

Media Tracking Report

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Education and Pakistan

Education in Pakistan sharpens existing divisions, says report- in [DAWN](#)

According to the report titled 'Education and Inequality' launched by the Institute of Development Research and Corresponding Capabilities (IDRAC) and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) states that Education in Pakistan largely sharpens the existing divisions, mainly around religious lines. Discriminated against in all respects, the life of non-Muslim students and teachers is miserable.

"A massive 60pc of the non-Muslim students interviewed as part of this study said they had experienced discrimination or felt they were being discriminated against and disrespected," reads the report. Similarly 70pc of teachers admitted to having faced discrimination based on their faith. While, as many as 72pc of parents believed their children to be discriminated against in schools and colleges because of their faith-based identity.

Urdu to be medium of instruction in primary schools: Buzdar-in [DAWN](#)

The Punjab government has announced its decision to revert to Urdu as medium of instruction at the primary level in public schools from the next academic session beginning in March. The announcement came rather abruptly through a tweet by Chief Minister Usman Buzdar.

It claimed the provincial education department had conducted a survey of students, parents and teachers in 22 districts about the medium of instruction and almost 85 per cent of the respondents in each category voted for Urdu. English would be taught as a separate subject, said the post. Sources in the bureaucracy said the abrupt decision might create difficulties in teaching at the primary level. They said the previous government led by former chief minister Shahbaz Sharif had conducted exhaustive consultations through an education consultant, Sir Michael Barber, and introduced English as a medium of instruction in public sector schools.

Raising quality of govt teachers - 'Durbeen' aims to reform Pakistan's education system-in [The News](#)

A non-profit organisation named 'Durbeen' has taken on the mantle of imparting free higher education to individuals who aspire to become professional teachers while being a part of a larger, monumental education eco-system.

For this purpose, the organisation is credited for initiating a pilot project at the Government Elementary College of Education (GECE), Hussainabad, with a dream to prepare apt, informed and educated group of high-quality teachers through its progressive training courses.

IMF and Pakistan

The IMF decision by Sakib Sherani- [DAWN](#)

The author analyses the IMF decision by the PTI government and examines the state of the economy when the government came into power. According to the author "The gap between exports and imports in 2017-18 stood at \$37.6 billion, the largest in the country's history. The external current account deficit (arrived at by adding other inflows and outflows to the merchandise trade flows) had crossed \$19bn — once again, the largest in absolute terms Pakistan had ever experienced. The gross external financing requirement — adding external debt repayments, foreign investment outflows etc. to the current account deficit — was an unprecedented \$27bn. With debt repayments expected

to rise sharply from 2018-19 onwards, Pakistan's foreign exchange requirement was projected to remain elevated for the next few years, despite import compression."

"While the government grappled with the complex issue of approaching the IMF, and reached out to friendly countries for assistance, the resultant delay was increasing the uncertainty and adding to a sense of panic. However, it would be wrong to lay the blame on the delay alone. It was clear from early on unfortunately that the PTI government had not done its homework before taking over the reins of power and was woefully ill-prepared. Prior spadework had not been done, the severity of the crisis appeared to have been completely misread and underestimated, and there was no stabilisation plan to put into effect from day one. In addition, a most critical element in providing confidence to markets, strategic communication, was completely absent" writes Sakib Sherani

The IMF Repeats Old Mistakes in Its New Loan Program for Pakistan- in [The Diplomat](#)

The structural conditionalities the IMF sets out in the new loan agreement look eerily similar to the conditions set out when Pakistan's last program began in 2013. The inclusion of the same policies less than three years after the "successful" completion of the previous program, underlines how little lasting impact the previous program had.

The author elaborately writes about the different conditions of the new programme such as audit of State-Owned enterprises, comprehensive plan to address the financial losses in electricity sector and other structural and compares it with the IMF bailout package given earlier.

According to the author "Since the IMF has been constantly engaged with Pakistan, the lender would do well if programmes were built on work done during the previous loan agreement rather than starting from scratch each time. While governments in Pakistan change, the fundamental work done to prepare for structural reforms can be used across programmes.

The Fund could also potentially have more success by pushing for structural reforms, such as privatisation or changes in governance, early in the program, when Islamabad is more desperate for IMF support, rather than settling for important but easily reversible steps."

Civil Service Reforms

21st century talent in a 19th century system by Mosharraf Zaidi- in [The News](#)

Some civil servants (but not all) will be up in arms about the impact outside talent can have on outcomes for Pakistan. Often, they are defensive for two reasons. The first is their legitimate interest in protecting institutional territory because of fears that outside talent may have nonlinear interests in using the authority vested in them by the state for purposes other than the greater public good. Luckily, an array of tools to protect against such abuse already exist – ranging from the vesting of principal accounting officer responsibility exclusively in civil servants (as decided by the Supreme Court of Pakistan), to the existence of an auditor general's office.

The second cause for defensiveness among civil servants is the insecurity that outside talent introduces to the system. If diplomatic or bureaucratic talent from outside the system can come and supplant existing lifers, then why should lifers dedicate their entire careers to achieve the pinnacle that was seemingly awarded so easily to Marker, Lodhi or Siddiqui. This is a less convincing argument. Inside-the-system talent should be able to outshine outsiders quite handily given the investment in their career that taxpayers make over a roughly two-decade period prior to their eligibility for ambassadorial roles.

The two decade wait prior to making ambassador is an interesting barrier to inside-the-system. Typically, the minimum periods required at each grade level in the civil service are five years at BPS 17, seven at BPS 18, and another seven at BPS 19. Only the very exceptional and lucky PAS/DMG officers tend to make it to joint secretary or director general or ambassador in the minimum nineteen years. Most take a few years longer.

Why are Civil Service Reforms bound to fail in Pakistan?- in [Daily Times](#)

While the accountability agenda is flying high on the current politico-economic scene of Pakistan, the one that relates to promised reforms appears to be virtually non-existent. The government is completing one year in its office. However, the dream of bringing changes in the crumbling and inefficient governance structure does not appear to come true any time soon. The government has already spent 20 per cent of its life loud-mouthing the accountability mantra. Now, the remaining time should be focused on working on the other significant half of PTI's election manifesto: bringing qualitative change in the lives of the people.

Govt reverts key planning position to bureaucracy- in [DAWN](#)

The government has appointed former chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue Dr Jehanzeb Khan as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission (DCPC), giving the lucrative post back to the federal bureaucracy after 23 years.