

The Educational Problems, their Causes, and Remedial Measures for the Community-based Schools of Yohanabad, Lahore

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Kashi's thesis is technical and many may not want to read the whole 80 pages. Nevertheless her research is invaluable. I have therefore extracted some of the insights and suggested solutions she has given. The overall aim of this study is to address the shortcomings faced by education in community-based schools.

- Education is critical for the Christian community in Pakistan for several reasons. Firstly, education is a pathway to social and economic mobility, which is especially important for underprivileged communities. Access to quality education can help break the cycle of poverty and provide opportunities for better-paying jobs and improved living standards.
- Secondly, education is essential for the empowerment of marginalized communities. Education can help individuals develop critical thinking skills, access information, and advocate for their rights and interests. In a country where religious minorities face discrimination and persecution, education can be a powerful tool for promoting social justice and equality.
- Thirdly, education is crucial for promoting interfaith harmony and understanding. Christian schools in Pakistan often welcome students from diverse religious backgrounds, providing opportunities for students to learn about each other's cultures and traditions. Education can help break down stereotypes and promote tolerance and respect for religious diversity.

The following extracts are from professional academic literature addressing the reasons and solutions for low enrolment, drop-out and academic failure in low-income community-based schools. It is followed by Kashi's own research in 5 low-cost community schools in Youhannabad, Lahore.

From academic literature: The Causes

Lack of resources and facilities

1. Often, community-based schools **lack the resources and facilities** which are needed for the development of their students. For example, multiple community-based schools lack a proper library which is considered a "gateway to knowledge and culture".
2. Multiple schools in Pakistan **lack basic infrastructure such as proper classrooms, sanitation facilities, and safe drinking water**. The education system in Pakistan focuses on rote memorisation instead on developing critical thinking which results in the quality of education dropping as the students fail to acquire deep learning. Teachers in Pakistan often lack the necessary training and qualifications, and there is a lack of accountability for teacher performance present in institutions.

Poor leadership

3. Schools may be limited by bureaucratic structures, standardized curricula, and external mandates that constrain their ability to create caring and responsive learning environments. Power imbalances within schools can lead to a **lack of shared decision-making** and a disregard for the needs and perspectives of students, families, and communities. A negative school culture can result in a lack of trust, respect, and support among staff, students, and families. This can make it difficult to create caring and supportive structures and pedagogies.

The cultural backgrounds and experiences of students may not be recognized or valued by school staff, leading to a lack of connection and engagement with the curriculum.

4. The predominant **focus is on standardized testing** and the academic achievements are defined from very narrow perspectives. This discourages teachers and schools from prioritizing Place-based Education (PBE). Additionally, multiple teachers may lack the support or training which is needed to integrate such method into the curriculum.
5. The **behaviour of school principals** can affect student achievement. Effective leaders can set high expectations for their teachers and students. This can motivate teachers to provide a high-quality education and encourage students to work hard and strive for excellence. School leaders who provide support and resources to teachers and students can create a positive and conducive learning environment. Teachers who feel supported are more likely to be satisfied and committed to their work, while students who receive appropriate support are more likely to succeed academically. School leaders who create a clear and compelling vision for their school can inspire and motivate their staff and students. This vision can provide a sense of purpose and direction and help align everyone's efforts towards common goals. Effective leaders can build positive relationships with their staff, students, and parents. This can foster a sense of community and create a supportive network of people who are invested in the success of the school. Leaders who encourage innovation and experimentation can create a culture of continuous improvement. Teachers who feel empowered to try new teaching strategies are more likely to find effective methods for their students, leading to improved academic achievement.

Lack of training or qualifications

6. **Poverty is a significant barrier** to education in Pakistan, particularly for girls and children from marginalized communities. Inadequate financial resources and limited access to education facilities and resources contribute to low enrolment and high dropout rates. Many **teachers in Pakistan are not adequately trained**, which can lead to low quality of education. Corruption and nepotism in the education system contribute to a **lack of transparency and accountability**, which can negatively impact education outcomes. Security concerns, particularly in certain areas of the country, can make it difficult for children to attend school regularly and safely. Traditional beliefs and social norms, particularly in rural areas, can limit access to education for girls and children from certain communities.
7. **Poorly trained teachers** can struggle to effectively engage and motivate students, leading to poor academic performance. **Parents who are not involved** in their child's education may not be able to provide the necessary support and encouragement for academic success. Teachers who struggle with classroom management may create an environment that is not conducive to learning, leading to poor academic performance. **Students who lack motivation** may struggle to engage with academic material and may not see the value of education. Schools that lack the necessary resources, such as textbooks, technology, or support staff, may struggle to provide students with the tools they need to succeed academically. It is important to note that these factors are often interconnected and can have a cumulative effect on academic performance. For example, a lack of parental involvement can impact student motivation and engagement, which can in turn contribute to poor academic performance. Similarly, inadequate resources can impact teacher training and classroom management, further contributing to poor academic performance.
8. The ineffective use of textbooks can be linked with the **absence of proper qualifications and professional skills among the teaching staff**. In multiple community-based schools, teachers are not very highly qualified and oftentimes have access to limited professional

