

Education in Pakistan: A Survey

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Every year the government of Pakistan publishes some report or the other about education. If not specifically about education, at least the *Economic Survey of Pakistan* carries a chapter on education. These reports confess that the literacy rate is low, the rate of participation in education at all levels is low and the country is spending too little in this area. Then there one brave promises about the future such as the achievement of hundred percent literacy and increasing the spending on education which has been hovering around 2 percent of the GNP since 1995 to at least 4 percent and so on. Not much is done, though increases in the number of schools, universities and religious seminaries (*madaris*) is recorded. The private sector mints millions of rupees and thousands of graduates throng the market not getting the jobs they aspired to. The field of education is a graveyard of these aspirations.¹

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1. The following indicators point grimly to where Pakistan stands in South Asia.

Children not reaching grade-5	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
(1995-1999) Percentages	30	48	56	50	3
Combined enrolment as a Percentage of total	36	54	61	43	66

(These figures are from a UNDP 1991-2000 report quoted in *Human Development in South Asia: Globalization and Human Development 2001* (Karachi: Oxford University Press for Mahbub ul Haq Development Centre, 2002).

The Historical Legacy

South Asia is an heir to a very ancient tradition of both formal and informal learning. These traditions vary from region to region and, more importantly, between different socio-economic classes. The very poorest people generally receive no education at all while those on the upper echelons of the social hierarchy learn languages, literature, theology and a few other subjects.

According to G.W Leitner, the well known functionary of the British empire who said that the British colonial venture had ruined indigenous education in the Punjab, there were 300,000 pupils in indigenous schools before the conquest of that province in 1849 whereas in 1860-61 these numbers had come down to 60, 168 pupils (however, Leitner also has a higher figure of 120,000 pupils).² Leitner's report does not establish the higher figures but it is useful in that it tells us what kind of schools existed and names some of the texts taught in them.

To confine ourselves to the education of South Asian Muslims, who are in a majority in Pakistan (96.16 percent) which is the focus of this survey, there were the *maktib* (Persian schools) and *madaris* (Arabic Schools). As there were more Persian than Arabic schools³ it seems that the aim of education was primarily pragmatic i.e. to equip one's self for the business of this world rather than the other. Persian being the language of the highest domains of power - the government, the bureaucracy, the judiciary, education etc - it was necessary to learn it in order to function as *munshi* (clerk), *muallim* (teacher) and generally as a functionary of the state.

The British substituted English for Persian⁴ and also introduced Urdu, the informal lingua franca of North India but one which had hitherto not been taught formally in schools by Muslim

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2. G.W. Leitner, *History of Indigenous Education in the Punjab since Annexation and in 1882* (1st. ed. 1882; Lahore Republican Books, 1991 reprint).
 3. R. Thornton (Comp), *Memoir on the Statistics of Indigenous Education Within the North Western Provinces of the Bengal Presidency* (Calcutta: J. Thomas, Baptist Mission Press, 1850).
 4. Tariq Rahman, *Language and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.22-38.

rulers, to the education system.⁵ This was a revolution as it created a new basis for socio-economic stratification. The poorest people, especially those living in the peripheries, continued to remain illiterate as there were no schools, or at least not affordable ones, where they lived. Some of them did, however, study in the *madaris* which, being charitable organizations, provide free boarding and lodging. Working class, lower middle class, and middle class children attended the vernacular-medium schools established by the British authorities. The upper classes and children of the higher Indian officers of the British bureaucracy and military attended English-medium institutions. In short, the medium of instruction roughly corresponded to one's position on the hierarchy of wealth and power in the state.

In the areas now comprising Pakistan, Urdu was the most commonly used medium of instruction in government schools. In the province of Sindh, However, Sindhi was also used. There were Convent schools and armed forces schools for the rich and the powerful, which used English as medium of instruction. All higher education, in colleges and universities, was also in English. The *madaris* used Urdu as well as the indigenous languages as media of instruction. Except for the *madaris* and the private English schools, the government controlled, or at least influenced, all other institutions. They also remained obvious symbols of the educational caste system with the upper classes using English almost like a first language and being completely alienated from both their vernacular-school compatriots and the *madrassah*-educated '*mullah*' (equivalent of clergymen).

Education in Pakistan

Beginning with the National Education Conference of 1947 there have been at least twenty-two major reports on education issued by the government from time to time. Among the most salient ones are: *Report of the Commission on National Education* (GOP 1959); *The New Education Policy* (GOP 1970); *The Education Policy (1972-1980)* (GOP 1972); *National Education*

5. Tariq Rahman, *Language, Ideology and Power: Language Learning Among the Muslims of Pakistan and North India* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.210-218.

