period. Each has different help needs and contextual factors. In the past, Pakistan has received 6% more foreign help than India; however, since 2015, Pakistan's share of foreign aid has decreased relative to India. Pakistan received 45% of foreign aid in 2015, whilst India received 55%. Pakistan receives US\$21 million in foreign aid annually on average (Data Journalism Pakistan, 2017). The two main kinds of aid agencies are multi-lateral agencies and bi-lateral agencies. Organizations classified as bilateral have relationships between two governments or nations; multilateral organizations, on the other hand, have relationships with more than two states or countries. The main assistance organizations that have been funding Pakistan's education system using taxpayer dollars are listed below based on this classification.

USAID

USAID has collaborated with Pakistan's government agencies to improve education. Their main goals have been to improve both the quality and accessibility of basic and higher education. Since 2009, USAID has been collaborating with educational institutions to construct or renovate them.

The main initiatives of USAID include teacher training, merit-based scholarships, and changes at the elementary level. Currently, a number of multi-level and significant initiatives have enhanced the collaboration between USAID and Pakistan. The list of all such projects is as follows according to USAID Women's Hostel Project, Sindh Basic Education Project, Centers for Advanced Studies Program, U.S. Pakistan Science & Technology Cooperative Program, Merit and Need-Based Scholarship Program, Enhancing the Quality of Education

The centres for advanced studies are established at the University of Engineering and Technology, Jamshoro. National University of Science and Technology, Islamabad, University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. So far, undermining the quality of education In Pakistan, 17 university faculties of education have received \$47.5 million in rehabilitation from USAID. The universities whose faculty of education buildings have undergone rehabilitation are listed below. The list is available on the website's official source (USAID, 2018b): Islamia University, Bahawalpur; Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan; University of Education, Lahore; University of Punjab (Institute of Education and Research), Lahore; University of Punjab, Lahore; Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi Karachi University, Karachi, Universities in Sindh, Hyderabad, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur, Peshawar, ten, Hazara University, Mansehra, and Malakand, twelve D.I. Khan, Gomal University Women's University Sardar Bahadur Khan, Quetta University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Muzaffarabad; Karakoram International University, Gilgit; and Lasbela University, Uthal.

It is noteworthy that the implementation of USAID's projects frequently involves cooperation with the government of Pakistan, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other relevant parties. Enhancing the well-being of Pakistani citizens and promoting sustainable development are the objectives of the organization. You are advised to visit the USAID Pakistan website or official USAID publications for the most recent information on USAID programs in Pakistan.

UNESCO

In order to help girls in rural regions of the country have greater access to high-quality education and skills, UNESCO and the Government of Pakistan have formally launched the Girls' Right to Education Programme, a three-year initiative.

Through the support of better access, enhanced quality, and secure learning settings, the initiative seeks to raise the number of girls enrolled in primary schools by 50,000, boost their retention rates, and improve learning outcomes at the community and local civil society level.

With a focus on programs for people with disabilities, girls' education, and technical and vocational training, UNESCO's commitment to inclusion guarantees that no sector of society is left behind. UNESCO helps to raise socially and ecologically concerned individuals by including education for sustainable development.

In collaboration with the Pakistani government and other stakeholders, UNESCO's work is collaborative in character, which emphasizes the value of teamwork in bringing about significant and long-lasting change. These programs fit well with the larger global objective of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 4, which is to provide inclusive, egalitarian, high-quality education and encourage opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone.

UNESCO's continuous dedication to research and data collecting guarantees that interventions are grounded in evidence and adaptable to new problems as the educational landscape changes. Through its active involvement in the development of educational policies and practices, UNESCO helps lay the groundwork for Pakistan's society to become more just, resilient, and empowered.

Even while the particular projects could change to meet the changing demands of the education sector, UNESCO's unwavering dedication to promoting inclusiveness, learning, and sustainable development will always be essential. The cooperative spirit and all-encompassing methodology that characterize UNESCO's work shine like a light of hope, showing Pakistanis the way to a better and more just educational future.

World Bank

At the moment, Pakistan has the sixth-highest population in the world. The population of the nation increased from 31 million in 1947 to 217 million in 2019 (United Nations Population Division 2019). According to the World Population Review 2021, Pakistan's population is growing at a pace of 2.02 per cent, which is significantly quicker than the country's educational progress. This is putting strain on public services. Conversely, Pakistan's rapid population expansion has undermined several attempts to raise educational funding and student enrollment.

