

*Analyzing the factors for Low Quality of Education in  
Public Schools of Islamabad*



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**CERTIFICATE**

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I am a life-long learner that strives to learn what I can to be the best person. I have a deep interest in research. It leads us to gain information and knowledge about things we urge to know. I always had an interest in the field of education. Hence, I decided to conduct research work on the flaws in the Public Education Sector of our country. This issue is very close to my heart because I have studied in different public sector educational institutes in this country. I want the authorities to make better policies for this sector through highlighting the issues and problems faced by the people related to it. I have earned this M.Phil. Degree because I believe it will open doors in my professional life.

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## **Abstract**

The quality of education in the public schools of Pakistan is very low. The focus of the policymakers has always been on the quantity of education and not the quality. The students studying in the public schools lack the ability of critical thinking. They do not have reasoning skills. There are a number of obstacles in the provision of quality education in these schools. The education is being provided free in the public schools but it is of very low quality. I have analyzed the different elements that lead towards low quality of education. The issues faced by the teachers and students in these publics are also examined in this study.

A quality education is the one that focuses on the whole child—the social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of each student. It prepares the students for life and not just for testing. A student who gained quality education can imagine things, make judgments and think on his own.

The students of the public schools of Islamabad are just good at learning by rote and memorization. They cannot think and write on their own. The teachers are teaching using medieval teaching techniques. The Federal Board of Education remains unable to make policies that ensure quality education in these schools. The pattern of evaluation is obsolete.

This study used a qualitative approach to explain the factors responsible for the low quality of education in public schools of Islamabad. The students, who participated in this study, are selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. The semi structured interview technique is used for conducting the interviews of the participants.

Methodology used for this research included interviews with 60 participants from two different schools in the Islamabad city. Field notes were also collected during the course of data collection. The data which is collected through the interviews and field notes is used to make themes. A total of eight themes are created to answer the research questions posed by this study.

## **CHAPTER 1 Introduction:**

### **1.1 Background:**

Education is the process of simplifying the act of learning, acquiring information, attaining general knowledge and understanding ideologies and philosophies. Education is perceived as pre requisite for development. The developing countries of the world spend a larger chunk of their budget on education. The difference between the developed and underdeveloped countries is due to the gaps of knowledge (World Bank Report, 1998-99).

There are a number of factors that leads to low quality of education. When these factors accumulate within a specific education system, the provision of quality education becomes impossible. They include unsuitable teaching methods, ineffective system of examination, poor learning environment etc. If the administrators of the institutes or schools are quite clueless about these elements, it contributes to low quality of education. They may not fully aware of the issues faced by the students and the teachers, whereas sometimes they choose to ignore them despite knowing fully. The poor teaching practices leads to rote learning and decreases the interest of the students in the studies. The quality of education is highly dependent on quality of teaching staff, curricula and evaluation systems (Education Review, 2016).

In Pakistan, the public education sector has always been neglected in terms of finances and policy making. There are a number of factors which are blamable for the low quality of education. This country allocates only 2-2.5% percent of the total budget for the education sector and this percentage has never reached to 3 percent in the seven long decades. There is no trend of sufficiently investing in the human capital. The teachers are under trained and dismayed. The students are not motivated enough to study for their own good. The role of household in the academic life of a larger population of the students is almost next to nothing. There are number of problems in the public education sector of Pakistan which contributes to the low quality of education. The policymakers are unable to solve these



issues. The quality of education in private schools is relatively better as compared to the public schools. The schools run by the government in the country are producing students with no skills and capabilities. The majority of the population prefers to send their children to public schools just because of ease and affordability (Khan and Mahmood, 1997).

### **1.2 Problem Statement:**

An ideal system of education develops reasoning skills and intellect in the students. Quality education enables people to develop all of their attributes and skills to achieve their potential as human beings and members of society. In Pakistan, the focus of the policymakers is on the quantitative expansion and thus the education system lacks quality.

This research needs to be conducted because the quality of education has always remained a major problem in Pakistan. The factors, which are responsible for the low quality of education in the public sector schools, need to be investigated. There are numerous issues faced by the students, teachers and administration of these schools. The quality of education is not improved in the public schools despite efforts have been made to resolve these issues in the past. In an under developed country like Pakistan, education plays a vital role in the nation building, hence it is important to focus on the quality of education. Well learned students will perform better in their professional lives which eventually benefit the country.

### **1.3 Objectives of the study:**

- To investigate the obstacles in the way of provision of quality education in the public schools of Islamabad.
- To analyze the issues faced by the students in the public schools.
- To examine the problems faced by the teachers in the public schools.

## 1.4 Research Questions:

This research will answer the following questions.

1. Which factors are responsible for the low quality of education in public sector schools of Islamabad?
2. What are the issues faced by the students in the public schools?
3. What are the problems faced by the teachers in the public schools?

## 1.5 Significance of the study:

The findings of this research will explain in depth the elements that are responsible for the low quality of education in the public schools of Islamabad. The quality of education in the public schools of this city is considered relatively better than the rest of the country. Hence this study would rate the highest quality of education provided by the state in qualitative terms. This research would be conducted while spending time in the schools and observing the classes. Hence the readers will have the knowledge which is otherwise difficult to gain through the numerical information provided by surveys. The focus of this research is on the data collection through interviewing in order to understand the teaching-learning process occurring inside the classrooms. The conclusion of this research would provide valuable suggestions in order to make the corrective educational policies accordingly. The recommendations provided would throw light on the apparently overlooked yet central problems within the education system hence will be proved useful for the policymakers.

This is an **interview based qualitative research**. The tools for the data collection would be semi structured interviews, unstructured interviews and focus group discussions. This study would be done through conducting interviews from teachers, students and principals of the two public schools of Urban Islamabad i.e. I.M.S. no 1 (1-V), G-9/2 and I.M.C.G I-8/4. I have developed an interview guide through which approximately 50 to 60 questions would be asked from every

respondent. These questions would acquire the information related to the issues faced by them which pave hurdles in the way of provision of quality education. The sampling techniques chosen are convenience sampling and purposive sampling.

### **1.6. Research Gap:**

The literature which I reviewed for this study focuses more on the structural issues when it comes to the drawbacks in the education sector of Pakistan. It studies the quantitative as well as qualitative factors responsible for the low quality of education but the psychological and ideological problems have not yet been discussed in detail. It is quite vital to address and investigate these issues. Therefore, in this study, I would investigate and examine the factors of all kind which are responsible for low quality of education. This study would be critical of every actor who is part of the education sector. Researchers and social scientists often compare the education policies of the developed and under developed countries but this study would throw light on the factors which inhibit the formulation and implementation of those policies in our part of the world. Hence, this piece of research would be useful in order to understand the structural as well as social issues responsible for low quality of education in Pakistan.

## **CHAPTER 2:**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the literature studied for this piece of research work. It includes a vast number of research articles, papers and 4 books which I have studied for writing this chapter. It explains in detail the topic of research. It defines the term quality education. It throws light on the plight of education sector of Pakistan. This chapter also brings our attention towards the determinants of quality education.

#### **2.1 Lack of Adequate Funds:**

One of the major reasons behind the poor plight of education sector in Pakistan is the non-availability of adequate funds needed to run a system efficiently. This sector is highly abandoned by the government of Pakistan in terms of fiscal support and backing. The budgetary allocation for this area has never risen to 3 percent of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The insufficient resources are responsible for its lowly performance. Almost every other report regional or international, points towards the ineffective policies made by the policymakers, but the right policies need resources for their implementation. The teaching profession is one of the most under paid professions in the country due to which there is a dearth of motivation and hard work in school teachers. (Zafar, 2003)

#### **2.2 Issues Related to The Teachers:**

The compromise on the merit has always remained a vital reason behind the deteriorating quality of education in Pakistan. The process of recruitment of school teachers is influenced by the political interference. The local MPAs and other politicians directly or indirectly play a role in the appointment of teachers especially in the rural areas of Pakistan. After the initiation of their services, these teachers are bounded to act in accordance with the instructions of their appointers. They lack professional

liberty and teaching capabilities. The teachers who are appointed on the basis of anything but merit are not supposed to be good professionals (Saleem, 2002).

A determinant of the low quality of education is the inefficiency of teachers. Majority of the teachers in Pakistan lack the ability to update their knowledge with the course of time. The world is experiencing huge changes and the societies are facing variations with each day passed. Teaching profession requires constant updating. Teachers are needed to update themselves with the latest theories and piece of researches in their subjects. It will help them to vast their knowledge. Well-read teachers produce well-read students. In Pakistan, unfortunately, there is no trend of upgrading knowledge among the teachers. These teachers depend entirely on what they studied in their college days and teach accordingly. They lack the recent knowledge and researches due to which their teaching remains poor (Farooq, 1990)

The schooling in the public sector schools of Pakistan depends entirely on rote learning. It is because the teachers working in these schools lack professional skills hence they are unable to develop the analytical skills in their students. The teachers are unable to make their students think, analyze and criticize. The teachers give no attentions towards promoting their students to ask questions and understand the concepts in depth. Thus the only way to make the students pass the exams is to encourage him for rote learning. The understanding of the concepts has a lot to do with critical thinking. The students taught by such teachers also lack social and leadership skills (British Council, 1988)

There is a significant role of parents in the academic life of their children. In Pakistan, parental participation is insufficient in this regard. The success or failure of the students is entirely dependent on the performance of the teachers and the students themselves. A teacher is the most important actor in the academic life of a student but at the same time the parents are required to play their part too. The participation of parents in the learning process of their children is very crucial. The main reason behind

this minimal participation of the parents is that either the parents are illiterate or they do not consider it a part of their job. They send their children to schools and put their entire responsibility on the teachers. The parents are not aware of the fact that the grades of the students are related with the role of teachers as well as parents (Muhammad, 2002).

There is a flaw in the procedure of assignment of subjects to the teachers. For instance, a teacher who has a degree in Mathematics will be asked to teach social studies in a primary school. When a person is not given the subject in which he or she has a degree, they should not be expected to teach the best. It is the story of every other school especially in the schools which are located in the remote areas where there is a dearth of teachers.

There are a number of elements of a curriculum but a teacher having a key position can play a vital role in enriching it. Teachers are of chief importance when it comes to uplifting the standard of education. In Pakistan, there is a severe shortage of qualified teachers. There are various problems faced by the teachers which include little salaries, low social status, obsolete curricula, dearth of intellectual liberty etc. Different committees are made to analyze the benefits of highly paid and efficiently trained teachers since the beginning. A compromise made on the quality of education in Pakistan when people with low qualification were appointed as teachers in order to enhance the quantity of female teachers in 1970s. In 1980s, during Zia's regime, a few kinds of indigenous schools were introduced for the sake of increasing the literacy rate in the country (Siddiqui, 2010).

The teachers of the public sector schools are not fully trained and they lack content knowledge. The development of a teacher is composed of three elements i.e. skills, attitude and knowledge. The entire emphasis of the policymakers is on the lack of knowledge and teaching skills whereas the issue of attitude is highly ignored and hardly discussed. The teacher training programs are unable to alter the attitude of teachers. The teachers after attending these programs become more well-informed, but they still lack efficient teaching skills. It is a difficult task to improve the quality of teachers and teachers'

education. The state machinery is not able to make policies in this regard but not able to implement these policies. One main reason behind this inability to implement the policies is the non-involvement of the major stakeholders i.e. teachers and students in the process of formulation of policies. Another reason behind this mess is the lack of active monitoring and accountability system (Siddiqui, 2010).

### **2.3 Role of Curriculum:**

Curriculum is one of the most important factors that determine the quality of education. It is considered as a foundation of the education sector. In Pakistan, it is developed and approved by the provincial ministries. It is composed of a number of subjects which are going to be taught in the schools. As the process of teaching is led by the teachers so they should be the major stakeholders in the development of the curriculum. In case of Pakistan, the role of a teacher is of an implementer of the curriculum proposed by the policy makers and other government officials. Teachers are not consulted during the process of development of the curriculum. They are just provided with it when it is developed already and are urged to follow it in their respective jobs (Hoodbhoy, 1998).

The performance of the teachers is highly associated to the quality of the curriculum. If the curriculum covers all the recent developments of the world, it will help the teachers to teach the students the recent phenomena, theories and ideas. This practice eventually will increase the quality of education in the schools. Contrary to our case, teachers are considered an important part of the committees responsible for the development of the curriculum and they are taken on board during the whole process. If the teachers will not participate in that process they will have little know how of the dimensions of the curriculum. Hence they are unable to implement it in the best possible way (Government of Pakistan, 2001)

Text book is one of the chief elements that define the learning process. It is an important source of gaining knowledge for the learners. The contents of a text books are of crucial importance because they play a vital role in enhancing the knowledge of the students. The quality of education is directly

related to what has been taught to the students. Text Books containing lessons having easier and deeper explanations of the ideas will help them to have good understanding of the basic concepts (Farooq, 1993).

The curricula devised for the schools should be relevant to the students. It should be in accordance with the practical understanding of the pupils. It should provide the opportunity to conduct experiments in order to nourish the practical skills of the students. Most of the times, students are unable to connect the material being taught to them with their everyday life. This will lead to loss of interest in the subject (Serpell, 1993).

The teacher of the public sector schools are strictly instructed to cover the whole syllabus in the definite time. The syllabus is not in accordance with the time period given to teach it. It puts a huge burden on the teachers which adversely affects their teaching capabilities. The teachers are more concerned about completing the task given to them and less concerned about teaching it in an efficient manner. There is no time for them to develop analytical and communication skills in the students. These skills possess great significance in the determination of the future success of the students (Khalid, 1998).

In an underdeveloped country like Pakistan, a commonly used tool for exerting power is curricula. Textbooks are a huge and primary source of knowledge 'for the student body of a country. Youth is considered as a backbone of any country. In the history of the world, a large number of revolutions were initiated by the students. In case of Pakistan, the freedom movement was fueled by the students of Aligarh University. Students unions can be united for and against the state. The knowledge propagated by textbooks is used to control minds of the students. It is also aimed at disseminating the state narrative among the youth. The narrative which suits the state is considered an official truth. Anyone who rejects or objects to the official narrative is considered anti-national. The state is often involved in manipulating the people to ensure its interests. Hence curricula and textbooks are used to create discourse which goes in favor of the state (Naseem, 2010).



A problem faced by the teachers working in the distant areas is the lack of accommodation facilities. The government does not provide accommodation to school teachers who are working away from their homes. There is no trend of building residential colonies for the teachers. This loop in the policy making negatively influences the overall performance of a teacher. The teachers, who are paid less and accommodation not given, are not fully satisfied with their jobs. They find it difficult to arrange for an accommodation in distant areas while having minimal salaries. When the level of satisfaction is low among the teachers, they do not perform their duties to the fullest due to which the poor students do suffer (Husain, 2001).

In Pakistan, textbooks which are part of the school curriculum are not up to the required standard. The organization, content and language of these books are faulty. There is also presence of content which is insensitive and derogatory towards certain communities and ethnicities in these books. Internationally, a systematic approach is used to develop the content of the textbooks which includes a movement from simple to difficult. In Pakistan, the pedagogical rules are not followed strictly. There is a rigid trend of following only one book for a single subject in the public schools. There is no concept of using alternative books to halt the domination of one fixed book. There is no freedom for the teachers to choose a textbook which is more applicable to their surroundings. The measure to establish National Book Foundation (NBF) was proposed in Education policy of 1972. Another issue, related to the curriculum is its execution. It is not so difficult to make policies and design curriculum. The real difficulty lies with the execution of the curriculum because it entirely depends on the excellence of teachers (Siddiqui, 2010).

## **2.4 Evaluation Systems:**

Another determinant of the low quality education is low grade evaluation system. The external examination system encourages the students to adopt rote learning in order to get good grades. It also puts extra burden and stress on the students which is not good for their mental health. This whole

procedure is full of flaws. The external examiners are paid inadequately to check the exams so their performance is in accordance with the payments made to them against paper checking. Evaluation is a key indicator of the performance of the education system. There should be a drastic change in the paper evaluation system. This obsolete examination system should be reconsidered by the policymakers in order to make the overall education system efficient (Government of Pakistan, 1978).

A number of developed countries have reformed their education sector through introducing reforms in the evaluation systems. Following their way, Report of the national commission of education 1959 suggested a number of ways to mend the system of evaluation in Pakistan. This report has described in detail the flaws and impacts of the prevailed examination system. It has also recommended numerous measures to increase the standard of the evaluation system but unluckily none of those measures has ever been implemented in the country. Our education system has badly stuck in a vicious circle which starts at the substandard process of learning and teaching and ends at an obsolete system of evaluation (Government of Pakistan, 1990).

## **2.5 Ghost schools:**

There is a concept of ghost schools in Pakistan. These schools are not existed in reality. They have their existence in the official documents only. They are mostly associated with the rural areas. Their buildings are destroyed and are used for activities other than academics. Most of the buildings are taken over by the local landlords. The ghost teachers apparently working in these schools draw their salaries regularly. They are receiving salaries but in return they are not performing duties for the education departments. Efforts have been made in order to convert these schools in to functioning schools in the last two decades. It can be done when the authorities of the education department vigilantly monitor these schools in the remote areas (Ghazi, 2010).

In Pakistan, there are three main types of primary & secondary educational institutes i.e. private schools, public schools and Madrasahs. The quality of education in the public and private sector

schools varies greatly. The standard of the education in the private schools is far better. The students studying in these schools are able to score better in the competitive exams as compare to the students studying in the public sector schools. They have a solid grip over English language which is significant to achieve higher scores in every subject. Due to English proficiency, these students are able to deliver good in the interviews conducted by universities and offices. A social conflict has been created in the country due to presence of these different types of educational institutes. The curriculum being taught in the religious madrasahs is unable to make them aware of the happenings in the outside world. These students are deprived of the universally taught subjects such as natural sciences, social sciences, mathematics and English language. These students have no scope in the job market and compelled to spend their lives in poverty (Ghazi, 2010).

## **2.6 Lack of motivation in students:**

There is a lack of motivation among the students to study for the sake of getting education. There is a general perspective in the people that one should study to get a job or earn a livelihood. This is a very reason behind encouraging only their boys to study and no such encouragement is dedicated to the girls of the society. The basic reason behind getting education is to earn and run the kitchen. Majority of the students consider the process of schooling as a burden which is necessary for the survival. They do not enjoy the course of classes and study at the school. Another reason behind the lack of motivation among the students at the higher level is the level of employment prevailing in the country. Students with degrees in hands are not able to get a job because there are much lesser vacancies available as compared to the number of fresh degree holders graduated per year. The downfall of the economy is also a determinant of the dearth of motivation in the students.

There has always been a lack of quality research in the academic circle of Pakistan. Research is a tool to discover new ways to find solutions of the different problems faced by the people in their daily lives. It provides a better know how of what is happening around us. Apart from the financial and managerial

issues, another key reason behind the low quality of research is the low level of tolerance for the dissent in the country. Pakistan is a conservative country where discussing, analyzing or criticizing a number of ideas and subjects is prohibited. These restrictions negatively affect the process of research. There is no trend of urging students to ask questions in the schools, colleges and universities. The students do not develop the skills to analyze or criticize for which the teachers are responsible. The higher education totally depends on the research work conducted in the universities. The financial issue faced by the higher education system of Pakistan has been resolved in the last decade. During General Musharraf's tenure, this sector has started receiving huge amount of financial resources. The issue of quality research work is still there. The quality of research is not entirely dependent on the budget; it has much to do with critical analysis and deep study of a desired topic. Now it is the responsibility of the universities to produce research papers which are of high quality and can be published in the international journals (Rasool, 2007).

Every student is motivated to study in the early years of his academic life. A student of play group or Montessori level is always motivated to study. A student steps in a school for the aim of getting education and learning new things. He is mentally prepared for the activities to acquire education. We see a decline in the level of motivation among the students with the course of time. As the time passes, the urge of students to learn things gets low. Some of the students leave their studies before graduation and they can't make it to tertiary or university level. Some of them are bodily present in the classrooms but they remain absent minded most of the times. The passion for learning tends to decrease over time. First we have to understand the meaning of word "motivation" in this regard. A student's motivation is his wish to engage in the process of learning. There are a number of reasons which are responsible for making a student unmotivated towards studies. When a student is enthusiastic to study, he will enjoy every bit of the process of learning and will take keen interest in pursuing the academic activities. The students, who like the process of learning, often choose the tasks or activities that are relatively challenging. These students have an innate urge to discover and learn new ideas, hence they keep on

experimenting. On the contrary, the students, who studies for sake of reward, select easy tasks to do. They are not in favor of doing activities in which they need to face difficulties. They prefer easy route to success and hence it reflects in their choice of activities (Mark Lepper, 1988).

Every student should be motivated to study but their source of motivation may vary. Some students enjoy the course of study and the satisfaction they get through it. These students get the feelings of accomplishments after they learn something. On the other hand, one source can be achievement of a reward or avoidance of any penalty. These sources will define how effectively a child would learn. The environment a child gets in his home determines his ability to get motivated. Some parents who develop the curiosity to discover things in their children through encouraging them to question. The children belonging to such homes develop positive attitude towards learning. There is a natural curiosity in them to learn new ideas. It is the responsibility of the parents to foster their natural curiosity. The parents can make this possible through providing their children an environment which is favorable and encouraging for learning. It is observed that the students in their early age work harder as the compare to the students who have been studying since years. The level of putting effort tends to decrease with time (JereBrophy, 1987).

There is a phenomenon called “attribution retraining” in which special attention is given to weak students in order to help them. These students are helped through special practices and exercises. The motive behind these practices is to help students to avoid the fear of failures, find and rectify their mistakes and correctly judge the reason behind their failures. The students should consider the low level of effort or hard work as a primary source behind their failure. A student has the ability to work hard than before. When a student considers lack of ability as a reason behind their failure, it would negatively affect the process of learning. Such students soon become disappoint and leave their studies. They think that they are not capable of learning, so in their opinion there is question of putting effort in a process which is beyond one’s capabilities. The environment of a classroom is of crucial

importance when it comes to the process of learning. If a student gets value, admiration and reverence in a classroom, he will more keenly engage in the learning process. The positive attitude of the surroundings will have a positive effect on the attitude of a student (Brophy, 1986).

## **2.7 Teacher Training:**

The training of the schools teachers is the responsibility of the respective provincial governments. The teachers are trained through education training programs of the Allama Iqbal University and teacher training courses conducted in the public schools. The teachers who received training through these institutions are provided with Certificate in Teaching (CT) or Primary Teaching Certificate. There are two types of training programs for the teachers. One is the crash courses for the newly inducted teachers and the other one is the refresher course for the teachers already teaching in the public schools. The duration of the crash programs is three months. The refresher courses are offered to a teacher in every five years. These courses are compulsory for the teachers. The effectiveness of these courses is judged through evaluating their impact on increasing the quality of education. It is assumed that the thoroughly trained teachers are able to teach efficiently. These teachers training programs will also influence the learning of the students hence the teaching-learning process will be better off through these programs. It is observed that there is a severe lack of training facilities in the country. Some teachers are near their retirement age and they have never attended a single training course in their entire teaching career.

## **2.8 Extra-curricular activities:**

It is observed that a number of activities can be advantageous in order to foster the literacy development in the students of kindergarten. Multiple literacy practices should be done to these students in order to make their psychological development favorable to understand simple things. These activities may include playing games, watching educational programs on television, conversations between the students during meal time, reading books, writing and drawing, watching

cartoons, outdoor activities etc. It is important to develop certain skills in the children through performing these activities in the very early age. The activities apart from regular teaching-learning process are helpful to make students more creative. It will enhance the general knowledge and phonological awareness in the students. It is very important to develop a friendly environment for the students which enable them to learn efficiently. The students should be mentally healthy in order to think and understand. The process of learning through co-curricular activities is a universal way of efficient learning (Baker et al, 1994).

A key challenge for the education sector of Pakistan is that students who are enrolled in a school are not learning anything. This problem is also a reason behind a high dropout ratio. A larger chunk of the country's population is poor; they have no option to secure a better future other than to send their children to public schools. The financial issues are on one side, the children, studying a school having good infrastructure, furniture, washrooms and teachers, are not able to learn anything. A number of surveys are conducted in the country by public sector or NGOs in order to rate the quality of education. According to a survey by LEAPS, in Punjab, only thirty one percent of the students studying in the third grade of primary schools were able to write a correct sentence in Urdu language and only fifty five percent of the total fifth graders can read a story book in Urdu language (Nadia Naviwala, 2016).

## **2.9 Medium of instruction:**

Another problem faced by the students in the villages and small towns is the lack of understanding and fluency of the language used as a medium of instruction in the schools i.e. Urdu. For example, the students studying in the interior Punjab find it difficult to understand the concepts and lessons taught in Urdu language. Majority of the students speak their mother tongues at their homes, so they lack the basic understanding of the language. They are unable to learn the concept and read the text books which are written in Urdu and English. This problem related to the medium of instruction is wide

spread in the country. This will lead to a difficulty in absorbing the material provided to the students (Nadia Naviwala, 2016).

