

SECTOR BRIEF

Education Sector in Pakistan

By ICMA Research and Publications Department

At independence in 1947, Pakistan's education system was underdeveloped, with 85% illiteracy, especially high among rural women. The country had just one university, the University of the Punjab, and forty colleges across four provinces.

In 1947, a National Education Conference was held with the goal of achieving universal primary education within 20 years. In 1951, a six-year National Plan of Educational Development for 1951-57 was introduced. A Commission on National Education was established in 1958 and submitted its report in 1960.

In March 1970, the first official Education Policy was approved by the Cabinet. This was followed by the National Education Policy (1972-80) in 1972, with further policies introduced in 1979, 1992, and 1998. The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2009 remains in effect today, although draft policies were issued in 2016 and a National Education Policy Framework was proposed in 2018 by the Ministry of Education & Professional Training.

In 1973, the government nationalized schools, established the University Grants Commission (UGC), and founded the People's Open University, later renamed Allama Iqbal Open University. In 2002, the UGC was replaced by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), which now regulates higher education in Pakistan.

Education Levels in Pakistan

Pakistan's education system includes public and private institutions. Key education levels are as under:

- 1) Pre-Primary Education:** Focuses on early childhood development for children aged 3-5. Enrollment in 2022-23 was 12.09 million, a slight drop from 2021-22.
- 2) Primary Education (Classes I-V):** Provides basic literacy and numeracy. Enrollment decreased to 23.8 million in 2021-22 but is projected to rise to 24 million in 2022-23.
- 3) Middle Education (Classes VI-VIII):** Bridges primary and secondary education. Enrollment rose to 8.8 million in 2021-22 and is projected to reach 9.1 million in 2022-23.
- 4) Secondary/High School (Classes IX-X):** Culminates in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams. Enrollment reached 4.5 million in 2021-22 and is expected to grow to 4.6 million in 2022-23.

- 5) Cambridge Examinations (O & A Levels):** British system exams with over 1.6 million entries in 2022, including 226,000 O Level and 125,000 A Level students.
- 6) Higher Secondary/Intermediate (Classes XI-XII):** Leads to the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC); enrollment in 2021-22 was 2.1 million, projected to rise to 2.3 million in 2022-23.
- 7) Degree Colleges (Classes XIII-XIV):** Offers undergraduate programs. Enrollment for 2022-23 is expected to be 620,000 students.
- 8) University Education:** Provides bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. In 2021-22, 2.23 million students were enrolled, projected to grow to 2.41 million in 2022-23.
- 9) Technical and Vocational Education:** Focuses on skill-based training. Enrollment was 0.44 million in 2021-22, with a slight increase expected for 2022-23.

Education Landscape in Pakistan



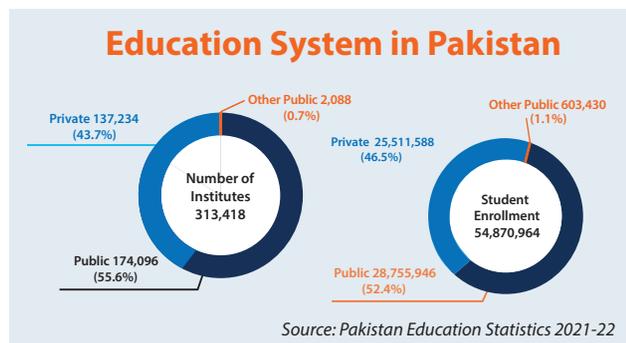
Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2021-22

According to the Pakistan Education Statistics 2021-22, the education sector in Pakistan comprises a vast network of 313,418 institutions that cater to approximately 54.87 million students. This system is supported by a dedicated workforce of 2.14 million educators, highlighting the scale and significance of education in the country. The different types of education institutions in Pakistan are summarized below:

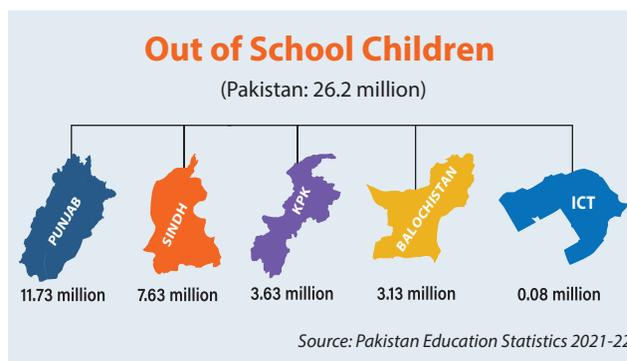
- **Formal Schools:** 227,506 (73%)
- **Religious Schools (Deeni Madaris):** 43,613 (14%)
- **Non-Formal Basic Education Institutes:** 25,106 (8%)
- **Education Foundation Schools:** 10,087 (3%)
- **Technical and Vocational Institutes:** 4,182 (1%)
- **Degree Colleges:** 2,487 (1%)
- **Universities:** 220
- **Teacher Training Institutes:** 217

Pakistan's school education system includes **227,506** institutions serving around **42.58** million students, supported by **1.63** million teachers. There are classified into public and private schools as under:

- **Public Schools:** 174,096 (55.6%)
- **Private Schools:** 137,234 (43.7%)



In Pakistan, public schools enroll **29.36** million students, representing **53.5%** of total enrollment. Of these, **78%** are in primary education, **11%** in middle education, **10%** in high school, and **2%** in higher secondary. Meanwhile, private schools account for **25.51** million students, or **46.5%** of the total enrollment.



