

Mapping Trajectories of Educational Reforms in Pakistan: A Functionalist and Neo-Marxist Views

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ABSTRACT

Educational system in the postcolonial state of Pakistan evolved under two dominant narratives - to transform the traditional agrarian society into a modern industrial state and to socialize its diverse population in common norms, values and beliefs. The former focused on development of human capital while the latter emphasized on social cohesion and formulating a common national identity. These functional aspects of education were realized from the early days of its independence in 1947, which also laid the foundation for educational policy in the country. Successive governments incorporated development of educational sector as cornerstone of their policy, however, these educational policies were hardly translated into tangible action and practice. This paper argues that the functional aspects of education overshadowed the socio-economic inequalities associated with education, on grounds of region, class, gender and ethnicity in the state of Pakistan. To elaborate that how functionalism shapes the outcome of educational policies, functionalist paradigm is contrasted with neo-Marxist theoretical framework to map the particular trajectory of Pakistani education system. This contrast reveals

disparities not only in inequitable access to educational opportunities on grounds of class, gender or region, but it also shifts our attention to the inequalities within schools, such as variations in curricula, language of instruction, textbooks, pedagogy and school cultures.

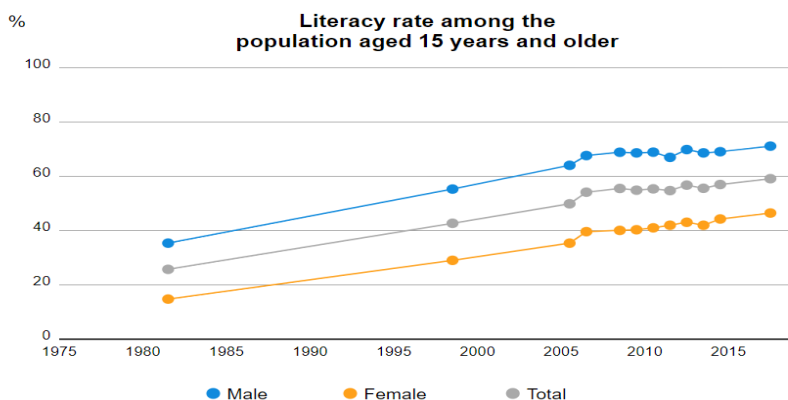
Introduction

In Pakistan, education is often presented as panacea for all evils. If democracy fails, it is because people are not well educated to make smart choices; poverty is because of the failure of education system that does not impart relevant knowledge and skills; extremism is because of the failure of education system which does not instill critical thinking, and the list goes on. Since its creation in 1947, education in Pakistan has been seen as a cure for all of her problems ranging from overpopulation and unemployment to the elimination of extremist and strengthening of democracy. It is argued in this paper that behind these views, there is a fundamental assumption about the system of education that schools are instituted to serve the societal needs and requirements. Durkheim (1956) viewed schools as institutions of socialization and as a societal means of projecting itself into the future. I maintain that this functionalist perspective of approaching education has remained a dominant viewpoint in the period after the formal decolonization. Given the historical specificities of the country, education was seen as a solution for two of her most important issues - to provide sound economic foundation to the country and work towards a political project of nation building and promoting social cohesion among its disparate social groups.

The functionalist view of education has deep historical roots in Muslim nationalism during colonial period. There are many factors accountable for it. First, the Muslim nationalism in the Indian subcontinent which led to the creation of Pakistan in 1947 was strongest in the northern parts of India where Muslims constituted a minority. In those provinces and regions, Muslim nationalism was primarily driven by the fear of being overwhelmed by majoritarian politics of Congress party and a gradual shift in colonial policy to establish preventative institutions in India (Jalal, 1994). However, the regions of India which actually became part of Pakistan in 1947 were provinces where Muslims already had great majority. The Muslim League, party which led the campaign for separate country under its leader Jinnah, had little existence in the newly created country. This set the stage for ongoing political and economic conflict between the migrant community which had led the movement for creation of Pakistan and the local ethnic

and tribal elites of the country. Thus, social cohesion became a pressing issue in postcolonial Pakistan.

Secondly, the regions of subcontinent which became part of Pakistan in 1947 were one of the least developed areas of India. At the time of its creation, literacy rate in Pakistan was one of the lowest in the world. Less than 15% of the population was literate at the time of independence, which further went down in rural areas, with female literacy virtually reaching zero (Bengali, 1999). Similarly, funds allocated to the educational sector were too meager to establish a viable system of education, which could cater the need of 75 million of its inhabitants. Finally, Pakistan's involvement in armed conflict with India over Kashmir created space for postcolonial army to enter into politics (Rizvi, 2013). The ascendancy of army as a major political actor in Pakistan right from the beginning set Pakistan on a highly authoritarian trajectory. This had a strong repercussion for education as well, where textbooks were designed to project an exclusive national identity and are replete with militaristic values (Nayyar & Salim, 2005).



