11

Education

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A mixture of neglect, shortsightedness and administrative inertia—in part the result of periodic political control instituted by military regimes—have combined to retard the progress of education in Pakistan. Social critics, policy-makers and politicians have decried the neglect of this most vital social investment. Policy documents for 40 years acknowledge this lack of progress, and promise future achievements. Yet the story of education is one of a lack of accountability, political vision and commitment. Social rates of return to all levels of education, especially the primary level, have been shown to be very high. This chapter begins with an assumption that education is one of the most important social investments.

Enrollment and Curricula in the Plans

Primary and secondary education each require five years in Pakistan, which is a short period of enrollment by international standards. College education begins after only 10 years of schooling. The first two years of college are referred to as higher secondary

or intermediate, but count as part of higher education and lead to an F.A. or F.Sc. (Fellow of Arts or Science) degree. Another couple of years lead to a bachelors degree. Two important policy poposals have been to dissociate the intermediate level from college education and to extend the bachelors degree to three years.

An attempt to implement a three-year bachelors degree was resisted by student rioting in the 1950s. A landmark policy report in 1959 took up the issue again. This has acquired urgency more recently as foreign universities withdrew recognition of Pakistani degrees.[1] The Sixth and Seventh Plans have taken up these concerns again. The Sixth Plan called for de-linking intermediate classes from colleges and extending high school education by two years. The Seventh Plan also declared that a third year honours class will be required for a bachelors degree by all students intending to pursue higher education.

There appears to be excessive specialization at a very early stage, students being able to earn a bachelors degree having studied only three subjects over a two-year period. The curriculum is centrally determined and allows individual teachers little flexibility; students protest deviations from prescribed syllabi or for being held responsible for material not covered. Even college teachers resist syllabus changes.[2]

While elite urban schools show some concern for inculcating analytical skills, others have been following methods of rote learning. In schools, colleges and universities, students memorize information when board examinations are due; the information once spewed out is forgotten. Such obstacles create pressures on students, and reports of cheating and bribery abound.[3] Attempts at adopting a semester system in universities were mostly unsuccessful. One reform suggested in view of this is to have 25 per cent of the total grade determined by continuous internal evaluations.[4]

Colleges and universities have been proliferating beyond the capacity of the economy to absorb entrants to the job market.[5] The system has little selectivity, and almost anyone who wants to can get admitted somewhere.[6] Given an open admission policy and very low fees (see Table 11.9), the average quality of intake is naturally low. The response of planners to the pressure on the job market, and to preserve quality control, seems to be to maintain a very high failure rate at all levels in board examinations; up to 75

per cent of students appearing for examination fail.[7] It also contributes to the pressure on some students to succeed by any means possible.[8]

The problem of saturation of the job market is compounded by the lack of systematic effort to gear the curriculum to the world of jobs and the failure to provide systematic career guidance.[9] The resulting uncertainty is one reason why campuses have been a ripe source of recruits for political causes and violence. One government report estimated that, on average, actual teaching time may be as little as 40 per cent of the prescribed time.[10]

Another important cause of the low quality of education is the lack of adequate facilities. This was identified in the First Plan, which said educational institutions were understaffed, overcrowded and ill-equipped.[11]

The Sixth Plan highlighted three new policy issues.[12] The first was to propose involvement of local bodies in the planning, management and maintenance of educational facilities. This was partly intended to pass on the financing burden to local governments. There was also recognition that local governments may have a better sense of local needs, and be better able to monitor quality and motivate parents to enroll and keep children in school. The second initiative proposed was to impose user charges, especially at the higher level. Only a minor portion of recurring expenditure and none of the development expenditure was being recovered as fees, especially at the higher level. Currently, about 1 per cent of recurring expenditure is being recovered (see Table 11.9). The Plan intended that a sizable portion of recurring expenditures be recouped as fees. Finally, the Plan acknowledged that allowing the establishment of private schools and colleges in 1977 was successful, and would continue to be encouraged in order to reduce the financial burden on the public sector. Nationalization of schools was deemed to have damaged the quality of education.

These policy directions were again emphasized in the Seventh Plan, which is more specific in some regards, such as earmarking the appropriate fee as 10 per cent of recurring expenditure. The proposed local level participation, especially in the rural areas, has been made more explicit. The Plan foresees setting up school management committees which will include community representatives. Once again, the role of the private sector is underscored.