Policy (GOP 1992) and the *National Education Policy: 1998-2010*.⁶ The last military government also issued several reports including a controversial and much criticized *Report of the Task Force on Higher Education*.⁷

These educational reports touch upon all kinds of educational institutions but they focus more on modern education provided in the government schools, colleges and universities. For the *madaris*, however, the government commissioned separate reports of which the best known are: The report of the National Committee on the Religious Seminaries;⁸ and the comprehensive report on the *madaris*.⁹ After discounting all the rhetoric about development several salient features of the states' real educational policy become clear. They are as follows:

1. To allow the status quo to prevail as far as possible (i.e. a class-based system of education functioning in different languages: the vernaculars for the common people and English for the elite).
2. To use Islam and Pakistani nationalism to prevent ethnic groups from breaking away from the centre and to build a modern, cohesive nation out of different linguistic and ethnic groups.
3. To enhance literacy, impart skills and create an educated workforce capable of running a developing society.

These features were mutually contradictory at times. The first feature, of which the decision-makers may not have been

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6. The publication details of these reports are as follows: *Report of the Commission on National Education* (Karachi: Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, 1959); *The New Education Policy* (Islamabad :Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, 1970); *The Education Policy 1972-1980* (Islamabad: Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, 1992); *National Education Policy: 1998-2010* (Islamabad: Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, 1998).
 7. *Report of the Task Force on Improvement of Higher Education in Pakistan: Challenges and Opportunities* (Islamabad: Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, 2002).
 8. *Qaumi Committee Deeni Madaris* [Urdu: National Committee About Religious Seminaries] (Islamabad: Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan: 1979).
 9. *Deeni Madaris Ki Jame Report* [Urdu: The Comprehensive Report on the Religious Seminaries] (Islamabad: Islamic Education Research Cell, Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, 1988).

conscious, was actually the result of unequal distribution of educational funds and the educational bureaucracy's inertia. Thus, while government schools in the rural areas do not even have chairs for the pupils, the great so-called 'Public' schools ('Public' in the sense of the public schools of Britain such as Eton and Harrow), have not only facilities but even luxuries for their pupils. The second aim, that of nation-building through Islam and Pakistani nationalism, was a conscious objective but it was not always pursued in the same manner or with equal vigour. During General Zia-ul-Haq's rule (1977-1988) the Islamization of education and textbooks was more thorough than at any other time. The third aim, that of improving literacy and other educational skills through conscious efforts, suffered as a result of the other two. While elitist children found it much easier to enter elitist domains of power, ordinary government school pupils found it much more difficult and the students of *madaris* were, in reality, barred from them. Thus the workforce was almost as class differentiated as a result of the process of education as society otherwise was.

The Present Educational Scene

The present educational scene is full of contradictions. On the one hand there are dynamic, fast-moving educational institutions charging exorbitant fees, while on the other there are almost free or very affordable government schools as well as religious seminaries which are entirely free. The students of these institutions live in different worlds and operate in different languages. They do not, however, get education in their own mother tongues. These are spoken by the percentages of the population.¹⁰

Such diversity, leading to extreme polarization and divisiveness in society, can be potentially dangerous. However, to understand this danger let us look at all major kinds of educational institutions: Schools, religious seminaries (*madaris*) and institutions of higher education (colleges and universities).

10. Punjabi, 44.15%; Pashto, 15.42%; Sindhi, 14.10%; Siraiki, 10.53%; Urdu, 7.57%; Balochi, 3.57%; Others, 4.66%. The total population being 132,352,000. *Census Report of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Population Census Organization, Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, 2001), Table 2-7, p.107.

Schools

The number of schools is given as follows in a recent government source.¹¹

Level	Number	Student Strength	Teachers
Primary	169,089	19,921,232	345,457
Middle	19,180	4,278,392	99,098
Secondary	13,108	1,795,444	66,522

After ten years of schooling, students sit for examinations held by the different Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education in the country. The teaching and the examinations are both in Urdu except in parts of (mostly rural) Sindh where they are in Sindhi. Some schools do, however, teach in English so that students appear for the matriculation examination in English too.

Most students from elitist English-medium schools appear for the British Ordinary (O' level) and Advanced (A' level) school examinations which demand much higher competence in English than the Pakistani system does. Most of the 511,077 students, being from Urdu-medium schools, study the textbooks provided by the Textbook Board of the Provinces (Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan). These textbooks use Islam and Pakistani nationalism to create a Pakistani nation out of the different linguistic and cultural groups (Punjabis, Sindhis, Pathans, Baloch and Urdu-Speaking Mohajirs) which constitute Pakistan.¹² There is also much glorification of war and the military and many anti-Hindu and anti-India remarks interspersed throughout the books.¹³ Possibly because of such textual propaganda, students of

11. *Economic Survey of Pakistan: 2001-2002* (Islamabad: Economic Advisory Wing, Finance Division, Government of Pakistan, 2002), p. 146.

