Importance of Personality Development and Learning Environment for Deradicalization in Pakistan

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***A**bstract: Personality development and learning environment are combination of all those factors that influence or create a bent of mind of a child or student. A child is influenced by parents, peer, school, and environment. All these factors are responsible for child's idiosyncrasy and personality development. Apart from these factors, the most influential factor is institution, its curriculum design, advance teaching methods, teachers' training and conducive teaching-learning environment. This article attempts to focus on various aspects related to the personality development and learning environment, including factors determining it, ways of evaluating it and suggestions for improving it in Pakistan's perspective. Apart from above findings, authors have made a special attempt to create a linkage of deradicalization with personality development and learning environment in Pakistan. The analysis is operative and conclusions drawn may be applied by the policy makers in the state apparatus.*

Keywords: Personality Development, Learning Environment, Deradicalization, Education, Teaching-Learning Process.

Introduction

Pakistan's strength lies in the diversity of its cultures, languages, beliefs, terrain and cuisine. This diversity also prevails in education system, ranging from private institutions in mega-cities to public-sector institutions in rural Sind, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. These institutions provide an environment extending from fashionably innovative to traditionally entrenched people of this country. It is assumed that each kind of institution would have a direct effect on the quality of learning and its product, i.e., students.[1] According to various research studies, classroom milieu is one of the significant elements in a student's accomplishment. In Pakistan, the published data is not sufficient or lacks to define how learning environment differs from one institution to other. Also, how this environment affects a student's achievement, growth and personality is not undertaken.

The most dynamic factor in the nation building is education as mentioned by our founding leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah, while addressing a group of students: "Pakistan is proud of her youth, particularly the students, who are nation builders of tomorrow. They must fully equip themselves by discipline, education, and training for the arduous task lying ahead of them."[2] However, the subsequent actions showed that the priority to learning and nation development could not run beyond rhetoric.

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Many policies and strategic plans have been implemented since the beginning, but could not achieve the desired results. Till the 18th amendment in the constitution, which announced education as the fundamental human right, there was very little changes observed.[3] Enormous problems of access to education system, inequality of opportunity and infrastructure remained common. The issues being faced by the nation are the by-product of negligent attitude of policymakers towards education system. In order to fill this vacuum, new educational policies must be introduced and implemented by involving all the stakeholders including parents, teachers, principals, researchers, intellectuals, educationists and renowned academicians.

An Overview of Personality Development and Learning Environment in Pakistan

Personality is comprised of all physical, mental and emotional attitudes, whereas, learning environment is a combination of various physical locations, peculiar surroundings and cultural setups in which learners learn.[4] Therefore, personality is an aggregate of physical and mental qualities, enthusiastic state of mind, rewards and motivational components, though, learning conditions refers to the assorted areas along with settings and social orders in which students learn. Since many studies, it may learn in a wide collection of settings, for instance, outside-of-school territories and outdoors conditions, the term is usually used as a more exact or differentiating alternative, when it comes to the classroom.

The natural factors that apply weights on our personality development are the way of life in which we are raised, our initial moulding, family standards, social gatherings and different impacts that we encounter. Nature to which we are uncovered, assumes a generous part in moulding our personalities. Personality, as indicated by the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, is the entire nature or character of a man.[5] It expounds that how a man acts, feels and considers, and how he acts in a given arrangement of conditions is to a great extent dictated by the condition of his psyche. Insignificant outer appearance or a man's discourse or peculiarities are just edges of one's personality. Personality development in the true sense alludes to further levels of a man. Hence, an investigation of our personality should begin from an unmistakable handling of the ideas of our brain, and how it capacitates.

Personality trait is a unique quality, which makes a person distinctive from others. In Pakistan, parents and teachers do not appear to take an interest in matters related to temperament, character, and environment required for the personality development of the students. Teachers understand where parents either have no time or insufficient knowledge to be engaged in their children's schooling. The

education system of Pakistan does not take it into account and neglects profile building of students as productive and responsible members of a modern society. This problem relates directly with the curriculum being taught in educational institutions. The contents of curriculum, being taught to students, have vital importance as education is not just the content of textbooks poured into students' minds like empty barrel, rather its main purpose is grooming, character building and personality development that educates, trains and grooms young minds.