The Sixth Plan was to restructure the expenditure pattern, which it likened to an inverted pyramid. Thus a freeze was to be imposed on the quantitative expansion (though not qualitative improvement) of higher education; the focus was placed on universal primary enrollment. Of necessity, the emphasis would have to be on raising enrollments in rural areas, especially that of girls. In addition, a mass literacy programme was to be launched to improve the 26 per cent literacy rate. The Seventh Plan follows the lead of the Sixth in attributing most importance to the primary level. Reducing disparities between gender and region is again emphasized. In sparsely populated areas, girls schools will be constructed, in which boys up to eight years of age will be allowed to enter. Also, at the higher level the pledge to freeze construction of new universities in favour of qualitative improvement is renewed.

One notable difference is that the Seventh Plan discontinued the emphasis of the Sixth on the mass literacy campaign, viewing it to have been a failure due to the high cost and difficulties in monitoring. It concluded that the most cost–effective way of increasing literacy is through formal education, and that the literacy campaign diverted valuable resources from that. The other significant policy change is the proposed devolution of the entire responsibility of higher education to the provinces. Currently, the provinces control the administration while the federal government funds universities via the University Grants Commission. This dual responsibility is perceived to be problematic. In the next section, the ramifications of these policies are reviewed.

Finance of Education

The most urgently stated priority in the Sixth and Seventh Plans is restructuring educational investment away from the higher level towards the primary level. Table 11.1 shows total allocations to the different levels of education over the past three plan periods.

The intention of the policy reorientation towards the primary level is not reflected in educational allocations for the Sixth Plan period, since there is barely any change in the percentage of total expenditure allocated to the primary level between the Fifth and

TABLE 11.1
Change in Allocation over the Last Three Plan Periods

	Fifth	*Sixth*	*Seventh*
Primary	.36	.37	.44
Secondary	.23	.22	.27
Teachers' education	.02	.02	.01
Technical education	.07	.07	.09
College	.13	.07	.03
Scholarship	.02	.04	.03
University	.08	.11	.10

Sources: Seventh Plan (P. 369) and the Fifth Plan (p. 715).
Note: Allocations will not add to 100 because of the exclusion of certain categories such as the allocation to library systems and miscellaneous programmes and the allocation by other divisions to education.

Sixth Plans. However, such a restructuring is evident in the Seventh Plan since the allocations to the primary level have risen from 37 per cent in the Sixth Plan to 44 per cent in the Seventh. Meanwhile, allocations to college education are pared down as intended in both the Sixth and Seventh Plan periods (down from 13 per cent in the Fifth Plan to 7 per cent in the Sixth and 3 per cent in the Seventh).

Allocations are only a part of the story and not the most important part. Of greater importance are the utilization ratios or the ratios of actual to allocated expenditure shown in Table 11.2.

In the Sixth Plan, the utilization ratio for the primary level at 50 per cent was the lowest of the educational expenditure categories being considered. It is not surprising that the target achievement ratio reported in Table 11.3 for the Sixth Plan is the lowest overall at the primary level, especially for girls.

Apart from at the primary level, the educational administration seems sound. It is a matter of concern that actual enrollments at college and university levels exceeded targets (by 22 per cent for degree colleges and 19 per cent for universities) even though institutional expansion at the college level fell short of them. It is also evident that government did not succeed in its intention to restrict admission at the college and university level by administering screening tests for talent.[13]

There is evidence showing the primary level as having the highest social rate of return.[14] In view of this, the intended restructuring of

TABLE 11.2
Expenditure Allocation Ratios for the Sixth Plan by Level

	Sixth plan
Primary	.50
Secondary	.93
Teachers' education	.60
Technical education	.68
College	.95
Scholarship	1.12
University	.66

Source: Seventh Plan (p. 369).

TABLE 11.3
Percentage Target Attainment for the Sixth Plan (1983) by Level (percentage)

	Institutions	*Enrollments*		
		Male	*Female*	*Total*
Primary				
a. General	99	72	59	68
b. Mosque	63	—	—	—
Secondary				
a. Middle	78	89	93	90
b. High	113	88	79	85
High				
a. Intermediate	75	—	—	107
b. Degree	92	—	—	122
c. Universities (general)	—	—	—	119

Sources: The Sixth Plan (pp. 551–53) and attainments from the Seventh Plan (pp. 341–44).

educational investment towards the primary level and away from the higher level would seem to be in the right direction.