12. For ethnic politics see Tahir Amin, *Ethno-National Movements of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Institute of Policy Studies, 1988; Feroz Ahmed, *Ethnicity and Politics in Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Rahman 1996, *op.cit.*

13. For detailed analysis see K.K. Aziz, *The Murder of History in Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Press (Pvt) Ltd, 1993); Rubina Saigol, *Knowledge and Identity: Articulation of Gender in Education Discourse in Pakistan* (Lahore: ASR Publications); Rahman (2002), *op.cit.*, pp. 515-524. For a comparison between India and Pakistan see. Krishna Kumar, *Prejudice and Pride: School Histories of the Freedom Struggle in India and Pakistan* (New Delhi; Penguin Books India, 2001).

these Institutions are more prone to more militancy than their English-school counterparts as will be discussed later. The following chart indicates the number of schools according to the medium of instruction.¹⁴

	Punjab	Islamabad	NWFP (FATA)	Sindh	B'Tan	AJK	FANA	Federal Govt (Cantonment)	Total
Urdu-medium	67,490	368	13,556	3,657	9,939	6,009	1,370	167	10,255
Sindhi-medium	Nil	Nil	Nil	36,750	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	36,750
Pashto-medium	Nil	Nil	10,731 (Primary)	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	10,731
Mixed-medium (Urdu & Sindhi)	No Info	No Info	No Info	1,394	No Info	No Info	No Info	Nil	1,394
English-medium	22,855	309	3,995 326 (FATA)	5,943	465	No Info	No Info	No Info	33,893
Total	90,345	677	28,608	47,744	10,404	6,009	1,370	167	93,023

Besides the Urdu and Sindhi-medium schools the government also runs some English medium schools (model schools) in urban centres. The armed forces too run such schools. In addition to these, there were 33,893 English medium schools spread out all over Pakistani cities and even small towns.¹⁵ Almost all such schools the author visited claimed to use English, though some did concede that they also used Urdu or Sindhi as an alternative medium of instruction. They are much in demand by the public because they claim to use English as medium of instruction. Parents go to incredible lengths, sometimes depriving themselves of basic necessities, to teach their children in schools advertising themselves as 'English medium' because they feel that the most powerful and lucrative jobs within the country will be within the reach of their children if only they learn English. Thus, in order to empower themselves - in common with other ex-colonies - English medium schools are very popular.¹⁶

14. The data on schools in Sindh is from *Sindh Education Profile: 1993-1996* (Karachi: Education Department, Government of Sindh, 1998). The data about Punjab is from *Punjab Education Statistics School Comes 1997-1998* (Lahore: Punjab Education Management Information System, Government of Punjab, 1998). The data on English medium private schools is from *Census of Private Education Institutions 1999-2000* (Islamabad: Federal Bureau of Statistics, 2001). The data for other areas is from the Academy of Higher Education and Planning, Islamabad as it existed in January 2000.

15. *Census of Private Educational Institutions, op.cit*, Table 1: p.12.

16. Alistair Pennycook, 'Language, Ideology and Hindsight: Census from Colonial Language Policies'. In Thomas Ricento (ed), *Ideology, Politics and Language*

For the survey this author carried out in 1999-2000 in order to find out the opinions of young people which might be relevant for society and politics, English medium schools were divided into three categories: (1) Ordinary (2) Elitist (3) Cadet Colleges and Public Schools.¹⁷ These were classified as those charging a monthly tuition fees between Rs.50 to Rs.1499. They catered for ordinary, lower-middle and middle class, people. Some only call themselves 'English medium' while actually teaching in Urdu because neither teachers nor students were sufficiently competent in that language.

Schools in the second category charged tuition fees ranging from between Rs.1500 to Rs.10,000 and more per month. The teachers and students are much more exposed to English in informal settings - home, peer group, cable television, comic books, foreign travel etc - than their counterparts in other schools. English was used informally by children in schools in upscale residential localities.

Schools in the third category, called cadet colleges and public schools, cater to the elite of power more than that of wealth. Most of them are influenced by the armed forces. The tuition fees for the wards of the armed forces are generally lower than that of civilians. While English is the medium of instruction, the students tend not to use it informally with each other. Among such schools are: Cadet College Pitaro (Navy); Military College Sarai Alamgir, Jhelum (Army); Burn Hall College, Abbottabad (Army); Cadet College Sargodha (Air Force) and others. Public schools on the lines of Eton and Harrow, such as the Aitchison College in Lahore, are run by Boards of Governors (or Trustees). In most cases the top brass of the army has a presence on the boards.

Stated Policy and Real Policy

The stated official policy of the government is that public money will be spent on schools which will use Urdu (and Sindhi only in parts of Sindh) as the medium of instruction. It is often

Policies: Focus on English (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Jon Benjamins Company, 2000).

17. Rahman (2002), *op.cit.*, Appendix 14.

stated that private educational institutions are run by private resources and enterprise. However, even during the British period the English-medium schools, called European Schools at that time, cost more. A report of 1941 puts this as follows:

The cost of European Education is high compared with education in India generally, the cost per pupil in Anglo-Indian and European Institutions being Rs.156 against Rs.14 only in all types of institutions from a university to a primary school.¹⁸

It is explained that the public funds are used to meet only 31 percent of the expenses whereas the rest of the 69 percent comes from fees. However, even this comes to Rs.48.36 per pupil per year which was Rs.34 more than the average amount (Rs.14) spent on ordinary Indian students. In short, whatever the stated policy might be, the real one was to subsidize the education of the Anglicized elite. This policy continues till date.