development opportunities. The same is true about the administration and the leadership of the schools. This is an issue that automatically decreases the quality of education.

9. Pakistan has one of the lowest enrolment rates in the world, particularly among girls and children from poor families. Despite increased investment in education, the quality of education remains low, with **inadequate facilities, poorly trained teachers, and outdated curricula**. Education resources are unevenly distributed across the country, with rural areas and disadvantaged communities receiving less funding and support. The education system in Pakistan suffers from poor governance and accountability, with **corruption and nepotism** undermining efforts to improve education. Teachers in Pakistan often lack adequate training and support, which contributes to low quality of education.

Poor motivation and mindset

10. Coming from the Christian community, it can be claimed, that many of these students have **pre-placed restrictions** on themselves. They often believe that as Christians, they can achieve only so much. Having grown up in a community where they have seen Christians in lower-level jobs, they unconsciously develop a mindset that their life will be the same. As a result, a large population of children fail to give their education the importance, which is needed, finding it unnecessary.
11. **Poor performance in elementary school** can have negative impacts on further education in several ways. It can affect a student's academic confidence, leading to a lack of motivation to learn and a negative attitude towards education. Poor performance in elementary school can limit a student's future academic opportunities, such as admission to selective high schools or universities. Furthermore, it can also lead to knowledge gaps that can impact a student's ability to succeed in higher education. For example, if a student struggles with basic reading or math skills, they may struggle in more advanced courses.

Poverty and family engagement

12. **Family background** impacts a student's education more than is realized. In community-based schools, most students come from families which do not have a strong educational background.
13. **Poverty is a significant barrier to education** in Pakistan, particularly for girls and children from marginalized communities. Poverty contributes to low enrolment rates and high dropout rates, as families struggle to afford the costs of education and prioritize immediate needs such as food and shelter. Poverty also affects the quality of education and leads to gender inequality.
14. **Parental involvement** can have a positive impact on student motivation and academic achievement, with involved parents helping to create a supportive home environment that promotes academic success.
15. Parenting attitudes play a significant role in academic achievements, towards the end the researcher went on to suggest parenting behaviours that would have a positive impact on the academics of the children. It encourages the examination of how the **family background** is currently impacting the students of community-based schools and how it can be stirred in the direction which would assist the students in improving their academic achievements. Aside from one's family, the community in which a student interacts also heavily influences their education.
16. **Many parents may not have the time** to be involved in their child's education due to work or other commitments. This can make it difficult for them to attend parent-teacher conferences, school events, or help their child with homework. Some parents may not have

the resources to provide their children with the materials or support they need to succeed academically.

17. Students from low-income **families often lack the resources and support necessary to succeed academically**, such as access to quality education materials and support from family members. Traditional teaching methods, such as rote memorisation and lecture-based instruction, may not be effective in engaging students or promoting deep understanding. Multiple parents may be unable to support their child's education due to work commitments, lack of education themselves, or other factors. The last cause is the lack of proper facilities such as clean water, electricity which hinder learning and academic success.
18. Children from poor households often cannot afford to attend school or are forced to drop out early to work or help their families. **Poverty also affects the quality of education** by limiting resources and trained teachers, leading to a lack of skills among students. The gender disparity is also linked to poverty, as girls from poor households face more barriers to education than boys. Therefore, poverty is the underlying cause of many of the educational problems in Pakistan.
19. **Families living in poverty** often lack access to healthcare, social services, and financial support. This further exacerbates the challenges faced by families living in poverty. Political instability, conflicts in the region, and security issues have also contributed to poverty in Pakistan.
20. Students who have uninvolved and authoritative parents often fail to have high academic achievements. When **parents are not involved in their children's education**, it can have a negative impact on their academic achievement. For example, students whose parents do not attend parent-teacher conferences, do not monitor their homework, or do not provide academic support at home are more likely to struggle in school. Authoritarian parents are characterized by their high demands for obedience and conformity from their children, often using punishment or harsh discipline to enforce these demands.