Efforts were made to make English language the medium of instruction in the public schools. Majority of the teachers in Punjab do not know the basic know how of the English language hence this is not a realistic step to make. It is necessary for a student to understand the language of the teacher and the textbook in order to have a grip over the subject. Some educationists in the country are in favor of adopting this measure while others are not. An important question raised through this debate is that how can the teachers who themselves have no fluency in the English language will be able to teach the language itself or teach the other subjects in this language. Another problem is the presence of the students of a number of grades/classes in a single classroom. This issue is due to the lack of classrooms in a school. This will decrease the efficiency of the students because the material taught to them would not match to the academic level of the students. The teacher would be unable to decide that text books of which grade should be taught in the class (Nadia Naviwala, 2016)

## **2.10 Mismanagement of Financial Resources:**

There is an infrequently discussed issue of education sector which is the mismanagement of the financial resources. A larger chunk of the education budget goes to the salaries of the teachers. The number of government teachers in Pakistan is greater than the number of people working in armed forces. Whenever the education budget is increased, there are increments in the salary structure of the teachers. No one pays attention to spend the additional budget to increase the quality of education in the primary schools. In reality, our policymakers have no idea how to do it. Even if some people have the idea to make policies, they have no sense how these policies would be implemented. The quality of education is a very subjective topic. In order to work in this dimension, first we have to understand the term “quality of education” and its determinants. Policies should be made to make effective use of the financial resources allocated to the education sector. Instead of increasing the salary budget, the



expenditure should be increased for improving the quality of textbooks and class lectures. Introduction of multimedia in the classrooms can be an important measure in this regard (Nadia Naviwala, 2016).

### **2.11 Attitude of the teachers:**

There is lack of motivation in the teachers. Teachers do not want to perform. A various schemes of teacher training were introduced in the country, but still teachers are not performing up to the mark. In Pakistan, a person who is not able to become anything becomes a teacher just to earn a livelihood. People are not choosing this profession out of passion. Hence they do not do their duties passionately. Teachers lack the capability to teach. Punjab has always been ahead in the education reforms. A number of monitoring units were developed across the province, which are responsible to monitor the schools every month. The former Chief Minister of Punjab, Mian Shahbaz Sharif used to work on the principle of “Deliverology”. The education bureaucracy was urged to do work and report on time. Latest technology was provided to these monitoring units, they had to visit the schools and make a record of attendance of teachers and pupils in the class, state of the classrooms etc. The online availability of the data was made sure during his tenure. The motive behind adopting these measures were to create an atmosphere of fear and strictness which is believed to be necessary for the people in Pakistan to work (Nadia Naviwala, 2016).

The problems faced by the Sindh province are huge and complex. The political interference in the education system is at the highest level in this province. Teachers wholeheartedly opposed the otherwise appreciated measure of the government to make digital records of the teachers. There were a huge number of teachers which was not appointed by the Education Ministry of Sindh. They were either promoted illegally or ghost teachers. In 2015, the provincial government took a massive step and directed all the school teachers to come and verify themselves biometrically. The verification center was established earlier in Larkana and later in Karachi. The salaries of the teachers not verified were stopped. This step was strictly opposed by the teachers. After the intervention of the Supreme

Court, the government had to take back this measure. According to the ruling, the families of the (ghost) employees should not suffer. It is the flaw in the thought process and thinking of the people in Pakistan. They believe once they get a government job, they are entitled to receive salaries even if they are not performing at all. Pakistan is illogically and wrongly considered a welfare state in this regard (Nadia Naviwala, 2016).

## **2.12 Education in Japan:**

There is a considerable difference between the population of Japan and Pakistan, but the number of schools in Japan is more than 30 times as compared to the number of schools in Pakistan. There are a total of 35 lakhs primary schools in Japan. According to Pakistan Education Statistics, there are 1,45,829 primary schools out of which 1,25,829 are public schools. The quality of education in Japan is considered one of the most highest in the world. The Japanese students score highest positions in numerical and intellect based international tests and competitions. In Japanese schools, the quality of lessons is mattered and not the quantity. The system of education is unique there. (Malik, 2017).

In this section, the education policies of Japan are discussed to have a comparison of the system of education in both the countries. This will help the readers to have an insight of the techniques used for providing quality education. It is essential to know the services being provided to the students and teachers living in the developed world in order to understand the issues faced by our students and teachers. For this purpose, I have reviewed the book named “Primary School in Japan, Self-individuality and learning in elementary education”.

### **Encouraging the individuality among the students:**

The motive of education is to develop certain characteristics in the people such as cooperation, sensitivity, independence, creativity and discipline. Education is necessary for the sharpening of the selves. The chief duty of the Japanese schools is to produce well desired human beings. This discourse

regarding the role of schools has been changed due to change in the economic arena of the country. Now the main focus of the schools is on respecting the idea of individuality among the students (Cave, 2007).

### **Japan's Educational Reform Program:**

The Government of Japan has devised an education reform program which gained worldwide attention in the 90s. The world became curious to know the recipe behind the success and uniqueness of the Japan's education system. At that time, Japan was named as the number one in the education sector (Vogel, 1979).

The key element in the education reform program was proposed in a report submitted by the advisory council formed by the government in 1987. The major focus of this report was on lifelong learning, internationalization, higher level of individuality and information technology. The emphasis on the individuality was a factor which remained missing from the education policy of the country since the beginning. It has impacted the students in a positive way along with the introduction of a revised curriculum. This new curriculum was introduced with the motive of developing interest and motivation among the students. It had urged the students to study and learn for one self with interest and not for the sake of gaining knowledge only (Kariya, 2002).

Another major change made was the introduction of the experiential needs and giving importance to the individual needs of the students. The Social Studies and Science subjects were replaced by a new subject known as "Daily Life". The intention behind the introduction of this subject was to improve the learning capabilities of the students (Monbusho, 1989).

One of the major flaws in the schooling system of Japan was the lack of socialization among the students. Students used to study most of the time and lesser time was available for other activities. It is the need of the hour to make students more social and creative in order to prepare them to cope with

the rapidly changing social and economic environment. The demands of the economy are much diverse and complex. The students should be able to learn and think wisely in order to identify and solve the problems for themselves. Such students would be able to perform best in the markets and would eventually contribute well to the economy of the country (Monbusho, 1996).

The students in the primary schools should on one hand have the characteristics of cooperation and sociality and on the other hand they must possess the qualities like creativity, individuality and independence to cope with the newly derived demands of the economy. A new policy made the school week of five working days from previously five and a half working days. It is observed that more free time available to students will definitely contribute to the brightening of their learning capabilities. In 1998, the content and time duration of the compulsory subjects were cut short in order to more time for elective subjects. In the meanwhile, an advanced subject “Integrated Studies” was introduced. The main motive of introducing this subject was to transfer the ability of the students explore, think and learn (Monbusho, 1996).

There is a pattern of dependence on the parents in the Japanese children. The kids feel the sense of obligation towards their mothers because she made a lot of sacrifices in order to raise her child. The inter dependence on the mother exists due to this sense of obligation and it is widespread in the whole nation. This dependence is not just ontological or inevitable but it is also a result of hierarchical relationships. So while focusing on the concept of interdependent self should not be forgotten. (DeVos, 1974)

There is a strong emphasis on the group projects by the teachers in Japanese primary schools. The students are directed to work on a project collectively and behave as individual group members. The advantage of creating such groups is that a deep sense of distinctiveness and individuality can be generated. Another benefit of this joint activity is that it throws the light on the evils of social control such as alienation of students, bullying, psychological issues (Fukuzama, 1994).

Jerome Bruner, who was an American Psychologist, introduced the powerful concept of “scaffolding”. It is a process which includes helping a student to teach him or her how to do a certain task. This process of help may include eliminating obstacles, simplifying the task and highlighting significant ideas (that the student might ignore) (Wood, 1998).

The writings of Jean Lave have influenced the idea of sociocultural pedagogy. According to her, the learning by the students would be highly efficient if students can be able to relate what they are being taught to their daily lives. The material which students are learning in the classrooms should be applicable to circumstances outside the classroom. These views are supported by the qualitative data showing the behavior of the American people. These people find it easy to do mathematics at a supermarket but they find it problematic to solve similar mathematical problems which they studied in the schools. The concepts studied in the textbooks do not exist in isolation, they have relations to broader systems in general (Lave, 1988).

### **Research centers in the schools:**

Some schools in Japan have research centers within the premises of the schools in which research work is conducted. In these primary schools, the research lessons for the teachers are organized on a weekly basis. These seminars are helpful for the teachers to learn certain things which improve their ways of teaching. The teachers are made aware of the different interests of the students. Teachers are urged to respect the individuality of their students. The schools in which teachers are trained through regular research sessions have a great reputation. There is a practice of teachers transferring at regular basis in Japan. This process of exchange of teachers makes it easier for the schools, in which these research lessons are not conducted for some reason, to have teachers of high standing. The aim of these efforts is to make teachers alter their methods of teaching and adopt unique and advanced teaching methods (Cave, 2007).

### **Role of a teacher in Japan:**

Special attention should be given to the arrangement of a class. It is the responsibility of a teacher to create a friendly environment in the classroom. It is made sure that the students are studying in a disciplined and harmonious atmosphere. The role of a teacher is very important in this regard. It would be easier to make groups in the class when there is a strong bond of intimacy and friendship among the students. These groups are beneficial for the learning, understanding and discussion by the class. The students have to perform in the form of groups when it comes to sports and other extra-curricular activities (Oguma, 1993).

In primary schools of Japan, the students are taught to do community work in order to make them useful members of the society. Groups of students are made separately for the purpose of cleaning of the classrooms. At afternoons, lunch is served to the students in their classes. Some members of a group are responsible for fetching the lunch from the kitchens and it is the duty of the others to serve it to the entire class. These activities are helpful to build a sense of responsibility and cooperation among the students. There is a concept of class meetings in the Japanese schools. These meetings are held and organized by the students in which often teachers are also invited. These meetings are aimed at discussing and solving the problems of the students. The issues which are discussed are of prime concern to all. The weaknesses and strengths of the students are discussed (Cave, 2007).

### **Volunteering in Japan's schools:**

The simple acts of care, help and apathy should be a part of students, learning at his schools. In Japanese schools, students are provided the opportunities through which they can indulge in volunteer activities. The students of various public schools in Japan had volunteered their services during the disastrous earthquake in 1995. Such activities lead to responsible social interactions among the students. Apart from other practices, the activities related to the physical fitness of the students are also made mandatory. It is very significant for the students to be mentally and physically healthy for

the sake of collective learning. The hygiene and health of the students is a matter of utmost importance. There is a trend of daily exercises and weekly running competition in the schools (Cave, 2007).

When some positive qualities are developed in the children in their early age, its impacts can be highly visible at the national level later on. Some emotions and sensibilities can be injected in the students by developing conscience. In Japan, the stories of empathy are a crucial part of the textbooks. The stories on the topics of love, sacrifice, respect and empathy can also serve to this purpose. Teachers help their students in order to develop moral autonomy and able to tackle or settle their issues themselves independently. The development of moral autonomy is not something which would negatively affect the sense of cooperation among the students. In fact moral autonomy and cooperation both are complementary to each other (Cave, 2007).

### **Individuality vs. deviant behavior:**

We have to understand the minor difference between individuality and deviant behavior. The primary school teachers often face deviant behaviors of their students which may include ear piercing, nail polishing, unsuitable shoes, bunking classes etc. In Japan, the students are neither judged nor discriminated for their deviant behavior. They are also not forced to do what others around them think right. Instead a lenient approach is adopted towards these issues. These students are guided by the teachers to adopt favorable things choose the right themselves. The deviant behavior cannot be overlooked because it can affect the overall discipline of the school (Cave, 2007).

### **Kokugo:**

A new subject introduced in the Japanese schools through Education Reform Program in 1990s i.e. Kokugo. This subject has the material related to the knowledge of self and personal identity. It is very essential for a person to know himself. The students in the primary schools are urged to do activities of their very own choice and discover that which sort of activities they enjoy. It helps them to realize

their interests. The children get the opportunity to know each other's perspective through these practices of the Kokugo. The lessons in this subject sharpens the thinking ability of the students, it is also aimed at developing the emotion of sympathy, love and understanding of their indigenous customs and traditions. It also helps the students to learn the meaning of concepts like life, death, afterlife, God etc. through poetry (Cave, 2007).

In Japan, the students of a primary school are exposed to a number of stories and are encouraged to write the accounts of these stories. The students feel free to write on sheets what they think of that story and especially about the aspect which impressed them the most. Students explain their viewpoints and the teachers ask them questions related to what they understood. In this way, students become able to express their views. The students come closer to each other while the discussion starts. Due to these activities, the emotional and cognitive development of the students takes place. In this way, students talk to each other about what they think and feel (Cave, 20017).

### **2.13 Development of skills:**

The students are trained to do debates and presentations in the Japanese schools. There is an emphasis on the creation of refined oral and written skills in the students. Students are directed to write about anything they like related to their school life. It may include daily record of things, tasks, any piece of poetry, fictional stories etc. Writing skills are a predominant factor which helps the students to express their understandings. Building of concepts is not of any use, if a pupil cannot express what he understands. In Japan, the students of a primary school are encouraged to make persuasive arguments in debates. Debate is an activity which increases the ability of a student to think and express critically. During the regular classes, students are taught to do research through surveys using questionnaires and make a report of their research work. They present their reports in the class. This is always a group activity in which each and every student of the class gets the opportunity to learn (Cave, 2007).



The Japanese students score high in the international mathematics tests. It clearly shows that their mathematical skills are unbeatable and extraordinary. The primary school teachers work so hard to teach the students the skills to solve math problems. The students are taught numerous methods for solving a single problem. The students give utmost importance to the mathematical understanding. There is less focus on just obtaining a correct answer and more focus on the procedure of solving the question. The teaching methodologies adopted by the teachers in this regard are unique and interesting (Schumer, 1999).

### **2.14 Implementation of Policies:**

In Pakistan, there is lack of consistency in the implementation of the policies made by the government. The tenure of an elected government is five years. An initiative taken by a government is not preceded further by the upcoming government. Hence every new government wastes time in making new policies instead of implementing the old policies made in the previous tenure. The process of governance has the involvement of a number of actors in the form of a hierarchy. If one actor is not doing his job justly the whole process will be disturbed. In Pakistan, a number of ministries and departments deal with the education sector. These departments are not connected with each other to the extent so that they make mutually benefitted policies. The implementation of a policy is highly dependent on the administration and teachers working in a school. It is up to them to which extent they follow policies made by the concerned departments (Siddiqui, 2016).

Islam has always been a source of inspiration for the education policy makers in Pakistan. It is considered the religion of the majority of the population and the reason behind the creation of the state. It is also considered the motivation behind acquiring education in the country. No policy can be made without having special on Islam. The subject “Islamiyat”, earlier made compulsory till 10<sup>th</sup> grade, is now compulsory till intermediate level. Any subject or topic which is critical of Islamic beliefs, values or customs can never be a part of any textbook in the schools. It is made sure no such material is taught

in the schools which may hurt the sentiments of the students (as majority of them are happened to be Muslims). During President Zia ul Haq, s regime, the teachers are evaluated on the basis of their knowledge of Islam and national identity of Pakistan prior to their appointments. In any developed country, this can never be a criterion for teachers' appointment (Siddiqui, 2016).

### **2.15 Quality of School Life and Grade Level:**

A research conducted in Israel shows that there is an adverse relationship between opinion regarding quality of school life and grade level. It is observed that the students studying in higher classes have a lower level of satisfaction from the school life and the students studying at primary level have a comparatively higher level of satisfaction in this regard. According to many students the reason behind their lower levels of satisfaction is the change of attitude of the teachers. The teachers in the primary section of a school focus more on the whole pedagogical process whereas the teachers in the middle or higher sections of a school give more importance towards the achievements, rankings and marks obtained by a student. The teachers of primary schools spend more time with their students in the classes. They are helpful to their students in matters other than studies. They play an active role in developing the thought process of their students. They also play a part in helping the students to make cordial and friendly relationships with the fellow students which would in turn affect the overall the climate of a classroom. In the higher schools, the students see a change in teaching behavior of the teachers. They no longer get the same pampered treatment that they used to get in primary schools. The duration of the time spent by the teachers in the class also shortened. The students start feeling insecure and unsatisfied when they start studying in a high school. The perception of the students is changed over time when they feel their teaching-learning process is only confined to class lectures and the teacher-students relation is no longer the same as it used to be earlier (Magen-Nagar & Shachar, 2016).

## **2.16 Impact of British Colonialism on Education:**

The British paved the way for colonizing sub-continent mostly through establishing east India Company on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1600. In the beginning, they adopted the culture, traditions and language of the native people in order to achieve benefits in the future. They opened charity schools wherein the first school was established in 1715 was St. Mary's Charity school. The emphasis of the educational policy formulated by Lord Minto was on the promotion of Indian Education. The religious neutrality was maintained for a shorter period of time; later on missionaries were set free to endorse Christianity. Hence, they started to establish advance English schools. In these schools, English Language was the medium of instruction. In 1823, a committee was founded and a huge amount of money was allocated for the promotion of western education. Lord Macaulay was the president of that committee. The policies made by Macaulay were aimed at creating a class which would act as a bridge between us and the Indian Population. Their way of education was made mandatory in the schools. A certain class of people especially non-Muslims adopted the English language and lifestyle wholeheartedly (Abdul Qayyum et al, 2015).

Macaulay was the chief mind behind the promotion of English language in the sub-continent. The educational budget was increased from 0.1 million to 1 million in 1813. The new educational policy was formulated in 1854. It proposed establishing more and more primary, middle and secondary schools as the majority of the total population was deprived of getting education. The focus of the policy makers shifted towards the higher education. At first, universities were established in three towns i.e. Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. A number of departments were built in these universities which include English, Arabic, Sanskrit, Persian, Law and Engineering. There were few main points in Wood's education policy i.e. provision of secular education, inspection of schools by the state, allocation of funds, fee prescribed etc (Abdul Qayyum et al. 2015).

In 1857, the rule of East India Company came to an end and the subcontinent came under direct control of the British government. The government of Britain strictly maintained the religious neutrality in the region which gave a set back to the Christian missionaries. In 1882, Indian Education Commission was formed and Sir William Hunter was appointed its chairman. The policies made by this commission revolve around the improvement and enhancement of the primary education. It also focused on the establishment of native schools and teacher training institutions. According to this commission, normal schools are built in the rural areas which would be used for teacher training programs. Medium of instruction has always been a big issue in the policy making process in every era. English language along with the native languages were emphasized to be adopted as medium of instruction because in order to make people aware of the European knowledge. It is important to convey the knowledge in the language which is understood by the masses. It is recommended that a lot of efforts should be made to promote women education in United India. A system of graded schools was introduced. Institutes of professional and vocational training were made to promote the education for professional traits. In 1919, another commission was formed which is known as “Calcutta University Commission”. This commission included a number of reforms aimed at increasing duration of tertiary level degrees/courses, introduction of education in B.A, M.A and intermediate level, encouraging women to attain education etc. There was a specific focus on the promotion of certain modern languages. Apart from quantitative expansion, qualitative expansion of the education sector was brought in to attention. Special attention was given to the plight of rural population in terms of education and increasing the literacy rates in the remote areas (Abdul Qayyum, et al, 2015). Before the British Colonial Rule, the religious institutions were responsible for both religious and secular education. The Madressahs and Patshalas were considered the institution of higher studies. Contrary to today's situation other than religious subjects, a number of other subjects like Philosophy, Mathematics, astronomy etc were also taught in the Madressahs. When the sub-continent was taken over and ruled by the East India Company, the education system was greatly disturbed due to

Macaulism. The Macaulay minute destroyed the essence of indigenous education. It segregated the religious and secular education. The religious institutions were no longer liable to provide secular education due to this segregation. They were made continued only to religious education (Sehgal, 2017)

### **2.17 Religious Madressahs in Pakistan:**

In today's Pakistan, the Madressahs have become the only option for the under privileged class. Most of the people are compelled to send their children to Madressahs because the government-run secular schools are very less in number. Some people send that kid in a maddressah who is weaker in studies and cannot cope with the education system in schools. The children studying in religious institutions have no scope in employment sector. They have no skills and degrees. Another problem attached to these institutions is that wrong interpretations of Holy Quran are taught there without any surveillance by the relevant government institutes. A considerable number of these religious seminaries are affiliated with the sectarian groups which play a notorious role in socio-political environment of the country. It is the need of the hour to enhance and revise the curriculum being taught being taught in the Madressahs. The educational reform program named "Tanzimat" initiated by the Ottoman Empire was one of its kind. It was aimed at introducing the modern education system previously. Attaining education till the primary level was made compulsory for everyone in the state. Some prominent features of the primary schools were co-education, free of cost food and clothing for needy students, encouragement of tolerance, co-existence, respecting the individuality of the students (Sehgal, 2017).

### **2.18 Higher Education in Pakistan:**

The higher education system of Pakistan experienced a sharp increase in its funding in the years 2002-2008. This increase has been successful in improving certain parts of the entire system. There is still a lack of improvement in the overall system. If we observe the past of the Muslims of the sub-continent,

we come to know Muslims have always been remained backward when it comes to education. It is primarily because prejudice is deeply rooted in influential orthodox Muslims against English Language and advance scientific education. At the time of partition of United India, there was only one higher education institute in the newly born state of Pakistan i.e. Punjab University. Most of the faculty members of this university were Hindus who migrated to India in 1947, which resulted in a great loss for the academic activities and student body of the university. Later few public universities were established in 1950 including Sindh University, Karachi University etc. There was no concept of private universities till 1980s mainly because former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto nationalized the educational institutes in 1970s. According to statistics of HEC, Pakistan has a total of 132 universities; even then it is far behind its neighbors when it comes to enrolment in higher education institutes. Another problem in this regard is huge provincial disparities. Sindh, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P have lower levels of enrolment as compared to Punjab (Hoodbhoy, 1998).

In United States, a test named GRE (Graduate Record Examination) is conducted by most universities in order to determine the capabilities and competency of a teacher. In Pakistan, a not so similar test conducted by a private organization known as NTS in numerous subjects. A test of this sort is one of the most useful tools in assessing the quality of a teacher. Another tool for this purpose is the judgment that whether a teacher can solve a certain portion of the problems questions mentioned in the end of a chapter. A person who is going to become a teacher should at least able to do that. The evaluation of a teacher of social sciences is quite different. A person should be checked whether he can pursue a knowledgeable discussion or does he possess fine speaking and qualitative skills. A drawback of these tests is that the people who originate from Urdu medium background will find it difficult to pass the exam (Hoodbhoy, 1998).

There are a number of factors which determine the teaching quality. An incompetent teacher would largely appreciate the practice of rote learning for his students. He finds it difficult to teach concepts

in easiest and simplest ways. So the best escape in such situation is rote learning. A competent teacher would use material from latest and advanced resources and would discourage the use of older texts and notes. In today's world, teachers can make efficient use of e books and online textbook material. In Pakistan, teachers don't take their jobs seriously. They do indulge in other part time jobs and businesses. These activities other than primary job lead to distraction from their jobs. They become unable to give proper attention to teaching which is indeed a full time job. Another major element regarding the teaching learning process is the evaluation of the students. It is a norm in Pakistani schools that teachers are not obliged to provide the students their marked exams. Students are deprived of the privilege to know their position in the studies. In Pakistan, the student to teacher ratio is satisfactory. There is a culture of discouraging students to ask questions in the classroom. This practice is a basic reason behind the fact that there is no concept building in the students. When a student is not able to ask a question, there may be reasons behind it i.e. discouraging behavior of teachers, insufficient time duration of the class, no arrival of questions in a student mind etc. (Hoodbhoy, 1998).

There are certain indicators used for checking the quality of student body. The number of students qualified for study in undergraduate or post graduate programs in best universities of United States tells us about the academic quality of students. Pakistan has the lowest number of students in United States in South Asia, India being at the top. A significant tool in this regard is GRE (Graduate Record Examination) is conducted in Princeton university, U.S.A. In 2005, the higher education commission (HEC) of Pakistan made GRE tests compulsory for winning a Ph.D. degree. This compulsion was later removed from the rules book of HEC hence contributing to deterioration in the quality of higher education in Pakistan. Another measure to examine the quality of students is the extent of company's satisfaction with the graduates. When a student completes his degree, he is incorporated in public sector, corporate sector or NGOs. An employer is well aware of the capabilities of his employee especially in the private sector (Hoodbhoy, 1998).