In Pakistan the armed forces and the higher bureaucracy use English for official purposes. Thus they were interested in obtaining young people who were competent in that language. Moreover the elite which went for jobs in the modern domains of power: the officer corps of the armed forces; higher bureaucracy; superior judiciary; commerce; media; higher education etc - was very desirous of teaching English to their children. They could either buy it at exorbitant cost at the private elitist schools or they could establish institutions where English would be the medium of instruction but the cost would be lower - at least for their own wards. It was for the latter purpose that General Ayub Khan, as the commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Army in the nineteen fifties, established 'a number of cadet colleges and academies'.¹⁹ In 1966 the students from less privileged institutions protested against these institutions. A commission on students' welfare and problems agreed that such schools violated the constitutional assurance that 'all citizens are equal before law (Paragraph 15 under Right No. VI)' (GOP 1966:18) but defended them as follows:

Such establishments are intended to produce better type of students who would be more suitably disciplined and equipped for eventually

18. *Education in India in 1938-39* (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1941), p.113.

19. Ayub Khan, *Friends Not Masters* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 43.

entering the defence service of the country or filling higher administrative posts and other responsible executive positions in the government and semi-government bodies and private firms and corporations.²⁰

As a result the cadet colleges multiplied. Indeed, the armed forces through the Fauji Foundation (Army), Shaheen Foundation (Air Force) and the Bahria Foundation (Navy) created many more institutions from the nineteen seventies onwards.

The cadet colleges are subsidized by the state as the following figures indicate.²¹

Institution	Cost in 1998-99 (Pakistani rupees)
Cadet College Palandri	8,181,000
Cadet College Razmak	11,887,000
Cadet College Sanghar	5,000,000
Cadet College Larkana	10,000,000

The cost of an ordinary Urdu-medium school, such as the ones which are available for most ordinary children in the country, is Rs. 3,580,000 per year. It is because of this that, while cadet colleges have excellent boarding and lodging arrangements, spacious playgrounds, equipped libraries and laboratories and faculty with masters' degrees, the ordinary Urdu-medium (and Sindhi-medium) schools sometimes do not even have benches for pupils to sit on. In short, contrary to its stated policy of spending public funds on giving the same type of schooling to all, the state (and its institutions) actually spend more funds on privileged children for a privileged (English-medium) form of schooling. This perpetuates the socio-economic inequalities which have always existed in Pakistani society.

20. *Report of the Commission on Student's Problems and Welfare* (Islamabad: Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, 1966), p. 18.

21. *Details of Demands for Grants and Appropriations 1999-2000: Current Expenditure* 2 Vols. (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, Finance Division, 1999), Vol 1: p. 1084; Vol 2: p. 1461-1642.

Socio-Economic Class and World View

In Pakistan socio-economic class affects world view in general. Relevant for those interested in violent social change, religious militancy or war with India are questions relating to the distribution of resources, the introduction of Islamic law (*Shari' a*) and Kashmir. In the survey mentioned above the following responses to questions given below indicate how socio-economic class stands in relation to these potentially explosive issues.²²

Q. What should be Pakistan's Priorities?					
(a)	Conquer Kashmir?	Urdu-medium Schools (N=520)	Elitist English medium (N=97)	Cadet Colleges (N=86)	Ordinary English medium (N=119)
	Agree	95.58	62.89	88.37	88.24
	Disagree	02.12	31.96	06.98	06.72
	Don't Care	02.31	05.15	04.65	05.04
(b)	Develop nuclear Weapons?				
	Agree	79.81	64.95	79.09	73.11
	Disagree	13.65	26.80	15.12	18.49
	Don't Care	06.54	08.25	05.81	08.40
(c)	Implement the Islamic Law				
	Agree	95.58	52.58	79.07	86.55
	Disagree	01.73	23.71	05.81	01.68
	Don't Care	02.69	23.71	15.12	11.76
(d)	Give equal rights to religious minorities?				
	Agree	44.04	53.61	33.72	47.90
	Disagree	33.68	22.68	39.54	28.57
	Don't Care	23.71	23.71	26.74	23.53
Q.	Do you want the language used for higher jobs in the state and the private sector to continue to be English?				
	Yes	27.69	72.16	70.93	45.38
	No	71.15	27.84	29.07	53.78
	No reply	01.15	Nil	Nil	0.84

Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, such as those in the Urdu-medium and the ordinary English-medium schools, support on aggressive foreign policy and more Islamization leading to less tolerance for religious minorities. They are also dissatisfied with policies which make powerful jobs the monopoly of the English-using powerful elites.

22. Rahman (2002), *op.cit*, Appendix 14.7.

Children in the cadet colleges, because they belong to middle class backgrounds and are subjected to regimentation in their institutions, support aggressive policies but are less supportive of Islamization than their counterparts mentioned earlier (i.e. students of Urdu-medium schools). Children of elitist schools, being exposed to Western sources of information and role models, are least supportive of militant policies and Islamization. They are also the most tolerant towards religious minorities but they are alienated from the peoples' culture and aspirations and desire to preserve and perpetuate their privileged position by supporting English as the language of the domains of power in the country.