Solutions

1. Critical care is a necessary component of effective school reform and involves **creating caring and supportive structures** and pedagogies that enable students to develop intellectually, emotionally, and socially. Critical care is an important framework for creating equitable and socially just educational environments in urban small schools.
2. Schools should incorporate in their education a method of **connecting the students with their communities as well as with nature**. They stated that in schools, students should be given the opportunity to interact with the real world and confront issues which they would be faced with as adults.
3. The success or failure of an institution heavily relies on **the performance of its leadership** in having students achieve high academic results. School leadership needs to be continuously improved, however, indirect it may be. Transformational leadership behaviour positively affects students' academic achievement, as it fosters a sense of motivation, inspiration, and commitment among teachers and students.
4. Start small with **manageable projects, such as studying local history before moving onto larger-scale projects**. In order to enhance engagement and learning, these projects should employ local resources such as local experts, community organizations, and natural areas such as parks. These programs should not be limited to only certain classes, but rather be integrated into the whole curriculum. It was also suggested that teachers should be trained and supported so that they can plan and implement the programs with efficiency. This

should include professional development. The PBE programs should encourage students to take ownership of their learning and engage in their community in meaningful ways.

5. The impact of poverty on education needs to be reduced by **providing financial support to low-income families** while increasing access to quality educational resources. Teaching methods need to be reformed so that they encourage student involvement through learning activities which allow students to participate and interact in their classrooms.
6. The empowerment of girls through **promoting education for girls and by providing girls support to pursue education beyond primary school**. Schools also need to improve their facilities and provide their students with a good educational environment. Institutions should have adequate functioning toilets, electricity, clean water, etc. In addition to this, institutions should also promote parents to be involved and engage in their children's education through events like parent-teacher meetings and home visits.
7. Principals should develop **a clear and compelling vision for their school**, which is shared with teachers, students, and other stakeholders. The vision should inspire and motivate teachers and students to work towards common goals. Principals should create **a supportive and collaborative environment that empowers teachers to take ownership** of their work and encourages them to innovate and experiment with new teaching strategies. Principals should set **high expectations for both teachers and students and provide the necessary support and resources to achieve these goals**. This can help foster a culture of excellence and continuous improvement. **Principals should communicate regularly and openly with teachers, students, and parents to build trust and transparency**. They should also listen to feedback and respond to concerns and suggestions. Principals should model the behaviour they expect from others, such as demonstrating a strong work ethic, promoting respect and inclusivity, and maintaining a positive and optimistic attitude.
8. **Parental involvement is very important in a child's educational journey**. Parents can provide emotional support and encouragement to their children, which can help to boost their confidence and motivation to learn. Parents can serve as advocates for their children by working with teachers and school administrators to ensure that their child's educational needs are being met. Parents can create a home environment that is conducive to learning by providing resources such as books, educational materials, and technology. Parents can help their children with homework, which can help to reinforce classroom learning and improve academic performance. Parents can encourage their children to participate in extracurricular activities, which can help to promote a sense of engagement and belonging at school. Parents can model positive attitudes towards education by valuing learning and demonstrating the importance of education in their own lives.
9. Parents can attend **parent-teacher conferences**, email or call teachers with questions or concerns, and stay informed about their child's progress in school. Parents can help their child with homework, review assignments, and provide support when their child is struggling. Parents can volunteer at their child's school, whether it's in the classroom, on a field trip, or helping with school events. **Parents can create a positive learning environment at home** by encouraging reading, setting aside time for homework, and creating a space for their child to study. Parents can support their child's extracurricular activities, whether it's attending a sports game or a music recital. Parents can advocate for their child's needs, whether it's requesting additional support from the school or ensuring their child has access to necessary resources.
10. Schools can provide teachers with **additional training and support to improve their ability to engage and motivate students**. This can include professional development opportunities, mentoring, and coaching. Teachers can use a variety of classroom management strategies to create an environment that is conducive to learning. This may include setting clear

expectations, providing positive reinforcement, and using behaviour management techniques. Schools can encourage parental involvement in their child's education by providing opportunities for parents to volunteer, attend school events, and communicate with teachers. This can help to create a partnership between parents and teachers, which can have a positive impact on student motivation and engagement. Schools can provide additional resources to support student learning, such as textbooks, technology, and support staff. This can help to ensure that students have the tools they need to succeed academically. Teachers can use a variety of strategies to promote student motivation and engagement, such as project-based learning, peer collaboration, and differentiated instruction. These strategies can help to make learning more relevant and engaging for students.