On the other hand, education system in Pakistan promotes cramming, which impedes learning and effective personality development. Another missing link in our instructional framework is that it neither perceives substitute according to psycho-social and financial prerequisites of our country nor it distinguishes the ability of students for specialization. There is still an ambiguity that whether to give emphasis to ideology and distinct values or propagate modern and liberal thoughts. The stages in which a person's personality develops, includes infancy, early childhood, play age, school age, young and adult age, and old age. Whereas, our society does not pay any heed or consider these stages an important vehicle in making the society as a whole. The major five personality traits, common in a society, are extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism.[6] These attributes are persevering qualities, which are not one or the other great or awful. Early on, parents can work with the kid's variable traits instead of contradicting them that further leads towards a breaking point. Afterward, as child grows up, parents can help to adjust to his or her own particular world regardless of characteristic dispositions.[7]

Today, Pakistan is confronted with various issues like poverty, fear based oppression, sectarianism, and radicalization. The major causes are illiteracy, lack of appropriate education system, and unawareness developed by inadequate learning opportunities. These essentials of a befitting learning-framework are neglected altogether in Pakistan. There are some other factors, which causes uncertainty in Pakistan, but weak education system is one of the most contributing factors. Thus, Pakistan's education system is having multifarious weaknesses and extended problems.

During the last 70 years, numerous policies and plans have been implemented in Pakistan, yet the most pivotal is Education sector, whose multi-natured problems are still waiting for suitable and speedy solutions. These problems include ill-planned policies, allocation of insufficient funds, deficiency of physical infrastructure, weak examination system, untrained and inexperience teachers, continuous political obstruction, obsolete educational programs, poor administration and supervision, absence of research-work, and inadequate training facilities. Keeping in mind the end goal to address these issues, there is a dire need to

redefine national objectives, adopt modern approaches in implementing comprehensive overhauling plan, and in addition, suitable instructional framework. Unfortunately, Pakistan's educational system does not provide an ideal teaching-learning environment and equal opportunities of education to everyone across the country. Due to having diversity in education system for the last 70 years, a wide gulf has been created between haves and haves not. This difference is ultimately benefitting and facilitating the elites, who are ruling the country as well as the poor masses, resultantly, numerous social divisions and strife have emerged.

The world, at large, is spending a major chunk of development budget in education sector, but in Pakistan, the amount allocated for this important sector shows downwards trend throughout budgetary history of the country. As indicated by the International Crisis Group, Pakistan is of just 12 nations that spends under 2% of its GDP on education.[8] The leading countries strives for enhancing the quality of its human resource with persistency, whereas, Pakistan is constantly being criticised for paying less heed and not considering the education sector as an important area. However, in the recent past, a marginal rise has been observed in budget allocation for education sector. Since 2015-16 till current spending plan, the planned expenses increased by 21% from PKR 59,260 million to PKR 71,716 million, bringing about a compound yearly growth rate (CAGR) of 10%. This is 1.7% of general spending plan.[9] In this backdrop, Pakistan's educational system highlights various substantial and alarming issues. Personality development of students is dependent upon the contributions being made by education institutions, where facilities are still very less due to which the execution phase remains unfulfilled and desires results are not attained.

The limited research facilities available in Pakistani educational institutions are also of not required standards. It is because of non-availability of funds. Most of the universities do not have resources to purchase technological equipment to equip their labs. The research and experimental equipment, which is present in few universities, have been provided by various countries as an aid. In such a situation, it has become very difficult for the teachers to show practical demonstrations and conduct research based activities in an appropriate manner. Institutions, which have somehow managed to buy instruments, are mostly owned by the private sector and poor students virtually have no access to them. Moreover, fee in private schools is soaring very high. Up till now, government has not paid any attention to this problem. It has only estimated the cost of giving free education to children for the next four years, which stands at PKR 230 billion. However, chances of spending that amount are very less due to looming economic crisis. A majority of parents do not afford to send their children to private schools, being expensive. Ultimately, the

choice left behind is either poorly managed public schools or madrassahs, where education is either less expensive or free. Resultantly, these madrassahs churn out yet another class that is usually unaware of the world outside their own.