In Pakistan, the teaching workforce consists of **1.25** million teachers in private schools, making up **58%** of the total. In contrast, public schools employ **890,000** teachers, accounting for **42%** of teaching workforce.

Pakistan is dealing with a significant issue of Out-of-School Children (OOSC). While the percentage of OOSC dropped from **44%** in 2016-17 to **39%** in 2021-22, the total number has increased from **22.02** million (excluding AJK and GB) to **26.21** million. This rise is mainly due to population growth, showing the ongoing challenge of providing access to education and keeping students in school.

SWOT Analysis of Education Sector in Pakistan

PRIMARY EDUCATION

STRENGTHS

- ◆ Extensive network of over 260,000 institutions.
- ◆ Government supports initiatives for basic education.
- ◆ Availability of free education in public schools.
- ◆ Growing awareness of early childhood education



WEAKNESSES

- ◆ Low literacy rate
- ◆ Dearth of trained teachers
- ◆ Poor infrastructure and inadequate facilities in public schools
- ◆ Low enrollment ratio in schools
- ◆ High dropout rates, especially among girls.
- ◆ Low teacher-to-student ratios in rural areas.
- ◆ Cultural barriers discouraging girls' education.



OPPORTUNITIES

- ◆ National programs improving access and quality.
- ◆ Mobile learning to reach remote areas.
- ◆ Partnerships with NGOs focused on literacy.
- ◆ Increased investment from NGOs and Int'l organizations.
- ◆ Programs aimed at improving gender parity in education.

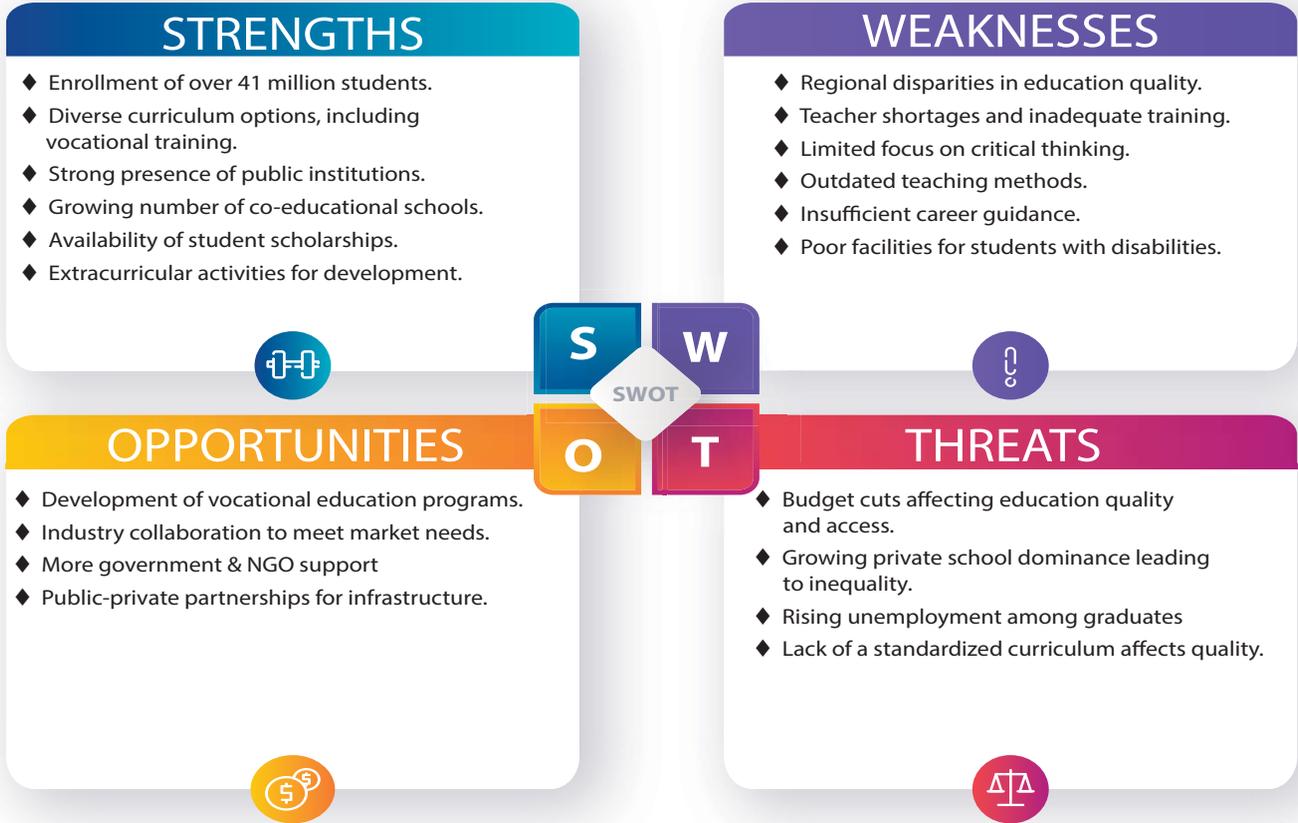


THREATS

- ◆ Security issues affect school attendance.
- ◆ Child labor takes precedence over education.
- ◆ Economic downturns reduce education budgets.
- ◆ Political instability disrupts funding and policies.
- ◆ Natural disasters damage school infrastructure.
- ◆ Socioeconomic disparities limit education access.



SECONDARY EDUCATION



HIGHER EDUCATION