The government also appears to have succeeded in encouraging privatization. In 1977 the establishment of private schools was once again allowed. Table 11.4 shows estimates of private institutions as a proportion of the total at the end of the Fifth and Sixth Plan periods.

The available data show a boom in private sector schooling:

TABLE 11.4
Private Institutions as Proportion of Total

	1982–83			*1987–88*		
	Male	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Primary	3.2	5.5	4.0	8.6	12.8	10.2
Middle	8.6	4.5	5.8	22.1	14.2	17.0
High	13.7	6.1	8.4	18.7	9.4	12.0

Source: The Seventh Plan (pp. 370–71).

within a decade of privatization, about 10 per cent of primary schools and 20 per cent of high schools were privately owned. This is a positive trend since private schools are usually of better quality. However, private schools have earned a notorious reputation of underpaying teachers relative to the public sector and overcharging the clientele. This may be because they have a large pool of educated unemployed to choose from; government teachers are on a fixed salary scale which is periodically revised along with salaries of other government servants. There is evidence that the unit recurrent costs of private schools are not significantly lower than public schools during comparable time periods.[15]

Social observers fear the greater danger is that of entrenching a dual system of education, whereby the rich will be able to afford elite private schooling and hence have a better chance of going on to higher education, especially if admission does become more selective and user charges are imposed. The encouragement of elite private sector institutions at the higher level could further reinforce such a duality.

It is perhaps to avoid closing the only avenue open for social mobility that there has been little movement on user charges. Alternatively, it may be due to administrative inertia that appears to characterize the whole educational planning process. Government reports and plans pay scant attention to determining how many of the earlier policy proposals were successfully implemented. It is thus disconcerting to come across old proposals as though they represent new initiatives. Both the Sixth and Seventh Plans mention the need to dissociate the intermediate level from the bachelors level and make it a part of secondary education, and also to dissociate undergraduate programmes from universities. Both

mention the need for user charges to reduce the enormous subsidy at the higher level and scholarship schemes to draw poor talented students into higher education. There is no mention in the Seventh Plan of a National Scholarship Foundation that was supposed to have been launched in the Sixth Plan for this purpose. Involvement of local rural communities for primary education mentioned in the Sixth Plan is mentioned again in the Seventh Plan as if it were a new initiative. One can only infer in these and other cases that very little indeed was accomplished in the broader policy restructuring proposed in the Sixth Plan.

Comparative Data

The performance of Pakistan's educational sector has lagged relative both to other public sectors in Pakistan and the education sector performance of other countries. Tables 11.5 and 11.6 show Pakistan's performance relative to other countries on the subcontinent.

Islam is often viewed as a cultural constraint that impedes schooling, especially of girls. The issue is complex and may have much to

TABLE 11.5
School Enrollment Rates in South Asia by Gender

	Primary				*Secondary*			
	Male		*Female*		*Male*		*Female*	
	1975	*MRE*	*1975*	*MRE*	*1975*	*MRE*	*1975*	*MRE*
Bangladesh	95	70	51	50	40	26	11	10
India	94	107	62	76	36	45	16	24
Nepal	86	104	16	47	23	35	4	11
Pakistan	63	68	28	35	22	30	7	11
Sri Lanka	81	105	74	102	47	60	49	67
Reference group	—	110	—	87	—	41	—	25

Source: World Bank (1988).
Note: 1975 refers to some year between 1972 and 1978. MRE represents the 'most recent estimate' from 1980 to 1986.

TABLE 11.6
Public Educational Expenditure in South Asia

	As % GNP	*As % of total government expenditure*
Bangladesh		
1975	1.1	13.6
1980	1.5	8.2
1982	1.5	–
1983	1.8	8.6
1984	1.8	–
1985	1.9	–
India		
1975	2.8	8.6
1980	3.0	10.0
1982	3.2	–
1983	3.4	9.2
1984	3.7	9.0
1985	3.7	9.4
Nepal		
1975	1.5	11.5
1980	1.8	12.4
1981	2.1	13.6
1982	2.8	15.7
1985	3.0	10.8
Pakistan		
1975	2.2	5.2
1980	1.8	5.0
1982	1.9	4.9
1983	1.9	5.0
1984	2.0	–
1985	2.1	–
Sri Lanka		
1975	2.8	10.1
1980	3.1	8.8
1983	3.0	7.1
1984	2.8	8.5
1985	3.1	–

Source: UNESCO, Statistical Yearbook (1987).

do with the way Islam has been absorbed in particular societies. Separating the specific influence of religion from other influences may be very hard. However, some examples concerning this issue may be instructive. Indonesia, another large and Muslim country, has universal primary level enrollments for both boys and girls.