11. **Parents should create a democratic environment at home.** Democratic parents are characterized by their warmth, responsiveness, and willingness to engage in collaborative decision-making with their children. They encourage their children to take the initiative and make decisions on their own, which can lead to increased autonomy and self-motivation. This can result in a greater sense of ownership over their academic achievements and a more positive attitude towards learning.

The following are the recommendations from Kashi's own research, based on extensive interviews with staff and students in five Community-based schools in Youhannabad, Lahore.

Problems

Head Teachers

Many of the principals highlighted one major issue which are commonly faced in community-based schools. They stated that most of these schools do not have enough funds, which limits the extent to which they can provide quality education or seek to improve the existing system. One of the principals stated:

"The lack of funding is a big problem which almost every community-based school in Pakistan faces. Only a few schools are supported by big organizations which provide them with a stable, but little, financial support."

A few of the principals referred to the lack of qualified teachers as being a root problem for the lack of educational quality in community-based schools as it greatly undermines the resources and their implementation in classrooms.

"Many of the teachers found in community-based school are unqualified or underqualified for the positions that they hold. This really undermines the education which can be provided at these schools."

Another issue that was underlined by the principals was the high rate of absentees and drop-outs. They stated that if students continuously miss school days or stop attending school all together, their education is impacted very negatively as they fail to keep up with their syllabus and manage their time. One of them remarked:

"Students take days off from schools very frequently and many students end up completely dropping out of school. If students do not attend classes regularly, they fall behind and cannot complete their syllabus before the end of the school year. This leads to many of them performing poorly and going onto their next classes with incomplete knowledge."

Teachers

The first issues that was emphasised by many teachers is that the students do not have their foundations properly built in kindergarten and elementary school, which means when the students enter the higher grades, they are unable to write and read properly. This poses a great problem as teachers have to teach the students basics rather than focusing on the actual curriculum. A teacher claimed:

“We discover that most of the children in our classes have no foundation built from KG and as a result, when they are promoted to upper classes, [they] can’t read and write. The lack of proper foundation, forces us to focus on building their academic foundation rather than teaching them the syllabus of their respective grades.” – (T1)

High teachers drop out was also highlighted as an educational problem which is often faced in community-based schools. This creates a shortage in staff, causing other teachers to take over teaching subjects that they themselves are not familiar with. Regarding this problem, one of the teachers commented:

“The rate of drop-out among teachers is high in community-based. Many leave very abruptly, leaving no choice but to appoint the current staff, who have no experience at teaching the subject, to instruct the students.”

Students

The first focus group highlighted that most community-based schools lack facilities such as science labs and libraries. They claimed that due to the lack of science labs their understanding of many scientific processes was limited, and they had difficulty understanding them. The students suggested that some students learn better by seeing, implying the importance of visual aid. This group also added that in addition to the lack of facilities, these schools also faced a lack of in-class and extra-curricular activities. This also was said to limit understanding and cause students to turn to rote memorisation, preventing them from developing critical thinking. A student said:

“Our schools and we know many other community-based do not have science labs, computer labs, and libraries. This lack of facilities limits our understanding as we cannot perform or see the processes and experiments which we study about. A lot of students understand better when they are able to see the process. Since we cannot do this, we find it difficult to understand what is being taught. There is also a lack of activities at these schools which means we can only depend on our books for knowledge and so most of us rely on rote memorisation.”

The second focus group underlined that the constant drop-out of teachers affected their academics negatively. The students stated that as teachers change, so do their teaching styles which make it difficult for students to clearly understand what is being taught. Many also brought to attention that this *“often causes the syllabus to go unfinished”* and be taught in a rush. In addition to this, these students stated that they fail to receive proper support from their parents and community. They claimed that they are often told that education is useless and will do nothing to help them achieve their dreams. This causes many students to feel discourage and eventually to give up on their education. One of the students commented:

“Our teachers are changed very often as they leave, some even doing so in the middle of the school year. This disturbs our studies as we have to spend a lot of time getting used to a different teaching style. This also puts us behind on our syllabus, often causing us to rush through topics. Because of this our understanding of certain topics is lacking. Another aspect that affects our education is the discouragement from our parents and the community as a whole. We are often told that our future is the same as the adults and that education will do nothing to help us strive for a different one. Some parents do not support their daughters’ education as they will get married anyways and of their sons as they would anyway end up working as labours or shop keepers to support the family. This limit on our future disheartens many and some even give up on studying.”