Such acute divisiveness along socio-economic class lines, combined with religious intolerance, can lead to further political unrest in Pakistan. Such unrest will probably be expressed through the idiom of religion. However, poverty and alienation from the privileged classes will probably be the major motivating factors for these disgruntled and jobless young men who will come out of the educational institutions for the underprivileged.

Madaris

The *madaris* are associated with the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan who were students of these institutions.²³ They have also been much in the news for sectarian killings and supporting militancy in Kashmir. They are considered the breeding ground of the *Jihadi* culture - a term used for Islamic militancy in the English-language press of Pakistan.

At independence there were 137, or even fewer, *madaris*. In April 2002, Dr. Mahmood Ahmed Ghazi, the Minister of Religious Affairs, put the figure at 10,000 with 1.7 million students.²⁴ They belong to the major sects of Islam, the Sunnis and the Shias. However, Pakistan being a predominantly Sunni country, the Shia are very few. Among the Sunni ones there are three sub-sects: Deobandis, Barelvis and the Ahl-i-Hadith (*salafi*). Besides these,

23. Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and the New Great Game in Central Asia* (London : I.B. Tauris, 2000).

24. *Pakistan: Madrassas, Extremism and the Military* (Islamabad/Brussels: International Crises Group, Asia Report No. 36, 2002), p.2.

the revivalist Jamat-e-Islami also has its own *madaris*. Whereas the Deobandis have a strict interpretation of Islam which disallows the veneration of saints, the Barelvis follow popular Islam which venerates saints and allows folk interpretations of the faith. The Ahl-i-Hadith are a puritanical sect close to the Saudi, Wahabi, interpretation of Islam. The Saudi Arabia based organization Harmain Islamic Foundation has been giving funds to the Ahl-i-Hadith which has made them powerful. Indeed, the Lashkar-e Tayyibah, an organization which has been active in fighting in Kashmir, belongs to the Ahl-i-Hadith.²⁵ In recent years, the Deobandi influence has increased and the Taliban were trained in their seminaries. According to Khalid Ahmed, one of the most knowledgeable commentators on the religious scene in Pakistan, 'The largest numbers of seminaries are Deobandi, at 64 percent, followed by Barelvi, at 25 percent. Only 6 percent are Ahl-i-Hadith. But the increase in the number of Ahl-i-Hadith seminaries or *madaris* has been phenomenal at 131 percent, going up from 134 in 1988 to 310 in 2000'.²⁶ The table below contains information from 1988. It is being reproduced here only because there is no reliable information on these lines at present.

Sect-wise Breakdown of *Madaris*²⁷

Province	Deobandi	Barelvi	Ahl-e-Hadith	Shia	Others	Total of Provinces (1988)*	Total of Provinces (2002)**
Punjab	590	548	118	21	43	1320	3100
NWFP	631	32	5	2	8	678	1200
Sindh	208	61	6	10	6	291	900 (+300 in FATA)
Balochistan	278	34	3	1	31	347	700
Azad Kashmir	51	20	2	-	3	76	Not Given
Islamabad	51	20	-	2	3	76	100
Northern Areas	60	2	27	11	3	103	150
Girls' Madaris	Not given	Not given	Not given	Not given	Not given	Not given	448

25. Khalid Ahmed, 'The Power of the Ahle Hadith', *The Friday Times* [English Weekly from Lahore] 12-18 July 2002, p.10.

26. *Ibid.*, p.10.

27. Source for all data for 1988 is *Deeni Madaris Ki Jame Report*, *op.cit.* The Source of figures for 2000 is *The State of Pakistan's Children 2000* (Islamabad: SPARC, 2001), p.53.

Total of Sects	1869	717	161	47	97	2891	6898 (102 not accounted for)
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If present numbers are to be calculated Khalid Ahmed's data given above may be used in combination with the data of 2002 given here. However, as mentioned earlier, the sect-wise numbers of *madaris* is not known to this author.

The *madrasah* students are the most intolerant of all the other student groups in Pakistan. They are also the most supportive of an aggressive foreign policy. The following responses to my questions indicate as follows.²⁸

Madaris (N=131)				
Q. What should be Pakistan's priorities?				
(a)	Conquer Kashmir	Agree 99.24	Disagree Nil	Print Case 0.76
(b)	Develop nuclear weapons?	96.18	1.53	2.29
(c)	Implement <i>Sharia'h</i> ?	97.71	0.76	1.53
(d)	Give equal rights to religious minorities	6.87	81.68	11.45
Q. Do you want the language of higher jobs in the state and the private sector to continue to be English?				
		Yes 10.69	No 89.31	No reply Nil

The figures are self-explanatory. What needs explanation is that the *madaris*, which were conservative institutions before the Afghan-Soviet War of the nineteen eighties, are both ideologically activist and sometimes militant. According to Peter L. Bergen, author of a book on Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda group: 'nowhere is bin Laden more popular than in Pakistan's *madaris*, religious schools from which the Taliban draw many of its recruits'.²⁹ Even with the end of Taliban rule in Afghanistan, the *madaris* have plenty of zealous young people who can potentially act as crusaders against both Western interests and the moderate regimes, both military and civilian, whom they perceive as the allies of the West.³⁰

28. Rahman (2002), Appendix 14.7, pp. 592-596.

29. Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War Inc: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (New York: Simon Schuster Inc, 2001), p. 150.