## **2.19 Public Schools vs. Private Schools:**

In Pakistan, during 1970s, the education sector of the country was nationalized which in many ways adversely affected the quality of education. In 1979, Zia ulHaq,s government decided to denationalize the public sector schools. During and after this regime, the number of private schools in the country grew remarkably. According to Pakistan’s bureau of statistics Report 2009, one third of the total student population goes to private schools. There are public schools, high fees private schools and low fees private schools. The high fees private schools are in range of only a smaller chunk of the population, visibly the elite class. The low fees private schools are accessible and affordable to larger population but still people from the poorest segment of the country cannot send their children to these schools (Muzaffar and Bari).

In 1970, Hirschman wrote a book named Exit, Voice and Loyalty. He explained the idea of voice and exit in the background of public and private sector schools. When the customers of public education have concerns regarding the quality of education, they may stop using the commodity anymore. This exit by the consumers makes no incentive for the public schools to get improved. Contrary to this, the customers stop using the services provided by the private sector schools. It is a matter of concern for them and they take necessary steps to address the issues and improve the quality of education. In this case of private schools, there exist a large number of competitors in the market. The owners of private schools are afraid to lose their clients in favor of a nearby competitor. Such a situation can be avoided if there is full information provided to the service takers. When there is full information, there is a feedback which is a compulsion when improvement is required (Muzaffar and Bari).

In case of public schools, there are strong unions made by teachers, provincial departments and educational bureaucracies which create obstacles in the way of getting affected by the client’s exit. There is also no provision of accurate information to the parents of the students. A considerable large majority of the people sending their children to public schools cannot afford the private schools, hence



they are not in a position to exercise the “exit” option, even if they are provided with the worst possible quality of education. The writers provided certain proposals in order to ensure the quality of education. The first proposal is the introduction of legal activism through public interest litigation (PIL) for safeguarding the right, to quality education, of the general public. The poor segment of our society which sends their kids to government run schools cannot afford to pursue legally in the courts to ensure their rights. Instead of poor people, the civil society should play an affective legal role in the courts on behalf of those people who cannot have enough money to do so (Muzaffar and Bari).

In Pakistan, the education system is so diverse and complex. There is a chain of public schools administered and financed by federal and provincial governments. There is a relation between the quality of education and location of the public schools in Pakistan. The public schools located in the urban areas have a relatively better quality of education as compared to the public schools located in rural areas. These better quality schools include Model schools and colleges in Islamabad City, Divisional public schools etc. The schools operated and run by the Pakistan armed forces are also of fine quality in terms of teaching and infrastructure. Another type of schools is private schools. These schools can be divided in to further three categories. Firstly, there are internationally run schools which are situated in mostly the few big cities of the country. Secondly, there are elite private schools like Aitcheson College, Chand Baagh College etc. They are mostly boarding schools. Thirdly, there are franchises of private schools like Convents, Beacon House School system etc. The students of these schools pass O and A level examinations mostly through Cambridge system. Another category of schools is the one that charges moderate fees. It is affordable by middle and lower middle classes (Kardar, 1998).

## **2.20 Education and Politics:**

In western countries, the growth of education can be linked to the introduction of liberal politics and rapid industrialization. There is a consensus about the requirement of universal primary education in

all times. No one can deny the significance of it. Two mainstream economists Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill held different opinions regarding the attainment of education. According to classical economics propagated by Adam Smith, it is an individual's right to choose from where his children would acquire education whereas John Stuart Mill is a proponent of state provided education (Muzaffar and Bari).

The issue of quality of education should be discussed in the public domain. The people should be made well aware of their rights and interests. Another approach to make the voice of the people powerful is the public domain. The youth of Pakistan has always been considered apathetic and idle, but it played a major role in the lawyers' movement, 2007, during the Parvez Musharraf's regime. Most of students were from the elite private universities (Muzaffar and Bari).

### **2.21 Impact of Education on quality of life:**

Education has certain impacts on the subjective quality of human life. Primarily education becomes a vital source for the livelihood and hence for survival. Education plays a significant role in the social and economic spheres of our lives. It is a general perception that it is relatively easier for the educated people to acquire a reasonable job as compared to the people who are not educated enough. On one hand, education is related to the attainment of economic resources and on the other hand it strengthens our social support through having firm relationships. In this article the authors Catherine E. Ross and Marieke Van Willigen investigate the role of education in our socio-economic lives. They inspected the impact of education on different indicators of quality of life. They made a clear distinction between distress and dissatisfaction. Basically both are related to a sense of deprivation, while latter is connected to comparison with others. A moderately well off person will consider himself under privileged when he compare his state with others. There is a need to investigate the relationship between education and satisfaction. It is not necessary that a person having enough monetary resources has higher level of satisfaction. Satisfaction is a highly subjective phenomenon. There are countless

obvious benefits of acquiring education. A person gets the opportunity to learn certain abilities and values during the course of schooling which he would not be able to learn efficiently otherwise (Ross and Willigen, 1997).

Education leads to employment and an employed person is far away from monotony. He gets a chance to further nourish his skills which he acquired during the process of getting education. If a person is educated enough, his education would become a reason behind stability in his societal relationships. Marriage is considered a possible escape from loneliness and distress. An educated person has better marriage proposals than an uneducated person (Durkheim, 1951).

There is a high rate of unemployment among the uneducated population or people with lower levels of education. These people when offered jobs are provided with lesser incomes. They cannot enjoy a higher standard of living due to low level of incomes. There is a constant psychological pressure on their minds to meet their wants and fulfill their financial and social responsibilities. Sometimes a person with lower income does a part time job too for the sake of providing himself and his family a better quality of life. This huge burden of work can put his health at risk and he may suffer from episodes of anxiety and depression. Hence a person with higher education may be able to protect himself from such difficulties (Pearlin et al, 1981).

There are mixed views when the relationship between education and marriage is examined. According to Glick, there are lesser chances of divorces in educated couples because educated people marry later in their lives. Half of their lives spent in attaining higher education and building careers. They marry when they become financially stable. Hence the rate of divorce is low among them, considering deteriorating economic conditions a reason behind divorce (Glick, 1984).

The higher levels of education in women discourage them from marrying. Either such women marry late or they do not marry at all. On the other hand, women with lower level of education mostly prefer to marry. An educated person is financially independent whereas marriage, for women, is about

financial dependence on the spouse. Hence marriage is not on the priority list of the educated women (McLanahan and Casper, 1994).

It is also observed that there is a negative impact of marriage on human well-being. Marriage enhances economic burden as well as extent of responsibilities on the couple. A married couple has to worry about child care expenses if both of them have jobs. Hence the relationship between marriage and well-being is not simply positive as it is perceived by the society. Well educated women are more health conscious and face difficulties arranging health care services for their children. Therefore, they may have no child or fewer children (Ross and Huber, 1985).

There is a huge impact of social support on our well-being. Social support is basically moral support which comes in the form of love, care, advices, togetherness etc. Education is considered to be a determinant of social support. An educated person can manage his social relationships more efficiently. He has lower level of employment related stress which can adversely affect the social relationships otherwise. Lack of social support in one's life may lead to emotional disturbance (Walker, 1993).

## **2.22 Education and Globalization:**

There are numerous hurdles to the free flow of academic knowledge and the major of these barriers is linguistic barrier. A huge number of languages are spoken in the world hence the scholarship written in one national language of a country is difficult to be understood by the natives of another country. There is hegemony of English Language in the world of scholarly knowledge. Mostly publishers from any country prefer to translate from English language as compared to any other language. Hence there is an asymmetric flow of knowledge which can be changed if more works are translated from other languages in to English language. Sometimes, the essence of a piece of work lost during the whole process of translation (Anderson, 2009).

The main focus of educational research in Scandinavian countries is on the living style of youth instead of their schooling. The reason behind that is almost all of the schools in these countries are fully state funded. They have one of the best welfare systems in the world. The ethnographers while conducting research are more interested in covering different aspects of students' life in their schools (Anderson, 2009).

The origin of anthropology of education was United States. Education was started to be studying as a distinct subject for the first time in United States. Later on, the developing countries started doing research on education on education and schooling when duly funded by international institutes. Education was given due importance when its role was considered important in the process of modernization and industrial expansion ( Splinder and Splinder, 2000).

### **2.23 Education and Gendered Citizenship in Pakistan:**

According to Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, in the time span of five years 2004-2009, approximately 1,635 women were brutally killed by sons, fathers, brothers and relatives etc. In Pakistan, the number of cases reported is far less than the number of incidents actually happened. Hence just 354 people were detained by the police out of total 898 FIRs listed. Only 481 out of 3669 people were held by the authorities. Every other woman in Pakistan goes through the traumatic experiences in the form of domestic abuse (HRCP website).

Ayaz Naseem in his book named "Education and Gendered Citizenship in Pakistan" conceptualized the state of Pakistan and its power dynamics through three ways i.e. historic, structuralist, Marxist and post foundational descriptions. In the context of history, Pakistan was once a colony of British Government in the form of United India. When conceptualizing the role of state, we cannot disconnect impact of British Colonialism even after the independence in 1947. The state of Pakistan has always been sympathetic towards the elite class, the class which was empowered in the colonial regime and

still supported by the colonial masters. The effects of post-colonialism are widespread in the Pakistani society (Waseem, 1994).

According to Hamza Alavi, when we study the situation of Pakistan through Marxist ideology we come to know that there are more than one segment of the society falls under the category of “bourgeoisie” i.e. metropolitan, native, landed bourgeoisie etc. The leading classes in Pakistan are united in order to save and struggle for peripheral capitalism. For instance, the Islamic religious clerics known as mullahs are not so economically rich but still enjoy the privilege and have influence in the socio-political arena of the country. On the other hand, the most powerful segment of the country is the military establishment which sometimes directly and all the other times indirectly rules the country. If women are considered as a weaker class, their plight would be improved relative to improvement in the class relations (Hamza Alavi, 1972).

The situation of women can be discussed by examining their status in colonial times. The British government introduced certain reforms in order to change the status of women in the Indian sub-continent. It banned the notorious act of sati through criminalizing it. This ground-breaking act had a considerable role in women empowerment in the United India. The real intentions behind these acts of colonizers are not specifically altruistic though. The British colonizers reinforced the unjust and aggressive feudal and tribal system within the Indian Territory. This feudal system changed the power dynamics and made all landlords economically and socially so powerful. At the same time, the laws made and reinforced during the colonial rule ensure the subordination of women. For instance, the colonial state reinforced the Hindu Inheritance law which inhibits Muslim women to acquire their inheritance to which they are entitled otherwise according to Islamic sharia law. Another evil of the colonization is the creation of Muslim-Hindu rivalry which later became a motivation behind the formulation of two nation theory (Hamza Alavi, 1972).

There is no such trend of highlighting the endeavor of women in the Pakistani feminist literature. The scholars started writing material on feminist perspective after 1970. Earlier, the required attention was given only to a few women belonging to elite class in terms of scholarship. Pakistan was primarily made in order to empower the Muslims of sub-continent socially and economically. Contrary to this, obstacles were put in the way of empowerment in the form of racial, social, cultural, linguistic and economic status differences from the very beginning. In 1948, soon after the partition, Muslim women gathered outside national assembly demanding their inheritance rights. The law makers having patriarchal mindsets were hesitated to pass this bill firstly because it may go against their own interests. Later on, the bill was passed. The point of discussion is that there are no such efforts made by the Pakistani state to ensure the women empowerment till decades (Jalal,1990).

#### **2.24 Michel Foucault's idea of knowledge and power:**

The term "education" can be related to the Michel Foucault's idea of knowledge and power. It has been experienced that often some ideologies are promoted while the others are deliberately rejected within a country. The actual knowledge of historical facts can be gained through education and educational discourse. In schools, the students are manipulated and exploited in the name of discipline and rigid rules & regulations. The system of education used as a political tool in order to promote the agenda of the powerful people in a society. According to Foucault, the powerful people use these tools to control, exploit and rule the weaker people (Foucault, 1971).

There is a very strong relation between power and knowledge. According to Michel Foucault, both terms are complimentary to each other. To exert power, there is a dire need of a knowledge base. On the other hand, knowledge is always rooted in power. Power does not flow in one single direction. It can have a number of directions. Power and its relations are embedded in the foundation of almost every society (Foucault, 1979).

The use of power by the state is common since centuries. If we dissect this narrative through the Foucauldian perspective, we can conclude that state creates a need for itself to exert power. It makes people think about itself as vulnerable and insecure. The state is considered as something having unlimited limitations. Hence, there is a need to control every one through exerting power in order to be safe. The concept of national sovereignty emerged with the course of time. Certain acts and people may be declared as a threat to sovereignty and safety of the state. Michel Foucault gave the idea of Governmentality, a term made from the combination of two words i.e. government and nationality. The role of government goes beyond the governance. It revolves around the amalgamation of citizens and things (Burchel et al, 1991).

The post structuralist idea of use of space as a power tool can be applied to the anti-women laws made during President Zia ulHaq, s regime. For instance, the idea of Chaddar and Chaardewaari (Veil and four walls) used to confine women and limit their movement. This can be related to Foucault's idea of panoptical. Women were confined to their homes and if they go outside, they had to accept continuous surveillance and moral policing. Hence space can also be used to exert power for anyone. In case of Pakistan, it is still used to confine women. Chaddar is a veil used to cover the body of a woman in Islamic traditions. Hence it can be termed as panoptical of dress (Naeem, 2010).

### **2.25 Entities to be blamed for the plight of education system in Pakistan:**

There are a number of entities which should be blamed for the plight of education system in Pakistan. Firstly, politicians are blamed for it because the elective representatives are primarily responsible for dealing with the system of education. Secondly, the bureaucrats are blamed because they are responsible for the implementation of the education policies. Thirdly, the intelligentsia should be blamed for not playing its part in questioning the apathetic behavior of the ruling class towards the most important sector of a country. An effective policy is of no use if it's not implemented properly. In the same manner, an irrational or weak policy is of no use, even if the process of implementation is



satisfactory. The above mentioned stake holders of a country should be blamed in accordance with the extent of power and authority they have. It is mostly and not entirely the responsibility of government to ensure the quality of education for its citizens (Qureshi,

## CHAPTER 3

### **Methodology:**

The third chapter is made up of 8 sections. It explains the Methodological Approach that is used in this thesis. Firstly, it defines the research method selected for conducting this research. Secondly, this section explains the locale of the study, sample techniques and size and participants involved. Thirdly, it explains the procedure of getting access to the schools and acquiring permission to conduct research in the required setting. Fourthly, the tools used for generating and collecting data are discussed in this section. Lastly, the techniques of data analysis and limitations of the study are discussed.

### **3.1 Research Method:**

I have selected the “Unstructured interview and semi-structured interview method” for leading this research. This method requires fine interactive and communication skills. I am going to work using these methods because I can efficiently do so within the time provided to me by the university to complete my degree. This research kind needs lesser time in the field and does not include the collection of cultural knowledge of the participants.

### **3.2 Research Locale:**

The research is conducted in the urban areas of Islamabad. In Islamabad Capital Territory, there are total 191 primary schools, 60 middle schools and 97 high schools according to the Pakistan Education Statistics 2016-2017. These schools are under control of Federal Directorate of Education (FDE). FDE is a federal department, which works under the Capital Administration and Development Division (CADD). The total number of students enrolled in these 348 schools is 1, 86,526. I have collected data from two schools, which are Islamabad Model College for Girls I-8/4, and Islamabad Model School no 1 G-9/2.



*Figure 1 I.M.C.G I-8/4*



*Figure 2 I.M.S no 1 G-9/2*

### **3.3 Access to Research Setting:**

I have acquired permission from the Principals of these two schools located in Islamabad City i.e. **Islamabad Model College for Girls I-8/4** and **Islamabad Model School no 2 G-9/2**. I.M.C.G I-8/4 is a Secondary school, which has classes from 6<sup>th</sup> grade to intermediate. I.M.S no 2 G-9/2 is a primary school which has classes from 1 grade to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The principals are informed about the nature of my research project. They are made fully aware of the stages and methods of data collection and description of the possible benefits to the participants. The management of the schools is made assured of maintaining the confidentiality of the data. The consent would be formally acquired from the adult participants.

### **3.4. Tools of Data Collection:**

The tools used for the process of data collection are **Direct Observation, Individual Interviews** and **Focus Group Discussion**. These tools are participatory in nature. The Direct Observation is a technique, which will be consistently used in this research project. I have attended the lectures given to the students in order to observe the teaching-learning process and behavior of both teachers and students in a classroom. I have conducted interviews from students, teachers and principal of the primary school in order to collect data. As the students are in huge number in a class of a public school, I have conducted focus group interviews as well as individual interviews.

The information collected from the semi-structured interviews is of various types. I have developed an interview guide which covers all the topics regarding the quality of education. I would ask approximately 60 to 70 questions from the students individually in 14 broad categories i.e. personal information, academic information, attitude of teachers, development of skills, extra-curricular activities, nature and intensity of punishments given to students, conceptual understanding of the lessons, development of skills (mathematical, written, verbal etc.), confidence building, extracurricular

activities, sources of motivation to study, daily routine of students ,atmosphere of the classroom and activities of interest.

There is one major question which inquired about these 14 broad categories. Then, 40 to 50 sub questions may originate from these major questions. These sub questions were asked to find out the minor details related to the vast category of subject.

### **3.5 Data Collection Unit (DCU):**

The respondents of a study are those people who are requested to participate in a specific research. The respondents of this study include Teachers, Students, Principals and Scholars.

**Students:** The emphasis of this study is on the problems faced by the students. The students are one of the main actors of whole system of education of a country. For this research, the students of grades4to 10are interviewed using Convenience and Purposive sampling techniques.

*Convenience sampling technique* is chosen because the students have a busy schedule so I have interviewed them considering their availability.

*Purposive sampling technique* is applied because there are different categories of students in a class, so I have interviewed the students related to different categories in terms of grades and intelligence level. I have observed the teaching learning process in the classrooms so hence choose those students who have the potential to make me understand the core issues. The youngest respondent is 10 year old age, so that he can understand the interview questions and respond accordingly. The students from only these classes are selected to be interviewed in order to obtain the viewpoints of both primary and high school level students.

**Teachers:**I have conducted the interview of the teachers of both Primary and Secondary school level. I decided to adopt both **Convenience and Purposive sampling techniques** for this purpose. Purposive sampling technique is used to make those teachers part of my sample who have much experience to

throw light on their working under different administrations and governments. The information obtained through experienced teachers proves to be helpful in analyzing the change of attitudes in the students over time. Again, the **convenience sampling** is used because of busy schedule of the teachers. The data collection was done in the month of January, which is the busiest month in the schools because the teachers remain busy in completing the syllabus in that month.

**Principals:** The interviews of the principals of both the selected schools was to be conducted using **purposive sampling technique**, because the principal of a school is considered a highly information rich entity. In this way, I became able to get a glimpse of the issues faced at the administration level. The Principal of the high school level did not give me the opportunity to interview her, because she was not willing for it.

**SCHOLARS:** I interviewed two university professors namely Dr. Parvez Hoodbhoy and Dr. Huma Haque for data collection. I have formally acquired permission from them for these interviews and their recording. They were chosen because they hold interesting progressive viewpoints regarding the education system of Pakistan. Dr. Parvez Hoodbhoy written a book on education system two decades back named “Education and the state: Fifty years of Pakistan”. I interviewed Dr. Hoodbhoy at his office in Quaid e Azam University, Islamabad. I have interviewed Dr. Huma Haque at her residence in sector F-8, Islamabad.

The tools selected to interview teachers and students are **unstructured and semi-structured interview**. Semi-structured interview method was chosen because it permits new ideas to be a part of the data collection process. Considering this method, I made a theme of specific questions and an interview guide in advance. The questions which are a part of the interview guide were asked differently from different respondents. The semi structured interviews were conducted from both teachers and students.

### 3.6 Sampling:

The sample size of this study is **62**. According to Kvale, the size of a sample should be enough to find out what a researcher wants to know for his research (Kvale, 1996). According to majority of the qualitative researchers, the number of participants has not a huge impact on the quality of the study. The thing which is quite important in this regard is the element which is considered important to be studied by the participants (Hatch, 1995).

The two sampling techniques selected for the collection of data are **Convenience and Purposeful sampling**.

*Convenience sampling* is used because it helps in identifying an assembly of students who are willing to participate in the interview. It was quite a difficult task to make students give interview considering their busy work schedule.

*Purposive sampling* is used in order to select the participants of specific groups of interest. This sampling technique was needed because it provides an opportunity to involve participants who, in my opinion, were more useful in generating the acquired data.

The purposeful sampling allows us the selection of those cases which are useful in providing deep information related to our subject. The researcher can develop a deep understanding of the issues which are significant to the purpose of our study. The detailed comprehension proved to be more useful rather than having just empirical generalization in the case of qualitative research (Patton, 2001).

### 3.7 Data Analysis:

The process of data analysis includes explaining, establishing and forming the data obtained. It is the method of providing the readers an insight of the data from the viewpoint of participants and researcher. There are several methods of analyzing data which includes analysis **by people, by issue, by instrument and by research question** (Cohen et al, 2007).

The methods of analyzing data in this research project is “by issues”. The data is analyzed by issues in order to understand the main points related to each specific issues. The individual responses of the individuals are thoroughly quoted throughout the Results section. All these responses were discussed in detail too.

### **3.8 Limitations of the study:**

- The data was collected only from the schools situated in the urban areas and there was no data collection from the schools located in the rural areas of Islamabad. So, the readers will not get to know the plight of education system in the rural areas. The reason behind doing so is that the focus of this research is analyzing the best quality of education provided in the country by the government. Hence, the students studying in rural areas are not considered for data collection.
- The sample size selected for this research is small. In qualitative research, researchers may choose a larger sample size in order to make generalizations on the basis of the data. I have selected a small sample size because of avoiding the repetition of data considering the age of the participants who are mainly students.



## Chapter No 4

### Results and Discussions

#### 4.1 Introduction:

The basic motive behind this research project was to analyze the reasons for the low quality of education in the public sector schools of Islamabad. The other reason behind conducting this research was to figure out the possible solutions for the challenges being faced by the education sector of this city. The experiences of the respondents and their valuable feedback provided a deep insight to the research questions raised by this study.

This chapter answers the research questions of this study in the light of all evidences gained through the information collected from the participants of the study and the observations made by the researcher.

#### Demographics of Participants:

A sum total of sixty respondents are interviewed for the sake of collection of data for this research work. The participation by all of them was wholly on voluntary basis. Not a single participant charged a single penny for making their valuable contribution to this study considering it a piece of work for the greater good of the students in specific and the society in general. Initially, the permission was taken from the Federal Directorate of Education G-9/2 in order to gain the access to the schools for the collection of data. It is the organization under which all public sector schools of Islamabad work. The permission was granted within two days after the submission of an application for the given purpose. Within two days, a permission letter was issued directing the principals of both schools that depicts the required permission to conduct the research. This research was conducted under the supervision of an assistant professor

In the second phase, vice principals of both schools were accessed and provided with the granted permission letter one by one. After achieving approval from the Principals of the schools, the process of data collection started earlier in the primary schools and later in the high school. All the participants were interviewed one on one. In the primary school, Islamabad Model School no. 1, a total of seven teachers, twenty students and 1 principal were interviewed. The total number of students in this school was 800 and the total number of teachers was 35.

In the high school, Islamabad Model College for Girls I-8/4, a total of 4 teachers and 28 students were interviewed. The principal of this school was asked many times for the interview as per her convenience but she showed no interest and willingness for being a part of this research. I was unable to interview her despite many efforts. All the interviews were recorded through my cell phone (Huawei). These interviews were transcribed on daily basis in order to retain the essence of the data collected.

The time consumed for an interview was different for different participants as it varies from person to person. The students of lower age group took comparatively lesser time to convey their points as compared to the students of the high school who went on to describe the details of the issues and events etc. The field notes were also written during the course of recording interviews and observing the students body language. I have conducted the interviews in the months of January and February 2020. These months were selected because the students had to go for their final exams in the month of February and March. Hence, the interviews were taken prior to their last month of attendance.

Apart from teachers and students, I have also interviewed two university professors, Dr Parvez Hoodbhoy and Dr. Huma Haque for getting their valuable opinions in order to understand the reasons behind this plight of public sector education system. The interviews of both these intellectual personalities were recorded with their permission.

## **4.2 Interview Protocol:**

The interview protocol made for taking interviews in order to acquire all major information regarding the research project and particularly the process of data collection. It throws light on the motive behind the study, the readers of the study and the possible benefits for the participants of the study and the people who can have access to the data collected through the participants. The interview protocol was provided to each and every participant. The introduction part of the interview protocol was explained in detail to the students as well as the teachers especially to the high school students who were extremely worried for the confidentiality of their data. I made all participants comfortable prior to the interviews and showed welcoming attitude towards their questions and concerns. I tried my best to answer to every question of the students just to make them relieve.