Moreover, teachers are poorly trained in government schools and majority of them opt for this profession as a last resort. Their competence level and command on key subjects remain weak. Most of them are unaware of effective teaching methods. Rote-learning is, thus, a common practice across the country owing to still following outdated and redundant teaching methodologies without having proper facilities and teaching-learning material. Another pressing problem is dearth of well-trained teachers and non-merit based enrolment. Teachers lack proper training and know-how and the ultimate sufferers are the students. Although, enrolment of teachers in education institutions is increasing, but still, a wide gulf between student-teacher ratio exists.

In Pakistan, the emphasis is usually given on quantity than quality. The same approach is also reflected in curricula, which is not based on true objectives, resultantly, students are unable to develop their thinking-power. It has also broken linkages with practical life, due to which students face difficulties while interacting with the society. Our national survival in terms of economic uplift, boost in defence and scientific revolution is entirely depended upon the kind and quality of education, we deliver to our children. In this regard, curricula are still lacking behind the international standards, and also not promoting the students' interest in practical and scientific fields.

Another sour point is the examination system, which is to test the students' innate knowledge and standard of academic learning. Continuous malpractices and usage of unfair means in examinations, have almost spoiled the set objectives and its outcome. The issue of unfair means has deep-rooted concern for the invigilators, students, parents and examination boards. Pupils look upon a degree as an identification to work, which can be obtained on the off chance that you pay the cost. Sadly, parents do not discourage their children in utilizing unfair practices to pass the examination, however, the most worrisome is that our educationists have likewise been polluted by the toxic substance of this underhandedness. The corrupt practices are not only spoiling the set objectives of education in the country, but also promoting the culture of uncertainty, chaos and criticism.

Characteristics of a Learning Environment

Learning environment is an important component of teaching-learning process. It is the healthy environment that plays a vital role in vertical growth of students. Conducive environment can only be created in education institutions, when teachers

pay special attention towards teaching-learning process and develop trust and harmony among their students. This trust further leads to true participation and attraction towards positive learning and establishes safe and supported environment. In order to create healthy environment, teacher's role is the most crucial and pivotal. It starts with the self-reflection, proper planning and continuous dynamism, while implementing the set objectives and curricula. Few strategies may be considered for creating conducive teaching-learning environment in a classroom:

Know Yourself

Knowing yourself is the ultimate reality to pursue specific goals and plans. Before going into planning phase, the teachers need to know themselves in depth about their beliefs, values, behaviour, and attitudes. The students' personality is shaped simultaneously with the reflection of their teachers' conduct and behaviour.

More Accentuation on Questions; not the Appropriate Responses

Curiosity is a positive sign of learning. If quality questions are asked by students then learning takes place in a befitting manner. However, students should be encouraged to ask questions rather gauging them by their answers.

Be Interested in Thoughts

Creativity is the hallmark of quality learning. Ideas, critical thinking and imaginative thoughts are originated from anyone. It is a sure-fire way to keep your students inspired as well.

Teaching–Learning Environment

Classroom activities have great importance in a teaching-learning environment. There is a dire need to adopt modern teaching techniques, which certainly enrich learning experience of the students. It can be inquiry based learning, instructions directly or e-learning.

Customize Learning

From the beginning of an academic session, an honest endeavour is required to explore the innate talent of students, and then, attention should be drawn to weaker ones. The learning levels need to be distributed systematically for the consumption of students. Such considerations help achieving the excellence and also helpful to customize lesson plans. This system is supportive to achieve the desired outcome.

Get Rid of a Clinically Based Appraisal Design

In order to assess the set objectives and goals, it is important to distinguish 'good students' from the 'good thinkers'. Clinical-testing techniques are considered to be little out-fashioned. Students should be clear about their testing procedures.