Source: UNESCO

Table 3: Expenditure of Education (2009-2017)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Government expenditure on education										
as % of GDP	2.59	2.29	2.22	2.14	2.49	2.47	2.65	3	2.9	...
as % of total government expenditure	11.86	11.86	10.92	11.04	11.51	11.3	13.19	15.06	14.54	...
Government expenditure per student (in PPP\$)										
Primary education	...	...	...	...	355.56	375.09	372	...	...	...
Secondary education	...	...	...	...	459.77	613.48	736.07	...	...	...
Tertiary education	...	...	...	...	3322.93	2397.13	2895.11	3479.09	3345.61	...

Source: UNESCO.

The postcolonial discourse on education is consistent with the global model of development. The post war international economy was characterized by states' regulation of the markets inspired by Keynesian economics. The concept of national development was closely tied to the economic performance of the country and education was seen as an aid to achieve that end (Mundy, 1998). It was more so the case in newly independent countries. The former colonies in the "global east" which suffered centuries of exploitation from the "global north" immediately found themselves "underdeveloped" and later "developing" in the postcolonial era (Tikly, 2009). The fundamental assumption was that these postcolonial countries can eventually catch-up with the developed nations by properly investing in industry and technology. In Pakistan too, the educational discourse framed citizens as human capital for the development of national economies. Thus, economic modernization and social cohesion became the two most pressing agenda for the education in the newly independent country.

This paper first presents a brief historical sketch of evolution of education system in Indian subcontinent which Pakistan inherited after 1947. Second part of paper deals with reviewing the literature on education from two theoretical perspectives i.e. functionalism and neo-marxism. After presenting the review, the paper discusses the functional aspects of education in the state of Pakistan. This includes three distinct elements that shape educational policy and practices in the country. The first functional element that serves the societal need is the role of education as a modernizing agent. This has been one of the two dominant themes of education policy in Pakistan, at least at discursive level. Secondly, the article briefly dwell upon female education as means of achieving social goals of decreasing childhood marriages, maternal health and controlling burgeoning population. The article further talks about the role of education in promoting social cohesion in society by focusing on identity and common values. Finally, paper will present a neo-Marxist critique of educational policies in Pakistan followed by a conclusion.

Historical Background

The history of colonial education goes back to the early decades of the nineteenth century. During that period, India was being governed by the East India Company rather than British crown directly. The colonial education system was first introduced when the Charter Act of 1813 of British parliament stressed upon the company to appropriate financial resources for the purposes of educating the Indian masses. The act also allowed the Christian missionaries to preach gospel and establish schools. The evolution of colonial educational system was shaped by conflicting discourses among the colonial protagonists (Whitehead, 2005). The company with her commercial interests in the colony resisted social reforms. The orientalist saw value in local cultures and indigenous educational institutions and sought to base educational system on local traditions. However, the missionary groups and colonialists inspired by Bentham's utilitarian philosophy were in favor of education designed on western ideals of rationality and scientific progress (Whitehead, 2005). This conflict about the role and function of Indian education was ultimately resolved by the publication of Lord Macaulay's minutes on Education in 1835, which stated:

“We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.” (Macaulay, 1835)

The English Education Act of 1835 endorsed the minutes of Lord Macaulay and paved the way for European science and literature to be taught to native Indians in English language. However, there was a shift in colonial policy regarding Indian education after the “Indian war of independence” of 1857. The company rule was ended, and India came under direct control of British crown. The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the lack of British interest in the education of colonial subjects due to several factors: sheer size and extreme cultural, religious and linguistic diversity (Whitehead, 2005). Thus, in a modern sense, there was hardly any coherent educational policy of Britain in colonial India. After the British crown took the direct control of the colony, education was mostly left for Indians. Due to the new job opportunities created in colonial administration, Indians demanded more public spending on colonial education. Thus, the demand for English education came from Indians rather than colonial administration imposing it on Indian subjects. (Whitehead, 2005)

During twentieth century, education was made a provincial subject and left to the provinces to deal with. With center having complete control over tax

collection and public exchequer, Indian provinces were fully dependent on financial support from the central government (Sayeed, 1968; Aziz K. K., 2005). After the Indian Act of 1919, which provided for elected members in provincial cabinets, the Indian representatives of the provinces found themselves highly constrained due to their reliance on central funds. Thus, overall, the colonial policy on education is characterized as that of indifference and incapacity towards education of Indian subjects.