Causes

Head Teachers

There were two causes which were highlighted as being the reasons for the lack of funds in community-based schools. The first cause was the lack of parental co-operation with paying fees and being willing to pay for extra-curricular fees. Many parents come from poor background and are reluctant to pay for their children's education. The second reason was because of the lack of support received from NGOs and the government. A principal remarked:

"The first reason that we lack funds, is because parents do not pay fees on time, or try to completely be relieved of the responsibility of paying it. Most of the parents come from financially difficult backgrounds and for that reason we keep our fees low. However, if they refuse to pay even the small amount of fee that we ask for, it becomes exceedingly difficult for us. To make it worse, most community-based schools do not have any external form, from NGOs or the government, of funding to fill the gaps." – (P1)

The lack of qualifications was also attributed to two reasons: the lack of finances and the lack of opportunities. Often, these teachers do not have professional development opportunities such as workshops or training. However, when these opportunities do present themselves, the unavailability of funds prevents the teacher from pursuing them. Another reason that community-based schools do not have qualified teachers is because the schools cannot afford to pay salaries which are fair for the teachers' qualifications. A principal stated:

"Many teachers are unqualified in community-based school because they do not have opportunities to pursue professional development. When they do find it available to them, they cannot afford to attend. The reason that we hire these teachers, despite their qualifications not being up to par, is because we can afford to accommodate them. We cannot afford to hire teachers with high qualifications."

The reason for the high rate of absentees and drop-outs suggested was the lack parent's involvement. They stated that parents were either inattentive or too busy with their jobs to make sure that their children were going to school. A principal commented:

"In most cases both the parents are working parents, and this means that they leave home early and come back late. As there is no one at home to send them to school or check on them, they end up skipping school. If the parents are not both working, there are also parents who are not attentive to their child's education and so agree to let their children take school days off. Some children also end up bunking school after informing their parents that they are going to school."

Teachers

The teachers highlighted parental pressure and management's policies as the cause of the student's not having a proper academic foundation. They stated that parents pressure the school to promote their children into the next class and the school management often passes every student despite their academic level. In addition to this, it was highlighted that many teachers are unqualified to teach and therefore create academic gaps in the student's education. Even if the teachers are qualified, some do not give their best while teaching. One of them stated:

"At community-based schools, we often do not have proper assessment criteria for promoting students and the management usually promotes every student despite their academic standing. The parents also pressure the school to pass their children even if they are not ready for that class. Many times, the teachers you find in the lower classes do not have proper qualifications and therefore teach poorly. If the teachers are qualified, they sometimes work half-heartedly, not teaching properly."

The cause underlined for the frequent drop-out of teachers was the low salaries given at community-based schools. Another because which was mentioned was the mistreatment of the

teachers by the school administration. The teacher claimed that teachers are often scolded in front of their students and other staff making them feel disrespected and unheard. A teacher remarked:

“The reason that so many teachers leave is because their salaries are low, and they see themselves being paid more in other places. To add to this, the management often disrespects the teachers, especially in front of the students and other staff. When teachers do not feel appreciated, they leave.”

Students

The first focus group stated that community-based schools often do not have facilities is because of the lack of funds and/or the lack of space. Since the funds of these schools are often low, they are focused on more essential supplies like textbooks, boards, etc. Many community-based schools are located in houses or small buildings and don't have place to build such facilities. The cause that this group gave for the lack of extra-curricular activities was because it is considered to be consuming the time that students should be spending. It is not considered an essential part of education and therefore is not given importance. One of the students commented:

“Community-based schools many times do not have big campuses and cannot afford to spare space for facilities like labs and libraries. There is also the availability of funds which limits the schools from building such facilities. The schools cannot afford to build them. As for the in-class and extra-curricular activities, most schools and parents believe that they are a waste of time and students should be more focused on their education. As they are seen as a distraction, they do not happen in schools.” –

This group stated that the constant drop-out of teachers is to do with the low salary that is given to them. For their second issue, they underlined that this is because many of the parents and community members are themselves either illiterate or working in low paying jobs and therefore fail to see the importance of education or the role it could play to uplift their youth. A student from this group stated:

“I think the teachers leave so often is because their salaries are too low. The reason our society discourages us so much is because they think they are showing us the reality. They themselves have not received education and have failed to do better than their predecessors and therefore they believe that it is true for our generation as well.”