30. For Central Asia parallels see Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (Lahore: Vanguard, 2002).

General Pervez Musharraf's government, in an attempt to control religious extremism, made a law to control the *madaris*. This law - Voluntary Registration and Regulation Ordinance 2002 - has, however, been rejected by most of the *madaris* which want no state interference in their affairs.

The *Madaris* are not 'frozen in time' as A.H Nayyar, an academic and writer on educational matters, wrote about them.³¹ The education they impart has two aspects. Most of formal courses are, indeed, medieval. They are in Arabic and Persian, the classical languages of Islam in South Asia, which students memorize without much real understanding. This part serves as a symbol of identity and continuity. The other part comprises Urdu textbooks which are read by the final year graduating students. These are polemical texts which refute the beliefs of the other sub-sects of Islam as well as modern ideas. Among the latter are capitalism, socialism, democracy, modernism, individualism etc. As *radd* is the Urdu word for refutation, the present author calls them *radd*-texts. These *radd*-texts have a tremendous formative influence on the minds of the young clergymen (*mullahs*) because they are in Urdu which they understand very well. Moreover, their arguments are simple and already familiar to them through the sermons of other *mullahs*. Thus, the clergy is engaged with the modern world but on its own terms and according to its own perceptions of it. Being so actively engaged and having such beliefs about reform, the *madaris* are not frozen in time; they want to take time in their own hands.

While the refutation of other sub-sects can lead to sectarian hatred, the refutation of modern ideas leads to opposition to the modern state and the process of colonization which introduced modernity to South Asia during the British era.

The *madaris* became militant when they were used by the Pakistani state to fight in Afghanistan during the Soviet occupation and then in Kashmir so as to force India to leave the state. Pakistan's claim on Kashmir, as discussed by many including

31. A.H. Nayyar, 'Madrasah Education: Frozen in Time; In Pervez Hoodbhoy (ed), *Education and the State: Fifty Bars of Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 215-250.

Alastair Lamb,³² has led to conflict with India and the Islamic militants *Jihadis* have entered the fray since 1989. The United States indirectly, and sometimes directly, helped in creating militancy among the clergy. For instance, special textbooks in Dari (Afghan Persian) and Pashto were written at the University of Nebraska-Omaha with a USAID grant in the 1980s.³³ American arms and money flowed to Afghanistan through Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence as several books indicate.³⁴ At that time all this was done to defeat the Soviet Union. Later, while Pakistan's military kept using the militant Islamists in Kashmir, the United States was much alarmed by them - not without reason as the events of 9/11 demonstrated later.

Apart from the *madaris* proper, religious parties - such as Lashkar-e-Tayyaba) Jaish-e-Mohammed and Harkat-ul-Mujahidin - print militant literature which circulates among the *madaris* and other institutions. Although these parties have been banned, their members are dispersed all over Pakistani Society, especially among the *madaris*. The *madaris*, especially the Deobandi *madaris* of the N.W.F.P., Baluchistan and South Punjab are potential centres of Islamic militancy in Pakistan.

Higher Educational Institutions

There are 755 colleges³⁵ and 80 universities in Pakistan.³⁶ Out of these about 35 colleges and 35 universities are in the private sector.

While students join universities after high school in Western countries, they usually go to colleges for their B.A degree in Pakistan. Public universities generally begin at the M.A level though some universities do have a three-year B.A (Honours)

32. Alistair Lamb, *Incomplete Partition: The Genesis of the Kashmir Dispute 1947-1948* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

33. Joe Stephens and David B. Ottway, 'The ABC's of Jihad in Afghanistan', *The Washington Post* (23 March 2002), See. A, p.1.

34. John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (London: Pluto Press, 1999).

35. *Colleges of Pakistan* (Islamabad: University Grants Commission, 1999).

36. *The News* [English daily from Rawalpindi], 17 July 2002.

course. The colleges are affiliated with universities. They teach for the B.A degree for two years after which students appear for the examination of the university. Courses are not evaluated by the lecturers they are evaluated only through the final examinations of the university. Such a system forces students to cram guides based on past examination papers and regard all education as being examination-oriented. The lecturers are promoted on the basis of seniority and not on published research. As such they are generally stagnant and have little knowledge of academic developments in their field. The tuition fees of public colleges is affordable for even the working classes so they used to be the meeting place of students from elitist English-medium schools as well as the Urdu ones. This, however, is changing very fast because private entrepreneurs are establishing colleges with very high tuition fees. These are mostly in lucrative fields of employment - information technology, business, commerce, engineering, medicine, law - but some colleges (out of the 35 in the private sector) catering for the humanities have also emerged recently.