The educational institutions, established during the colonial period, were mostly secondary and postsecondary institutions including colleges and universities. This was primarily done keeping in view the colonial requirement of provision of literate Indians to fill the lower cadre governmental jobs. The colonial administration was a massive structure and required trained people to run it. Thus, one of the primary functions of the education system performed during colonial times was to prepare Indians and give them access to the lower level administrative positions. This role of education is an integral part of nationalist discourse about colonial education system that it was designed to produce the “nation of clerks.”

However, Kumar (2005) contradicts this account of colonial education. He contends that colonial project of education was not to produce a nation of clerks but central to it was the enlightenment ideal of civil society.

“The customary statement that colonial education was ‘aimed’ at producing clerks is both theoretically feeble and historically untenable. Its theoretical weakness lies in the fact that it does not help us distinguish between the ideas underlying the educational system and its practical purposes. Colonial education produced political leaders, professional men and intellectuals, not just office clerks.” (p. 25)

Kumar (2005) further states that “at the heart of this walled knowledge was a vision of civil society based on eighteenth-century English political ideas. In England, the vision consisted of a dream of bourgeois individuality, equality and security of property; in the colony it became a programme to train a small minority of property holders in the attitudes and skills of colonial rulers.” (p. 17)

Literature Review

The purpose of the review section is to familiarize readers with the two theoretical frameworks borrowed in the paper i.e. functionalism and Neo-Marxism. For sake of clarity, the review is organized into three distinct themes in order to highlight the key differences between two theoretical frameworks. These two theoretical perspectives provide views of schooling and educational system at large, which are diametrically opposed to each other. By looking at the width and depth of these differences, one is in a better position to grasp the broader range of debates and disagreements within the field of education. The review deals with the issues of equality and

inequality, hidden curriculum, the core functioning and purposes of the school system.

Hidden Curriculum

The topic of hidden curriculum has been thoroughly analyzed under different titles like ““unstudied curriculum,” the “covert” or “latent” curriculum, the “non-academic outcomes of schooling,” the “by-products of schooling,” the “residue of schooling,” or simply “what schooling does to people.”” (Wallace, 1974, p. 6) To put it simply, it is defined as the context in which schooling takes place, which may include but not limited to the socialization processes taking place inside schools, the unintended consequences of the lessons, unconscious propagation of norms, values and beliefs etc. Here, we begin by the functionalist explanation of hidden curriculum.

According to Merton (1957), social institutions perform two types of functions - latent and manifest. “The distinction between manifest and latent functions [refers, first] to those objective consequences for a specified unit, which contribute to its adjustment or adaptation and were so intended; the second [refers] to unintended or unrecognized consequences of the same order (Merton, 1957)” (Elliot & Lemert, 2014). Thus, the manifest function of the school is to teach lessons from various fields of knowledge, but the latent function is to provide pupil a common platform to interact and socialize with each other. It is not only the classroom and the formal curriculum which plays an important role in child’s upbringing but all type of activities taking place inside schools including playground, corridors, interacting with teachers, students and administrative staff etc.

Dreeben (1968) argues that children in schools are taught to function in political and economic life of the modern state. According to Dreeben, schools inculcate the norms of “independence,” “achievement,” “universalism,” and “specificity”, which are fundamental in enabling children to participate in a modern industrial democratic society. Schools instill in children the sense of responsibility and accountability, and teach them the importance of neutral laws which are uniformly applicable to all. Dreeben argues that these principles are indispensable for any individual to function in a modern industrial society, thus, schools function in latent ways to serve the societal needs.

Jackson (1990) argues that hidden curriculum is an inherent part of every classroom environment. Inside schools, there are certain norms and values, and social and behavioral expectations from the students which, if met, brings rewards. According to him, children are rewarded on the basis of both official and invisible curricula like “consider as an instance the common teaching practice of giving student a credit for trying. What do teachers mean when they say the student tries to do his work. They mean in essence, that he complies with the procedural expectations of the institutions.” (p. 34) He delineates other invisible practices of the schools as exercising restraint,

doing efforts, completing the given task, not wasting time, cooperating with fellow students and respecting teachers, punctual and being tidy as part of school's expectations from every student.