Similarly Nigeria had overall primary school enrollment of 92 per cent in 1985.[16] Compared to Pakistan's limited progress (see Table 11.5), primary enrollment increased in Indonesia by 46 per cent and in Nigeria by 60 per cent between 1965 and 1987.[17]

The most serious shortcoming shows up in the low enrollment and high drop-out rates in rural areas. Primary rural enrollment for girls in Baluchistan was less than 3 per cent, and secondary rural girls' enrollments were under 3 per cent in all provinces (see Table 11.7). The high wastage rate among those who are drawn into the educational network is also a more serious problem in rural areas. Almost half the primary students and one-third of secondary students dropped out before attempting the final year exams in urban areas. In rural areas, close to two-thirds and four-fifths

TABLE 11.7
Mean Enrollment Rates in Pakistan by Province, Region and Sex (1978/79–1982/83)

	Primary		*Secondary*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Punjab				
Urban	59.0	64.1	50.5	29.3
	(1.0)	(2.0)	(0.9)	(0.5)
Rural	54.1	25.3	17.9	2.7
	(2.3)	(1.7)	(0.5)	(0.2)
Sind				
Urban	76.4	56.0	47.6	34.3
	(2.0)	(0.6)	(1.3)	(1.4)
Rural	49.4	8.0	9.6	0.6
	(2.1)	(1.0)	(0.4)	(0.2)
NWFP				
Urban	65.6	53.4	42.5	18.1
	(3.9)	(5.0)	(0.5)	(0.9)
Rural	35.7	9.9	17.1	0.8
	(2.2)	(0.9)	(0.5)	(0.0)
Baluchistan				
Urban	54.3	34.8	35.8	15.8
	(3.0)	(3.6)	(1.9)	(1.6)
Rural	27.7	2.4	3.3	0.1
	(1.1)	(0.4)	(0.1)	(0.0)

Source: Khan *et al.*, 1986 (Tables 2 and 3).
Note: The numbers in parentheses are standard deviations.

dropped out. In almost all cases (for all provinces) girls dropped out more than boys. The most drastic picture existed at the rural secondary level, where between 72 per cent and 97 per cent of girls across provinces did not stay on to attempt the matriculation examination.[18]

The causes of this could be sought on both the supply and demand side. On the demand side, the most often cited reason is poverty. The poor find it difficult to bear the direct cost of education like uniforms, books and travel, even if no fee has to be paid; even more burdensome is the indirect opportunity cost of much-needed child labour.

Other reasons include poor facilities, a curriculum perceived as irrelevant, and sometimes teachers who enforce discipline using corporal punishment.[19] Low morale among rural primary teachers is not surprising given that they earn less than government peons in urban areas. Another possible cause of low educational attainment is feudalism. Anecdotal evidence suggests it has impeded progress in many regions since landlords actively oppose schools for fear of reducing the assured supply of docile, cheap labour.

The opportunity forgone from educating girls in poor rural households may be more keenly felt since they tend to be more heavily involved than boys in domestic and farm chores. It is likely, however, that cultural factors are the greatest deterrent to female education. Parents often believe that education spoils girls' attitudes by making them 'difficult' and averse to the hard labour that is their life role; continued education beyond puberty may make them morally suspect of being unchaste. Both factors can prejudice a girl's marital prospects, and families desire to avoid the stigma of retaining daughters beyond marriageable age.[20]

These factors can be considered to reduce the utility that households may otherwise derive from girls' schooling viewed as a consumption good. Educating girls may also be a poor investment strategy because culturally induced job market discrimination reduces the rate of return to their education. Moreover, the returns to girls' schooling accrue to the families into which they marry, again reducing the investment incentive to educating girls.[21] These factors increase the gap between the social and private rate of return to educating girls—from the perspective of the household—and hence strengthen the case for intervention to enhance girl enrollments. This could be done by focusing both on the demand

side to change attitudes and on the supply side to provide the needed facilities.

School factors can also deter girls' education more than that of boys. Girls' parents attach importance to separate schools, women teachers, high boundary walls, latrine facilities amd easy access.[22] These lead to the supply side of the problem of low attainment. Table 11.6 gives comparative data on education for Pakistan relative to other neighbouring countries.