Guarantee that Students Comprehend Criteria for Progress

Prepare an appraisal design and plan it in the light of classroom environment, students' cooperation, and testing-system to influence students appropriately. This is the beginning, where the correct assessment plan and its execution are carried out for positive output.

Relearn Learning Tendencies

There are number of teaching-learning approaches available and the learners should get an opportunity to get benefit from them. A creative approach leads to better learning and critical thinking; therefore, innovative techniques and brainstorming sessions are helpful for students' learning.

Urge Students to Make Inquiries

Regular interaction between teachers and students is a healthy sign with addition of critical thinking and curiosity. This is the best identification of teaching-learning environment as well the teachers' effectiveness. Students should be encouraged to rediscover themselves with the habit of inquiring and asking questions.

Personality Development and Learning Environment – An Analytical Perspective

Personality development of students and learning environment go side by side in any education institution. Their relationship is deep and interwoven. An analytical perspective of the personality development and learning environment in Pakistan underpins followings:

- The existing system does not provide any social, spiritual and political need of the society.
- It does not inculcate unity, patriotism and desire for a welfare state in young minds.
- It does not promote cultural and ethical norms and religious tolerance.
- It does not create responsible members for the society.
- Allocation of funds for the education sector does not guarantee transparent spending on educational projects.
- Lack of trained teaching-staff, because of poor intake and politicised induction system, directly affects the quality of teachers.

- Capacity-building issues are the core concern, which must be on government's priority to eliminate this menace.

The declining standards of education is owing to inadequate policy initiatives and deteriorating teaching-learning environment in Pakistan, thus, resulted into poor outcome.

Deradicalization and Role of Education in the Society

Radicalization is described as a process, whereby, an individual or a group of individuals is engaged in violent terrorism or extremism. Such activities further lead to destruction, destabilizing a State and its apparatus. However, deradicalization is referred to reverse the radicalization process and curtailing the ongoing risk to the society form extremism and terrorism. The phenomenal rise of radicalism in Pakistani society has badly damaged the State's infrastructure and its citizens as well. There are many visible factors responsible for wide-spreading of radical trends and poor education system is one of them. "If a society is educated, enlightened and economically prosperous, the prospects of extremism, transforming into militancy, radicalization, violence and terrorism become proportionately dim. But, if the society is backward, under-developed and illiterate, the challenge of extremism becomes serious."[10]

The role of education is, therefore, of tremendous importance in carving the bright future of any nation around the world. Education performs a pivotal role in shaping the general outlook and behaviour of the people. It ultimately broadens the horizon and purges out the anti-social trends and develops personality of individuals. Unfortunately, education has never been a top priority in Pakistan and its negative outcome is evident. In order to improve the existing education system and its quality, followings are recommended:

Methodical Reforms

Reforms must be specific and methodical in nature, highlighting the set areas and addressing the key issues simultaneously. The areas, which can bring into focus, may be economy, fiscal resources, governance, human resources, infrastructure, curricula and delivery. These areas are interwoven and in case of leaving any one of them may hinder the long-term objectives.

Standards of Excellence

An Institution's standards of excellence ought to be crafted to serve the purpose. Any system is viewed as excellent, if it encompasses variety of purposes. This is to say that when an institution achieves its set goals, while managing its resources

effectively, it produces desired results. However, ambitions for system-excellence must not impose uniformity in performance-standards by all institutions.

Classroom Environment

Teacher in a classroom needs to be assigned the task of motivating and inspiring students. This kind of environment is very much conducive for learning, where teachers motivate and expect students to deliver and rewarded. It is a chief characteristic of an effective school, because motivation to learn results in academic achievement of students.

Teachers Training

Teachers training needs to be standardized. One cannot expect improvement at later stages, if pre-service training is not incorporated in the existing system. In fact, teachers are keen to go through a standardized training to learn and improve their performance. However, they do not have enough opportunities for in-service training to improve. This indicates the fact that teachers are not lacking motivation and interest; it is the lack of supportive mechanism and structure to help them in overcoming their weaknesses. Organization of special training programs and workshops with an aim to facilitate teachers to enhance their abilities, is one of the most important elements in improving the standards of education in the country.