Most of the questions which I asked were already written in the interview schedule as I was following the theme of a semi structured interview schedule. It includes posing open ended questions to all the participants. This technique was adopted to have a greater insight and deeper comprehension of the experiences of the participants. I could have used the theme of a structured interview, but such interviews are not able to see a greater picture for a qualitative study because the researcher misses a lot of valuable information in this way. Hence I decided to go with a semi structured interview schedule. A number of questions were added in this schedule while taking the interview of the participants. I had to add certain sub questions e.g. “why so?”, “tell me about it in detail”, “describe your personal experience?” etc. There are some core questions related to the personal details and questions revolving around the major issues from each and every participant. Changes were made in the sub questions for different participants.

## **Research Questions:**

The three research questions of this study are as follow:

1. Which factors are responsible for the low quality of education in public sector schools of Islamabad?
2. What are the issues faced by the students in the public schools?
3. What are the problems faced by the teachers in the public schools?

### **4.3 Research Results:**

The data transcriptions were coded entirely and as a result 500 codes were emerged primarily. Out of these 500 codes, a total of 120 codes were selected finally for analyzing the data. From these finally selected codes, 8 themes were merged. Following are the main themes which would be used in order to have a qualitative analysis of the data.

#### ***Theme no 1: Issues related to study in the classroom***

This theme deals with the factors responsible for low quality education. These factors are related to specifically the process of learning in the classrooms by the students

**Rote Learning:** Rote learning is considered as one of the major issues faced by the students in the public schools of Islamabad. Participant number 1 who is a student of grade 5 stated that he was once asked by a teacher to learn by rote a mathematical formula which he was unable to understand otherwise. According to another student, who studies in the same class said “Rote learning becomes the last option when we have not understood the basic concepts of a lesson or understood them partially”. This was sort of a confession made by this students about the practice of rote learning in their school and he considered it a last option just to get passed. A number of other students hold the very same opinion regarding this issue that they are compelled to learn by rote irrespective of their will just because their concepts are not clear.

A student of grade 7 of the high school said “The mere focus of the teachers is on covering the whole lesson in a period, they have no concern for the concept building and clarity of concepts of the students”. A student of grade 5<sup>th</sup> said “I myself prefer to memorize the lessons word to word for the preparation of exams because I cannot write in my own words. Whenever I tried to write in my words, there are a lot of mistakes in it and I get lesser marks”. This student prefers rote learning in order to have mistakes as less as possible. Most of the students are not able to write on their own. They have to rely on memorization to make correct sentences.

A student of grade 5<sup>th</sup> said” I do not learn by rote, instead I memorize the lessons word to word”. I asked him to differentiate between the two things. He went on to explain the difference between the two concepts and said “These two concepts are different in a sense that the idea of “understanding” belongs to memorization only. When we learn by rote, we do not understand the meaning of the words”. According to this student, rote learning is a technique to memorize a lesson where we do not know the meaning of the words we memorize. For instance, students who learn the Holy Quran by rote, do not know the meaning of it as the language in which the book is written is not known by these students. Whereas memorization is the act of memorizing a lesson or a topic, which a student understands but is unable to describe it in his own words. This is what I have got from the view point of this 11 years old boy.

While sharing her views regarding rote learning, a student of grade 7<sup>th</sup> said “I have achieved considerably good grades in the last in the last terminal examination for which I prepared through learning by rote. It is because our teachers prefer checking exactly the same answers which they themselves made us write in our notebooks. They do not like it when we write in our own wording”. This student explained the mindset of majority of her teachers. The teachers who prefer checking the identical answers which they teach to the students are the ones who indirectly encourage rote learning among the students.

A small minority of the students of the primary school admitted that they are directly instructed by the teachers to learn by rote, but the majority of the students of the primary as well as the high school told that they were never directly told by any teacher to learn a thing by rote. So what the teachers do is the encouragement of rote learning, for which they do not necessarily have to say it aloud in the classrooms. This encouragement is on indirect basis in a way that they made their preferences clear to the students which include checking the answers they themselves taught in the class.

Another participant, who happens to be a student of grade 10<sup>th</sup> in the high school, said “I have to learn by rote because I am unable to write 500 words on my own for an essay or a long answer”. The reason these students stated had much to do with the creative writing skills and the vocabulary. The students having unsatisfactory writing skills and poor vocabulary consider “rote learning” as an easy yet uninteresting way to get grades. A student of grade 5<sup>th</sup> said “I prefer to learn by rote because I consider it as a perfect escape when I have not prepared for the test or exam before, rote learning become a great short cut to get passing marks in such a case”. These opinions vary from students to students. Different students came with different reasons behind adopting the technique of rote learning. Everyone stated the elements that provoke them to do it. Some students consider rote learning an easy tool to get marks, while the others consider it as compulsory part of schooling.

When I asked about the widespread practice of rote learning in the school, a primary school teacher who teaches English and Science to grade 4 said “I ask the students of my class to make sentences individually, but only a few students are able to do that. Then I select the best sentence, write it on the white board and ask the students to copy it from the board. Contrary to this, a majority of the teachers in this school make sentence on their own and make students write these sentences in their notebooks. These students are asked to memorize these sentences word to word, what would be the incentive for a student to make a sentence on his own in this case? This teacher made it clear that there is a trend of rote learning in this school which cannot be eliminated as it is adopted by the majority. According to

her, there are only a few teachers in the school who encourage students to write on their own, majority depends on the rote learning.

### ***Lack of Concept Building:***

Concept building is crucial for understanding any idea. A thing which lacks to a greater extent in these public schools is the building of concepts. It does not come at the priority list of the teachers at all. A student of grade 7<sup>th</sup> said “I do not get the basic concepts in the Science class”. When I asked her to tell the reason behind it. She said “I am unable to understand the concepts because the teacher does not repeat anything in the class. Most of the teachers do not repeat anything in the class, they cover the entire topic in one flow”. According to this student, the repetition of concepts at the primary and high level schools is necessary for better understanding.

A student of grade 4<sup>th</sup> of the primary school said “I copy so many words from the white board, which I do not know the meaning of”. The field notes mentioned the actual experience of the researcher where a student of grade 4 was seen to be copying words from the white board without having any knowledge of them. I have observed two periods in this class. In the first period, the teacher (who teaches Urdu Subject) came and started writing words and sentences on the board. Meanwhile the students remained busy in copying those words from the board. The teacher then read loudly all that she had written on the board. The matter of concern was that she just wrote and read. She did not explain the meaning of those words and the idea behind those sentences that she made. I was sitting in the 4<sup>th</sup> row of the classroom for observing the process of teaching and learning within the classroom. It was one of the techniques I used for the data collection. When the students finished copying the word sentences into their notebooks, I asked the meaning of few words from the students sitting around me. These four students did not know merely the “meaning” of majority of the words written on the board. They were just copying to memorize in the future for the preparation of their final exams.

A student of grade 9 while sharing her views on concept building, explained the idea of difference of IQ levels in the following words “Sometimes, I remain unable to understand the basic concepts from the competent teachers as well because they are unable to teach the concepts in simple words. They do not make things easy for us”. According to this student, the mental level of the students is not in accordance with the teaching manner of the teachers. She tried to imply that easy ways of building the concepts are not adopted by the teachers of their school. The teachers teach exactly what is written in the course books, so the students are unable to understand the concept most of the times. This particular student remains unable to understand the concepts taught by a senior teacher because of the huge in difference in levels of intellect.

A student of grade 5 was very annoyed at his teacher just because they do not repeat the main ideas themselves. While explaining his story, he said “Our teachers repeat the concepts only when a student asks them to do so, they do not do that otherwise”. At one hand there is a difference of understanding levels and on the other hand there is no repetition of concepts by the teachers. Majority of the teachers do teach an entire lesson in one flow. I have seen an immense lack of concept building in both these public schools. The teachers do not care for building concepts which later becomes one of the major reason behind the trend of rote learning. Focusing on concept building should be considered as a primary job of a teacher, while all other tasks should be secondary to him.

## **Theme 2: Medieval Teaching Methodologies:**

### **Lack of Capturing Interest and Attention of Students:**

I have also inquired about the extent of interest and attention capturing by the teachers while delivering the lectures. One of the major factors that contributes to quality education is the interest of the students in the studies. I have observed a number of classes and tried to examine the interests of the students through inspecting their body languages. While observing grade 4 in the primary school, I have seen a student playing with his pencil throughout the class time and the teacher did not observe him even



once. In the very same class, a female student remained busy in constantly drawing a picture on her notebook and the teacher did not notice her too. During this class, the teacher was teaching them General Science.

While describing the factors that make a lecture interesting, a student of grade 8 said “English class is so interesting because the teacher talks to us while teaching and engages us during the course of a class. We find it interesting when a teacher tries hard to capture our interest. No teacher other than her tries to capture our Interest”.

This student, on one hand, described the elements that are responsible for capturing their interest and on the other hand, indicated towards the lack of efforts made by the majority of the teachers in this regard. According to her, her interest in the studies increases a lot when the teacher engages them in a discussion during the course of teaching them a lesson. She wants the teachers to capture her interest as well as attention during the course of teaching. In her opinion, it is the responsibility of the teachers to effort hard to capture the interest of students. It is the failure of a teacher if her students do not pay attention to what she teaches. This student mentioned her English teacher, the only teacher who takes this responsibility. She informed that no other teacher tries to capture their interest and this is the reason that they do not listen to their lectures as attentively as they listen to the English teacher in the classroom.

A student of grade 9 said “Few teachers try to capture our interest and majority doesn't”. She knew the importance of capturing attention of the students. According to her, some teachers do that heavy lifting while the others do not bother about it much. It is evident from this statement that if a teacher wants to capture the attention or interest of a student in a public school, she can do it. There are no time related hurdles in the way of it. The only obstacle in this way is the unwillingness of the teachers. Those who prioritize doing that, do that at any cost.

When I have asked a teacher of Primary school about the causes of disturbance in the class and the inability of the teachers to capture the interest of the students in their class, she replied “Pin drop silence is natural up to a certain extent only, but when you teach the students in an interesting and refreshing way, not even a single student would disturb you. A teacher should know how to capture the attention of the students. A teacher should act like a child in the class, tease students lovingly, share jokes with them, and then start acting seriously once she is about to start teaching a lesson/topic”.

According to this teacher, it is natural for the students of a primary school to not maintain pin drop silence in the classroom. It is because these students are so young that they cannot sit absolutely silent for hours and hours. They would talk to each other and exchange things and it is quite a normal thing. According to her, the teachers should not beat or insult them over such acts, instead she should become a master of capturing the interest and attention of the students while teaching them. This teacher used to teach Science and English to grade 4 earlier and is now a teacher of physical education.

### ***Lack of Questioning:***

Asking questions by the students is an indication of concept building among the students. I have observed a number of classes in different classrooms and have seen a different pattern there. Even a single student did not ask any question from the teacher during most of the classes that I observed. I have asked this question regarding the reasons behind lack of questioning in the classrooms from all the participants of my research including teachers, students and the Principal.

When I asked about this issue, a student of grade 4 said “I do not ask questions from my teachers in the class because I fear the teachers a lot and their attitude is not welcoming towards our questions”. This student was keen for asking questions but could not do it because of the element of fear. Children of this age group cannot talk to the people whom they are afraid of. According to him, the teachers do not like much when students ask questions from them.

To explain the reason behind her not asking questions in the classroom, a student of grade 7 said “I do not ask questions from my teachers because my concepts are not clear so I have no idea about what to ask”. This student made it clear that clarity of concepts leads to asking questions by the students. If a student has basic understanding of a topic, only then questions will come into his mind and he will ask questions to have further understanding. These were the two major reasons, I have found out, behind the lack of questioning by the students. A student of grade 8th told about the number of students who ask questions mostly. She said “ There are total 76 students in our class, only 4 or 5 students ask questions most of the times. The rest of the class do not ask questions from the teachers at all”. If we look at the number mentioned by her, it makes only 6 percent of the total number of students in the class. It means only 6 percent students do ask questions and the rest of them 94 percent students do not ask questions at all. The matter of concern here is the population that does not ask questions and the total strength of the class. I have posed the very same question to the students of the primary school too. A student of grade 5 said “In our class only 2 or 3 students ask the questions in the class, whereas the strength of the class is 42”. In this class, 93 percent of the total number of students are not habitual of asking questions in the class. According to these students, a teacher and her attitude is responsible if the majority of the class does not throw questions.

There is a vast majority which does not ask questions because of unwelcoming attitude of the teachers. Field notes mentioned that students of grade4 were copying words from the white board which were alien to them. When I provoked one of them to ask the meaning of those words from the teacher, he replied “I cannot ask it from her (teacher), because she will insult me over doing this”. The teacher was not encouraging them to ask questions from her, let alone provoking them.

A student of grade 5 also blamed the element of fear for the lack of questioning in the classrooms. She said “I do ask from my friend sitting next to me in the classroom, when I do not understand anything but I cannot ask the same question from my teacher because of lack of friendliness amongst us”. This

student was at much ease while asking questions from her friends in the class. She does not fall under the category of those, who lack the clarity of concepts. Questions come to her mind but she does not possess the courage to ask the teacher. She finds an easy route in asking from her friends.

A student of grade 7 said “I do not ask questions from the teachers because majority of them does not consider my questions sensible. They do not find my questions genuine. Whenever I ask a question, the teacher mocks my question and then the fellow students laugh at me, thus I lose confidence every such time. I quit asking questions in the class due to this behavior of the teachers”. This student became so sad while sharing his story. He did not look like a dull student. Questions do come into his mind but he remains unable to ask them due to disapproving atmosphere of the classroom.

The teachers do mock the questions asked by the students. This behavior of the teachers is responsible for belittling and discouraging the students. Intentionally or unintentionally, the teachers are unable to create an environment in the classroom which is favorable for the students to ask questions.

A student of grade 8 consider “shortage of time” as a reason behind the lack of questioning in the classrooms. She said “Whenever a question comes into my mind, the time period of a class reaches towards the end”. According to her, the teachers teach them throughout the 40 minutes of class. They do not have a separate portion out of these minutes for questions asking by the students. The teachers have no time for listening to the questions, they remain busy in teaching till the end.

I have found out a number of reasons behind the lack of questioning in the classrooms. The primary reasons are element of fear, shyness, judgment, mockery, shortage of time and lack of clarity of concepts.

According to a student of grade 9, there are a number of factors responsible for lack of questioning and now it has become a trend overtime. Students have to gather the courage to break this taboo

because asking questions from the teachers has become a taboo now. A student who asks a lot of questions is considered “disrespectful”, as he does not take it as it is taught to him by the teacher.

While answering to my question, a student of grade 10 said “Firstly, I give such facial expressions which display my inner feelings because I want the teachers to judge themselves that I am not getting their point but if they still do not understand the fact, only then I do ask questions from them as a last resort and that too very often”. After listening the answer of this student, I have analyzed that the act of questioning should be considered serious as the act is highly problematic for some students. Questioning is a crucial part of every academic activity, but the students of this high school were having a hard time doing this simple task.

A student of grade 5 said “I do not ask questions from the teachers because of the fear of getting judged for the low level of understanding and called a “poor student”. This behavior of the teachers inhibits students from asking questions during the class. This student visibly seemed to be annoyed by the behavior of his teachers.

When I asked a student about the provocation by the teachers to make students ask questions, a student of grade 6 said “No teacher has ever provoked us to ask questions in the class. Provocation is something alien to us”. Almost all the students of the primary as well as high school whom I interviewed hold the similar opinion regarding provocation. Field notes verify the truthfulness of these claims made by the students as not even once any teacher was seen to be provoking her students to ask questions in the class during the course of class observation. No trend of any provocation was observed at all.

When I interviewed the principal of the primary school, I discussed this matter to her. I told her about the lack of questioning by the students in the classrooms. Regarding this issue, she said ***“If a student does not ask question in the classroom then his family is responsible for it and not us. Teachers are only responsible if they do not answer any question”***. She was clearly clueless about the sensitivity and depth of the issue.

She went on to say on this issue “The students are scared to ask questions, a person is scared when he thinks, he is doing something wrong. The families in which they had a brought up do not build confidence in them. I go to classrooms and politely ask students to ask questions from me but they still do not ask. If a student does not ask question, then how the teachers are responsible for it?”

According to the principal, the students and their households are responsible behind them not asking questions in the classroom. This has nothing to do with the teachers and their behavior within the vicinity of the school.

I have interviewed a famous physicist and scholar Dr. Parvez Hoodbhoy for having his valuable opinions regarding the reasons behind the low quality of education in the public schools of our country. He wrote a book named “Education and the state” in 1997, which explains the plight of Pakistan’s education system and the role of state in it.

When I asked him about the lack of questioning in the classrooms of our public schools, he said “I think it is the responsibility of the teachers to provoke the students to ask questions and provide them a friendly environment and inquire from them that why don’t they ask questions. Teachers should make sure that the students have understood everything. Teachers should focus more on the weak students of the class. Teachers should teach students to think about one thing in different scenarios and to imagine solutions for a problem”. Dr Parvez Hoodbhoy totally rejected the claims made by the Principal of that primary school. According to him, it is entirely the responsibility of a teacher to urge and provoke his students to ask questions.

### ***No Discussion of Mistakes:***

A large number of students of both schools were complaining about getting insufficient feedback from the teachers regarding their academic standing. Field notes indicate that a teacher, who was teaching to fourth grade when I have observed her teaching style, returned the checked tests without telling the

students about their mistakes. A student of grade 8 said “Our teachers do not discuss the mistakes of the students on individual basis. Only sometimes they point out our mistakes but do not tell us how to correct it”. The teachers are habitual of not discussing the mistakes of the students in the classroom while returning them the checked tests. Another student of the same grade said “Mostly teachers do not discuss our mistakes, only two of them state the mistakes on the test paper”. This student seemed to be complaining of this behavior of the teachers. She wanted her teachers to discuss the mistakes as well tell the ways to rectify these mistakes.

A student of grade 4 said “Only one of our teachers discusses our mistakes while returning the tests papers and sessional exams and majority of the class does perform well in her subject”. *This student indicated towards the relationship between discussion of mistakes by the teachers and the academic performance of the students.* The students of this class perform well in a particular subject, whose teacher discusses the mistakes in the class and provide them adequate feedback. The students of the primary school were thoughtful of the impact of the discussion of mistakes. This student seemed to be enough satisfactory through getting required feedback from one of the teachers on individual basis.

A student of class 7th said “a couple of our teachers does discuss the mistakes in the class but only with the few students especially those sitting in the front rows”. This student seemed to be a victim of neglect. Such students wish to know about their mistakes in order to not repeat them in the future tests. She went on to say “I would like to know about my mistakes but that desire is quite conditional. I want them to have a discussion with me in a constructive way. This discussion should not come with an element of humiliation or confidence suppression”. According to her, feedback is crucial but the way in which it is provided matters too. The aim of any teacher behind providing feedback should be to make students know their mistakes and be able to rectify them.

I have asked a student of grade 4 that do the teachers teach them to rectify these mistakes,he replied “Generally teachers do not teach to rectify mistakes, but they do if someone asks them to do so”.

Students are required to ask from the teacher to discuss their mistakes. As discussed earlier, students consider it very daring to ask anything from the teachers. It requires a lot of courage. Students want the teachers to discuss such things on their own so the students do not have to intervene.

A student of grade 9 said “I need a tutor because they take a lot of tests and gives individual attention. My tutor points out my mistakes and guide me on how to rectify these mistakes so I can be able to get good marks in the exams”. This student told another benefit of having a tutor which is the discussion of mistakes on the individual basis. The point made by her reflected towards the number of tests conducted and the preparation of exams. The tutors share the burden of studies with the students.

The students of the primary school were predominantly were having this problem of no discussion of mistakes and methods to rectify these mistakes. But these students do enjoy the privilege of getting back their checked tests. Whereas the students of the high school were deprived of this facility of getting checked tests. A student of grade 10 said regarding this issue “In our school, teachers do not take tests on regular basis and there is no such trend of getting checked tests. One of our teachers have not returned a test she took 5 months ago (she laughingly told). We are deprived of knowing about our mistakes let alone the procedure of correcting them”. According to this student, the students of their class are unable to get to know about their academic standing except during the exam season. They donot receive the feedback on weekly/monthly basis. These students tend to have a lesser number of tests as compared to the students studying in the primary school. The students of the primary school are provided the checked tests whereas the students of the high school do not have this privilege.

A student of grade 6 responded to this issue and said “Our teachers take a very few tests in the whole year and they do not return it for weeks and sometimes months so there is no point of discussion of mistakes

A large number of students from the high school reported that there is no trend of returning back the checked tests in this school. In fact the teachers conduct very few written tests in the whole academic



session. These students were deprived of getting feedback which is necessary to improve one's self academically.

### ***Faulty Math Methodologies:***

A huge number of students were unsatisfied by the teaching methodologies used for teaching Mathematics in their schools. Mathematics is the subject which is considered as the most difficult subject by majority of the students. During one of the interviews, a student of grade 8<sup>th</sup> said "Our Math teacher solves 20 percent of the total questions given in the exercise on the black board and then she asks us about our understanding of those solutions. All of the students reply in "yes" even if they have not gotten her at all". This participant pointed towards the low extent of the concern that the teacher has towards the understanding of her students.

A student of 7 grade told that their Math teacher teaches the subject orally to the class. She kept laughing while telling about this eccentric style of her teacher which was truly unacceptable to them. Another student of the same grade reported "Our Math teacher solves only 1 or 2 questions regardless of their kind on the board, hence we badly need tutor for this subject because of lack of clarity of concepts. This student was not satisfied with the number of total questions solved by the teacher in the class. According to her, the teacher should solve at least half of the exercise because all questions are different in kind.

A student of grade 4 said "our Math teacher never invites us to the white board to solve any question". This statement indicated the lack of class participation during the Math class. There is no trend of inviting the students to the board to solve Math problems during the class. A student of grade 5 said "Once our Math teacher asked us to memorize the whole solution of a Math problem which was way too difficult". This student reported with sheer disappointment and was deeply unsatisfied with the teaching methodologies of his Math teacher. These were the few faulty methodologies being used by the teachers for teaching mathematics, a subject which is famous for its practical approach.

### **Theme 3: Non Academic Issues**

#### ***Personal Attacks and Judgment:***

During the process of data collection from the high school, I have observed another widespread trend which may contribute to making school, a less attractive place for some students. There is trend of attacking personally the students by the teachers in order to punish them. The students of primary schools were too little to think about such things. I had a discussion about this issue in detail with the students of the high school.

While talking about her personal experience in this regard, a student of grade 8 said “Our teachers do judge us a lot. Once upon a time, our Urdu teacher judged me when I wore a jeans pant on the Eid Party. Another time, a subject teacher judged me for having short hairs. She disapproved of me for having short hairs, though we have not any such policy in our school, so I consider it a personal attack”. This student referred to a particular incident where her teacher judged her while she was wearing a jeans pant on a party. This happened with a girl aged 13 years only. She also shared the incident where a teacher objected to the length of her hairs. Such type of judgments made by the teachers are considered personal attacks. These students of this high school have to face these things on regular basis.

I asked her about why these teachers behave in this manner, she replied “I can say about a particular teacher. We complain to our parents about her and when they come to attend Parents Teachers Meeting (PTM), they discuss it with her hence she hold grudges against us. She judges us over our friendships even, she passes comments on us while we are playing during the break time. Also she does personal attacks on us, her actions disturb us mentally”. This student told me the possible reason behind this behavior of a particular teacher. She just made a supposition about it. According to her, they do not like the teaching methodology of their Math teacher, so they make complaints of her to their parents.

As the teacher is much aware of this act, hence she has become vindictive towards them. The teachers do hold grudges against the students over personal matters. They do this type of behavior with the students in order to discourage them from making complaints. These tactics are supposedly used by a teacher of high school in order to scare her students.

I have inquired from the students about the possible impacts of this kind of behavior of their teachers. Another student of grade 8 said “I start disliking this school because of this behavior of some of our teachers, when we dislike a place we don’t spend our time there happily”. This student pointed towards a disastrous repercussion of this intimidating behavior of few of the teachers of this high school. According to her, when anyone has been attacked personally in a certain place, he would start disliking that place with the passage of time. The rude behavior of the teachers are forcing the students to not enjoy the course of studying which is the purpose behind attending the school. So this behavior not only suppress the confidence of the students but also affects their learning at the school. When a student is mentally disturbed, he would be unable to focus much on the studies, as a consequence of it he cannot learn as much as he should.

