



**Center for Global & Strategic Studies
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**Unrest in Educational Institutions: Causes and
Remedial Measures**

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The persistent educational crises took another stride in the aftermath of a recent wave of unrest in different educational institutes of Pakistan. Various universities and colleges from different regions are continuously making the headlines in account of hooliganism of students due to the provision of inadequate facilities, expensive educational cost, fissures in meritocracy and prejudice of the administrations of respective institutions.

Furthermore, increasing dissatisfaction, dejection and disillusionment among the students of top-ranked national universities are spurring into an alarming

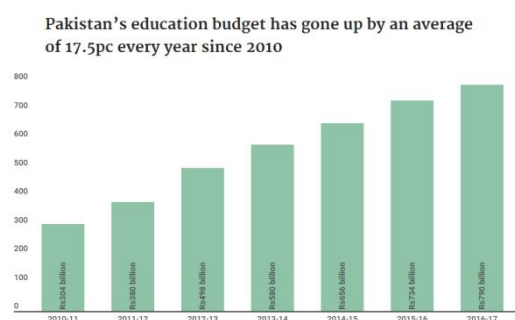
precedent of strikes, protests and boycott of classes. Apart from this, students are also using print, electronic and social media to raise their voices and show solidarity with each other in persuasion of their demands and requirements.

Causes of Educational Unrest

The current unrest in educational institutions contain a plethora of issues, ranging from the exploitation of student through injecting the fascination of politics with inadequate provision of resources and funds. Besides, the lack of reforms and incoherent policy mechanisms and quality of teaching methodology is also adding fuel to the fire.

Politicization of educational institution is one of the alarming factors in escalation of unrest and turmoil. For instance, universities and colleges in governmental sector are controlled and exploited by different interest groups in order to attain their desired objectives through empowering the student councils, student organizations and unions. Although the students are actual strength of the country, however, they are tactically misguided and misused by selfish forces, leading them to go astray.

Most importantly, the educational system of Pakistan is uneven due to ambiguous configuration of its three-tiered educational system in aspects of medium, discourse and standards, which largely ensues societal polarization and disparity through creating dysfunction mechanism in educational



institutions and separate representation of elite, middle and lower class respectively.

Ironically, the educational cost and budget is one of fundamental crisis that contributes to agitation among students and leads to unrest and turmoil. In recent



years, there is a substantial rise in the cost of higher education and most of the students belong to lower and middle class, therefore, they cannot afford the cost of tuition fee and other necessary dues.

Although Pakistan has doubled its educational budget for the fiscal year 2017-18, however the problem still lies in proper allocations and inefficient use of those funds¹.

Defected role of teachers is another grey area which contributes in escalation of unrest among the students, because most of them are woefully incapable to groom their students due to conventional approach of teaching methodology, discouraging class participatory trends of students, preferences of rote memorisation techniques (cramming and drilling) and to some extent their sectarian and ethnic biasness towards their students.

In addition, most of the recruitments and appointment of teachers are being made on the basis of patronage and their political backings rather considering the transparency of merit. This trend increases the influence of interest groups and

¹<https://www.dawn.com/news/1335342>

political lobbies in educational institutions which not only wrecks the merit transparency but also fosters the trends of corruption and violence escalation among students.

Lack of proper infrastructure and inadequate facilities are posing significant challenges to the educational system of Pakistan. For instance, most of the schools, universities and colleges in



governmental sector lack basic educational and residential facilities. The classrooms and hostels portray a dismal picture due to overcrowding and scant necessities such as water, electricity, security and facilities for extracurricular activities. This dilemma gets worse further due to rampant corruption in funds allocation and spending in those institutions.

Impacts of Unrest

This growing unrest is a matter of great concern because it may lead to deterioration of the entire educational system of Pakistan in several ways. First, the current situation is affecting the academic performances by changing the idiosyncratic approach of students from education to other ill-conceived activities that may spoil their entire academic careers.

Secondly, the excessive role of ethnic and political councils in the governmental educational institutions are proactively promoting the narratives of ethno-

nationalism and also nourishing the theme of societal disintegration through dividing students on the lines of ethnicity, secularism and conservatism.

Thirdly, the wave of unrest is also creating vacuum for exploitation of students by extremist and interests groups through indoctrinating and radicalizing them, which ensues colossal blow to the bright future youth and its development.

Fourthly, Councils and Unions provides inclusive autonomy and unrelenting power to the students which is often exercised wrongly in pursuit of different objectives, ranging from accomplishment of redundant favours to the violation of rules and norms of educational institutions.



The less autonomy of administration is resulting into student's monopoly which provides a cushion to increase in illegal activities such as, drugs culture abuse and ethnic disputes in universities and colleges.

Way Forward

Although the educational system is facing multifaceted challenges; however, the unrest and crises in educational institutions can be managed by taking following possible measures.

- a) For short term remedial measures, the authorities must address the legitimate demands of students to eradicate chaos and turmoil from educational institutions.
- b) The role of ethnic and political councils from universities and colleges must be supplanted with student societies and clubs, irrespective of any distinctions on regional or ethnic lines to channelize the student potential and energies in right directions to avoid the plight of ethnic disharmony from educational system.
- c) Stringent policies should be formulated at provincial and federal level to ensure proper allocation and spending of funds for building the infrastructure and provision of adequate facilities to the students.
- d) The educational system is incoherent with national requirements and unequal tiers in educational system is creating societal polarization, therefore, a coherent mechanism should be established through bringing legislative reforms to decrease the gap between three tiered educational systems.
- e) The government must ensure fairness and transparency in recruitment and appointment of teachers to undermine the factors of political backings and patronage from educational institutions. Furthermore, teachers training programs must be initiated through organizing seminars, conducting workshops and training sessions to improve the standards of teaching methodologies and guiding techniques.
- f) The role of political and religious parties must be exterminated from educational institutions to avoid the risks of exploitation, radicalization and

indoctrination of students. Furthermore, the stringent measures must be taken to outboud the educational institution from activities which provoke the political agendas, ethnic or sectarian disharmony among students.

g) The government must increase the scholarship programmes and instigation of student loan programmes may help to facilitate the needy students to ensure their prosperous academic careers. Furthermore, career counselling programmes must be started in all the institutions to improve the quality of education.

h) The syllabus and curriculum followed in educational institutions is out-dated and traditional. Therefore, the government need to revamp the syllabus and curriculum, aligned with modern national demands and requirements.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the current unrest in educational institutions have ensued colossal blow to the entire educational system. The precedent of protests, strikes and boycott in account of fulfilling their demands by the students are increasing the vulnerabilities of exploitation of students by the anti-state elements through propagating the minor issues on ethnic lines to hijack the system. Therefore, the government must take radical measures to facilitate the students at first hand to avoid any possible risk of exploitation. The educational institutes are the formative stages of a student's intellectual capabilities, it is therefore highly imperative that one must devise prudent and pragmatic policies to ensure this goal is achieved without any hindrance.