Solutions

Head Teachers

The solution suggested for the first problem was that parents should be encouraged to pay school fees and strict measures should be put in place to ensure that the required fees are paid. In addition to this, they added that schools should also be active in fundraising, advertising, and promoting their schools. A principal emphasised:

“The schools should be strict in their fee collection policies and encourage parents to pay the proper fees. In addition to this, most community-based are small institutions, many of them located in villages. Therefore, to receive external fundings, they should actively fundraise by advertising their school.”

The principals suggested that the schools themselves need to encourage their teachers to pursue professional development while guiding them regarding the opportunities present. One method of encouraging teachers was the active participation of school heads in professional development. By seeing their principals and head teachers pursuing professional development, the teachers will also be urged to do the same. Furthermore, organizations and the government should look to create more professional development opportunities for teachers. One of the principals stated:

“Firstly, it is necessary that the school heads themselves look to better themselves through professional development so that they cannot only encourage their teachers, but also guide them as to how they can do so too. School heads need to constantly encourage their teacher to better themselves and grow their qualifications. Apart from this, educational organizations and the government should provide the teachers of this country with more and better opportunities to pursue professional development.”

The solution to the third problem was to raise awareness among the parents regarding the importance of their involvement in their children’s education. Parents often think that they hold no responsibility in their children’s education and therefore there is a need to convey to them that for the students’ academic success, they need to cooperate with the school. A principal commented:

“Our parents have this mind-set that when their child enters school, their responsibility ends there. So, parents need to be taught about the importance of their involvement in their children’s education.”

Teachers

To ensure that the students have a firm academic foundation, the institution needs to ensure that their staff is qualified and skilled to teach and would not allow academic gaps to develop. In addition to this, the management needs to have fixed policies regarding promotions, solely based on academic capabilities, which cannot be bent. The management also needs to ensure that the teacher who are laying the foundations of the students’ education are qualified and well-trained. The teachers also need to be more intent in their classroom, making sure that their students are benefiting from what is being taught. One of the teachers remarked:

“The schools need to take responsibility to make sure that their students are being promoted with the needed academic skills. The administration should develop and implement a set criterion while ensuring that they are hiring qualified teachers who will not compromise the quality of education. Teachers also need to take responsibility and not do their work half-heartedly.”

It was highlighted that in order to solve the issue of teacher drop-out, the management needs to improve their behaviour towards their staff, which ensuring that they are appreciated for the effort that they are making. Encouraging the staff to perform even better will also increase the chances of them staying on longer as it will allow them to thrive and grow. A teacher said:

“If the management were to improve their behaviour towards the staff, showing them more respect and appreciation, it would cause teachers to work longer. A positive relationship between the management and the staff would create an environment which allows growth and development. This would encourage teachers to stay at schools for long periods.”

Students

The first focus group suggested that the schools should develop facilities like science labs as it would help the students excel. In addition to classroom activities, educational trips to historical sites, museums, and factories were suggested to give students a wider perspective on what they are studying. By highlighting the academic effects of such activities, the students emphasised the need to include them in their education. A student commented:

“The schools should look to develop these facilities, even if they are small room or stored in classroom. This would greatly help achieve better academic results as it would enhance our understanding. Conducting educational trips would help us gain a better and more realistic perspective of what is being taught. This would also help us leave rote memorisation.”

The second group offered the solutions of signing proper contracts with teachers to ensure that they did not leave in the middle of school years, leaving the students confused and often at the mercy of unqualified teachers. In regard to the issue of the discouragement received from the society, this group suggested that the institution should hold meetings and conferences to educate, especially the parents, regarding the significant role that education and their encouragement can play in the students' lives. The community can also be educated through raising awareness about education. This would not only prevent them from discouraging students but might also encourage them to send their children to school, increasing the literacy rate among the community. One of the students suggested:

“The management to make teachers sign contracts with time limits so that they are unable to leave abruptly in the middle of a school year. The school should conduct conferences and meetings with parents and the whole community, to teach them about the importance of education and how it will help their children and the youngsters of the community to achieve better futures.”

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The aim of this study was to identify the educational problems, their causes, and suggest remedies for community-based schools. To do so, the community chosen for the research was the Christian community found in Yohanabad, Lahore. The findings of this research have suggested various problems, causes and solutions.