Pakistan had only two universities in the public sector in 1947. Now the number has gone up to 45 and is still increasing. Moreover, private institutions calling themselves 'universities' are mushrooming in all the cities of Pakistan. Some of these institutions are not recognized by the University Grants Commission set up by the Government of Pakistan, but they are flourishing anyway.

The public universities are colonial institutions. Universities were set up by the British colonial government in 1857 so as to educate the subordinate bureaucracy because it was very costly to import it from Britain. Moreover, recruiting Indians would strengthen British rule by giving a sense of participation in running the affairs of the state to them.³⁷ These universities were dominated by the government as their chief executive officers (called vice chancellors) were appointed by the government and the chancellors were governors or viceroys. They lacked funds for quality research or attracting the best minds to academia; they

37. A.N. Basu (ed), *Indian Education in Parliamentary Papers: Part I* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1952).

emphasized teaching rather than research and they were, for the most part, subordinate appendages of the bureaucracy.³⁸ Pakistani universities retained these characteristics with the result that they did not attract the best minds in the country either and, therefore, lacked in quality research.³⁹

Recently, the mushrooming of universities has affected the image of the public universities very adversely. First, most new public universities have been created in response to the political demand from local pressure groups that their city or region should have a university. The new university hires former college lecturers as faculty and some well-connected people, not necessarily academics but former bureaucrats as well as military officers, become vice chancellors, registrars and treasurers etc. This means that what little research was needed in public universities (5 research papers to be promoted associate professor and 8 for a full professorship), is not insisted upon further lowering the academic credibility of Pakistani academics in general.

The other problem is that funds, already woefully inadequate, have to be spread out more widely. In an article written in 1998 I had shown that if the cost per student per year is adjusted with the 1985 prices as base, the real cost per student had decreased for all public universities. In the Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, the foremost institution of higher learning in Pakistan, it had gone down in real terms from Rs.37,430 to Rs.13,983 per year per student.⁴⁰ This trend has continued with the figures being as follows for some major public universities.⁴¹

University	Enrolment	Departments	Unit cost per student per year
University of Peshawar	17,134	35	Rs.23,497 (\$338)
University of Punjab	9,972	43	Rs.59,000 (\$975)

38. Edward Shils, 'The Academic Profession in India' In Edward Leach and S.N. Makherjee (ed), *Elites in South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 172-200.

39. Tariq Rahman, *Language, Education and Culture* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 120-142.

40. *Ibid.*, p.131.

41. Data base at University Grants Commission, Islamabad and information at the office of the Steering Committee on Higher Education, Islamabad.

University of Karachi	12,255	43	Rs.27,160 (\$449)
University of Baluchistan	2000	31	Rs.77,000 (\$1273)

While the government spent US\$ 1080 per student per year in 1987, it spent only \$450 in 2001. This is a reduction of 62 percent. In 2002 more public universities have been added, so that the spending (per student) has decreased further. This translates into very little expensive laboratory equipment, almost no academic journals, very few new books and no inter-library loan system for borrowing dissertations and reports. As such if any academics are doing research in public universities they are doing so despite the system and not because of it.

The mushrooming of private universities teaching subjects supposedly leading to lucrative employment is undermining the concept that, among other things, a university education enlightens a person and gives him/her the knowledge to understand the human significance of policies and advances in knowledge. Moreover, the educational apartheid which starts in schools - with the rich and the powerful studying in elitist English-medium private schools and cadet colleges - continues in the domain of higher education too. Elitist children, after British 'Ordinary' and 'Advanced' school examinations, go on to study in private colleges and universities charging exorbitant tuition fees. The following figures bring out the difference between the fees of the public and the private universities.⁴²

Tuition Fees Structure Public Universities	
University	per annum fees at the M.A Level (Pak Rupees)
Punjab University	1320
Quaid-i-Azam University	1350

Private universities charge much more as the following figures indicate.⁴³

Tuition Fees Structure of private universities			
University	Fees (Pak rupees)	Duration	Subject and Level
Al-Khair	100,000	2 Years	MCS/MIT
Baqai	47,500	Per Semester	M.B.A

42. *Universities of Pakistan* (Islamabad : University Grants Commission, 2001).

43. *Ibid.*

	2,27,000	Per Year	M.B.B.S
Greenwich	9000	Per Course	M.B.A
Hamdard	8,500	Per Course	M.B.A
	72,000	Per Year	M.B.B.S
Iqra	12000	Per Course	M.B.A
LUMS (Lahore University of Management Sciences)	1,74,000	Per Year	M.B.A
Aga Khan	3,92,000	Per year	M.B.B.S
GIK (Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute).	1,50,000	Per Year	B.E

MCS= Master of Computer Science; MIT= Master of Information Technology

Besides the tuition fees, examination, admission and other types of fees also exist in both kinds of universities but, of course, they are far higher in the private sector than in the public one.

The fact that private colleges and universities are attended by rich young people, who are generally fluent in English and have tremendous self-confidence bordering on arrogance, make them appear to be 'good' institutions. The fact, however, is that the faculty is generally part-time rather than full-time and this part-time faculty is from the public sector universities. Except in some universities - such as Aga Khan, LUMS, GIK etc. - the faculty members are not published academics. In some they do not even have Ph. D or other research degrees. The classes are, generally speaking, air conditioned and the furniture is better than in the public universities. However, taken as a whole, the private universities charge far more than the quality of education they offer.