Vallance (1974) argues that hidden curriculum in fact is not that hidden. According to her, the only reason that it did not become part of public discourse is that there was great unanimity about this role of school. She takes a historical view and argues that during the transition from rural to urban centers and from agricultural to industrial mode of production and huge waves of immigration, families were inherently constrained to socialize in new set of circumstances. Schools were instituted as places of "supplementary nurturing institutions" (p. 12). At that point, there was great emphasis on military precision in the maneuvering of classes. Great stress is laid on punctuality, regularity, attention, and silence, as habits necessary through life for success in an industrial civilization." (p. 13)

However, Neo-Marxists thinkers have developed theories which link hidden curriculum to the economic structures of the society and to the interests of the dominant social group. Bowles and Gintis (1976) have drawn a strong parallel between factories and schools. In what is known as "correspondence principle", the authors extend the principles of division of labor, alienation, competition and false consciousness, which were characteristics of capitalist industrial mode of production, and apply them to the schooling system. They suggest that "since its inception in the United States, the public school system has been seen as a method of disciplining children in the interest of producing a properly subordinate adult population." (p. 37) Analyzing the result of New York High School (page 137), they have shown from data that children with certain traits like creativity, aggressiveness and independence were awarded low grades while children with the traits of perseverance, punctuality and consistency were rewarded. Furthermore, they argue that the nature of relationship between school administrators, teachers and students represents the hierarchical nature of division of labor at workplace.

Anyon (1980) in her article "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work" studied five different schools, each representing a particular economic class in the society. These schools ranged from poor working class schools to elite schools in a rich locality. Her conclusion was consistent with other studies in Marxist tradition that schools of working class children worked towards making students obedient workers, while on other hand, she observed that elite schools facilitated the children to develop critical thinking skill and leadership qualities.

Apple (2004) deals extensively on the topics of power, hegemony, and both overt and hidden curriculum. He talks about the "ways students learn to cope with the systems of crowds, praise, and power in classrooms: with the large amount of waiting children are called upon to experience, with the teacher as a child's first boss." (p. 79) However, he does not link hidden curriculum with factory (Bowles & Gintis, 1976) but connects it to culture and larger

political and economic structures of society. Thus, he analysis hidden curriculum with respect to the need of the dominant social group to control and gain hegemony over the rest of social groups.

Giroux (1978) contends that learning in the school is determined more by the hidden curriculum than by overt curriculum. Grouping students into a homogeneous categories and then imposing on them undifferentiated commands, the power relationship between students and the teacher and lastly the reward and punishment mechanism of evaluation have profound impact on students. He further says that “in highly stratified teacher-student relationships, students learn quickly to become “consumers of pre-cooked knowledge,” knowledge that students digest in an uncritical and passive manner. In a no less important, but more tragic sense, they learn that “knowledge” is the product of professional rank and entitlement; or to put it another way, students learn how to be silent in the face of authority. In a long run, they learn how to legitimize their own powerlessness. (p. 149)

Education and Social Inequality

The topic of social inequalities and its relationship with schooling system has remained a crucial area of investigation in educational research. For functionalists, schools provide equal opportunity to all students to compete for different roles in a hierarchical society. Neo-Marxist on other hand, argue that schools as social institutions perpetuate social inequalities on class level. However, we begin here by taking the functionalist view first.

According to Durkheim, “society views education as ‘the means by which it secures, in the children, the essential conditions of its own existence (Durkheim, 1956)’” (quoted in Abbott, 1981). Keeping social solidarity in an industrial society becomes particularly important due to diversity in occupations and division of labor within those varied professions. However, Durkheim does not take the issue of inequality directly in his social theory. Barnes (1997) argues that “Durkheim did not develop the ideas of inequality of educational opportunity as a function of the social structure which today's educational sociologists find very important. This is perhaps so because Durkheim seemed to be looking for a way of establishing social order in that French society which had undergone so much stress and class conflict for better than a century. His goal was, above all else, to achieve social solidarity, the concept which is further developed in his discussions of moral education.” (p. 219)

According to Davis and Moore (1945), society consists of different roles and positions arranged in hierarchy of prestige and varying status. According to the authors, “if the duties associated with the various positions were all equally pleasant to the human organism, all equally important to societal survival and all equally in need of the same ability or talent, it would make no difference that got into which positions, and the problem of social placement would be greatly reduced. But actually it does make a great deal of difference who gets into which positions, not only because some positions

are inherently more agreeable than others, but also because some require special talents or training and some are functionally more important than others” (p. 243). Thus, schools in this context play a role of sorting children for different societal jobs, some important some not, according to their abilities and talents. For Davis and Moore, inequality is the natural state of society, however, they contend that these social hierarchies should not be based on arbitrary factors but on functions they play for collective existence. Parson (1959) views schools as meritocratic institutions serving the need of modern society. According to Parson, in a modern industrial society, the place of an individual is not determined by what he calls “ascriptive” characteristics like ethnicity, race or family background but rather depends on one’s internal merit and abilities. The role of the schools is to serve as an intermediary institution between family and the society by providing each member a level playing field in his/her effort to get their desired place in society. Thus, schools function as meritocratic institutions which provide every child equal opportunity to get knowledge, gain new skills and excel in life. He says, it is evident that “in American society, there is a very high, probably increasing, correlation between one’s status level in the society, and one’s level of educational attainment.” (p. 298) Depending on one’s effort in school and capabilities, schools will perform a role of allocating people to different occupational groups and hierarchy of jobs. Thus, social stratification is the natural outcome of the schools.