Quality Enhancement

The quality of education needs to be improved. It should not rest upon the achievement of high numerical values. For this, our institutions must provide conducive environment that supports and promotes creative learning, and focus should be on finding answers of the questions that are or likely to be posed by present and future and not of the yester years.

Expenditure on Education

Presently, the overall investment in education sector is at 2.2% of the GDP, while investment in the higher education stands at 15% of this outlay. The investment in the education sector needs to be enhanced. Ideally, in the next four years, this investment needs to be 4% of GDP in which there should be 18-20% rise in the share of higher education. This is important because various developed countries dedicate nearly 17% of their budget to education sector.[11]

Medium of Instructions

Absence of a uniform education system is yet another issue. Currently, there are three main systems: English-medium schools, Urdu-medium schools, and religious Madrassas. Each one of them has their own methodologies and subsequent products

resulted into social division and in some cases conflicts. Therefore, there is a dire need to introduce a uniform system of education for all citizens.

Improved Curricula

Curricula-development is another issue, which is not effectively managed. Usually, the contents of curricula are inappropriate or inadequate, which do not help in setting and subsequently achieving the intended goals. This happens because the task of curriculum-development is undertaken by non-professionals, which is totally unjust and inacceptable. It is an expert's job and needs an experienced hand, who can understand the importance of education institutions and serve national purpose accordingly.

Research Initiatives

The absence of research-based learning is another ignored area in our educational systems. In developed countries, it is viewed as a key to promoting, developing and enhancing the abilities of student. However, in our part of the world, this is not the case. For this, an institution at national level needs to be in place with a view to attract and facilitate students to undertake research. It will help students to familiarize themselves with their societal and national issues, and subsequently, they can come up with new ideas and solutions.

Numerous countries have been through the tumult of radicalization, and majority of them have actualized significant deradicalization programs. It requires political will, diligence and a composite State–reform agenda to implement deradicalization measures effectively, particularly in the field of education. Radicalism and terrorism are serious issues for Pakistani society, and deradicalization endeavours cannot demonstrate quick quantifiable outcomes without reforms in education sector, which resultantly create landmark impact on personality development of a student. At the same time, efforts must go on and get enough momentum to remain maintainable until the menace of terrorism is exterminated through an effective and vibrant education system. Pakistan needs to developed a comprehensive deradicalization strategy including educational reform-agenda and execute it in its true sense. For this purpose, a well concocted and deliberate social-building activity is required in the domain of education.

There is a significant presence of urban civil society in Pakistan, which has intellectuals, organizational capacity and experience of social activism. Being a noticeable social-force, this civil society can play an effective role in setting-up a progressive Islamic State. Also, gigantic changes in basic structure of education of the country are required. Dealing with radicalism is a deep-rooted responsibility, but

education is the most easy and permanent solution. Deradicalization through education initiatives must be executed on war footings. It also needs to be supported and backed by all stakeholders, because at this moment, Pakistan cannot afford to lose its fight against the forces of radicalism and fanaticism. Pakistan can emerge as a peaceful, stable and progressive State, if education reforms are introduced immediately, as envisioned by its Founding Father.

Conclusion

Lack of quality education is directly responsible for incoherent and poor development of students' personality in the country. Pakistan left behind in the comity of nations because of inconsistent education policies. At present, different educational systems are operating in Pakistan, which are paradoxical in nature. Instead of supplementing each other, these are diverting students in different directions. Element of teachers-training is also missing in educational institutions. However, there are certain teachers-training programs, but these training arrangements are unable to give measured response to contemporary needs. Therefore, there is a dire need to remove all types of perennial paradoxes present in existing syllabi and must rediscover the variables to create linkages between deradicalization and education system. It can only be done, if our education system is more oriented towards personality development of students and provide conducive learning environment. If these variables are applied practically by the State apparatus, it will result into a new vision of a nation.

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