While informing about the personal attacks made by the teachers, a student of grade 10 said “Our teachers do judge us over our clothing e.g. our class teacher often asks from different students that why your shirt is tight, why it is short in length? Why don’t you tie your hair properly?” This student pointed towards a number of intimidating questions posed by their class teachers. According to her, the teacher has no right to judge us for the length and fitting of our clothes, she should only be concerned for the tidiness of our uniform. These issues may fall under the category of “discipline”, but the way these students are judged and asked questions, it is quite disturbing for them. The students are being intimidated in a disrespectful manner in this school.

A student of grade 9 responded to my question about personal attacks made by the teachers and said “Once a subject teacher labeled our whole group of 8 students as “immoral” and directed a student to

stay away from us. Once a teacher said to me that I am too stylish to be a high school girl". This 16 year old student shared two incidents which explains the personal attacks made by the teachers on the students.

One of their subject teachers called a bunch of students "immoral" just because they participate too much in extracurricular activities and focus less on studies. The teacher categorically used this word "immoral" for a group of students in front of another student in order to inhibit her from retaining friendship with this group. In this high school, it is not a big deal for the teachers to use such highly derogatory words for the students. People send their children to school to learn manners from the teachers. The student who narrated this incident was one of those 8 students of that group. She shared another personal experience where the teacher attacked on her personally regarding her personality and objected seriously to her being too stylish. All the above mentioned intimidation has nothing to do with the studies of the students or the discipline of the school. They were totally personal attacks.

I have asked this question from few of the students of the primary school too but majority of them had no complaints or issues in this regard. While answering to the question about getting judged by any teacher in the classroom or otherwise, a student of grade 5 said "Often I do not ask questions from the teachers in the class because I am afraid I would be judged by the teacher for not focusing enough on the lesson while the teacher was teaching it". This student was deprived of the privilege of asking questions from the teachers because of getting judged by the teacher for not paying enough attention. According to this 10 years old boy, the teachers instead of replying to them in the classroom, judge them for not paying attention and sometimes for not being a capable student. He does not ask questions because of this fear of getting a backlash from his teachers.

When I asked a teacher of high school about this behavior of some of the teachers of this school, she replied "Students of middle level are so young so that can't decide either their question is valid or not. So hence they don't ask questions because of fear of getting judged or mocked". This teacher made a

statement which is quite similar to what that student of primary school said above. She also considers the fear of getting judged as one of the possible reasons behind lack of questioning by the students. According to her, the students of the middle level are not always sure about the validity of the questions in their mind. They desist asking such questions from the teachers, the validity of whom is doubtful. In this way, a number of students remain unable to ask questions because of the judgment and personal attacks made by the teachers.

### ***Lack of Confidence Development:***

Confidence is the faith in one's self which comes through the appreciation of one's own capabilities. It is considered as a key to success. According to my observations, the teachers working in the public schools do not work hard for developing confidence in their students. A student of grade 7 said "Until primary level, I used to study in a private school. The teachers of that school used to focus a lot on our confidence development. They made me participate in the extracurricular activities like debates and drawing. Hence they developed confidence in myself in this way".

This participant went on to say "In our school, teachers do not develop confidence in the students. The teachers do not encourage the shy students to participate in the activities. The student had a view point that teachers of public school do not fulfill the responsibility of developing confidence in their students". She told that all her class fellows in that private school were very confident. A student of class 8<sup>th</sup> said "I am not a very confident person but occasionally I feel very confident whenever I have full knowledge regarding a topic than I can talk about it in front of a gathering". This student meant to say that knowledge is a determinant of confidence. Through giving this statement she implied that her teachers were being failed in providing them with enough knowledge and enhancing their level of intellect. The teachers are indirectly inhibiting them from being confident human beings.

A participant who happens to be a teacher of primary school said "The difference between the students of public and private sector educational institutions is of confidence. Kids coming from rich families

are confident enough to ask questions hence their understanding level is high”. A student of 6<sup>th</sup> grade pointed towards the insufficient opportunities of extra-curricular activities in the school. She said “We have no opportunities to participate at this level only students of Matric and Intermediate are given such opportunities. We have a minute number of functions per year and the administration of the dramatic society does not invite us for these things”.

Another participant of grade 5<sup>th</sup> said regarding confidence suppression “Our teachers scold us unnecessarily and my father used to beat me a lot in the past. My uncle with whom I am living now a days beats me for not offering prayers. All these factors contribute to the suppression of confidence in myself”. This student was so depressed because of his family issues and behavior which were the reason behind his low level of confidence.

A student of grade 5 who considers himself to be a very confident person said “My mother and my maternal uncle developed confidence in myself. They always urge me to participate in extracurricular activities, my mother loves me so much and takes good care of me. I have a very friendly relationship with her”. It was obvious through his answer that his high confidence levels were due to his friendly bond with his class teacher, mother and uncle. Love, care and friendliness boost confidence level of children generally.



***Figure 3 Two students of Primary School Rehearsing on Stage***

A student of grade 7<sup>th</sup> said “Our teacher does not bother much about confidence building their whole concern is just to teach us and covered the entire curricula”. According to this student teacher do not focus on confidence building because they do not consider it as one of their duties. Field notes indicate that teachers do not think that developing confidence is part of their job. An element which contributes majorly to confidence suppression is that the extracurricular activities are not graded. They are not mandatory for all the students. A student of grade 4 said “No teacher has ever persuaded me to participate in any activity. There is no such trend which is a very unfortunate thing. Teachers do not

convince or encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities hence they do not bother about their confidence development which is a thing of least importance to them”.

### ***Corporal Punishment:***

Filed notes indicate that the corporal punishment is still practiced in the public school of Islamabad despite being banned by the government of Pakistan. The principal of the primary school told me that she got an official letter from the Federal Directorate of Education which was aimed at banning the practice of corporal punishment. I informed her about the practice of corporal punishment in her school she said “If a teacher beats a student despite it is being banned officially then there is something very wrong with her and she may have some personal frustrations”.

The principal accepted the fact that the government has failed to eliminate the practice of corporal punishment in the public schools because of lack of cooperation of teachers. She indicated towards a major reason behind this practice i.e. personal frustrations going in the lives of public school teachers, which eventually lead to victimization of students. A number of students of this primary school shared the story of abuse and beating faced by them and their class fellows.

A student of grade 4<sup>th</sup> said “I have personally never got beaten by any teacher but I have seen this sort of treatment from the teachers here. Once I saw a teacher beating a student using his copy and that student got a mark on his face due to this beating”. Another student of 4<sup>th</sup> grade said, one of our own teachers used to slap us and beat us through sticks and hands.” These statements clearly show that the teachers used certain objects to beat their students physically.

A student of 5<sup>th</sup> grade said “teacher insults us and beat us mostly when students of our own class fight with each other and create disturbance in the class. They do slap us at our back and head, another student of the same class said “Few teachers beat us with sticks and make us stand outside the class. Teachers mostly beat male students”. An element of gender discrimination was observed in the practice



of corporal punishment. A student of 10<sup>th</sup> grade said “Our English teacher makes us write things multiple times because in such a way we always learn her test next time”. Almost all students from the primary to high level were annoyed because of this punishment which urges them to write a topic or a sentence multiple times. Field notes indicate that some teachers asked them to write one thing fifty or hundred times. Students consider this punishment as highly illogical as it stresses them out.

A teacher of primary school said “*We ask students to write one thing multiple times in order to punish them. The logic behind it is to tease and irritate a student to the extent that next time he prepares the topic very well which we assign him for the test or homework*”. This teacher admitted that they consider this method a rightful technique to make students memorize even if he does not understand it.

When I asked a primary school teacher about whether she supports the ban on corporal punishment or not, she said “I donot support the ban on corporal punishment because this ban would made students rude. They would no longer be scared from their teachers. There are some students who would study only when they have a fear of getting punished from their teachers” The views of this teacher were religiously inclined. According to this teacher, there is no harm in beating students of a primary school. She justified her stance through reasoning. She reflected towards the element of fear which can only be incorporated in a student through beating him.

On the issue of corporal punishment, a senior teacher of the primary school (who was in the lane of becoming the next vice principal of the school) said “I do not favor the ban on corporal punishment because the mothers also beat their children over bad behavior and poor performance. Children are punished in this way in their homes, so they should be punished like this in the schools because they are used to it”. She rejected the idea of beating too harshly that can lead to physical injuries. She went on to say “In our school, students do not hold grudges against the teachers. We insult them and beat them and they forget it within a day or two. This corporal punishment does not affect the teacher-

student bond here, as it does in the high school”. She innocently overlooked the demerits of corporal punishment. She ignored the negative psychological impacts of physical punishment given by the teachers as well as parents. This is a prime example of normalizing corporal punishment and inhibiting it from becoming a taboo in the society.

While sharing her views regarding corporal punishment, another teacher of the primary school said “Slightly beating the students is necessary in order to make them afraid and disciplined”. This teacher raised the issue of discipline and related it to corporal punishment. According to her, she did not have any idea other than beating to make students disciplined. When I asked about the corporal punishment, a teacher of high school said “I used to beat students up to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but it is not needed at Matric level”. She added “I try not to hurt self-respect of my students”. Despite of the fact, that she beats them, she thinks that she does not hurt their self-respect. She does not realize the impact of corporal punishment on someone’s self-esteem.

I have interviewed 12 teachers for this research work. Four out of the twelve teachers favored the ban on corporal punishment whereas the rest of them did not favor this ban. Majority opposed this ban. The teachers who opposed this ban, did this on humanitarian grounds.

### ***Burden of Studies:***

The students studying in the public schools were burdened with studies. They consider gaining education a “burden”. During the process of data collection, I tried to find out the possible reasons behind this element of burden and up to which extent the students are burdened due to their studies.

I asked a teacher of a primary school that why students consider their studies as a burden, she said “Nowadays students are so burdened because they go to schools for gaining secular education in the morning, after returning from the schools they have to go to Madressahs/Mosques to attain religious education. Apart from this, they also attend tuition centers/academies and the remaining time is

consumed in doing homework at home, hence they are not fascinated to studies anymore. These students have an escape in the form of rote learning. Due to shortage of time, they ask the students to memorize things even if they have not understood them. A teacher can only teach them, they cannot make him memorize in the 40 minutes of class time”.

This teacher wanted to say that the students are burdened because of studying at different places in a single day, Schools, mosques, and tuition centers are the places where they have to go for studying. Hence most of our students lose the interest in studies over time. She also mentioned “rote learning” as a major reason behind the increase in the burden of studies. This route is short but stressful.

Another teacher of the primary school who teaches English to the grade 5 said over this issue “An important reason behind the burden on students at primary level is the exams. There should be assessments only up to the primary level”. This teacher threw light on the relationship between the evaluation system and burden on the students. According to her, the students of a primary school are too young to bear the burden of the exams. They find it difficult to memorize the whole books before the final exams.

I have asked this question regarding the reasons behind this burdening from every student. During explaining the factors that burdened him, a student of grade 5 said “When I do not do homework in time and there are a lot of tasks to do in a single day, it becomes a burden for me. During such a situation, a study becomes too boring and I cannot focus on it at all”. This student considers lack of consistency and huge amount of homework given by the teachers as major reasons behind burdening.

A student of 6<sup>th</sup> grade said “I usually get bored of the studies at school because of continuous studying and sitting on a bench for hours. Here we have only one break for rest, whereas at home we can take as many breaks as we want”. She wanted to say that she get bored in the school due to lack of fun and creative activities. The students get tired due to sitting at the chairs continuously for hours.

A teacher of the primary school who teaches Mathematics to the students of grade 2 and 3 said “There are certain things in the curricula of Mathematics which is beyond the comprehension of the students of grade 2 and 3. Such elements which are part of their course but are beyond their level of understanding provoke them to learn by rote. For instance, there are word problems in math book of grade 2. These things also put burden on the students”. According to this teacher, *the curricula should be designed considering the intellectual capabilities and age of the students. Otherwise, such curricula would not contribute to their knowledge at all. A thing which is beyond someone’s understanding becomes a burden. Most of the students do not enjoy while studying due to this burden.*

I have confirmed about the existence of this burden through asking all students about the details of their daily routines. A vast majority of the students take tuitions at regular basis in order to gain desirable marks. Only 3 students were not having tuition. I have asked them about the necessity of the tuitions they take and the factors which made it compulsory for them.

A student of class 7<sup>th</sup> said in this regard “Our Math teacher solves only 2, 3 questions in the class and then asks us to solve the rest of them on our own. Not even a single student understands what the teacher is teaching to us, those who understand necessarily take tuitions”. According to this student (who was visibly upset over the teaching methodology adopted by her teacher), it has become crucial for them to take tuition for Mathematics. Almost every student studies at home in order to solve the Math problems given by the teachers on daily basis. Apart from that, all students except 3 either go to an academy or take the services of a teacher living in their close vicinity. A very few students who belong to relatively stable families afford the privilege of having home tuitions.

A student of grade 7 said “If our teachers provide us individual attention we would not have to spend money for tuitions, my father pays 24 thousand rupees to my home tutor on monthly basis”. According to this student, students in public schools are forced to take tuitions because of lack of individual

attention given by the teachers. No one wants to pay hefty amounts to the tutors. When I asked her about the other subjects, she said “I need tuition for other subjects too for better understanding and preparation of exams. In academy, teachers give us individual attention, they answer to our questions. They satisfy us to the fullest in order to satisfy their employers. They consider themselves responsible for our results”. She raised many important points. She pointed towards the element of responsibility in the tutors and the absence of this feature in the public school teachers. Tutors consider themselves responsible for the result of their students whereas the public school teachers consider themselves unanswerable for the result of their students. This student mentioned the impact of being answerable to one’s employers. It shows the relationship between the fear of employer and the quality of education provided.

A teacher of high school confessed that about 90 percent of her students go to tuition centers. While explaining this she said “Almost 90 percent of my students go to tuition centers after returning from school, then they return back to their home in the evening. Parents have no time for their children. This is an extreme case of neglect”.

A student of grade 4 said “Sometimes, despite not understanding a thing, I do not ask any question from the teacher because I do rely on my tutor for such things”. Students do not ask questions in the class primarily due to fear or lack of confidence and secondly due to availability of the second option in the form of a tutor. Indirectly, it seems like that these students are forced to take tuitions because of lack of understanding in the first place. But when they finally have tutors, they are quite satisfied with this fact”.

Another students of the same class said on this issue “majority of the students do not ask questions in the class, because the things that we do not understand in the school, we learn them in the tuition center. It is the trend here, everybody does that”. They considered this scenario a “trend” prevailing in their surroundings. People do follow this trend as they consider it beneficial.

A 10 year old male student who studies in grade 4 said “After returning from school, I go to tuition and return back at 9 P.M. I don’t study at home, I just study there.” These kinds of students rely just on the tuition centers. So they spend 6 hours of a day in a tuition center for 6 days in a week. He told that his father lived abroad, whereas his mother is illiterate. So no one can teach him at the home. He himself is the eldest sibling. He went on to saying “I have been improved as a student after getting admission in to a tuition center. The percentage I used to get before gains an increase of 25 percent due to this tuition. Else I was only able to get around 40 percent marks”. This student told me about the necessity and importance of the tuition centers when it comes to their grades.

Almost all students of these two schools whom I interviewed consider getting good grades as the ultimate success of the school life. These students are able to have this ultimate goal through climbing the stairs of a ladder, where tuition centers being the most important stair. The above mentioned was the case where tuition is necessary to get promoted. In some other cases, it was just to have a better understanding and achieve the best score.

No one takes tuition for less than 3 hours per day. The students of these schools need 3 to 6 hours tuition on daily basis throughout the year in order to perform well. Many of the students go to the tuition centers immediately after returning from school where they do study for 6 hours too. This back to back study is another major reason behind the lack of interest of the students in the studies. Half of the day spends while studying, so it eventually becomes something boring for them. While explaining the advantages of tuitions, a student of grade 5 said “Earlier I used to get 60 percent marks, but after started going to a tuition center I took 80 percent marks in the last terminal exams”. This student witnessed a 20 percent increase in his total marks obtained due to tuition.

A student of grade 10 said “Our academy teachers take tests on regular basis, so the exam preparation becomes easy in this way hence the burden is shared”. She explained the concept of burden sharing through having tuition as they are effective in making students well prepared for the terminal as well

as final exams. I have asked all the students about having an increase in marks obtained through tuitions. On an average every student experiences an increase of 15 to 20 percent in their grades. This hike in percentages makes the idea behind taking tuitions very comprehensible.

#### **Theme 4 Lack of Certain Activities.**

##### *Lack of Creative Activities:*

During the course of data collection, I have noticed this thing that the time tables installed in the classrooms of the public schools lack the periods of Arts and Drawing. I was very curious to find and know about the factors that inhibit the policymakers to incorporate these subjects for the students of the primary and high school. Almost all of the students were unhappy of this fact i.e. there is absence of such creative activities in the school. I have inquired about the reasons and impact of lack of creative activities through the interviews taken.

A teacher of the primary school said on this issue “There is an extreme lack of creative activities in our school. There are no periods for drawing and art projects. This is the reason our students lack in creative skills”. According to this teacher, creative skills are something which can be instilled in the students through giving them opportunities to explore their creative skills and engaging them in creative activities. Another teacher of the primary school said “There should be a separate period for drawing and creativity in the time table of primary schools. These subjects should be given immense importance by making them graded. We have nothing here related to Arts but the students tend to study Arabic and computer science (orally)”. This teacher teaches English to grade 3,4 and 5 and is popular for teaching her students in a friendly and lighter mood. She kept on telling the benefits of having creative activities like drawing, painting and designing, convergent thinking, making models, listening to motivational talks. This English teacher seemed to be very compassionate of having these subjects in the primary schools. She went on to say “I teach English language, but apart from teaching lessons

and basic grammar rules, I try a little to boost their creative skills too. Unfortunately I have very lesser time and resources for doing all these things”. She briefly stated the activities of creative work, which students of any primary school should be doing. This teacher hinted towards her interest in creative activities and any duty assigned to her in this regard. She also suggested the addition of creative activities into the already existent “English” subject which is a compulsory subject from grade 1 to bachelors’ level. According to her, the inclusion of creative activities into English Language Subject is good, but the option of the introduction of a separate subject would be suitable among all the options.

I asked this teacher about the number of creative activities being performed by the students in the current time, she replied “Our students are quite interested and enthusiastic when it comes to creative activities, they take part in such activities happily when we ask them to decorate the auditorium for farewell party and their classrooms for the beginning of a session. They love to paint and draw”. She brought my attention towards the interests and desires of the students that revolves around the creative activities. The passion of the students for painting and drawing cannot be ignored.

She mentioned about the funding issue related to these activities, so I asked her about the source of funding too. While answering to my question, she said “We (teachers) have to fund such activities ourselves because our administration does not fund such activities. If I talk about myself, my salary is around 50 thousand and I am a married woman with three kids so I am unable to fund such activities throughout the year. I just do it once in a while for necessary events in the beginning and end of a session”. She explained in detail the financial obstacles in the way of inclusion of creative activities. The teachers themselves have to provide painting colors, card sheets etc. in order to make students participate in such activities. According to her, it is very difficult for the teachers to fund such activities and it is the responsibility of the administration to provide these necessary items.

In her opinion, the government schoolteachers are low paid as compared to the government employees of other cadres. So, the teachers can only spend money once or twice an year for these activities. She



raised another very important point. She mentioned two subjects i.e. Arabic and computer science which are part of the syllabus of primary schools. Arabic, a foreign language is taught to students whereas the computer subject is taught orally, a subject which is famous for its practical nature. These two subjects are given priority over Arts subject which is crucial for developing creative skills in the students.

A student of grade 7 shared her opinion regarding the lack of creative activities in her school and said “We get bored while sitting and studying for hours in a day. We have a break time of just half an hour. There is no element of fun during the hours of study. It has a negative impact on our interest in studies. The act of gaining education becomes a burden when it lacks element of fun and creativity”. This student pointed out towards potential disadvantages of not having creative subjects as part of the syllabus. The students tend to get bored due to hectic schedules and back to back studies. The idea of sitting on the benches for hours is nothing less than a nightmare for majority of the students. According to her, the lack of creative activities is responsible for lower level of interest of the students in the studies. She called such studies a “burden” which revolves only around books, notebooks and exams. The students of the high school were seemed to be very well aware of the necessities and possible benefits of having such activities in the school. It was not needed to first make them aware of such things. In fact, I saw them complaining of having no such activities in their school. It looked like they desperately want the administration of the school and their teachers to initiate these activities in their school. Many students do not enjoy the course of schooling because the lack of such activities. I have analyzed that the creative activities have no place in the priority list of these public schools. It is considered as one of the most important aspect of schooling anywhere in the world, but here I observed an extreme dearth of it and presence of a petty blame game. The teachers put the blame on the administrators of the school, whereas the administration put the entire blame on the Federal Directorate of Education for the lack of creative activities in the public sector schools.

While discussing the issue of lack of creative activities, the principal of the primary school said “In private schools, the students do a number of creative activities like drawing, painting etc. but we have students from the poor backgrounds so they cannot fund such activities themselves and neither can the government afford it”. The principal clearly said that they cannot have such activities in their school because it is a public school and the government do not provide them enough financial resources for

*o Feedback mechanism:*

Feedback is a kind of “corrective information” about a product, service, event or an action. It is the provision of this corrective information to the authority who is responsible for the production and provision of these things. The feedback mechanism is adopted by every organization and institution irrespective of them being public or private. The motive behind taking feedback is to satisfy the consumer of the product or the service. Feedback is also necessary in order to maintain or enhance the quality of product. Through feedback, a consumer is able to share his experience with the service provided to him. Moreover, he would be able to inform about the flaws in the service to the respective authority. Feedback is always taken through a mechanism which is a way or technique, through which the organization takes the feedback from the consumers.

Different organization have different mechanisms to receive feedback from the customers. For instance, in our university Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, we have to participate in a computer-generated survey in order to provide our feedback related to quality of education to the university. This survey consists of a questionnaire having several questions in different sections inquiring about the punctuality of the teachers, availability of the teachers, quality of curricula etc. We have to fill and submit this survey before the end of each and every semester. This thing is compulsory for all the students of the university.

Inquiring about the feedback mechanism was one of the parts of my interview schedule. I have asked this question from all the participants of my research. When asked about the existence of any kind of formal feedback mechanism, a student of grade 8 said “There is no system of taking feedback like the

way you are taking at the moment”. This student pointed towards the absence of a feedback mechanism in her school for inquiring about the quality of education. This statement made by her depicts an element of deprivation among the students studying in this high school. The way she said “No one does that the way you are doing it”, reflects towards the happiness and satisfaction she got through my act of taking interviews and listening to her queries. It seemed that she always wanted to share her concerns regarding the provision of education to them but no one has ever listened to her in the vicinity of this school.

She made it clear that there is no formal feedback mechanism in this school. So I asked her about the way they convey their issues, she replied “We are allowed to tell our problems to our class teachers and respective subject teachers but we do not do that because of lack of friendliness with the teachers. Our class teacher does not share such a bond with us so that we can be able to share our academic problems with her. Our teachers have just one concern and that is covering the whole syllabus”. She told me about having an opportunity to talk to the teachers about the queries. Despite of having an opportunity, the students were unable to avail it and it was their biggest concern.

When I analyzed this issue, I see a number of factors which may contribute to this problem. Firstly there is a lack of confidence in majority of the students studying in the public sector schools, which inhibits them from openly sharing their issues with the class teacher or the subject teachers. Secondly, the behavior of the teachers is not so welcoming enough to make students share their problems easily. There is an element of fear attached to the teacher-student bond within this school. The field notes indicate that a vast majority of the students were not able to communicate even a single sentence or a couple of words with the teacher in the classroom. I have observed this fact myself while sitting in one of the classrooms of high school where the teacher was teaching English language to the students of grade 10.

When the students of this age group are unable to communicate with the teacher, so how would the younger students communicate? It refers to the element of fear as well as the unfriendly behavior of the

teachers with the students. So this permission to share the queries with the teachers is just useless, because it is a one sided process where the students need to tell themselves without being asked or encouraged by the teachers to do so. Students are unable to convey their issues to the teachers due to lack of friendly environment in the classrooms.

When I asked about accessing the vice principal for discussing the issues and the problems, a student of grade 9 said “I can access the vice principal but I have not done that ever because she does not take us seriously and if we make a complaint about any teacher, that teacher will be informed about my complaint and we will have to face the consequences of it. Hence we do not access the vice principal for such matters even if a teacher badly misbehaves with us”. This student considered making complaints of teachers as playing with fire. They assume it a very risky and courageous thing to do.