However, Neo-Marxists believe functionalist arguments to be on shaky grounds. Bowles and Gintis (1976) contends that schools are not neutral places where children are treated according to uniform criteria of “merit”. They believe that there is a strong correlation between academic achievement and pupils’ socio-economic status. According to them IQ tests, number of school years, tracking into vocational and professional curriculum are far from being impartial mechanisms but are strongly influenced by the children economic class and racial backgrounds. According to Bowles and Gintis, children whose parents are economically well off have more chances to continue their education and consequently have more IQ than children whose parents are poor. Thus, apparently neutral intelligence tests carry class biasness.

Bernstein (1977) focuses on language codes of working and middle class pupil, which according to him, contributes to different outcome for children from different economic classes. He elaborates two different types of language codes – restricted and elaborate language codes. Restricted codes are descriptive; context bound and relies on shared understanding of the topic being discussed. They tend to involve a limited vocabulary with short and grammatically simple sentences. Elaborated language code requires larger vocabulary and larger complex grammatical sentences. They can convey complex conceptual meanings, unlike, restricted language code. The children of working classes use restricted language codes while the children

of middle classes use both restricted and elaborate language codes due to their privileged position and access to more opportunities to experience life. Schools on other hand, reflect middle class culture and its practices and curricula privilege students who have better ability to use elaborate language codes. Thus the taken for granted linguistic practices of schools contribute to educational inequality between students of different classes.

Giroux (1983) presents school as an arena of conflict characterized by both overt and covert curriculum, tracking systems, cultural and racial differences, and competing class ideologies. According to Giroux, “working-class students are not merely the by-product of capital, compliantly submitting to the dictates of authoritarian teachers and schools that prepare them for a life of deadening labor. Rather, schools represent contested terrains marked not only by structural and ideological contradictions but also by collectively informed student resistance.” (p. 260) But the relationship between cultural, racial and economic groups is highly asymmetrical in favor of dominant classes. Thus, schools contribute to unequal social outcomes.

Bourdieu (2016), explains schools as sites of producing social inequalities, with his expanded notion of capital i.e. social, cultural and symbolic capital. He uses these expanded notions of capital to explain how the dominant classes successfully maintain their position through the agency of schools. For example, he argues that educational achievement is strongly implicated on the participation of the cultural activities like book reading habits, travelling, museum, theatre etc. The parents of lower socio-economic status are unable to have enough time for their children, buy books for them or to travel with family on holidays. Bourdieu contends that the “middle classes are generally able to reproduce their position in successive generations, first, because they possess the culturally requisite intellectual and social resources necessary for success in an educational system controlled by them and, second, because their cultural practices actively exclude as inferior those of the culturally dominated classes.” (Nash, 1990) Social capital, by which he means a network of friends and community, along with cultural and symbolic capital play crucial role in determining the unequal outcome for children of different economic and cultural backgrounds.

Purpose of Schooling

The functionalist thought is often explained with reference to biological organism, in which each organ of the body is performing a particular function that contributes towards the existence of the entire body. Body-parts or individual organs are to be explained according to those functions which are necessary conditions for the survival of the whole body. According to functionalist, society all functions like human body. They argue that social practices and institutions also perform particular functions in the society which contributes to the adaptation and continuity of the whole social system. According to Durkheim (1956), for any society to

survive and continue its existence, there need to be sufficient homogeneity among its members. Schools in this context play a role of achieving condition of sufficient homogenization by socializing its members in common norms, values and beliefs. It creates in children a sense of belonging to the wider community and inculcating in them the importance of society. Thus, schools play an important role of socialization and achieving social solidarity among its members.

Parson (1959) further extends the basic precepts of functionalism and locates schools between family and larger social world. Parson, in addition to Durkheim's socialization function of schools, emphasizes the role of schools in preparing pupil for adult life and the role they will assume in different walks of life. In this context, school's basic function is social selection, "role-responsibility" and "manpower allocation." (p. 299) According to Parson, upbringing of children in families is mostly carried on particularistic standards, which contrast sharply with that of outer world. The modern industrial society's functions more on universalistic norms, which uniformly applies to all members, regardless of inherited privileges and titles, and kinship ties. Furthermore, one is required to get occupational skill to successfully function in an industrial society, thus, one's status in society is earned or "achieved", instead of dependent on one's "ascriptive" characteristics. Schools performs this function of transition from "ascriptive" to "achieved statuses" for its members of society. Thus, for Parson, one of the primary function of schools in modern society is sorting of people on the basis of their own merit and abilities.