However, the elitist glitter of the private universities has had the effect of ghettoizing the public universities which, like the Urdu-medium schools, are increasingly being seen as sub-standard, poor, incompetent and 'lower class' institutions. Moreover the private universities are generally not governed by academics. Thus the autonomy and power of academics, such as it was, is being eroded even further.

Moreover, the idea of the university as a liberal institution where one is exposed to new ideas is also under threat. Most private universities, especially these run by the armed forces, are highly regimented and academics do not run them. Thus academics, who are called 'teachers' and not 'academics', are treated at par with hired tutors who are supposed to provide a service for payment but have no part in the governance of the institution.

The recently announced policy on higher education contained in *The Report of the Task Force on Higher Education*⁴⁴ has announced more funds for the public universities. However, it has met with a lot of criticism from Pakistani academics because it has not increased the autonomy of the universities nor has it given an increased role to faculty members in running universities.⁴⁵ The amount of the promised money has not yet been disclosed and, with so many universities opening up, it is feared that it will prove to be inadequate and the public universities will suffer from more ghettoization. In short, the government's proposed reforms will increase the subordination of the public university - this time to 'civil society' (which probably means powerful people from NGOs, the corporate sector and other powerful institutions) in addition to government bureaucracy - without making it more competent.

Conclusion

To sum up, the state of education in Pakistan is woefully unsatisfactory. The *madaris*, the Urdu (and Sindhi) medium schools and the English medium schools cater for different socio-economic classes and further increase the alienation which exist between these classes. The system is unjust in that it distributes the most lucrative and powerful jobs most advantageously to the elite which is educated in English-medium institutions. Meanwhile the *madrassa*-educated people and the failures from the Urdu-medium ones join the increasing army of the unemployed who use the idiom of religion to express their defused sense of being cheated of

44. *The Report of the Task Force on Higher Education, op.cit.*

45. Rahman (2002).

their rights. Hence the unjust system of schooling may increase Islamic militancy in Pakistan which will be as much an expression of resentment against the present policies of the ruling elite as commitment to Islamizing the society.

The system of higher education is further splitting up the Pakistani educational institutions according to socio-economic class with the public colleges and universities being ghettoized and the private ones becoming coveted, elitist institutions just as the English-medium schools already are. This is making everybody, except the upper socio-economic classes, frustrated because they feel that they can no longer afford the best kind of higher education for their children.

On the whole then, Pakistan needs to change its educational policies so as to end this apartheid which threatens to disrupt society. This is easier said than done because a society of over 160 million people needs vast resources for anything as ambitious as providing it adequate and standard education.

Annexure-A**Educational Levels and Costs in Pakistan**

Institutions	Years	Level	Average Monthly Fees (in Pakistan rupees)	Socio-economic class
<i>Madaris</i>	15-16	<i>Almiya</i> (M.A.)	Nil (in some fees is charged)	Poor and rural children (mostly boys)
Government Schools (Urdu & Sindhi medium)	10	Matriculation	Nil to Rs.25.00	Working classes/ lower middle classes
English-medium	10	Matriculation	Rs.50-1499	Lower middle classes/Middle classes
English-medium (cadet colleges armed forces schools etc)	12	F.A. or F.Sc.	Rs.500-3000	Middle classes (in some cases wards of officials pay less)
English-medium (private elitist)	11	British Ordinary level (O' level)	Rs.1500- Rs.10,000 Plus	Middle classes and above
English-medium (private elitist)	13	British Advanced level (A' level)	Rs.6,000 to Rs.10,000 plus	Upper middle classes and above
Government colleges	11-14	F.A. & B.A.	Rs.50-150	Lower middle classes and above
Public universities	15-16	M.A. or M.Sc. and above	Rs.100-200	Lower middle classes and above
Private universities/ colleges	13-16	Bachelors and master's degrees	Rs.5000-15000	Middle classes and above

NB: US\$ 1 = Rs.60 in July 2002

Source: Field research

Annexure B**Essential Facts About Pakistan's Education⁴⁶**

Enrolment Ratio	35.98 percent	41.19 percent male	30.35 percent female	Less in rural=29.11 and more in urban= 49.71 percent
Educated persons (school level)	18.30 percent (below primary)	30.14 percent (primary, i.e., 5 years)	20.89 percent (middle, i.e., 8 years)	17.29 percent (matriculation, i.e., 10 years)
Educated persons (above school level)	6.56 percent (12 years)	4.38 percent (B.A., i.e., 14 years)	1.58 percent (M.A., i.e., 16 years)	85 percent (Others i.e., diplomas, post-graduates etc)
Literacy	34.92 percent	63.08 percent (urban)	33.64 percent (rural)	54.81 percent (male): 32.02 percent (female)

46. *Census: Pakistan* (2001), *op.cit.* Table 2.15; 2.19; 2.21.