Only those students are able to make complaints who are brave enough to bear the consequences of it. She assured me of having the permission to access the vice principal. It means that they are able to enter into the office of the vice principal and no one inhibits them from doing that. The problems are that the teachers do not like the idea of provision of feedback by the students to the vice principal. Most of the teachers make it an issue of ego. They do misbehave with the students and negligence related to concept building/conducting tests but do not want the vice principal or the principal to know about it. They do not want anyone to question their doings. The students, being well aware of the repercussions of making complaints, do not have the audacity to visit the Vice principal in this regard.

While telling me about the lack of formal feedback mechanism, some students told about the bad behavior of the teachers too. So there is no win-win situation for the students in both cases. Either they have to bear the issues and problems silently or face the consequences after making complaints in the form of wrath of teachers. It is the loss of the student in both conditions. On the face of it, the opportunities are provided to the students in a sense that they are permitted to provide the feedback to the teachers as well as the vice principal of the school. Despite having this permission, the students are not discussing their issues due to lack of encouragement by the teachers.

The matter of concern is that, no one bothers if the students are providing the adequate feedback or not. The teachers do not consider “acquiring” the required feedback from the students as their duty. The students are asked to do heavy lifting themselves. This student of grade 9 was visibly upset over this fact. She was concerned over the absence of feedback mechanism in her school. According to her, she can have a number of benefits, if their school has a proper feedback mechanism. It would help them to convey their issues regarding the provision of education and behavior of the teachers.

When I asked a teacher of high school who teaches to grade 9 and 10 about the absence of any mechanism to take feedback from the students, she replied “There cannot be any direct touch between the students and the administration of the school. Students can share their problems with their class and subject teachers. I ask my students to tell me about the level of satisfaction from the teaching methodologies I use. But most of our teachers are not friendly with their students. They do not open up with them. I try to find my mistakes with the passage of time. Some teachers have frustration which they take out on the students”.

According to this teacher, the public sector schools cannot have any mechanism through which the students acquire a direct link with the administrators of the school. By administrator, she meant the principal of the school. The students are allowed to share their opinions and issues with the teachers. She blamed the majority of the teachers for not being friendly and encouraging towards the students in the classrooms.

In her opinion, the teachers do not share a friendly bond with the students. It refers to the fact that the teachers just teach the students and do not talk with them during a class. When a teacher does not talk to her students randomly, the students can never become able to share their problems with such teachers. The majority of the teachers in this school are like that according to the students. This teacher holds the majority of the teachers of her school responsible for not acquiring adequate feedback from

the students. These students cannot be held responsible for not providing feedback due to the above mentioned reasons.

A number of students of the public schools are very least confidence. Such students are unable to take this initiative of discussing their queries with their teachers on their own without getting approached or asked by the teachers.

I have also interviewed, a group of six students who belong to 10 grade, through using focus group discussion technique. I have thoroughly enjoyed taking an interview from six students simultaneously. All the students wholeheartedly share their problems with me and responsibly answered to all my questions. When asked about the access to vice Principal of the school, a student of grade 10 said “The vice principal as well as the Principal asks us to visit them only in their early days of holding office and if when we try to approach them, our teachers place hurdles in this process”.

The rest of the five students of the group did agree to this statement made by their fellow student. According to this student, they face great opposition when it comes to providing feedback to the vice principal. Apparently students are allowed to do that but in reality they are not free to do that at all. This student pointed towards the opposition by the teachers for providing feedback. When I asked about the nature of that opposition they face, this student went on to say “If we convey our issues to the vice principal, which involve something negative related to our teachers, the teachers start holding grudges against us in the first place. Secondly, they inhibit us from sharing our issues with vice principal. They consider it a betrayal to the relationship between a student and a teacher. They point out the student who made the complaint in front of the class and then ridicule her for doing this”.

This student explained the bad behavior of their teachers towards them. This behavior is deeply rooted in hypocrisy. It also depicts the authoritarian mindset of the teachers working in the public sector schools, where the teachers consider themselves above the accountability. When the shortcomings of the teachers are conveyed to the vice principal, they make it an ego issue as they do not like the idea

of this kind of intrusion at all. This student discussed a number of techniques, through which the teachers inhibit the students from discussing their issues.

The direct inhibition involves the act of discouraging the students and labelling the idea of feedback as an act of rebellion and disrespect towards the teachers. Another way of inhibiting the students is to insult and ridicule them right after the incidence happens. It is because when a student makes a complaint of a teacher, the vice principal calls the teacher to her office and discuss the matter with her. Soon after returning from the office of the vice principal, the teachers insult the students who make the complaint of them. So it comes as an immediate punishment to those allegedly rebellious students who dare to take the matters bothering them to the vice principal.

A student irrespective of his age is very much scared of such sort of immediate repercussions. He would remain silent over the issues faced by him, but would never indulge in an act that may cause such insult or ridicule that too in front of the class. Such types of incidences are a major reason behind the suppression of confidence in the students of the public schools. The third type of the consequences are those which the students tend to tolerate in the long run too. Some teachers hold grudges against the students and the students tolerate the insults every now and then. This is another dangerous consequence of providing feedback to the vice principal.

I asked about the feedback from a student of grade 7. She shared a personal incidence with me and said “When one of our former principals was transferred newly to our school, she tried to inquire about our issues in person but the majority of the teachers including our class teacher inhibits us from visiting the office of the principal, whereas they should have encouraged us to share our issues with the principal. Once I made a complaint of a subject teacher to that principal, the very next day, the teacher came to our class and ridiculed me from doing that”. This student was a girl aged 13 years only and had to face the insult by the teacher over a mere act of providing feedback which is quite a normal thing to do.

A student of grade 9 said about this issue “We can make complaints but we do not because our system does not allow us to do so. Last year I was having so much trouble understanding some concepts in Math class because the teacher was not good at making things clear to us. So, I along with my friends, went to the Vice Principal in order to make a complaint but we were told by her that they had no teacher of Mathematics other than that one teacher for the school section. Then we left this idea, but before leaving the office we begged the vice principal to not disclose our names to that teacher. We were not sure at that time about what would be coming to us. But luckily, we remained safe from the wrath of that teacher”. This incident was very much effective for me to understand the loopholes in this entire system of feedback. The students are afraid of the teachers and the teachers do not like the idea of get summoned by the vice principal. The element of fear in students is due to the unfriendly and strict behavior of the teachers. It is because such incidents make that particular teachers prominent in front of the whole staff and their reputation gets damage due to it. The students get in trouble because their names are told to the teachers whom complaints are made. This is all about the absence of a formal feedback mechanism, which is crucial to enhance the quality of education at any educational institute.

### ***Lack of Oral Testing.***

The oral exam is a kind of testing which involves the posing of oral questions by the examiner. This tradition has been practiced in the schools since ages. The distinctive feature of the oral examination is that it requires the students to exhibit sufficient knowledge in order to satisfy the teacher. Another important aspect of oral testing is that it provides a student limited time to answer a particular question.

I have observed a number of classes during the process of data collection. The teachers only take written tests. No one bothers about the oral testing. The students were comfortable with the idea of written tests. When I asked about oral testing from a student of 10 grade, she replied “Only a couple of teachers conduct oral testing and that too very seldom in the whole year. Actually it is not the norm



here”. According to this student, teachers don’t conduct oral tests because it is not a norm here. The oral tests or viva is not a part of final exams except for three natural science subjects.

When I asked a student of grade 4 about oral testing, he replied “It happens only once in a while. Only our class teacher sometimes asks us to tell what we read in the previous class. Other than her, no one asks her in this way. The teachers focus only on written tests and that too before the final and terminal exams” for the sake of revision”. This statement made by a student of primary school showed the absence of oral testing in the primary schools as well.

When I inquired about the lack of oral testing from a teacher of high school, she answered “Our students of grade 9 and 10 remain so worried for the viva exam. They are comfortable for a whole written exam but are extremely anxious about the little viva exam. It is just because they are not comfortable with the oral testing”. These students do not like cross questioning. While I was taking viva exam of Chemistry last year, a student of grade 10 started crying when the examiner was asking questions from her. These students are not habitual of giving answers orally and talking in front of the teachers”. This teacher highlighted a major issue faced by the students studying in the public sector schools. The students who study at the public schools are unable to perform well in oral exams. There is also an element of confidence attached to it. The students are not confident enough to answer orally. The teachers are not asked by the authorities to conduct oral tests at the regular basis. In such a case, students are comfortable with just written tests.

### ***Lack of Class Presentations***

An oral presentation is analogous to delivering a speech in front of an audience. The only difference between the two things is the use of certain visual aids and other technologies. The multimedia presentations have now become a compulsory component of the higher education and offices. While interviewing the students as well as the teachers, I come to know about the lack of class presentations in the primary and high schools of Islamabad.

When asked about taking class presentations by a teacher of primary school who teaches to grade 4 and 5, she replied “I do not take class presentations at all. It is because we are not asked to do so by the administration of the school. As it is not part of the course made by the board. Secondly, I do not consider it important for the students of a primary school. Presentations belong to the high school or college”. According to this teacher, they just do that is asked them to do and that is part of their job. Why would they take class presentations, when no one has ever asked them to do so? She considers class presentations as an unimportant thing, which has no significance for the students of a primary school.

I asked about the conduction of presentations from another teacher of the primary school, she said “I do not take class presentations, because no one does that in the entire school. Only one teacher takes presentation in the class and she teaches Urdu to grade 5”.

I asked this teacher about her views regarding class presentations. She said “ I think class presentations are very important, because they boost the confidence levels of the students and enhance their learning”. This teacher also do not take class presentations but unlike the previous one she did not underestimate the importance of class presentations.

I have interviewed a group of grade 7 using the focus group discussion technique. I have chosen six students from grade 7. I have asked them a question regarding the trend of class presentations, one of the students replied “No teacher has ever taken class presentation. We have never presented in front of our class in our entire academic lives”. Another student of this group said on this issue “Presentations are necessary for confidence building but our teachers do not focus on it. Instead of these things which are beneficial to us, they give us time consuming summer vacations homework which is composed of copying material into or notebooks” This statement made by the students clearly displays the priorities of the teachers. They do not focus on those things which are advantageous to the students in a number of ways. She showed a great interest in class presentations but unluckily has not

provided such opportunities. It points out towards another important fact. The students do not have much interest in the activities which involve copy paste. They like to do creative activities like class presentations. They find it quite amusing, different from the routine class and home work.

I asked about the class presentations from a student of grade 9 who studied earlier from a private school, she said “There is no trend of taking class presentations in our school. I am aware of this term, because I used to have them when I was a student in a private school earlier. In that schools teachers present in front of us too using multimedia. Here we are not asked to give oral presentations”.

I have interviewed the students from grade 6 to 10 in this high school. And only one teacher takes class presentation.

### ***Lack of Practical Work***

Practical work is immensely vital for the development of certain skills. Practical work is equally important as the theoretical work. It is crucial to make the connection between the abstract and the real worlds. During the process of taking interviews, I have observed an extreme dearth of practical work in the public sector schools of Islamabad. The entire focus of the teachers is on the theoretical work. The teachers are seen to be worried for teaching the lessons and covering the entire course. Practical work can be considered as one of those things which are given the least importance in these public schools.

When I asked a student of grade 10 about the amount of practical work they do in the school, she replied “We have only a few practical of Computer Science in the whole year. So we have a very less opportunities to visit the computer lab in the whole year”. She was a student of Arts section. When I asked her about her viewpoint regarding the impact of practical work on their learning, she replied “Practical work is necessary. We are able to understand more deeply through practical work. The main focus of the teacher who teaches Computer subject is on teaching the theory written in the textbooks.

We rarely visit the computer labs. It is quite ironic in a sense that a subject of practical nature is being taught while focusing wholly on the theory”. These students are brought to the computer lab very fewer times in the whole year. Due to lack of practical work, some students loose the interest in the subject over time.

A teacher of high school who teaches Biology to the grade 9 and 10 said “In our school, very less importance is given to the practical work. Students can have conceptual understanding through the practical work. Due to burden of huge quantity of syllabus, we are unable to allot much time to the practical work even during teaching Science subjects. When I take my students to Biology laboratory, they learn as well as enjoy a lot. But I cannot do this much, because we have to cover the whole syllabus one month before the final exams. It also happens because the portion of the practical work has much lesser marks in the final exam as compared to the theoretical work”.

According to this teacher, they are not able to engage the students much in the practical work, because of huge amount of theoretical syllabus. They can compromise on concept building, but they cannot compromise on the quantity of syllabus. It is because, it is predefined by the Federal Directorate of Education in case of External Examination.

## **Theme no 5 Lack of Critical Thinking:**

### ***Lack of Critical Thinking:***

Critical thinking is the name of analyzing different facts in order to reach towards a certain conclusion and form a judgment based on the analysis of these facts. It is also known as “reflective thinking”.it is a tool used in educational settings to develop analytical, critical and problem solving skills in the students. Contrary to the popular opinion held by majority of the teachers of public schools, the students should be exposed to the critical thinking at a very early age in the primary schools. When a student of primary school will make to think critically, this thing will goes on with him till the tertiary

level and even beyond that. It proves to be beneficial for the students in their academic as well as professional lives. In the two public school from where I have collected data, the teachers as well as the students were not well aware of the term “critical thinking”.

I made the questions regarding critical thinking as one of the major part of my semi structured interview schedule. I have asked this question from all the participants of my research work but the students of the primary school had no clue about this term so they remained unable to answer to it. The students of the high school had knowledge about it, si they answered to this question. The most unfortunate yet interesting thing was that I had to explain the meaning and application of critical thinking to some of the teachers in the primary as well as the high school. I have explained the meaning of it to each and every participant who asked for it. The required answers cannot be acquired if the participant has no sense of the question being asked.

When I asked a student of grade 9 about the use of critical thinking as a tool to create critical skill. She replied “our teachers do not make us think critically, they just teach us the lessons of our books word toward. Their entire focus is on covering the whole syllabus”. She went on to say laughingly “they can’t teach us simple things properly and you are asking about critical thinking”. This student holds an opinion that considering the teaching abilities of her students it is quite sufficient for the teachers to teach simple lessons in the class. The idea of making students think critically is beyond the teaching capabilities of the teachers of this high school. She understood the meaning of critical thinking but she had not seen its application in her school ever.

A teacher of the high school responded to the question regarding critical thinking in these words “in the past I tried making my students to think critically while teaching them the stories in English language subject but these students of the public schools do not respond to the teachers in this regard. Now I do not effort much about it and that is because we have very lesser time for these things here. My entire focus is on completing the lessons and making them understand the topic atleast if we do

make students think critically. Then I have to have discussions with them too. While doing all these things, no time would be left for teaching the entire lesson, which would be a part of their exams”.

This teacher seemed to have not a clear idea of what critical thinking is. Later on, I made it clear to her while explaining in detail. She primarily blamed the lack of time and huge quantity of syllabus for the lack of encouragement of the critical thinking among the students. According to her, the students having low level of intellect, are unable to respond to such things she used to pose that urges the students to think critically. This students tried to imply that her students are not able to think critically in any way as if these students are mentally challenged. When I asked her to explain this fact in detail as I did not understand when she told, she said “whenever I ask questions from the students which involve critical thinking e.g. something which is different in application from the things mentioned exactly in the textbook, the students keep silent over such questions and donot answer at all”. While explaining her argument, she clearly missed the point of clarity of concepts of the students. If students have no understanding of a lesson or a topic, then how can he or she thinks critically about it. Critical thinking necessarily requires the clarity of concepts which in turn comes from the sessions of questions-answers and discussions within the classrooms. This question came into my mind but I did not ask it because the teacher had already told me enough regarding this topic and seemed to be not so interesting to talk about it anymore.

She considers covering syllabus as the most important duty of a teacher working in the public schools, because it is something a teacher is paid for. Teachers do prioritize those task for which they are held questionable and accountable by the administration of the school as well as their employer which is federal directorate of education in the case of public schools of Islamabad. The entire focus of the teachers in these public schools is on covering the syllabus within the given time. This teacher considers the understanding of a topic by a student as her top priority and according to her she has no extra time left to make students think critically because of this chief task. She thinks that critical

thinking does not contribute to understanding a topic fully. According to her, these both things are not mutually exclusive, which is contrary to reality.

When a student thinks about a certain topic critically, he tends to understand it more efficiently. He is able to think about it in a number of dimensions. He would be able to know about its different possible applications in this way. So it is evident from this teacher's response that she does not engage her students in thinking critically and that is something which is not her priority while teaching to the students. It is something not so vital in her opinion. According to her, the most important thing is to teach the students a lesson and each and every word of what is written in the textbook. It is not important for the students to think anything beyond it.

When I asked this teacher about the schooling of her own children (It was another major question of my semi structured interview schedule, she replied "I prefer private schools for my kids not because I think that the quality of education is good there, but because of critical thinking, creative activities, extracurricular activities and English language speaking. I do not want my children to get 90 percent marks but want them to be more creative. We do not do any such things in the public schools but if the course is lesser we can try to do that at least". Ironically, she confessed to send her children to private schools because the teachers there make them think critically and help them out in this regard.

This teacher started telling a number of benefits of sending her children to a private school. She mentioned "critical thinking" on top of the list of those benefits, a thing which she does not consider necessary for the students studying in the public schools. The dual standards of the Pakistani society were clearly seen in the statements made by this teacher. She herself does not focus on critical thinking, whereas wants the teachers of her children studying in a private school to make them think critically. This clearly shows that majority of the teachers teaching in the public schools are well aware of the benefits of the critical thinking. It is the proof of their awareness that they want their children to think critically and send them to private schools for this purpose.

When asked about the role of teachers in making their students think critically, a student of grade 9 said “our teachers do not engage us in such activities, and we do not do such things here. I can say on my behalf only that my intelligence level is not so great to do such things like that without any guidance”. It seemed like this student was very least confident. Secondly, she told that her teachers do not encourage them to think critically at all. Allowing critical thinking and encouraging it both are different things.

Most of the teachers did assure me of allowing critical thinking but that exactly what not what I wanted to know. As the level of intellect of most of the students in the primary as well as high school level is low, hence they need special kind of effort by teachers to help them critically. It would be a time taking strategy which needs teacher-students discussions in the classroom.

A student of grade 10 said while explaining this issue “no such thing happens here, but if the teacher allows us to do that and guide us in this regard, we can try to do that”. This student also verified the absence of critical thinking within her school. She have not listened much about it but was able to identify and understand the meaning of it. She believes that she can become capable of thinking critically about a topic if the teacher assist her in this regard. When I asked her about the nature of assistance she wants from her teachers, she said “I want my teachers to assign different questions and state briefly the different dimensions regarding a certain topic, in order to make us think about a number of things in different ways”. She wants the allocation of a definite time or some separate period for this task. She considers herself not capable of thinking critically because no one has ever asked them to do so.

No teacher in their school has ever given any questions in the tests to these students which provoke them to think critically. Critical thinking is not a rocket science; any student can do it with a little support from his teacher. But these students of this high school were thinking of it as a very difficult and unique thing. Anything which is not in the fashion becomes so different and unique. When I was



asking the questions regarding critical thinking from these students, confusion could easily be seen on their faces. As if I asked about an alien concept from them.

I, as a researcher, did not consider it an alien concept for the school students because critical thinking should be used to make students learn things in any educational settings. The positive aspect that I observed during the course of interviewing is the willingness of the students to think critically, all they want is to have opportunities and adequate time for things.

When I asked about the encouragement of critical thinking among the students from a high school teacher. She replied “critical thinking is not required at high school level, it happens at the university level only”.i was unable to get the illusion in this statement. According to this teacher, the students studying in a high school do not need to think critically at all. Critical thinking should confined only to university level, it should have nothing to do with the students of the high school. She totally rejected the idea of thinking critically for her students.it clearly shows that she has never allowed or guided her students for a thing, which she herself does not consider important. This teacher did not have a clear idea about what critical thinking is. Then she asked me about it. I explained it to her in detail. After that, she came up with this statement mentioned above. The ignorance displayed by this teacher indicates that the neglect regarding critical thinking is on purpose. The teachers as well as the policy makers do not consider critical thinking as an important factor for the learning process of the children. The issue of lack of time is just an excuse. It is considered as a separate thing and not a part of the entire learning process. Because in reality, the focus is not on learning, but it is on memorization. She later called high school students “not fit” for thinking critically. She is a teacher of a high school and critical thinking is not even on the last mention of her priority list.

When I asked another teacher of this high school about what does she do to encourage critical thinking in her students, she replied “I do not believe in it. A student of a high school cannot think critically, this ability is not in our teachers so how can it be in our students. This thing is not even in our society

as a whole”. This teacher is the senior most teacher of this school and teaches Urdu language to the students of matric level. She stated these facts without hesitation and in a straightforward manner.



*Figure 4 Students of Grade 4 Posing for a Picture*

According to her, the teachers who are supposed to be teaching critical thinking to their students, can not think critically themselves. She blamed the teachers to make students think critically. On the other hand, she called the entire Pakistanis population “clueless” about what critical thinking is. She analyzed the whole problem at micro level while answering to my question. She thought of it as a problem at national level. But then again, nations are prepared to compete with the global world in the schools. It looked like she pointed out towards the vicious circle of blame game e.g. schools vs. nations.

She went on to say “there is a need to teach the teachers how to think critically first. Once I told the principal of our school, that there were no chapters in the books which can be considered “thought provoking”. The principal did not listen to me carefully and I returned back without having any answer to it”. She recalled a real life incidence where she had to encounter an unconcerned principal.

She shared the issues in the curricula too. The lessons in the textbooks of Urdu and English do not have enough thought provoking lessons, according to her. The stories and the essays which are the part of these books which are being taught to the students do not make them go into deep thoughts. She told that this low quality of the curricula had bothered her many times in the past but cannot do anything about it. Finally when she brought this issue into the notice of the principal of the school, she achieved no result out of it. This incidence clearly shows the lack of incidence of the principal in uplifting the quality of education of her school.

It also points out towards the fact that these principals of these public schools do not consider uplifting the quality of education as the part of their job. They just consider running a school according to the rules and regulations set by the federal directorate of education as part of their job. She told that there are several other incidences too that can reveal the irresponsible attitude of the former principal but she does not want to go into the details of it. She raised two important points. One is the low quality of curricula and second is the attitude of the unconcerned principals. According to her, apart from teachers critical thinking has much to do with the nature and quality of the curricula. The lessons in the textbooks taught in the public schools have the potential to be learnt by rote rather than to think critically. In the second argument, made by her, she brought my attention towards the need to teach teachers think critically first. So hence they would be able to pass the entire phenomenon onto the students. She kept smiling while making this statement. Then I asked her again for the sake of clarification. Once again she repeated the same words and stood by them firmly. According to her, teachers of this school cannot think critically themselves. It raises a question mark on the process of recruitment of such teachers. It also makes the authorities and departments questionable which are responsible for recruiting such teachers in the high schools which are not able to think critically. These teachers do not know how to make and ask thought provoking questions from the students which urges them to think critically before answering.

Another participant, who happens to be a teacher of high school responded to this issue and said “a teacher who teaches English at our school is the only one who focus on critical thinking, but students and their parents make complaints against her. It is not easy to check paragraphs having distinct ideas and thoughts. It is very easy to check identical answers, but students do not like to effort and think critically”. This teacher put the entire blame onto the students. According to her, making students think critically and then evaluating them is a very time taking activity considering the strength of the classes. A teacher requires a lot of time in order to check the assignment of the students depicting critical thinking. As every student thinks differently, their writing would be different in substance to each other. This is not the case when students write answers after memorizing lessons word to word.

This teacher narrated a whole incidence where the English teacher faced a backlash from the parents of certain students. An English teacher of this school is famous for encouraging critical thinking. Once parents of certain students of her class made several complaints on result day regarding her teaching activities. According to those parents, this teacher wastes the time of their children on those topics and questions which would never be a part of their final exams. Hence the teacher had to face a backlash for making her students to learn while thinking critically.

This incident shows two sides of the picture. at one hand, the students and their parents do not like the idea of going through the trouble of critical thinking and doing assignments in this regard. On the other hand, the parents’ justification for this cannot be ignored too. In examinations, only those questions come that does not require critical thinking at all. Answering such questions requires only understanding the text written in the lessons.

The pattern of examination, is one of the major reasons behind the absence of critical thinking and encouragement of rote learning in the public schools. Whereas a large majority of the teachers blame the lack of time and huge quantity of curricula for the lack of critical thinking in the schools. Almost

every other teacher replied in the same way. They focused on the element of time as if lack of time is the chief reason behind absence of critical thinking in the government run schools.

I have interviewed the famous physicist and scientist of Pakistan Dr. Parvez Hoodbhoy for gaining his valuable viewpoints regarding the low quality of education in the public schools. He has written a book named “Education and the State, 50 years of Pakistan”. In this book, he explained the plight of education system in Pakistan and the role of state in it. I have studied a number of articles written by him in newspapers for the literature review of my thesis. So I decided to interview him too as he holds worthy opinions about this subject.