The first research question of this study was: “what are the problems which are faced by community-based schools?” Through interviews and focus groups, various issues have surfaced. The principals highlighted three key issues that they believe are the most common and urgent in community-based schools. The first issue underlined by the principals was the lack of funding. They stated that since funds are not available, schools must compromise on educational resources, teachers, facilities which results in the quality of education falling.

Multiple community-based schools, it was highlighted, lack qualified teachers meaning that the education provided in classrooms is not up to par, even if resources are available. The last issue highlighted by the principals was the increase in absentees and drop-out among the students. This causes students to have incomplete knowledge and understanding.

The teachers stated that the biggest educational problem which causes children to perform poorly is the lack of proper foundations build at the elementary levels of schooling. They claimed that most students come to secondary school not knowing how to read or write which results in teachers having to teach basics and fall behind on the syllabus. This also limits the student's understanding. Another problem underlined by the teachers was the high rate of teacher drop-out in community-based schools. They stated that multiple teachers leave which causes a shortage in teachers causing them to teach subjects they are not qualified to teach.

The students were highly active in their participation and brought to attention various problems that are present in community-based schools. The first issue highlighted by the students was the lack of facilities. Multiple pointed out that these schools lack facilities like science labs, libraries, and computer labs. This causes gaps in understanding as the students are unable to see or perform particles themselves. The second problem brought up was the lack of in-class and extra-curricular activities. This limits the students to theoretical knowledge, pushing them towards rote memorisation. It also leads to the students becoming disinterested and stressed which negatively affects their education.

The third problem underlined was the frequent drop-out of teachers. They stated that because of this they struggled as it left syllabus unfinished, and the students often must adjust to a different teaching style halfway through the school year. The last issues that the students mentioned was the lack of support from parents and the community. The students stated that they are often taught that education will have no impact on their futures and that they would end up in the same low paying jobs as the current adults of the community. It was mentioned that this has caused many to stop working hard and even has led some to drop-out of schools completely.

The second research question of this study was: what causes the educational problems and what impact do they have on education? The reasons for the inadequate funds in community-based schools were attributed to two factors. The initial factor was the absence of parental cooperation with regards to payment of fees and willingness to cover costs for extracurricular activities, which could be attributed to many parents coming from impoverished backgrounds. The second factor was the insufficiency of support from NGOs and the government.

Two reasons were identified as contributing to the lack of qualifications among teachers. Firstly, the absence of finances and opportunities prevents teachers from receiving professional development such as training and workshops. In few cases where opportunities do arise, teachers are unable to participate due to financial constraints.

Secondly, community-based schools often cannot provide competitive salaries for teachers commensurate with their qualifications, leading to a shortage of qualified teachers. It was suggested that the primary cause of the high absenteeism and dropout rates was the insufficient involvement of parents. It was noted that parents either exhibited negligence or were preoccupied with work commitments, resulting in inadequate supervision of their children's school attendance.

The teachers stated that the inadequate academic foundations of students can be attributed to parental pressure and management policies. They noted that parents often push for their child to be promoted, while the school management passes students despite their actual academic level.

The frequent dropouts of teachers were attributed to two factors. Firstly, teachers are dissuaded by the low salaries offered and secondly, teachers feel mistreated by the administration. This causes them to feel disrespected and neglected.

According to the first focus group, community-based schools often lack facilities due to insufficient funds or space. Due to budgetary constraints, these schools prioritize essential supplies such as textbooks and boards, while the limited physical space in houses or small buildings hinders the construction of additional facilities. The group attributed the lack of extra-curricular activities to the belief that it detracts from the time students should be devoting to academics and is not considered an integral part of education.

The first focus group also noted that the frequent teacher dropouts can be attributed to the low salaries offered by community-based schools. Additionally, the lack of parental and community member support for education may stem from illiteracy or low-paying jobs, leading to a failure to recognize the significance of education and its potential to uplift young people.

The last research question was: how can these problems be overcome? To address the first problem of lack of funds, the principals suggested that parents should be encouraged to pay school fees, and strict measures should be taken to ensure that the fees are paid. In addition to this, they added that schools should also be active in fundraising and promoting their school.

The principals suggested that the schools themselves need to encourage their teachers to pursue professional development while guiding them regarding the opportunities they can access. One method to encourage the teachers is the active participation of school heads in professional development. By seeing their principals and head teachers pursuing professional development, the teachers will be inspired to follow their example.