However, Althusser (1984) takes schools as part of state's mechanisms to indoctrinate people in accepting their dominated positions. Unlike traditional Marxist notion of repressive state machinery which includes police and army, courts, civil administration, prisons etc., Althusser talks about "ideological state apparatuses". According to him, the state machinery controlled by the dominant class secretes ideologies and false narratives. These ideologies are necessary because dominance cannot be achieved only through brute force, but requires some kind of consent from the dominated. For this purpose, states employ different mechanisms which he calls "ideological state apparatuses" of which states' education system is an integral part.

Bowles and Gintis (1976) argue that educational system, controlled by bourgeoisie, is designed to prepare workers for the industrial economy. Their formulation of "corresponding principle in which schools are seen as factories with all its characteristics, division of labor, strict schedule, reverence to authority etc. According to the authors, the "division of labor in education, as well as its structure of authority and reward, mirror those of the economy. Second, it holds that in any stable society in which a formal educational system has a major role in the personal development of working

people, there will tend to emerge a correspondence between the social relations of education and those of the economic system (1988, p. 237). Thus, schools take a form of a places where the future industrial workers are prepared.

Apple (2004) argues that schools should not be seen merely as a tool in the hands of economic elites to serve its interests. He criticizes the deterministic economic explanation of the schools, and brings into his analysis a complex interplay among government, culture and power and argues that “schools create and recreate forms of consciousness that enable social control to be maintained without the necessity of dominant groups having to resort to overt mechanisms of domination.” (p. 2) Apple contends that curriculum is a political devise formulated for the purpose of social control. It not only excludes certain kinds of knowledge’s but also present the included knowledge as the only form of legitimate knowledge. Through such contrivance, “hegemony is created and recreated by the formal corpus of school knowledge, as well as by the covert teaching that has and does go on. The selective tradition and incorporation function at the level of overt knowledge so that certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis and others are neglected, excluded, diluted, or reinterpreted.” (p. 77)

From the above discussion, it is evident that both theoretical frameworks have radically influenced the scholarship in the field of educational research. However, the functionalist view is no more a dominant view in educational discourse. At the same time, Neo-Marxists are also confronted with their own sets of limitations. Their views are historically rooted in the context of Europe and do not provide equal explanatory power in other non-European contexts. Thus, for future research, I would suggest that there is a dire need within Neo-Marxist tradition to provide a broader base for its theories which could equally be applicable to other non-European countries.

Methodology

The paper looks at the policy documents enacted by the Government of Pakistan, research and academic writings including studies done by independent research institutions. The policy documents include various five-years plans, national education policy documents of different governments, educational programs and national conferences organized by ministry of education. The paper focuses on identifying the role and function of education in the society according to the government officials and policy makers. For research papers, Google scholar and university library online resources were searched for the relevant material. These online resources were searched with the keywords of “education AND Pakistan”, “education AND Pakistan AND inequality” and “education AND Pakistan AND modernity”. A purposive sample of the research article was done. These articles were then reviewed to see the major themes regarding the educational system of Pakistan.

Findings & Discussions

Given the grim educational statistics, the major focus of all governments was to increase access to education by establishing new schools. The transnational history of education (Fuchs, 2014) of the country, its reliance on multilateral aid (Mundy, 1998) and its concern with building economic infrastructure shapes a model of educational policies which are consistent with models developed in other postcolonial states. The outcome of the national and transnational educational policies in Pakistan had two distinct but interconnected agenda – national development through cultivating human capital and promoting social cohesion through forging common national identity.

In Pakistan, virtually all educational policy documents start from similar kind of claims regarding education and its role in enhancing national prestige, economic development and civic virtues. The modernist agenda of education for national development remained consistent throughout the history of the country, however, there have been certain shifts, albeit of degrees, in projecting and framing of national character and identity through curriculum and textbooks. During the first educational conference in 1947, Jinnah, the person considered to be the father of nation, declared:

“the importance of education and the type of education cannot be over-emphasized ... there is no doubt that the future of our State will and must greatly depend upon the type of education we give to our children, and the way in which we bring them up as future citizens of Pakistan ... we should not forget that we have to compete with the world which is moving very fast in this direction.” (as quoted in Bengali, 1999, p. 2)

The second five-year (1960-65) plan pronounces:

“Upon education falls the supreme task of preserving the national ideals and building up the national character on strong foundations of faith, unity and discipline, without which no nation can aspire to greatness. The essential goals must be to provide an informed leadership, a responsible citizenry, and trained manpower. It is through the advancement of education alone that these goals can be achieved.” (as quoted in Bengali, 1999, p. 5)

