

Book Review

Education Policies in Pakistan: Politics, Projections, and Practices

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The book titled “Education Policies in Pakistan: Politics, Projections, and Practices” is written by Professor Dr. Shahid Siddiqui and published by Oxford University Press, Lahore in 2016. Dr Shahid Siddiqui is a renowned educationist and writer who has contributed a lot to generate knowledge for the local and global community. Currently, he is holding the position of Vice Chancellor at the Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad. Prior to this, he has worked on leading positions in many prestigious institutions such as Institute for Educational Development; Aga Khan University (IED-AKU) Karachi; Ghulam Ishaque Khan Institute of Engineering and Technology, Sawabi; Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), and Lahore School of Economics (LSE).

Dr. Siddiqui’s book is one of the comprehensive books written on the education policies analysis by any Pakistani or foreign authors. The author critically analyses all the education policies of Pakistan – from Pakistan Educational Conference 1947 to National Education Policy 2009. All the abbreviations/acronyms have been noted at the beginning of the book. The first three chapters discuss the rationale and processes, sociopolitical context of education policies, and vision and ideology respectively. The next ten chapters (4 to 13) address different significant themes including literacy, universal primary education, higher education, female education, language issues, technical and vocational education, special education, religious education and madrassahs, curricula and textbooks, and teachers and teacher education. The last chapter (Implementation: Challenges and Recommendations), analyses the

education policies in a holistic way. The book includes six appendices at the end which are directly or indirectly related to the education policies such as Quaid-i-Azam's message to the Pakistan Educational Conference 1947 (Appendix A) and speech of Maulana Fazal-ur-Rahman in Pakistan Educational Conference 1947 (Appendix B). This is a valuable addition since these drafts are difficult to locate in a single document.

The book includes old and latest references on education policies. In this way, the author has successfully incorporated his critical viewpoint supported by previous researches. Besides the description of the theme in the context of various education policies, each chapter contains discussion section and a summary at the end.

Another salient feature of the book is that it includes facts and figures with proper references regarding targets and achievements of students' enrolment, literacy, number of schools, colleges, and universities over a period of time, and students' achievement level in the selected subjects at primary level. The author has also taken up the issue of national language (Urdu/Bengali) which has been a controversy among the bureaucratic and political circles. Siddiqui in this book notes: "Bengalis had a strong deprivation as all the sources of power e.g. the capital, the presidency, the prime minister, the head quarters of army, navy and air force were situated in West Pakistan". This deprivation on the part of Bengalis ultimately led to the creation of a separate country under the name Bangladesh in 1971.

Since no human work is perfect in this world and there is always room for improvement in every work, the reviewer would like to highlight some of the aspects which may be considered to further improve the quality of the book. Firstly, it is suggested that a uniformity should be observed while writing key terminologies, for example, the nomenclatures of policies. It is further suggested that the nomenclatures which appear in the official policy documents should be preferred. For example, the correct nomenclatures of the 1992, 1998, and 2009 policies are: National Education Policy 1992, National Education Policy 1998-2010, National Education Policy 2009 but these have not been written correctly at some places in the book. Likewise, the correct nomenclature is Indiana University not University of Indiana. Secondly, some typographical mistakes need to be corrected such as the correct date of the ousting of Nawaz Sharif's government by General Pervez Musharraf is 12 October, 1999 which has been indicated in the book as 12 October, 1998. Thirdly, although the author has included all important sub-sectors

of education, but secondary education has not been discussed under a separate theme. Perhaps, it would be better to include it in the next edition as secondary education is a link between elementary and higher education. Fourthly, there is a need to add the reform of the establishment of separate directorates of elementary and secondary education in the country which was one of the key provisions of National Education Policy, 1992.

Overall, the book meets the desired quality framework and covers all the important aspects of education policies in terms of their preparation processes, sociopolitical contexts, thematic description, targets, achievements, and implementation strategies. It contains a critical analysis of the education policies in a logical manner, and all the more carries a holistic approach. It carries the characteristics of attracting readers of varying categories such as university undergraduate and postgraduate students, MPhil and PhD scholars, teachers, researchers, curriculum developers, teacher trainers, policy makers, and educational administrators and managers. The author has presented his analysis on education policies in a simple and comprehensive manner. A reader of little awareness of education plans and policies in Pakistan, can also seek guidance besides professionals and researchers who have relatively updated knowledge and understanding about education plans and policies in Pakistan.

It is concluded that the book is a good addition to the existing domain of knowledge, especially for those interested in education policy and planning. A comprehensive list of references given at the end of the book is useful for the readers to look for more readings on the topics of their interest. The reviewer, therefore, congratulates Dr. Shahid Siddiqui for generating knowledge for all those who are eager to learn about the education policies of the country.

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