The solution to the third problem suggested by the principals was to raise awareness among the parents regarding the importance of their involvement in their child's education. It needs to be conveyed to parents that for their child's academic success, they need to co-operate with the schools. This can be done through frequent parent teacher meetings and other parent child activities conducted by schools which would encourage parents to become involved in their child's academic life.

The suggestion was made by the teachers, to ensure that students have a strong academic foundation by having qualified and skilled teachers and preventing academic gaps from developing. The management should also have fixed policies for promotions based solely on academic abilities that cannot be compromised. Teachers should also be more focused on ensuring that their students benefit from what is being taught.

Regarding the issue of teacher drop-out, it was suggested that management of community-based schools should improve their treatment of staff, by showing appreciation for their efforts and encouraging them to perform even better, which will increase their job satisfaction and make them more likely to stay longer.

The first focus group proposed that schools should develop facilities such as science labs and organize educational trips to historical sites, museums, and factories to help students excel and gain a wider perspective on what they are studying. They emphasized the need to include such activities in the curriculum to benefit the students' academic performance.

The second group suggested signing proper contracts with teachers to prevent them from leaving mid-year, which would leave students in the care of unqualified teachers. To address the issue of discouragement from society, they recommended holding meetings and conferences to educate parents and the community about the vital role education plays in students' lives. They also suggested raising awareness to prevent discouragement and possibly encourage more children to attend school, increasing literacy rates in the community.

This study utilized participants from community-based schools. The sample included administrators, teachers, and students from five different schools. The students were divided into three main groups based on their grade levels and further divided into smaller focus groups. The staff was divided into teaching staff and administration. Open-ended questions were used to collect data, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with staff members to gather their perspectives on school problems, causes, and solutions. Focus groups were used to involve students in the study, and this approach allowed for a faster data collection process while also valuing their opinions.

Conclusion

This study has identified the educational problems that are currently faced by Pakistani community-based schools, highlighting their causes, and suggesting how they can be solved so that the quality of education provided to the minority and financially disadvantaged children of this nation can be improved. Now it is important that these solutions are implemented by schools.

However, as the needs of society and students is constantly changing with new research happening every year, there is a need to constantly build on this research. As the solutions suggested are implemented, there would also be a need for constant re-evaluation and to identify if any recent problems have taken the places of the previous ones. In addition to this, this study has only highlighted some problems and therefore, there is space for other researchers to conduct studies targeting educational problems, their causes, and their remedies that are not mentioned in this thesis.

Furthermore, this study is not only limited to community-based schools present in Pakistan. Similar studies can be conducted, as they have been, in other countries to address educational problems and their causes specific to that given country. The solutions as a result might also differ as might the method of implementation and the cultures and traditions might differ.

Recommendations

The findings of this study recommend:

1. That community-based schools face a lack of funding due to parents not being willing to pay fees and the lack of external funding and therefore should encourage parental cooperation while fundraising through promotional events.
 2. That the student drop-out is high in community-based schools due to the lack of parental attention and involvement and it was suggested that parents be taught the importance of their involvement and attention in their children's education.
 3. That there is a lack of qualified teachers in community-based school due to the lack of opportunities, financial availability to pursue such opportunities and lack of funds to hire qualified teachers. It was suggested that teachers be guided by their head teacher who themselves should actively pursue such opportunities so to set examples for their teachers. It was also suggested that teachers be provided with financial support to encourage them to pursue professional development.
 4. That the students of community-based schools who enter high school often lack basic academic foundations such as reading and writing skills due to the parental pressure and management policies to promote every student regardless of their academic standing. It was suggested that strict standards should be established at community-based schools which cannot be bent, especially to pressure from parents.
 5. That community-based schools face a high teacher drop-out rate due to the low salaries and disrespect from administration. It was suggested that the institutions should find ways to increase their teacher salary by increasing external fundings. Furthermore, it was suggested that administration should work to provide a positive working environment to their teachers who can feel appreciated and grow in that environment, causing them to stay longer. That community-based schools lack facilities such as computer labs, science labs, and libraries due to the lack of space and the lack of funding. It was suggested that schools should look to increase their fundings and facilitate students in the space that is available. It was suggested that this can be done by building multifunctional classes.
 6. That community-based schools lack in-class and extra-curricular activities due to the view that these activities distract students from their studies. It was suggested that schools should integrate in their system academically beneficial activities as to deepen the students' understanding and help them develop critical thinking.
 7. That the students of community-based schools receive discouragement from their parents and community due the community's own failures and lack of education. It was suggested that the community should be educated regarding the benefits of education and the opportunities it provides the youth.
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