The preamble of the new National Educational Policy 1970 declares:

“education and training are critical inputs in the economic effort of the nation. Without harnessing the vast human resources available to Pakistan, the task of sustaining and accelerating economic development would remain unfulfilled. In this regard, the basic objectives are, on the one hand, to broaden rapidly the base of education with a view to attaining the ideal of a universally literate and productive society and, on the other, ensure a continuous supply of highly trained

persons capable of providing imaginative and creative leadership in different spheres of national activity.” (as quoted in Bengali, 1999, p. 6)

A brief overview of modernist agenda in educational documents reveals that the major concern of the successive governments was to provide access to millions of out-of-school children, increase enrollment and retention in the schools. At the time of independence, it was estimated that two third of the children in the country between age group of 6 to 10 were out of school (Bengali, 1999). The biggest challenge for the government was to create nonexistent educational infrastructure which included school buildings, teaching material, and recruitment and training of teachers. This quantitative increase in the schools is the most recurrent theme of all policy documents. Each document laments the unmet goals of previous policy, sets an unrealistic goal to achieve universal primary education in certain period of time, vows to increase educational funding, increase number of schools and students, and recruiting and training teachers.

Since the first educational conference in 1947, government of Pakistan enacted seven national education policies, eight five-year plans and many other educational schemes, all cloaked in the agenda of economic prosperity, national development and human capital. Bengali (1999) contends that with the passage of time “policy and plan documents were drafted in a language that became more and more flowery and bombastic and the plans and schemes became more and more heroic and fanciful [but] a common feature of all policies, plans, programs, and schemes is that all of them, with the sole exception of the Second Five Year Plan, failed to achieve their objectives” (p. 26)

The functional aspects of education are also evident when it comes to female literacy. There is also a growing concern for female education in Pakistan. This might seem paradoxical given the patriarchal nature of society. Pakistan is ranked as second worst country in the world in terms of gender parity index, ranking 148 out of 149 countries (The Global Gender Gap Report, 2018). Yet there have been consistent efforts by the government to increase female literacy. The emphasis on girls’ education is tied with the focus of global institutions on the issues of maternal health and growing world population. The world Bank study on three African countries - Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya, showed that the increased level of female education can lead to decrease in fertility rate (Pradhan, 2015). This trend was found to be consistent in Pakistan as well (Ghafoor, Gul, & Allahi, 2014; Khan & Sirageldin, 1979; Khattak & Khan, 2011; Ohno, Chawdhury, & Haq, 2010). Thus, there was a realization that education is instrumental in reducing other social problems as well. Thus, in Pakistani context, education is increasingly seen as panacea and a solution to the issues of childhood marriages, maternal health, birth control and reducing fertility, and controlling burgeoning population.

But the most important aspect of education in Pakistan has remained the role of schooling in promoting social cohesion by socializing the its young members into common norms values and beliefs (Durkheim, 1956). Social cohesion in a broader sense is defined as “the property by which whole societies, and the individuals within them, are bound together through the action of specific attitudes, behaviors, rules and institutions which rely on consensus rather than pure coercion” (Green, Janmaat, & Cheng, 2011a, p. 1). These characteristics can be drawn from variety of sources. Green (Green & Janmaat, 2011b) categorized these characteristics into what he calls the regimes of social cohesion. In his study of European countries including north America, he described these regimes as “liberal”, “social market” and “social democratic” (p. 65)

The regime of social cohesion in Pakistan is centered around the state’s “Islamic” identity, inscribed in a constitution as the “Ideology of State”. Textbooks from the beginning became the official contrivances to ideologically construct citizenship based on “religious” ideals (Aziz K. K., 1993; Jalal, 1995; Saigol, 2005). The school encourages children to think of themselves only as Muslims. Any other affiliation or loyalty is said to be “anti-Islamic” and must be suppressed. Not only that, state is also projected as a “dungeon of Islam” (Shah, 2015) and its army as guardian of both geographical and ideological boundaries (Nayyar & Salim, 2005). There is also a strong emphasis on the “other” while conceiving a Pakistani nation (Jalal, 1995). India and Hinduism are depicted as an enemy and existential threats to Pakistan (Saigol, 2005).

A Neo-Marxist framework offers a completely different perspective on education and brings to foreground questions that have not been possible from a functionalist view. The question like who gets what, who gets to make decision, whose history and language being taught, why some are ahead than others, are crucial for the Neo-Marxist analysis. As has already been stated earlier, knowledge production and distribution are closely associated with dominant social structures and power (Apple, 2004; Foucault, 1980; Giroux, 1983). However, such questions are muted or not being asked due to prolonged periods military dictatorship in Pakistan. The production of knowledge and construction of national identity is closely associated with the dominant military which projects itself as the guardian of state and its ideology (read Islam). Anything dissenting voice challenging the dominant ideology is translated as challenging the religion itself (Ali, 2002).