Pakistan has struggled with inadequate basic education access, fairness, learning levels, and attainment for decades, despite a major devolutionary policy shift in education spending and decision-making to the province level with the passage of the 18th Constitutional Amendment (2010). Pakistan has the highest percentage of out-of-school children (20.3M) worldwide, with over a third of its school-aged children (5–16 years) not attending. The lack of qualified teachers is the main obstacle preventing kids from enrolling in and moving forward in school. This is followed by the poor quality of education, the distance to schools (especially for middle school and up), and the high costs to households of raising children. Include the means of getting to and from school. These issues are more prevalent among girls in rural schools and at all educational levels; they also get worse as kids get older.

The World Bank authorized a \$400 million aid package to support the Pakistani government in enhancing education access, quality, and relevance across the board. The initiatives aim to raise enrollment rates, lessen gender

and rural-urban disparities in primary education in Punjab and Sindh Provinces, and improve conditions for teaching, learning, and research for improved access, quality, and relevance at the tertiary level across the nation.

It's crucial to remember that the World Bank's programs are intended to complement the more general objectives of sustainable development, human capital development, and poverty alleviation. The World Bank keeps modifying its approaches in order to guarantee that the people of Pakistan receive the best possible results and that their demands and problems in education continue to change. Please consult the World Bank Pakistan office or official publications for the most recent information.

Asian Development Bank

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has weaved a thread of transformative projects throughout Pakistan's complex educational environment, making a substantial contribution to the country's quest for inclusive, high-quality education. According to my most recent knowledge update from January 2022, ADB is committed to promoting sustainable development and human capital development through a multidimensional strategy that includes infrastructure development, gender equality, quality enhancement, and strategic alliances. ADB's investment in educational infrastructure is one of its most important initiatives. ADB has been instrumental in creating conditions that are favourable to learning by funding projects for the building and renovation of schools and educational institutions. This investment serves the physical demands of educational institutions and highlights the significance of a cutting-edge, well-equipped learning environment in fostering students' intellectual development.

The foundation of ADB's efforts in Pakistan's education sector is quality enhancement. ADB aims to improve education by sponsoring new teaching techniques, teacher training programs, and curriculum development. The emphasis on quality reflects ADB's recognition that a strong educational system should not just be about accessibility but also about the content and application of what students learn, therefore equipping them for the challenges of the future.

ADB has given Pakistan a total of \$39.7 billion in public sector loans, grants, and technical support to date. The total amount of loans and grants that Pakistan has received is \$30.76 billion. The Asian Development Fund, additional special funds, and regular and concessional ordinary capital resources were used to finance them. In Pakistan, the Asian Development Bank has 53 loans and three grants totalling \$9.59 billion in its sovereign portfolio.

European Union EU

The European Union (EU) provides funding to initiatives that tackle both local and global issues. Two important goals are to reduce poverty and to uphold fundamental freedoms and rights. The European Union is dedicated to seeing a pluralistic, democratic, stable, and human rights-abiding society in Pakistan realize its full economic potential via inclusive, sustainable development. Pakistan receives funding from the EU, totalling over €100 million each year for cooperation and development. This includes initiatives to guarantee sustainable management of natural resources, advance human rights, good governance, and inclusive growth that is environmentally friendly, as well as to raise educational and career-related skills.

Impact on Access and Enrollment

The inquiry, "What do we know about what works in foreign aid to education?" is a straightforward one. However, it is not equal to the ease of accessing a list of successful programs or the ease of providing help for schooling. Additionally, there have been a lot of innovative and novel ways to provide educational assistance in recent years. If evaluating the success of foreign aid in education wasn't already challenging enough, consider this: in addition to the

fact that education has multiple uses, educational outcomes are also more influenced by events outside of schools than by those that occur there. This adds even more complexity to the evaluation of aid's effectiveness. It is not nearly as difficult as evaluating efforts to enhance and modify our own domestic educational institutions without stepping over international borders. Even yet, the lessons learned from decades of effort, accumulated knowledge, and experience point to what works best—even if those lessons involve particular "inputs" like capacity building, mentorship, and new accountabilities.

Educationists have long noted that it is far simpler to demonstrate the effectiveness of health treatments funded by assistance than education initiatives because short-term gains in death rates are more obvious than gains in learning. However, help to the health sector and aid to education confront very similar obstacles when seeking to measure the impact of aid to service delivery. This is due to the fact that attribution is usually complex. While distributing textbooks more quickly and providing anti-malarial bednets, for example, will undoubtedly have an overall positive impact, it can be difficult to identify and quantify how specifically these factors contribute to wider outcomes when they are combined with a host of other contributing factors, only some of which are aid-related.

Education and Gender Equality

Pakistan is not an exception to the rule that international aid significantly influences the development of the education system in developing nations. Leveraging international help to solve the issues Pakistan's education system faces—particularly in advancing girls' education and establishing gender equality—has gained more attention in recent years. This essay examines the main facets of foreign aid in the context of Pakistan's educational system, with a focus on promoting gender equality and girls' education.