I shared the views of these teachers regarding the absence of critical thinking in the public schools with him. On this issue, he said “if teachers, in the schools, have no time for making students think critically, then they have time for which purpose. The most important motive of schooling is to teach students critical thinking. I think they have much time for singing national anthem and studying Islamiyat books. Critical thinking is considered very dangerous ideologically in our country because when a student starts thinking he would ask questions in the class, he would challenge the things written in the textbooks and would raise concerns about their authenticity then there would be questions of a number of types regarding the incorrect things they are being taught in the schools, they are taught false things regarding our armed forces, they are taught that we have won all the wars, in reality except 1965 war (which also had a ceasefire, no one won) we have lost all wars with India, students are taught that our Army is the bravest in the world, they are taught that Islam is the best religion of the world, they are not given knowledge about any other religion, so when a student has critical thinking, he would start asking questions such as that if I was born at the other side of the border, then would I have been a Hindu? Would I have considered my religion the best, so such type of questions are raised through critical thinking which can damage the foundation of the state so when

the entire state is founded on false claims then the state cannot allow the students to think critically, so this is the biggest problem of our education system”.

Dr parvez hoodbhoy considers critical thinking as the most important aspect of schooling. According to him, people send their children to schools, for making them able to think critically. Books can be read at home but a kid would not be able to think critically at home on his own. He made some sarcastic points too in order to convey his point in a humorous way. He meant to say that the students have enough time to sing national anthem and study religion and the only thing, for which they have no time is critical thinking. It shows the priorities of the teachers and the policy makers of this country.

In real, he wanted to point the finger towards the system of education overall which should be blamed for the absence of critical thinking in the schools. It is the fault of the government generally and the respective authorities that control and regulate the system of education specifically. In public schools, time is used for many activities, we just need to manage the time. Again, time management has much to do with the priorities. The system of education has to maintain the priority list in a way so that the critical thinking remains on the top of the list. Dr Hoodbhoy brought my attention towards the another side of the story.

According to him, there is an issue of ideological conflict, regarding this issue. In countries like Pakistan whose constitution is based on an ideology, critical thinking is considered a very dangerous thing. It is a tool to develop the conscience of a person. When a child thinks on his own, he would think about anything and in any dimension. Thinking always lead to constructive as well as critical thoughts. When a student is taught to think critically, he will be able to think about any topic and hence become unstoppable. When a student thinks in this way, multiple questions comes into his mind. These questions will then urge him to ask things from the teachers. No one is able to control the thinking of a human being. A human mind is the most intelligent thing in this universe.

In Pakistan, the students in the public schools are not able to think critically at all. It is because they are neither taught nor encouraged to think critically in the schools. The narrative written in the textbooks taught to them is approved by the state. A critical thinker would not care for the official narrative as he is a free thinker. If such students raise questions in the classrooms, it will cause problems for the teachers. Firstly, there is no trend of asking questions in the classrooms, secondly there is no chance of asking controversial questions without keeping in mind the possibility of getting backlash. He teachers do not encourage the simple questions asked by the students, so they may ridicule the students who will ask controversial questions. The students who think critically, will not accept the facts written in the books as they are.

So critical thinkers may raise objections over the material written in the textbooks. There would be considerable contradiction between the official narrative and thoughts of a free thinker. Considering the above mentioned facts, it is not favorable for the government, if the students of the public sector schools or even the private schools are encouraged to think critically. It is one of the major issues of our education system that leads to low quality of education in the public schools. The students studying in private schools are able to think critically, because critical thinking is not suppressed there because they are not bound to follow the teaching methodologies and pattern of examination decided by the state. They have their own distinct system.

I asked Dr Hoodbhoy about the nature of policies made by the state regarding critical thinking, he replied “: yes there is no written policy for it, but whenever a student think critically he gets a huge backlash from the teachers and the society for instance the backlash is being received the organizers and participants of the Aurat March, so what do you think the women are asking for? They are asking just for the equality and autonomy over their lives, body but these demands are being rejected by the society, people do find them offensive... some slogans are targeted intentionally, people are not ready to digest this word “jism” in that slogan: So they cant digest just a word”.

Dr Hoodhoy, stated the fact that the policies regarding suppression of critical thinking do not exist in the written form at the school level. These policies are the social policies and the state make sure the implementation of these policies. This fact was accepted by the principal of the primary school that they have no written orders. According to him, the teachers are not officially directed by the employers or the administrators of the school to curb critical thinking. In a classroom setting, whenever a student thinks critically and gathers the courage to ask questions from the teachers respectively, he will definitely get a backlash from a vast majority of the teachers.

In this way, the students are given a clear signal by the teachers indicating zero tolerance for critical thinking. The teachers despite having no official orders still do that. One of the reasons behind this behavior of the teachers doing that they themselves are a product of this flawed education system. When they were students, their teacher used to not allow or encourage them to think critically. So it is a kind of vicious circle the administrators, the teachers, students and the state are a part of this circle.

Firstly, most of the teachers are neither capable of thinking critically, nor able to make their students think critically. Secondly the teachers being a product of our domestic education system are not in favor of the idea of critical thinking among the students. Thirdly, there is a category of teachers who are able to do that and not highly against it but still they do not practice it because they do not want to do hard work as they are idle. The above mentioned are the three major reasons behind the absence of critical thinking in the public schools. On the other hand, the critical thinking is suppressed in the public schools as a consequence of social policies enforced by the state. This whole scenario has to do with two things majorly e.g. capabilities and ideologies. The capabilities of the teachers and the ideology on which the foundation of the state is based.

As a matter of fact, these policies are not existent in written forms. It has much to do with the intentions, narrative and social structures within a state. Dr Hoodbhoy explained this issue by giving the example of controversial feminist protest i.e. Aurat March 2020. This feminist movement was just



an effort to raise the awareness regarding rights and demands of the women living in this country. It was an absolute peaceful movement. The majority of the participants were women who were holding placards depicting their demands and the injustices faced by them in their daily routines. Such types of protests are considered a very normal thing in majority nations of the world.

In Pakistan, a mere sight of the minority group demanding their right is considered as a threat to the ideological bond of the state. He explained the relationship between certain demands and the ideology. In Pakistan, the very idea of critical thinking is considered as a threat to the state in the same way. Critical thinking has the ability to challenge the national ideologies, historical facts and the official narrative of the state. These explanations are useful enough to understand the phenomenon of indirectly suppression of critical thinking in the public sector schools.

When a state wants to remain unquestioned, it does not allow the youth of the nation to think critically and ask questions. While analyzing the history of various countries or empires, we are able to know that whenever youth of any nation thinks critically, it leads to revolt as well as revolution against the state. We can take the example of partition of sub-continent, where youth of the united India played a major role in demanding and executing independence from the great Britain.

In order to avoid any such movements, any state efforts hard the root of such problems through suppressing the critical thinking among the students at least in the public schools. When a student of high school is not taught to think critically, this deficiency goes on with him up to tertiary level and beyond that. Youth is considered to be the backbone of any nation. If the youth is not able to think critically, we can assume that in the future the entire nation lacks the ability to think critically which is supposed to be taught in the primary and high schools.

During the entire process of data collection I have observed that a vast majority of the participants including teachers and the students were not aware of this term.

When I asked Dr hoodbhoy about the reasons behind the lack of creative writing skills in the students of the public schools, he replied “if you ask someone that how many books/novels you have read in your life then I think they have read only 2 or 3 books in their entire lives, even some people do not read a single book in their entire lives. ? if I talk about the university teachers, if you go their homes you won’t see any books in their homes let alone a library ,there would only newspapers and only Urdu newspapers Jung or Nawa-e-Waqt. I realized this fact when I used to live in the residential colony of Quaid-e-Azam university because there was a newspaper seller who distributes newspaper. Once I asked this person that in how many houses you do distribute newspapers so he replied I do distribute English newspapers in 4 out of 50 houses, Urdu newspapers in 10 houses, and nothing to remaining 35 houses and it was before the time of internet. It means that the professors of the no 1 university of Pakistan do not read newspapers let alone books, then why do we expect it from public school teachers don’t like reading at all. Teachers are not well learned”.

Dr Hoodbhoy indicated towards the lack of reading habits among the students. According to him, one thing which lacks equally among all the sections of the society is the habit of book reading. Teachers as well as teacher lie in the same category, when it comes to book reading. It is the issue of the society in general. He narrated a real life incident, where he obtained the information from the local newspaper seller about the sale of his product. He shared the shocking results of that survey. Only thirty percent o the total households in the society were the regular buyers of the newspapers. He told us that the teachers of a prestigious university like Quaid e Azam University do not read books. There are no libraries in the homes of these teachers.

He tried to explain that the lack of book reading habit is not just limited to the public school teachers and students. This thing can be observed anywhere in the country. Books reading make a person well learned irrespective of his academic degree. But when an educated person adopts this hobby, it will on one hand enhance his knowledge and on the other hand develop intellectual curiosity. There are

unlimited advantages of book reading. Teachers should not stop reading books once they get teaching positions at the schools, colleges and universities. A person should crave for getting maximum knowledge. There are new researches emerged with the passage of time. So a teacher should connect to the new researches related to his subject during his lifetime.

In Pakistan, there are two negative trends regarding this issue. Firstly, the teachers in the primary and high schools do not consider reading books and researches as part of their job. They have no idea that such things are necessary for them to perform their duty well. They are too idle to take time and read books in order to make themselves well learned, capable and upto date. Secondly, people who have completed studies and are aspiring teachers may read books and other stuff but once they gain jobs in accordance with their wishes, they stop reading any further. It shows that reading books is just a tool for them to get succeed in interviews and getting jobs. They do not read out of passion.

***Lack of Book Reading leads to Poor Writing Skills.***

In Pakistan, people do not read books out of choice or intellectual curiosity, they rather read in order to get material benefits. The same pattern can be seen, when it comes to choosing teaching as a profession. Most of the teachers chosen this profession just to have a career and earn money. A tiny minority had the ambition of becoming a teacher from the very beginning. Drhoodbhoy told me about the library in his own house. He talked about his passion for reading books and research papers. We can see the intensity of his passion through the fact that he does not own a smartphone because of fear of wasting time on different applications. He likes to spend hours and hours for book reading even in this age where he does not need to perform in front of any interview panel. He reads just because reading is his passion and he likes it very much. He reads just to get inner satisfaction and happiness.

According to him, this is the thing which lacks in most of the teachers in Pakistani universities, colleges and schools. This is human nature that people enjoy the piece of work in which they have interest. People do not like to do the kind of work which they find boring and uninteresting. Every person has different set of interests and passion. It may possible that those teachers and students do not like to read books at all, may like to do something else very much. But the problem is that why the book

reading is not liked by the majority of the people in our country.

People who visit internationally, can see random people reading books at public places, buses and trains etc. we have to figure it out that why it is not liked by the people of our country. Again, we can get the answer to this question by analyzing the teaching-learning process in our primary and high schools.

It is a widely held narrative that habits and interests of a person are shaped in the childhood and often as the result of certain practices in the schools. So early schooling can be blamed for not developing the habit of book reading among the students. Out of these students, some go on to become teachers in their later lives. Hence these teachers working in our educational institutions have no interest in book reading. Hence this cycle continues. These are the reasons behind the lack of reading habits among the teachers which inhibit them from becoming well learned academicians.

Dr hoodbhoy also highlighted another disaster being faced by the students of primarily public sector schools of Pakistan. These students do not read books hence they have poor writing skills too. They can not write on their own for two reasons. Firstly, their vocabulary is limited. Secondly, they have no sense of sentence structure which means that these students can not make a grammatically correct sentence. These facts are so crucial in order to understand the connection between reading and writing.

A student can not be good at writing, if he does not read books. Reading is a pre requisite for writing. When a student can not write in his own words, he is compelled to memorize the entire topic or lesson. If a student understands the basic concepts of a lesson, even then he has to memorize the entire thing because he can not make grammatically correct sentences. For majority of the students, getting good grades is the ultimate goal. So having good writing skills is crucial for a student to avoid memorization or rote learning. Good writing skills in return can be acquired through reading books. So we can say that one of the major determinants of ultimate success of a student is reading.

We should not forget the fact that students of a primary or high school are minor in age. In my opinion, it is the responsibility of the teachers to introduce the students to the culture of book reading at a very

early age. Such interest can be incorporated in the students by making them quite attractive for the students. According to my own observations, there are a number of things for which the teachers and the institutions are held responsible. One of these elements is book reading for which the teachers of the public schools do not consider themselves responsible if their students do not read books. They do not introduce their students the benefits of book reading. They do not consider this as a part of their job.

In this chapter, earlier I have discussed in detail the phenomenon of rote learning, its causes and impacts. I would like to relate the above discussion with the element of rote learning. It can be understood through a chain effect. Lack of book reading leads to poor writing skills and poor writing skills eventually contributes to rote learning. These issues should be solved at the primary level of schooling. Primary school is the place which develops the academic foundation of a student. The primary school teacher do not focus on develop reading and writing skills in their students. They find this route difficult and time consuming. Who would like to work this hard when they have a simple routine the form of rote learning? Making a student capable of writing on his own and making grammatically correct sentences is very difficult.

When I asked a primary school teacher about her role in making students think critically and the on purpose suppression of critical thinking, she said “I think that the government narrative is not so wrong to be questioned by the students. The students of a primary school are not capable to think much in this dimension but I would say that the critical thinking may suppressed at the high school level”. In her opinion, there is no official policy to suppress critical thinking at the primary level at all because the state and its institutions can not feel threatened by the thinking abilities of such young students. She agreed to the fact that critical thinking is suppressed at the high school level deliberately to control the minds of the youth. She missed the point that the ability to think critically should be learnt at the primary level which would go on with a student when they reach to the high school level.

According to her, she does not focus much on critical thinking because it takes a lot of time and requires individual attention. She is unable to do such things due to lack of time. She remains busy in

preparing the students to get passed in the exams in the external exams of 5<sup>th</sup> class. She blamed the lack of time for this negligence on the part of the teachers and rejected the idea that it has anything to do with the official policies of the federal directorate of education.

***Hurdles at the Policy Making Level.*** I have interviewed another eminent research scholar Dr. Huma Haque, who is a retired professor of Quaid e Azam university, Islamabad. She is also one of the participants of this research. She holds a PhD in Socio-cultural anthropology from university of Washington. I have interviewed her at home and recorded it with her permission. She shared her opinions regarding the dismal state of Pakistan's public education sector. I have asked her about the critical thinking in the public sector schools of Pakistan and shared with her the viewpoints of a number of teachers regarding the idea of critical thinking on this matter she said "There are two kinds of policies, we have public policy and social policy. Public policies are made by the state. It tells you about a problem and strategies used to solve it. Then there are social policies, they may not come from the government, but they are impetus for the public policy. It includes values and norms. Some things are not written on a paper but they influence minds. I think critical thinking is discouraged in schools, our cultural values and normative structures don't allow it. If teachers allow critical thinking, students would ask questions which are Anti culture, value and religion. Critical thinking is a tool which can be used anywhere anytime. Our society won't allow this. It's just not only about cultures, its more about religion. We can only work descriptive work and only less analytical work. There are laws which restrict us from saying things. Can we do research on politics of Muslim league and its vested interest. We are always celebrating partition of India. We can't do research on how partition hurts Muslims of India".

. Dr. Haque threw light on the kinds of government policies i.e. public policies and social policies. According to her, the public policies are always in written form and issues to the institutions. The government is responsible for making and implementing these policies. Every government institution is bound to follow such policies made by the government and they are discussed openly everywhere.

She mentioned another kind of policy which is known as social policy. Social policies are the stimulus

for the public policies. These social policies are acquired from the culture, norms and the religion. It is not necessary that the social policies are always adopted on the direct or indirect instructions of the state. Sometimes, government institutions adopt such policies on their own considering the socio political atmosphere and norms of their country. Apparently such policies are formed and adopted in order to gain nationalistic goals, but often getting some advantages lead to getting some disadvantages too.

Critical thinking is discouraged in the public sector school because it can cause risks to the societal and cultural norms. Public policies comes into existence in order to safeguard the social and ideological values. During the entire process of safeguard of these values, this thing is not considered that the suppression of critical thinking leads to rote learning and lower level of creativity and intellectual curiosity among the students. Gaining one thing at the expense of losing the other thing can not be justified at all.

Critical thing is considered a dangerous too due to the above mentioned reasons. The policymakers while considering this side of the critical thinking forgets the possible advantages of it. The benefits of critical thinking for a student's academic as well as professional life are totally ignored during the whole process. This fact is not taken into consideration that the sharp minds who thik critically can do wonders for the progress and development of a country. But the problems is that the state does not want the children to question the societal and ideological norms. It does not want the students to question the doings of the state as well.

The public schools have not received any such official orders though. The administrators of these schools just go with the trend of our society while strictly adhering to the material written in the textbooks.

Dr Haque also pointed towards another important disadvantage of suppressing critical thinking in the schools and the universities. According to her, students who can not think critically are able to do descriptive work only. Such students lack analytical skills and hence are unable to do any sort of analytical work. The reason behind this is that these students have no habits of thinking and writing

on their own. They can just explain the things as they are written in the textbooks. When these students are given such questions which are slightly different in application from the questions written in the textbooks, they get confused a lot.

They are unable to explain anything beyond the topics written in detail in their course books. Such students are good at descriptive skills only. Their analytical skills are quite weak. These students are unable to perform well in the competitive exams locally and internationally. When such students reach to university level, they find it so difficult to do assignments and research work that involves critical thinking. The reason behind this mess is that the public sector schools are not incorporating critical thinking into their students due to which these students are good at rote learning and unable to think critically and write creatively.

Dr Haque went on to say “ The teacher-student ratio in the public sector schools of Islamabad is very bad. There are too many students in a school and there are lesser teachers to teach these students. The classrooms are overcrowded. In a class, where there are 50 students a teacher would not give assignments that include critical thinking and analytical thinking because it takes a lot of time to check these assignments. Ideally, every assignment should be read by the teacher word to word. When the strength of a class is very high, it is difficult to conduct such assignments. In this situation, teachers are not experts and they have no time for preparation but they have to give assignments and exams. He won't give assignments include critical thinking and analytical thinking, because it takes time to read them and check them. Ideally every assignment should be read. Then every class has 50,55 students, it's just not possible.it is easy to take group presentations and descriptive assignments. There are a problems in descriptive assignments, that they can be cut and paste”.

According to her, lack of time or time management is also a factor behind the absence of critical thinking but it is not the major factor. It is a smaller part of the larger picture. This problem was also shared by a number of teacher too but the only difference is that the school teachers consider it the only obstacle in the way of critical thinking whereas Dr Haque called it one of the several other reasons



behind the absence of critical thinking in the public sector schools of Pakistan. An overcrowded classroom create a lot of problems for the students as well as the teachers. The over population of the schools and the classrooms also inhibits the encouragement of critical thinking a teacher who is willing to make students think critically, can not check assignments of a huge number of students in the class.

The behavior of the teacher has much to do with the strength of the class. Is the strength of the class is appropriate, a teacher may like to give assignments which involve critical thinking by the students. In this way, a teacher will be able to check and comment on the distinct ideas of the students written in those assignments. When the strength of the class is inappropriate, a teacher would be able to give and check the assignments of only descriptive nature. In Pakistan's public education system, the most common approach of evaluation adopted by the teachers is descriptive approach. It is considered as the easiest approach for the students as well as the teachers because it does not involve critical thinking.

Dr Haque indicated towards another drawback of huge strengths of the classroom. The number of students in a classroom has much to do with the nature of class presentations being taken. A teacher finds it easy to take group presentations, when the strength of the class is huge. Individual presentation requires a lot of time especially when the number of students in a class is large. There may be no considerable differences between the two kinds of presentations on the face of it.

Students can not be assessed on the individual basis in an efficient manner through group presentations. A teacher is not able to judge the extent of effort put by the students individually to make the presentation in this manner. There is also an issue of time allocation. The amount of time allocated per student in group presentations is very less. Though group presentations are good at enhancing the cooperation and socialization among the students, they have some disadvantages too. On the other hand, individual presentations are good at the individual assessment of the students. These things are totally dependent on the availability of tie and the strength of the class. Teachers will prefer to take

group presentations when the strength of the class huge. Teachers will give the assignments involving descriptive work in that case. They do it just for their ease while considering the constraint of time.

When I asked the teachers about the class presentation, only one subject teacher takes class presentation in class 5 in the primary school. Class presentation is a type of assignment which urges the students to think critically, an element which is terribly missing in these public schools. I have interviewed the principal of the primary school. I tried to interview the principal of the high school too but remain failed. She was not interested enough to get interviewed because of lack of time and willingness. Interviewing the principal was necessary because they are the administrators no the school and are responsible for maintaining the quality of education being provided in these schools.

In the first phase, I interviewed the students of different classes in one school, then I interviewed the teachers of the same school. I interviewed the principal of that primary school in the end. The principal of this primary school was a government officer of grade 19. She looked very much interested in having a conversation with me regarding the quality of education of her school and in the public school generally. She wholeheartedly shared her views and answered to every question in the best possible manner. When I visited her to formally get permission, she asked for the list of questions to be asked. I provided her the list two days prior to the day of conducting interview. On the interview day, she was in a great mood so we had a great conversation and discussion regarding the whole subject

.i have asked her questions regarding the suppression and absence of critical thinking in the public sector schools. When I asked her about the on purpose suppression of the critical thinking as a policy matter she said “yes it may possible that this suppression of critical thinking is on purpose as a matter of policy. our education system is the same today as it was designed by the British colonizers. The same system lies in the bureaucracy of our country. When there will be development in our country, our generation would be well aware and our systems will only then be changed overall”.

The principal was skeptic about the deliberate suppression of the critical thinking in the public schools. She accepted the fact that the teachers of this school are unable to make students think critically. She holds the entire stem of the country responsible for the absence of the critical thinking in the public schools. She pointed fingers towards the colonial legacy and its long lasting impacts on the various sectors of today's Pakistan, where the education sector being on the top. There is no trend of critical thinking in the public schools and every one follows this trend.

According to her, the government school teachers are just government employees and they do whatever they are expected to do while performing their jobs. When the government's institutions that regulate the educational policies do not urge the teachers to focus on the critical thinking, then why would the teachers do that? The main focus of the teachers is on the things, they are instructed to do which includes the covering of syllabus within the prescribed time, good grades achieved by the students, performing tasks assigned by the administration, punctuality etc. Encouraging critical thinking among the students was never a priority of the policy making institutions, then why a government servant would do a thing, that no one asks him to do in the first place. The principal was just stating the facts and ground realities, she herself was in the favor of introducing and encouraging the critical thinking among the students.

According to her, she has never received any official order for suppressing or rejecting the critical thoughts of a student. It means that the teachers are free to do it on their own. If a public school teacher wants to make his students think critically. He can do it. But they donot care for it because they do not consider it a part of their job. I observed that this point was also raised by the principal of the primary school during the interview. A number of teachers who consider themselves dutiful and hardworking were having neither any clue about what critical thinking is, nor do they make their students think in this way. They have no idea about the significance of the critical thinking for the students or primary

as well as high schools. In their opinion, they are preparing the students well to gain good grades and admissions in the reputable universities which are the parameters of the ultimate success.

A high school teacher said in this regard “I sent my children to government run schools despite having the affordability to send them to private schools. I am proud of my son, who studied from Islamabad college for boys G-6/3 which is a public school and eventually he got admission in to National university of Science and Technology (NUST), One of the most prestigious universities of Pakistan”.

This may happen when the policymakers are not acquainted with the benefits of critical thinking for the students. There are a number of actors in the education system which includes state, policy makers, administrators, teachers and the students”. If critical thinking is practiced in the schools, it will benefit the students obviously, but it will benefit the state too in the long run. The students are not wise enough to understand the benefits of critical thinking, if they understand it, even then there is no use of it. It is because neither the students, nor their parents have any say in the decision making. The only actor which needs to understand the importance of critical thinking is the state which has the ultimate power to direct the rest of the actors. This will work only from top to bottom. When the state realizes the importance of critical thinking and stop considering it a threat to it and the society, it will ask the respective policy making institutions to focus on it. Then it will become a priority for the policymakers.

On one hand, they will alter the pattern of examination in a way such that the exams consist of questions that demand the answers having critical thoughts of the students. It will urge the teachers to encourage the students to think critically and assist them in this regard because the students would not be able to get good grades only through rote learning and memorization. On the other hand, when the teachers know that critical thinking is one of the top priorities of their employers, only then they will go for it in order to get good ranks in the teachers assessments held annually by the federal directorate of education.