From a neo-marxist perspective, language also plays an important role both at individual and social level. In Pakistan, language has remained a symbol of high culture and in its institutionalized form, has become a mechanism for social stratification (Rahman, 2002). English as official language, its limited and unequal distribution through private schools and devaluation of local languages helps the urban elites to strengthen their hold on state’s power and

reproduce social inequalities (Rahman, 2004; Tamim, 2014) and it also narrows down higher educational opportunities particularly for working class women in Pakistan (Tamim, 2013). English language is also tied to the economic class and social identity and have strong correlation with the issues of militancy, religious tolerance and women rights (Rahman, 2005)

Similarly, the national identity constructed by the over developed bureaucratic and military organs of the postcolonial state (Akhtar, 2018) becomes a hegemonic project that gradually marginalized religious and ethnic identities in the country. Official curriculum and government subscribed school books are duped with content that are highly discriminatory and negates the ideals of diversity, inclusiveness and tolerance (Ali, 2002; Hoodbhoy & Nayyar, 1985; Jalal, 1995; Nayyar & Salim, 2005). The officially recommended books teach children from the early years to hate particular religions and countries and promote bigotry and militaristic values (Nayyar & Salim, 2005). Instead of promoting social cohesion, there is a strong resentment in the religious and ethnic minorities that their identities are suppressed and they feel alienated and excluded in the country. But nonetheless, the authoritarian nature of state and by institutionalizing the curriculum by linking it to the highest rewards of the state, schools continue to construct an exclusive brand of national identity.

Conclusion and Recommendations for future research

Of the two functional aspects of education i.e. as a tool of modernization and mechanism to promote social cohesion, latter occupies a central stage, while former mostly confined to official rhetoric. The reasons that the promises of modernization are not delivered are many. If we look at the official figures of budget allocated to the education sector in 2017, it is 2.2% of its GDP (Ministry of Finance, 2017). (also see Table 1.2). This is not something new for the country. The low priority given to education sector goes back to colonial time. In 1919, education department was devolved and made a provincial subject of administration; however, provinces were fully dependent of central government finances to run their administrative setup. As has already been discussed, colonial administration's educational policies were characterized mostly by its indifference towards the education of her Indian subjects; little was spent on education sector of the colony. Pakistan becomes an heir to this colonial structure of education, which it continues to this day in terms of priority and spending.

However, the efforts for social cohesion by promoting an exclusive Islamic identity through curriculum and textbooks were less dependent on governments' financial abilities. As Pakistan was carved out from Muslim majority areas of India where the indigenous Muslim ethnic groups had no interest in the idea of Pakistan or have resisted it, national solidarity became the primary concern for the new migrant elites of the country. For the migrant elites, who were better educated than indigenous ethnic groups of Pakistan and composed the civil bureaucracy of the country, the Islamic

identity served their purpose well. Together with the postcolonial institution of military, dominated by Punjabi ethnic group, a new exclusive brand of Islamic identity was promoted among the new generation through the network of public schools. The subjects of Islamyat (Islamic Studies) and Pakistan Studies were included in the centrally controlled curriculum and the textbooks were printed according to prescribed syllabus of each subject.

The states' religious ideology and emphasis on Islamic identity started to paint other group affiliations as "anti-Islamic". Due to the ideological straitjacket of the state, textbooks are either silent about ethnic or religious minority groups or depict them in a highly negative and derogatory light. These discriminatory tendencies in curriculum and textbooks reached new level during the dictatorial period of General Zia and unfortunately, these changes still permeate the school books and are regularly taught to all school going children in Pakistan. Instead of promoting social cohesion through inclusive values and identity, schools in Pakistan have become the place of ideological indoctrination and breeding grounds of intolerance in the society. Finally, the functionalist view of education has also dominated the scholarly discourse on the role and function of the education with almost complete neglect of education's interaction with other social structures of the society. Most of the research work produced in the country is either substandard or takes the view that how education can be better reformed to serve the societal needs of skills development, economic growth, human resource development, promoting employability and national development. Researchers hardly takes a critical view of education system with regard to social inequalities on grounds of region, class, ethnicity, gender religion etc. Questions like unequal provision of schooling, the nature of school knowledge, the role of dominant language, and its link with unequal economic structures are hardly addressed and are areas which need serious attention from scholars and researchers of education both nationally and internationally.

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