Differential access can create divisive forces. Important variations are those between provinces and between income and ethnic groups. Differentials by gender have been long neglected, though of late their social significance has begun to be appreciated. Table 11.7 reports school enrollments by provincial, regional and sex disaggregations between 1978–79 to 1982–83. The differences are easily noticeable. The spread in enrollment rates across provinces for region and sex extends from about 20 to 30 per cent at the primary level and between 15 and 20 per cent at the secondary level. Of the four provinces, rural Baluchistan lags farthest in educational attainment. Given the large area and low population density in far flung settlements, this finding is not surprising.

In almost all cases, boys' enrollment rates substantially exceed those of girls. As indicated earlier, low girls' attainment could be due to cultural and economic barriers to female education in rural areas, or to less access to appropriate educational facilities for girls. The urgency of the problem is well indicated by the secondary rural enrollments rates in Table 11.7 which vary from 0.1 to 3 per cent. The neglect of female education revealed by these enrollment ratios is shocking.

Table 11.8 illustrates the relative differential in educational facilities for boys and girls and how this has changed over time. This information can provide a clue to the extent to which the problem is on the supply side and whether any attempts have been made to redress it.

Pakistan started out in 1947 with many more institutions for boys than for girls. Columns 1 and 2 of Table 11.8 show the difference in availability for the various levels of education for 1987–88. The difference is still large, and girls' institutions vary from about one-third to one-half of those available for boys. The differential has decreased over time, but it is still substantial. In

TABLE 11.8
Number and Growth of Educational Institutions by Kind and Sex

	Numbers (1987–88)		*Growth (percentage)*			
	Male	*Female*	*1967/68 Male*	*1977/78 Female*	*1977/78 Male*	*1987/88 Female*
Primary	60,014	24,293	28	43	37	33
Middle	4,531	2,053	39	47	17	34
High	3,328	1,449	42	48	29	39
Secondary vocational	192	107	36	1	24	28
Arts & science colleges	404	177	44	34	22	34

Source: Economic Survey 1987–88 (1988, Statistical Appendix, p. 165).

columns 3 to 6 the rate at which this differential closed in the last decade is compared to the prior decade.

The commitment to Islamization at all levels may have encouraged separate institutions for girls during the Zia ul-Haq administration. Alternatively, a conservative religious interpretation of Islam could have impeded progress in female education. The data seem to support the former hypothesis. Although institutional expansion declined in the last decade relative to the prior decade, beyond the primary level the rate of female institutional expansion exceeded that of boys to a greater degree and at all levels including the secondary vocational and college levels. The lower growth rate of girls' schools at the primary level may indicate a trend towards an acceptance of co-education at the primary level.

An all-women university was also planned but has not yet been funded. Several women's groups opposed it for fear that it would relegate women to less serious subjects and that the quality of instruction would also be poorer. Whether or not a separate women's university is developed, there is some evidence that Pakistan's commitment to an expansive dual system of education up to the college level became more entrenched in the last decade.

Exploring access by income group at the higher level is important since the subsidy to higher education in absolute terms is the largest.[23] The main finding is that a significantly larger proportion

of boys and girls from the lower income (relative to their representation in the population) group may have participated in higher education between the early 1970s and early 1980s. There is a corresponding decline in the participation of the higher income group. This result can be partly accounted for by a greater understatement of parents' income by respondents who were students at the time of the survey than by employees who were reporting the approximate income of parents while they were in college. The lower number of students being drawn from the upper income brackets may also indicate that more families sent their children abroad for higher education.

Higher Education

Higher education infrastructure has expanded rapidly. Between 1967–68 and 1987–88, arts and science colleges have more than doubled from 251 to 581; professional colleges have doubled from 50 to 101, and universities have more than tripled from 7 to 23.[24] This may be a cause for concern only if the expansion meant that resources were being spread too thin and if economies of scale were not being realized due to institutional proliferation.

Government reports suggested that resources were indeed being spread too thin so that college and university libraries have sparse holdings, laboratories are ill-equipped, class and residential facilities are poor, and there are few extra-curricular activities.[25] Preliminary evidence also indicates that at least for the universities there is a potential to realize economies of scale, holding quality constant, but little thought seems to be given to this issue.[26] Political and related concerns for regional balance seem to dictate the rate and nature of educational infrastructural expansion rather than economic or quality considerations.

