

Submission to the Universal
Periodic Review of the United
Nations Human Rights Council

4th Cycle – 42nd Session

Country Review: Pakistan

June 2022

by Ntchindi Chilongozi Theu

Broken Chalk is an Amsterdam-based NGO established in 2020 and focused on raising awareness and minimizing human rights violations in the educational field.

Together with our international sponsors and partners, we encourage and support the following activities/projects: removing obstacles in education; contributing to the achievement of peace and tranquillity in society through adaptation studies in an environment of intercultural tolerance; preventing radicalism and polarization, and eliminating the opportunity gap in education for all. Our goal is to work with global partners to remove barriers to education and take concrete steps to ensure universal access to education.



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0. Introduction

1. Broken Chalk is an Amsterdam-based NGO established in 2020 and focused on raising awareness and minimizing human rights violations in the educational field. Together with our international sponsors and partners, we encourage and support the following activities/projects: removing obstacles in education; contributing to the achievement of peace and tranquillity in society through adaptation studies in an environment of intercultural tolerance; preventing radicalism and polarization, and eliminating the opportunity gap in education for all. Our goal is to work with global partners to remove barriers to access to education and take concrete steps to ensure universal access to education.
2. Pakistan has been facing challenges in its educational sector, such as a lack of trained teachers, high dropout rates, vast regional disparities in providing equal opportunities for girls in school, poor building infrastructures, outdated curriculums and many more. This report seeks to explore these problems and provide recommendations.
3. The right to education is a fundamental pillar of children's rights. Achieving universal education, however, is a complex process that requires social policy to join with educational policy to develop strategies that bring about change.

I. Statistical insights

4. One of Pakistan's challenges in the education sector relates to successfully providing an adequate good-quality education to children. About 23 million children aged 5 to 16 years are out of school. The percentage of out-of-school children aged 6 to 16 years is still significantly higher in rural areas, which amounts to 16.7% as opposed to the 5.6% in the urban territories (ASER-Pakistan 2022). In Pakistan, more girls than boys are out of school throughout all levels of education. In the province of Sindh, about 52% of the most impoverished children, of which 58% are girls, are currently out of school. As for Balochistan, a province in southwest Pakistan, about 78% of girls are out of school.
5. The primary gross enrollment ratio in Pakistan increased from 59% in 1990 to 71% in 2000 and 94% in 2019 (UNDP 2020). In 2019, Pakistan's gross primary education enrollment rate was 95.4% nationwide, 102.3% for boys and 87.9% for girls (World Bank 2022). However, out of the figures above, only 70% of the children entering primary school were estimated to reach Grade 5, with considerable provincial differences.
6. Gross and net enrollment rates at the primary, middle, and high school levels in Sindh and Balochistan consistently fall below those in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) (ADB 2019). Low enrollment and student absenteeism in primary schools are consistent concerns in rural areas (Riaz et al., 2015).

II. Educational barriers in the Pakistani Education System

7. Teachers in Pakistan lack professional development as several teachers' training centres and institutions in different provinces of Pakistan have failed to equip teachers the trainee advanced with knowledge and skills. These are primarily due to poor management, lack of funding, and improper training standards, i.e. trainers and administrators. In addition, traditional, outdated curriculums fail to enhance the teachers' skills, motivation, and quality, resulting in a significant lack of professional development.
8. Pakistan has one of the highest drop pt rates in the world. The poor education system, lack of trained teaching staff, poor parent-school relationships, poverty, and child labour are significant factors that contribute to this problem. According to a report by Unicef, 40% of children aged 5 to 6 (22.4 children of the same age group) are not in school. With children's progress on the educational ladder, the student dropout further increases. According to the report, 5 million children were out of school at the primary level, 6.5 billion at mid-level, and 11.3 billion at 5 billion, at the middle class, 6.5 million, and secondary level, 11.3 million children. The dropout rate in females is more than that of male students. According to different reports, the female dropout rate was 32% compared to 21% of male students at the elementary level.
9. The lack of financial means for children to continue their education has been an issue for Pakistani families.
10. Pakistan's educational system is not uniform - different educational systems are followed in the country. For example, various schools in the private and public sectors, including religious seminaries, have other mediums of teaching, curricula, and examination systems. This is a barrier in the country's education sector because it has become a dividing force between the privileged and underprivileged people of the societies leading to polarization, economic disparity, reinforcement of class systems and many more.
11. Over 80% of the total students enrolled in education attend public schools. However, most of these schools do not have the adequate infrastructure needed to enable a positive learning environment. Classrooms tend to be overcrowded, and there are a widespread lack of working electricity, laboratories, playgrounds, libraries, and heating and air conditioning systems. In addition, most schools do not have commuting systems, which exacerbates female dropout rates.

III. Politics in the educational sector

12. Turkish schools in Pakistan and other countries are being unlawfully closed or taken over by order of the Turkish government. According to research, the Gulen movement

established over 63 educational institutions in Africa, 222 in Asia, 150 in Europe, 315 in South and North America, and 10 in Oceania. However, the Turkish government has ordered that all Turkish schools in Pakistan established by the movement must be closed and transfer administration to Maarif foundation, a state-owned foundation for education in Turkey. (Khattak, 2022)

- 13.** The Turkish government's fight against the Gulen movement is strongly causing problems for innocent families who are not part of this politics issues. Therefore, these Political issues and propaganda have taken over the rights to education for students in Pakistan. Upon handing over the schools to the Maarif Foundation, the existing staff that manage the education institutions are unlawfully dismissed, deported, and some are even endangered by the take-over orders from the Turkish government. One affected parent said, "If they are imposing managers on me who have no education experience, I will transfer my children to a French school. I did not choose Maarif; they won't impose anything on me."
- 14.** In the words of Paul Wellstone, "Politics isn't about big money or power games, it's about the improvements of people's lives". However, this is not the case between the Turkish government and the Gulen movement. Their rivalry and political propaganda have become another barrier in the education sector of Pakistan.

IV. Recommendations & Conclusions

Broken Chalk recommends that Pakistan should:

- 15.** Develop a unified system with a single national curriculum that will contribute toward social cohesion, national integration and nation-building.
- 16.** Allocate the resources necessary to ensure public education's high quality and accessibility. Regulate and monitor private schools to address inequality in the education system by building schools, providing supplies and training teachers;
- 17.** Monitor the implementation of the right to education and expose violations;
- 18.** Strengthen the capacity of pre-service teacher training institutions to deliver quality literacy instructions in primary schools.
- 19.** Equip pre-service teachers in colleges of education and universities with the necessary skills to deliver quality literacy instruction in primary schools.
- 20.** Develop and promote high-quality vocational training to enhance the skills of children, especially those who drop out of school, with a particular emphasis on those in rural areas.
- 21.** Standardize and link practical, evidence-based training and content with the primary

school literacy curriculum.

22. Develop a comprehensive strategy aimed at improving water, sanitation, and hygiene in schools, including public awareness-raising activities and monitoring the implementation of the national standards on water and sanitation facilities, and ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for the performance of the strategy;
23. Engage colleges and universities in participatory research projects to have findings that could contribute to solving problems in the educational sector.
24. Give the Pak-Turk schools back to their initial owners; their damages should be duly compensated, and start an immediate open and transparent investigation of the unlawfulness of government officials.

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