There is no denying the importance of foreign aid in Pakistan's education system, particularly with regard to gender equality and the education of females. The school system has many difficult issues, but the multidimensional strategy of financial assistance, capacity building, and awareness campaigns has shown promise in resolving them. International aid has an influence on more than just building infrastructure; it also has an impact on policy lobbying and cultural change.

Even though there has been progress, obstacles still need to be overcome in order to achieve gender equality and universal girls' education. This will require ongoing support from both foreign donors and regional partners. The significance of culturally aware tactics and long-term viability in humanitarian programs must not be understated.

In the next years, it will be critical to promote cooperation, improve monitoring and assessment systems, and modify plans in response to changing community requirements. The ultimate gauge of the effectiveness of foreign assistance in Pakistan's education system will be the degree to which positive changes in public perceptions and the development of an inclusive learning environment that empowers all students, regardless of gender, occur in addition to higher enrolment rates.

Infrastructure Development

The infrastructure of education is essential to promoting high-quality learning. International assistance has had a substantial influence on the development of the education sector's infrastructure in Pakistan, although access to basic amenities is still a barrier. This essay examines the benefits, drawbacks, and possible directions for future foreign assistance in this crucial field.

Many more people now have access to education because of the funding provided by international donors for the building of new schools, especially in isolated and neglected regions. Additionally, they have helped to renovate already-existing schools, enhancing their structural soundness and supplying suitable learning settings.

Foreign aid has had a major role in the development of Pakistan's educational system. International actors may continue to play a critical role in building a robust and equitable education system for all Pakistanis by addressing challenges, promoting collaboration, and giving sustainability and community participation top priority.

Future Prospects

Pakistani education has several obstacles, and foreign assistance has been crucial in helping to overcome them. This essay examines the complex relationship between foreign aid and Pakistan's education system, outlining its benefits, drawbacks, and possible future directions. Funding for education initiatives is mostly provided by international aid, especially in underprivileged regions where government resources are few. The building of schools, teacher preparation, educational resources, and creative programming are all supported by this money.

The knowledge of international organizations and donor nations in curriculum creation, educational technologies, and best practices is invaluable. They work together with regional partners to modify international knowledge to fit the unique requirements of Pakistan's educational system. Strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks are frequently included with international aid, helping to guarantee the efficacy of treatments and evaluate advancement toward educational objectives. Future decisions are informed, and accountability is strengthened by this data.

International donors may play a crucial role in promoting education reform by pressuring the government to give education top priority and enact laws that deal with structural issues. Calls for access, fairness, and high-quality education for all may be strengthened by their individual voices.

Investigating cutting-edge funding options like social impact bonds and public-private partnerships can guarantee program sustainability and lessen reliance on outside funding. Long-term success will depend on fostering community ownership and local capacity building. Involving local communities in program design, implementation, and needs assessments helps guarantee that interventions are effective and pertinent. Ownership within a community promotes accountability and improves sustainability.

Successful collaborations may increase effect by utilizing a variety of resources and areas of expertise from the public and commercial sectors, government, civil society, and foreign funders. For effective utilization of funding, coordination of efforts and reduction of duplication are essential. Aid initiatives should take long-term objectives into account in addition to pressing needs. Enhancing teacher preparation, encouraging innovation and research, and backing structural changes can make a long-lasting difference in the educational system.

The function of foreign aid in Pakistan's education system is intricate and dynamic. Its contributions to increasing access, raising quality, and promoting change are indisputable, even though there are still difficulties. International aid may make a significant contribution to the development of a better future for education in Pakistan by putting sustainability first, encouraging cooperation, and concentrating on long-term effects.

Conclusion

The way Pakistan's education system is shaped is mostly determined by foreign contributions. The international community's varied support, which includes lobbying for structural changes, capacity building, and financial help, has made a substantial contribution to tackling the difficulties facing the educational system. In addition to making it easier to build infrastructure and provide resources, this help has prioritized curriculum development and teacher preparation in order to raise educational standards.

Additionally, international aid has been crucial in encouraging gender parity, inclusion, and education access, particularly in areas impacted by violence. By ensuring accountability and the effective use of resources, the dedication to monitoring and evaluation promotes a culture of data-driven decision-making.

It is critical that local players and foreign funders work together consistently as Pakistan moves closer to being a model country for education. Programs must be flexible enough to accommodate changing demands, technology must be integrated, and inclusive policies must be promoted if continuous projects are to succeed. In the end, foreign assistance acts as a catalyst for revolutionary shifts that open the door to a more accessible, equal, and resilient educational system in Pakistan.

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