Expansion also can be at the behest of vested interests or due to the inherent tendencies of bureaucracies to expand. Apart from the proliferation of colleges and universities, eight centers of excellence, seven research centers and six area study centers have been established since the early 1970s. One view is that these have often been developed around dynamic and charismatic personalities rather than as institutions with their own internal momentum.

Consequently, the loss of the initial leadership can have a crippling effect.

Much has been done on paper to encourage faculty research such as providing research grants, fellowships, revised study leave rules, funds for participation in foreign seminars and links with prominent foreign universities. Can all this help? Certainly some motivated individuals who manage to do research anyway will find such policies beneficial and boost their productivity. However, it is not so clear that the scholarly ouput of the average faculty member would improve. First, while compensation has improved and an attempt has been made to equate the status of university and college teachers with government officials, salaries fall far short of the private sector in industry or of the new private sector universities established. Second, college and university faculty are not heavily pressured to produce. After a one-year probation period, tenure is virtually assured to all individuals selected to academic posts. Third, it appears that movement up the academic ladder seems to have less to do with scholarly output than with playing the right game with the university administration and senior faculty members. Finally, the academic environment has driven many dedicated individuals out of the system. The last two points relate to the important issue of academic freedom.

There have been repeated demonstrations in Pakistan's brief history that academic freedom is closely tied to political freedom. The country has moved twice for a sustained period away from a democratic structure of governance; each time governance in universities was similarly affected. Thus the introduction of democratic faculty governance into higher education in the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto period (1970 to 1977) was rescinded by the Zia ul-Haq regime (1977 to 1988). The real danger from the subsequent centralization of power in the offices of the vice-chancellors, deans and department chairs is the low morale among faculty due to a lack of participation in the decision-making and the high premium it may put on intrigue and pleasing authorities, rather than sustained hard work, as a means of getting ahead.

There is no way of insulating academics from experiencing the after-shocks of undemocratic political change, and so, one can only hope the country is evolving into a political maturity which will free itself and academia from periodic and catastrophic convulsions. Meanwhile, in a politically evolving environment, academics inevitably need to be part of the political process and

devote part of their energy to ensuring security from such convulsions. Political authorities need to realize that self-governance is a key factor in promoting a vibrant academic environment. In this regard preserving a University Ordinance like the 1973 Quaid-i-Azam University Act, which provides an adequate measure of academic freedom, is critical.

The key ingredients for a healthy higher education system are a dedicated and dynamic faculty and receptive and serious students. Although the average student is respectful, the student body as a whole has not been exemplary. Currently, student unrest may have the greatest adverse impact on higher education. A major role was played by students and academicians in the political process that created the country. Once established, this tradition seems impossible to shake. Political parties continue to maintain youth wings with the activists drawn from higher education. Political tension and violence account for a large number of lost days when the institutions are closed. Examinations are thus postponed, and teachers work under great pressure to finish the prescribed syllabus quickly. This politicization of higher education is currently at an apogee. Campus shoot-outs among rival parties over the past few years have become common; even professors who have become involved have been gunned down.

Deans of universities have reported student problems among other issues.[27] They cited lack of career guidance in choosing educational programmes, poor standards in English in secondary schools, few extra-curricular activities, poor library, laboratory, hostel and transport facilities, and disinterested and dissatisfied teachers. Others view these problems as less critical than the virtually open admissions in many universities and colleges.

The consequence of open admissions is that institutions of higher learning are flooded with poor and mediocre students. They are willing to tolerate little educational innovation or flexibility of the curricula. Their perception of the lack of opportunity to get desired jobs and the unfairness of the job market leads them to spend much of their time in student politics, often violent.[28]

Students get drawn into violent campus politics because of their uncertain job prospects. While authorities are unable to resist the social demand for higher education, the labour market cannot cope with the flow of graduates from the various levels despite what appears to be a policy-driven, very high failure rate.

Several issues are of importance here: first, the match between the field of specialization and subsequent employment; second, the unemployment that may result from the lack of fit between education and the labour market or for other reasons such as excess supply of graduates and post-graduates. One report says that 96 per cent of graduates and 76 per cent of post-graduates were in occupations different from their educational fields of specialization.[29]

This discrepancy suggests that the degrees themselves, rather than the specific skills in graduate and post-graduate training, were being used as a credential for the labour market. While this is not distressing at the undergraduate level, one expects post-graduate training to be more specialized and hence utilized in and of itself. Some of the discrepancy can be explained by the utilization of post-graduate training as a preparation for the civil service, which absorbs a large number of the higher educated. Nonetheless, the lack of fit between the educational field of specialization and occupation is staggering.

The mismatch between education and the labour market may not only mean a resource misallocation but could also represent high levels of graduate and post-graduate unemployment, as is evident from the published reports of the Census of Pakistan, which show unemployment rates in the 20 to 24 age category for 1980 ranging from 8.5 per cent for those with a F.A/F.Sc. degree but not a bachelors degree to 10.7 per cent for those with a B.A. or higher degree.

Language may be one of the main handicaps in preventing creativity from emerging. Since the English of the prescribed texts is alien at the university level, it inspires awe and saps confidence in the teacher's own abilities. Most government schools now teach in national and regional languages, and bright students from government schools are suddenly at sea when they have to compete with students from the elite private schools, who speak and read English fluently.[30] Though important English language daily newspapers and weekly magazines debate the language problem endlessly, little hard research has been done on the social benefits and possible costs of education in a foreign language.

The introduction of private institutions of higher education is one of the most significant trends of the past decade in Pakistan. So far a medical university and a university of management sciences

have been established, and the Seventh Plan clearly states more will be encouraged to be established in emerging fields of an applied or professional nature. Given that these institutions offer a salary three to five times higher than government institutions for individuals trained in the West, university teachers can be expected to seek these more lucrative positions thus draining public sector institutions of talent. One precondition for these institutions to get a charter was that they would recruit primarily from abroad and that they would preclude drawing faculty from local academic institutions. They have partially drawn on overseas Pakistanis and new graduates from foreign universities and this reversal of the brain drain represents a net benefit to society.

Salaries and tuition are higher in private higher educational institutions. In government schools, post-secondary students currently pay Rs. 180 to Rs. 300 per annum. The annual tuition and other expenses at the Lahore Business School of the University of Management Sciences has been estimated to be Rs. 77,500 for 1989.

This trend towards privatization embodies positive features. Much-needed standard bearers are being established, and to some extent the brain drain is being reversed. However, so far higher education has been accessible to most individuals, so that the really talented students from poor backgrounds could succeed. It also served to unify the streams from elite private and public secondary schools. There is a danger now that the parallel school systems catering to different socio–economic groups could be extended into the higher level. If public higher education declines further, the limited amount of equality of opportunity provided by higher education will be constrained further.

User charges also threaten to constrain equality of opportunity. The Seventh Plan reveals that tuition fees only recover a negligible portion of total recurring costs, as is indicated by Table 11.9.

It is evident from this table that all levels of education are being heavily subsidized and that in absolute terms the subsidy varies positively with the level of education. Considering that development or non-recurring expenditure is not considered here, the actual subsidy, especially at the post-graduate level, is close to 100 per cent.

The government is aware of these high levels of subsidies and, as earlier indicated, has expressed the intention of imposing user

TABLE 11.9
Annual Recurring Cost per Student and Percentage Recovered as Tuition Fee (Rs.)

Recurring cost			*Percentage recovered*
Primary	650		0.0
Secondary	1,200		5.0
College	2,850	F.A./B.A.	6.3
		F.Sc./B.Sc.	8.4
University (general)	15,282		
		M.A.	1.6
		M.Sc.	2.0
Technical	10,387		0.9

Source: *Seventh Five Year Plan 1988–93* (1988, p. 345).

costs in both the Sixth Plan and the Seventh Plan. There was no implementation of such a policy during the Sixth Plan period, and there are no signs that any changes are currently being contemplated. In fact, user charges may be more difficult for the current popularly elected government to impose than it was for the previous martial law regime. There is, however, a possibility that pressure from lending agencies may bring about such a reform.

But imposing user charges at the higher level cannot and should not be viewed as an end in and of itself, but as part of an overall strategy to revitalize education, including privatization. Privatization is not without dangers. If the rich clientele of the state institutions migrate to private institutions, the pressure to prevent state funded education from deteriorating may well vanish. This has occurred in many cases at the primary, secondary and even college level where alternative private institutions exist. There is now the very real danger of the malaise spreading to the post-graduate level, where until now state institutions were the only option.

By encouraging privatization, the government may have created an opportunity to infuse dynamism into the higher education system, but only if it does not subsequently abandon its own commitment to state-funded education. What is necessary is having a parallel network of state and private institutions providing each other with healthy competition. The state has the advantage of a much larger pool of gifted but poor candidates that it can draw on, using tight admission standards.

These students can be supported with user charges still considerably below private sector fees for other students from relatively more prosperous families. The public universities could also do more to attract support from private sources, so that these schools become less of a burden on the state budget. The commitment to support deserving poor students whose families would find the increased fee prohibitive is clearly stated in the Sixth Plan. That scholarships, as shown in Table 11.2 were the only category where targets were exceeded, may at first seem encouraging. However, this over-achievement may simply have resulted from a low target relative to demand and it is not clear who benefited from the scholarships. Anecdotal evidence suggests that influence draws fellowships for the prosperous. However, the little hard evidence that exists indicates that scholarships are allocated on the basis of past performance rather than family income.

Even if scholarships are not allocated strictly on the basis of need, there is some evidence to suggest that the lower income groups are most over-represented in higher education relative to their proportion in the population and that they stand to gain most from the public subsidization of higher education. Thus there is a need for caution in altering the educational system. Beyond education, there is little other avenue for social mobility for the lower income groups.

Conclusion

Although a dismal picture of the achievements of Pakistan's educational administration has been painted, some recent policy goals have been successful. The policies, however, were controversial. Privatization is one such policy. At the school level, it proceeded fairly rapidly during the Sixth Plan (1982–83 to 1987–88). This policy has continued into the Seventh Plan (1987–88 to 1992–93), and the private sector is being encouraged to establish colleges and universities in certain specialized fields.

Privatization has raised concerns about entrenchment of a dual system of education with the upper income groups buying the best for their offspring and consequently providing the best career

opportunities for them. The concern about the closing of education as the only source of social mobility to competent but poor individuals was amplified by the declared intention of the Sixth Plan to impose user charges. Currently students receive an over 90 per cent subsidy at all levels, which amounts to a large absolute subsidy at the higher level. This objective was not attained, probably due to the opposition of influential parents whose children benefit from the subsidy at the higher level. The Seventh Plan firmly reiterated the intention to impose user charges equal to 10 per cent of recurring expenditure.

Both Plans mentioned scholarships as instruments for preserving social equity. The quantitative scholarship target was exceeded in the Sixth Plan. However, it is difficult to judge from the evidence available whether the initial allocation was adequate and whether the upper income groups do not appropriate them due to leverage or due to a lack of administrative discrimination in the allocation of scholarships.

Looking towards the next century, the lower income groups thus have good reason to worry that access to their one avenue of social mobility may be closed due to a combination of rising user charges and falling standards in public institutions. There is some evidence that the lower income groups are currently most over-represented in higher education and that they benefit most from its public subsidization. Education reform thus needs to be implemented with caution to avoid eliminating this sole source of advantage for the lower income groups.

Here it should be emphasized that there is a consensus in the literature that, given the much higher social rate of return in Pakistan at the primary and secondary levels than at the higher level, any educational strategy aimed at attaining equality has to be primarily geared towards broadening educational attainment at the primary and secondary level.[31] In this regard, the restructuring of educational expenditure towards the primary and secondary level in the Sixth Plan, and more so in the Seventh Plan, indicates a correct policy orientation. However, allocations by level of education reveal only a nominal difference at the primary and higher level between the Fifth and Sixth Plans' allocations. Moreover, target achievement ratios for the Sixth Plan demonstrate the lowest achievement rate of 50 per cent at the primary level. Continuing the same policy of emphasizing the primary level, the

Seventh Plan has at least more effectively restructured outlays towards the primary level and away from the higher level.

Pakistan's educational expenditure falls far short of other comparable countries. This may be a supply side explanation of the reason for its lag in the attainment of basic literacy and school level education. On the demand side, poverty, school related and cultural factors may account for low enrollments and high drop-outs. It should be of concern to policy-makers that these factors operate differently across regions and provinces, and so notable differences in educational attainment persist. Educational expenditure should at least match that of neighbouring countries, with more importance attached to the remuneration and working conditions of teachers.

Gender differentials are high, even though primary and secondary education for girls are the source of some of the non-quantifiable social benefits to education such as improved health and reduced fertility and infant mortality.

Compensation is also an important issue at the higher education level. There is also need for sensitivity to issues of academic freedom which should be accompanied by more rigorous expectations about professorial performance.