When I asked the principal that whether she considered the critical thinking as a threat to certain power elements in the country or not she replied “it should not be, in my opinion”. Suppose, we give a free hand to one generation, then the students of this generation would be in every sector of the country in the next twenty years. They would go into the bureaucracy, law, politics etc. In such a way, their mindset would be quite similar to each other. Then there will not be any such conflict among them. In our country there is one class which is highly qualified from prestigious institutions they often don't live here, and the other class is not so qualified or acquired education from low class institutions, if the level and quality of education is same for the society in general, I don't think so people would create problems for each other”.

The principal raised many important points during this interview. She threw light on the division of the society along the axis of class and held this division responsible for the conflict among the several classes. There is several powerful elements in our country that belong to different classes. At one hand, there I powerful military establishment and on the other side there is an equally powerful religious establishment. Then there is a ruling political elite and a bureaucracy. These groups work in their domains, considering their own interests at the same time. The ability to think critically may considered dangerous or lethal by any, few or all of these segments. All of them do influence the educational policy of the country directly or indirectly.

This issue is explained extensively in the chapter no 2 that is literature review of this thesis. I have studied a book named “educational policies of Pakistan” written by Shahid Siddiqui in order to understand the influence of different governments on the educational policy of Pakistan in the past seven decades. It was explained, the socio political ideologies of different rulers in the history can be observed through the design of their educational policies and the curricula.

According to the principal, all of these tiers of the state are at different stages intellectually and socially. It is because of the different sorts of education systems of our country. Due to other differences,

conflict arises among them. This conflict then creates an atmosphere of insecurity and sometimes threat to the social institutions and the ideologies. This threat is perceived as a danger to the power exercised by different groups. This conflict becomes one of the major reasons behind the suppression of critical thinking in the public sector schools only. This formula does not apply to the private sector schools because the government does not design curricula for them and can not bound them to follow the teaching methodologies adopted by the public sector schools. The government is quite successful in this regard as the majority of the students study in the public schools.

The principal also suggested a solution for solving this conflict in the long run. According to her, the root cause behind this conflict is the difference of mindset. Once these differences are minimized through uniform education focusing on critical thinking, then approximately all segments of the society would nearly be on the same page. In such a situation, no one would want to control the mindset of the other party. If we try to reach at this stage, only then there would be encouraged to think critically in the public sector schools. The teachers will teach them to think critically because now it is in the priority list of the government and hence the policymakers. The principal shifted the entire blame on the policymakers. In her opinion, teachers should not be blamed for it at all.

The principal also indicated towards another fact that a large number of students are unable to think critically in this school. Majority of the students of this school belongs to the lower and lower middle class families. People living in the vicinity of this school are poor and less educated. While interviewing all students, I have asked questions about their personal lives as well. Mothers of the majority of the students are very less educated. A student of grade 4 told that his mother has studied just up to primary level. Another student's mother has a qualification till middle level of education. The father of a 4<sup>th</sup> grade students runs a clothing stall at the nearby G-9 Markaz. The fathers of a couple of students work as drivers in different government department. Two male students came to Islamabad

from their respective villages to gain education while staying at the houses of their relatives. This is the scenario of the personal lives of these students.

According to the principal, these students have far less exposure to the technology and other such facilities due to their low financial status. The principal said “if we have a class comprising of 40 students then hardly there are only 10 students who are able to understand concepts and 30 students are not capable to understand the concept at all. you have observed the class just for few days but the teacher is teaching since the year and she knows that if she stick to building concepts then she will have to spend the entire month in order to cover a single topic and she doesn’t have this much. she has to prepare the exam and submit it to the administration on time. She is bound to do these things”. As we know that concept building is crucial for critical thinking. A student will be able to think critically only when he has the clarity of concepts regarding a topic.

The principal brought my attention towards a different aspect of critical thinking in this way. She explained the difference between the socio economic status of the students and their ability to think critically. According to her, some students are not able to think critically because of lesser level of understanding which in turn is due to the issues in their personal lives. She considers “interest” in studies crucial for the sake of critical thinking. The children of such households attend school just because of strictness of their parents. The principal called teaching such students way too difficult.

In her opinion, approximately 30 percent students in a class are able understand the concept taught by a teacher. Initially, I got confused over this statement. I was unable to understand this argument related to understanding of students made by the principal. Was she trying to say that some students of the class are mentally challenged so that they cannot understand the concepts? It can also be a possibility that the curricula being taught to them is not in accordance with their mental level or age. In order to have a clear idea, I again asked this from her. She clarified that she did not mean to say that the students are mentally challenged at all and the material being taught to them is not a matter of concern at all.

The only thing which is worth mentioning here is that there is large difference between these students and the students who attend private schools. The students studying in this primary school have no access to internet, smartphones. Their parents are very less educated. There is no trend of book reading in their homes. These were the opinions of the principal.

According to her, a major portion of motivation comes from the household. The teachers can do only a little in this regard. In short, the students who belong to lower financial classes are unable to understand concepts and hence think critically because of lack of motivation and enthusiasm. In her opinion, the teachers are willing to build concepts, but they can not do so because of lack of time. These students require extra attention, time and classes to make them understand concept. The students just answered about the absence and presence of any such activities that contribute to or encourage critical thinking among them. Some students of the high school made certain complaints to me as well regarding the mockery faced by them when they shared their viewpoints in the classroom. They told that the atmosphere of their classrooms are not open to debates. But the students of the primary school were not able to go into details regarding critical thinking. They are not aware of any kind of suppression of critical thinking and its possible advantages at this age. I asked this question from the teachers of both schools. The teachers of the primary school had an excuse in the form of age group of their students which is not appropriate for critical thinking in their opinion.

When I asked about the absence of critical thinking from a teacher of high school, she replied “I do not know about the deliberate suppression of critical thinking in our school, but this thing is more related to the teachers than it is to policymakers. Policymakers are not part of the classroom, teachers are. If teachers want to develop critical thinking in their students, they can, no one can inhibit them from doing so”. This teacher answered to my question briefly and in a straightforward manner. She put the blame of the absence of critical thinking in the schools despite being a teacher herself. According to her, the policymakers as well as the teachers are responsible for lack of critical thinking



in the public schools. Putting the entire blame on the policymakers would be an injustice to them and to the cause. The policymakers are responsible up to a certain context only because they are not part of the classrooms. If a teacher wants to make students think critically, she is absolutely free to do so. Neither the administration of the school, nor the policymakers inhibit them from doing so. Teachers can work in this regard but they choose to not because of lack of time and enjoying the comfort of going through the easy route. I have asked her this question that if the teachers are allowed to do that then why don't they do it, she replied "the teachers do not care for that because they work under great pressure. They have to cover a huge quantity of syllabus even I try to teach them slowly but cannot do so the entire year. The students cannot keep up with the burden of studies because of no support of parents as the parents of the majority has lesser level of education attained.

Critical thinking was one of the major questions of my semi structured interview schedule, so I did ask this question from all participants. I tried to explain the phenomenon of critical thinking to the students of primary schools in order to gain their answers regarding it. For explaining it, I gave them few examples. For instance, I asked the students of grade 5 about the activities including writing stories and essays on their own and the involvement of the class exercise of sentence making. The students were given the idea of critical thinking through these examples. While answering to this question, a student of grade 9 said "we just memorize the essay our English or Urdu teacher writes for us on the board. Our English teacher wrote an essay on "my mother" on the board and we copied it on our notebooks. It is written in our textbook too. I have memorized the whole say word to word, so I will be able to reproduce it n the exams"

I asked this student that if he is able to write an essay on "my father" involving the same theme which was used for writing "my mother". I asked him this question in order to analyze his writing capabilities; he replied "no, I cannot write an essay on my father, because the teacher has only told us to write an essay on my mother. I cannot try it even because I have memorized the exact sentences which are part

of the essay “my mother”. So I can write only the thing which I memorized and not another thing”. It is clearly evident from the statement of this student that they have never been made think in their classrooms by their teachers. The students are only able to memorize the topics they have copied in their notebooks. They cannot write on their own. A student with whom the topic “my mother” is thoroughly discussed in the classroom is unable to even think of another topic i.e. “my father” wherein both topics can be written using the very same theme and idea.

I interviewed the student of grade 4 and asked him questions regarding sentence building. Earlier, I have observed the class, in which this student studies. In that classroom, the students were doing an exercise of sentence making during the period of English language. The teacher first wrote the words on the white board and then without discussing these words with the students, she started writing the sentences using these words on the board. While the teacher was writing words and sentences on the board, the students kept copying the word sentences onto their notebooks. The teacher was not bothered about the understanding of the students at all. It was incident of the primary school while I was observing grade 4 sitting on the last bench of the classroom. I noted the whole incident in my diary, which fulfill the purpose of field notes. That teacher made 6 sentences on her own. One of those words was “beautiful”. This student of that class whom I interviewed was one of those students who attended this English period. Firstly I told him that I observed their class during English period. I brought this into his knowledge prior to asking this particular question about this word “beautiful”. He told its meaning correctly. So I got an idea about the understanding of the word. Then I asked him to make a sentence using this word. He made a correct sentence i.e. it is a very beautiful place. But the problem is that this is exactly the same sentence that the teacher wrote on the white board. I mentioned the sameness of the sentence to the student. This 10 year old boy was very much aware of the fact that he repeated that sentence made by his teacher. Then I asked him to make a different sentence using the same word. This boy kept silent for a while, I did not say anything to him meanwhile. After a couple of minutes, he said “Madam, I am unable to make any sentence other than the sentence my teacher

wrote on the board". I did not force him to do it keeping in mind the research ethics but I encouraged him that he could do that if he tries. Despite of this encouragement, he remained unable to make a sentence of a word, he knew the meaning of. Through this incidence I have analyzed the faults in the teaching methodologies being used in the public sector schools of Islamabad. A student of grade 4 cannot even think of making as sentence of quite an easy work. It seemed like these students are not habitual of thinking at all but they themselves are not at fault. The face expressions of this student were very similar to a robot despite of the fact that I was talking to him in a very friendly manner and he was at ease while talking to me. But when I asked him to think and make a sentence, he started acting like a robot. I have observed only few period sin the three weeks period of data collection. In this case, I consider the teacher to be at fault. When the teachers do not ask the student to make sentence son their own, then why would they think and do so. In such a case, where the students know that the teacher would make a sentence on her own and write it on the board for them to copy then why would they do the heavy lifting themselves. They would not do it for sure. Whatever may be the reason, intentionally or unintentionally the teachers are destroying the thinking capabilities of the students by not making them think themselves. Exercises like sentence making are a great source of polishing the thinking abilities of a student at he primary school level where a student is not able to think about complex issues otherwise. Due to these small efforts, the teachers of the primary schools can prepare these students to adopt critical thinking in the high school and later in the colleges and the universities. When the students are not made habitual of thinking and analyzing in the primary school, then how would they think critically in the high school? The administrators and teachers are responsible for this kind of scenario. A teacher is to be blamed for adopting such medieval teaching methodologies, whereas the administrators are responsible for not taking into account such things and solving them at the right time. The actor whom cannot be blamed at all here is the poor student. The students have no clue of what is being done to them in the name of education. It is the nature of our fellow countrymen that we love to have short cuts and easy routes to success in our lives. Our students also possess this

habit. The students themselves find it easy to copy from the board and memorize. It is the murder of their thinking and creative abilities. When such students reach to the university level, it becomes highly difficult for them to do assignments involving critical thinking. Being a university student, I am a witness to this thing. Whenever the students of masters/ M.Phil. are given any such assignments, the first thing come into their minds is Google research and then copy/paste. I have always wondered that why our students are like this? Why they don't like to think? Why they don't consider themselves able to think? Why they are not confident of their thinking abilities? Now during the process of data collection and data analysis for this research project, I have realized that our public school system is responsible for the intellectual weaknesses in the students studying in the universities. There is no trend of making students think at the primary level. The only thing, a vast majority of teachers does in the primary schools is making students memorize lessons and get promoted to the next standard. No one cares about building the thinking abilities in the students. As far as the students are concerned, having very less educated parents and unintellectual atmosphere of their homes, they are not capable of doing anything on their own. They do not read books at all. This was the condition of the primary school students regarding critical thinking. The viewpoint is of the teachers of the primary schools were discussed above in the detail, where almost not a single teacher admits of making students think critically. Half of the teachers, I interviewed of primary school, had no clear idea of what critical thinking is, while remaining half confessed of not giving it importance due to lack of time. In the same manner, while collecting data from the high school, firstly I interviewed the students and then the teachers. I have asked these questions regarding critical thinking to the students of the high school as well. As I discussed earlier, the students of grade 10 found such questions so amusing and gave answers on a lighter note. I have done a focus group discussion of grade 10. This group comprised six students from the arts section. According to all of them, no such thing like critical thinking exists in their school. Among the six students, one student said "I have heard this thing critical thinking for the first time in

my life. Our teachers do not practice any such things here in the classrooms”. The way these students were taking this term lightly clearly showed that it was absolutely alien to them.

When I interviewed a couple of students from grade 7 and 8 respectively, I got a slightly different reactions. One of those students had received primary education from a private school but she left studying there due to some family issues. While answering to my question regarding critical thinking she said “I have listened about this term “critical thinking” earlier, our teacher told us about it when I used to study in a private school”. I asked her about what she knew about this term and she replied “I think it is thinking on your own and reaching to a conclusion”. This was a student of 8 grade and it was a surprise for me when she told the right thing. She had a very clear idea about what critical thinking is, a thing, even some of the teachers had little knowledge of. While telling about her personal life in the beginning of the interview, she told me in detail about her past time in a private school and how she had to leave that school due to unstable financial conditions of her parents.

When asked her about the efforts of her teacher in making them think critically, she replied “I would love to engage in such activities in which we have to do something on our own, but unfortunately no one asks us to do something like that here, so our study is just limited to memorizing the lessons of our textbooks word to word”. This student of grade 8 also verified the absence of critical thinking in her school. However this particular student showed a great interest in critical thinking as she considered it an effective task to do. This interest showed by her may have its roots in the educational background of this girl. A student, who have studied from a reputable private school has the memories of engaging in such academic activities, whose presence is almost next to nothing in the public sector schools.

All the student participants of this high school who have studied in the public schools from the beginning had no idea of critical thinking at all. They were totally clueless about it, and only got a slight idea after I thoroughly explained it to them. On the other hand, some of the teachers were much aware of this term, while one of them was absolutely clueless too in this high school. All of them blamed the

lack of time and burden of syllabus for the absence or critical thinking in their school. As I discussed earlier, one teacher from the primary school rejected the idea of critical thinking at the primary school level, considering it a thing that belongs to high school or college level.

A teacher of the high school who teaches biology to the grade 9 and 10 was clueless about how to make student think critically while teaching them natural sciences. On this issue, she said “how can I make students think critically about science facts? I think this thing should only be confined to social sciences or languages. I cannot ask the students to think on their own for definite universal laws”. According to this teacher, the students of only arts and humanities section should be made think critically. She could not understand the use of of critical thinking in the science subjects. She was unaware of the fact that making students think critically in the science subjects will help them to resolve everyday problems. This tool may be used widely for teaching social sciences but it is equally important and worthy to be used for natural sciences. Critical thinking involves a rational analysis while evaluating a factual evidence. While thinking critically, a student probes the credibility of the source of information too. A critical thinker would be able to analyze whether the arguments made by the teacher comes from the scientific evidences or not. If he is able to think critically, he would thoroughly enjoy the course of learning science. All of the above mentioned facts are extremely common in nature and this is not a rocket science. But this particular teacher of high school was unable to understand these simple facts.

In the end, I interviewed the principal of the primary school and we had a long conversation. She, on one hand, blamed the policymakers for designing the pattern of examination in such a way that does not requires the students to think critically before answering the questions. The questions which are part of the exams are of descriptive nature, hence neither the teachers nor the students realize the importance of critical thinking. As far as the MCQs are concerned, they also do not provoke thoughts in the minds of the students. So basically both things are the same. On the other hand, the principal

blamed the lower level of understanding of the students for the absence of ability to think critically in them.

These were the facts obtained through the statements made by the participants and the observations made by the researcher. These facts explained the standing of public sector schools when it comes to critical thinking.

## **Theme no 6: Medium of Examination**

### *No Focus on English Language:*

English is not just a language, but a medium of examination for the student studying in the public sector schools of Islamabad. These students are required to perform in the exams while using English language. It is the medium of examination as well as the medium of textbooks. All books are written in English language except the textbooks of Urdu, Islamiyat and Arabic. So all the public schools of Islamabad are English medium schools in this way. During the process of data collection, I have observed the fact that the medium of instruction used in these schools is Urdu. Every teacher delivers the lecture in Urdu Language including the teachers teaching English Language. I have asked many questions from the participants regarding this difference in the medium of instruction and medium of examinations. I have also tried to inquire about the causes and impacts of this prominent difference.

I have asked this question about the conversion of knowledge into English language by the students whose national language is not English, a teacher of high school replied “If you send a totally illiterate person to America, he will learn to speak and understand English in three months. We are teaching languages in a very wrong manner. We are just teaching students rules of English language grammar, where to use present tense or past tense. Grammar is not a thing which a person gets through tutorial, a person get sit when you speak the language in front of him”.

This teacher reflected towards the faulty teaching methodologies being used for teaching students English Language. According to her, a student will only be able to learn a language when it is spoken in front of him. When a student listens to a language on daily basis, he would eventually learn it and become able to speak it one day. This rule also applies to the English writing. Language is a thing to practice. It is learnt through practicing it. When a student is exposed to English writing activities again and again, he will be able to write it on his own.

Contrary to the techniques mentioned above, the methodologies adopted by the English teachers of public schools are ineffective. They are not worthy of making students write or speak the language. The only thing which these students are able to do regarding English is “reading”. They can only read, because it does not involve any creativity. This teacher shared some of the techniques used by teachers with me. The teachers who teach this language are just teaching students the grammatical rules of the language. According to her, grammatical rules cannot be learned just through tutorials. Grammar of any language is learnt through listening and speaking the language. The English language teachers mostly use Urdu as the medium of instruction for teaching English language. There is no focus on speaking English language in front of the students in order to teach them. There is also no focus in making students speak English. They just speak English while reading from the textbooks.

I have observed these faulty teaching methodologies while attending the English language classes in the primary as well as the high school. Not a single teacher spoke with the students in English language in the primary school throughout the time period of observing the teaching-learning process. As far as the high school is concerned, only one English teacher speaks English language in the class. Even this teacher does not urge the students to speak English, so it is just a one-sided process. According to her, language has nothing to do with education, it is just a skill which any one can learn. She gave a hypothetical example of an illiterate man. In her opinion, an illiterate person would be able to speak



English language if he is sent to live in any English speaking country, he would learn this Language without having any such tutorials on daily basis.

This teacher went on to explain her point of view and said “the problem lies in the primary and middle school level where the teachers don’t speak English at all. Even Miss X (English teacher) is just teaching them rules, she doesn’t make them speak English. When we were young, our mothers did not teach us Urdu language grammar. Did they do that? No, they just speak in front a toddler, and he learns it. A three year old baby constructs language himself. In this way, language should be taught. Why don’t they teach just language for some years in the beginning?”

According to this teacher, there is no much use of it when a teacher speaks English language at high school level. It is because, the loss has already been done to the students when they reach to the high school. The root cause behind this problem is that the teachers do not speak in English language with the students at all. The students of the primary school are not made familiar with this language in the early years of education. These students are not made to write on their own in English language. They are not taught English in the way, they are taught Urdu language. If the English language teacher speaks English with the students of matric level, it would be difficult for her to fill that void which can only be avoided if the teachers of the primary school focus on English language.

I have asked about the medium of instruction used by the English teachers from the students of primary school. 100 percent of the total students interviewed told that the medium of instruction used by their English teacher is Urdu. When the English language teacher speaks in Urdu, then there is no question of English speaking by the rest of the teachers. The students of this primary school were neither capable of understanding spoken English nor speaking it. They are just able to read it and memorize it. The teachers just do a little service in this regard. They make students read English language so that they would be able to read it because reading leads to memorization or rote learning.

When I inquired about the reason behind preferring memorization over writing in their own words, a student of grade 8 said “there is a problem occurs because our teachers teach us in Urdu language and we have to write in exams in English language. There is a difference in medium of instruction and medium of exams, but if we have a clear concept we can try to write in our own words”. According to this student, the difference in medium of instruction and medium of examination is another factor that contributes to memorization.

The students who haven't understood anything would definitely go for memorization. But the students who have understood the concepts do memorize too because they donot know how to write it in English. It is because the teacher has taught them a concept while speaking URDU, WHILE they have to produce the same concept in English language. So this is another problem faced by the students of the primary as well as high school students. They do not know to write in a language, which is the medium of their textbooks and the examinations.

When I asked a teacher of high school about the inability of the students to speak and write English language, she replied “The English teacher teaches her subject in Urdu language, because our English teachers can't speak English fluently and it also depends on the atmosphere of the households, the parents of these students cannot speak English,even if the students speak one or two words of English in the school he would forget it the time the class ends, because the language is not endorsed by the surroundings, friends, and family”. This teacher brought my attention towards the inability of the teachers of the public schools to speak English fluently. She focused on the word “fluently”. The teachers do not speak English while teaching to the students hence in turn students have not become able to speak English and they never will be. If some students understand the meaning or pronunciation of few words in the classrooms, they will eventually forget them later.

It is because the atmosphere of their homes do not endorse English language at all. No one speaks or understands English at their home. She explained the division of the Pakistani society on the axis of

class. The lower or lower middle classes have no know how of English language. They have no culture of speaking it at their homes. They either speak Urdu or their native languages at homes. So it is very difficult to teach or make speak children English language who belong to such households. In her opinion, the learning of any language efficiently requires the endorsement of it by the surroundings.

When I asked a student of the primary school (grade 4) about the problems he faces while making sentences on his own he replied “Sometimes I don’t know the meaning of the words and other times I don’t know how to connect words to make a sentence”. This 10 year old students stated the factors that place hurdles for him to make correct sentences. Firstly, his English vocabulary is poor, so he does not know the meaning of a number of words in English language. He referred to the inclusion of new words in tests or exams. Secondly, he does not know the method of connecting words in order to make a sentence. This student has no grip over sentence structure. Knowledge about sentence structure and parts of sentence is crucial for making grammatically correct sentence.

When asked a student of grade 6 about the difficulties regarding writing on her own, she replied “In case of word sentences, I have sentences in my mind but it is difficult to translate them in English because it is not our language, in case of long answers, we have not understood the main idea so it is difficult to write on our own without conceptual learning”. This student came with a very interesting answer. According to her, she has a good thinking ability as she thinks about the words and sentences do come into her mind. The problem is that she does not know how to write those sentences into English language. It is the issue of conversion of language. As I discussed earlier, the students are not good at writing in the language which is the medium of examination of these public schools.

When asked a student of grade5 about sentence making he replied” I can make sentences only in Urdu language, I find it so difficult to make a sentence in English, I don’t know English grammar, I don’t know where to use verb and noun and how to connect the words”. This student was able to make sentences in Urdu language but not in English language. It shows that some students do have this

element of creativity in them, but it is just the use of language that inhibits them from being creative. He was very weak in English grammar hence not capable of making sentences.

According to him, he does not know about the connection of verbs and nouns and their respective places in a sentence. For the sake of clarification I asked him to make a sentence using word “Mobile, he replied “I AM MY MOBILE”. I asked him about the meaning of this sentence so he told he was trying to convey that he owns this mobile (pointed towards my mobile phone which was placed on the table for recording his interview). Through this activity of sentence making, I gained a very clear idea of where he stood in terms of sentence making and what kind of difficulties he faced while building sentences in English language.

These students were having no idea of verbs, nouns, subject, object, prepositions etc. When they are given a word for sentence making, they think of relative words and try to connect them in a sentence. While doing that, they do not bother about the sequence of the part of sentences. It is because they know nothing about this sequence. This, in turn, is because their teachers are just teaching grammatical rules and as mentioned above grammar is not something to be learn through tutorials only. It requires listening to the language on daily basis, a thing which lacks the most in these public schools.

Another student of grade 5 said “I can try to make a sentence in English but I know I am not able to make a grammatically correct sentence”. This student was very sure of not being able to make correct sentences. I thought of the origin of this surety. I asked a rhetoric question that why these students have no confidence in themselves in a sense that before making a sentence the student is saying the sentence made by him would have a lot of mistakes. The reason behind this is that the students faced a lot of discouragement whenever they tried to make sentences on their own in the tests. This discouragement was due to the mistakes in their self-made sentences. This whole scenario destroyed their confidence level in a sense that they no longer make sentences and memorize the ones made by the teacher all the time. This thing goes on with them up to the high school level.

While explaining the issue of medium of instruction, a teacher of the primary school who teaches to grade 4 said “Medium of instruction is a major issue, but let I tell you one thing that it is difficult for students to write in Urdu than in English. They can memorize English sentences and can write those in exams perfectly, but not the case in Urdu, writing Urdu its letters is a difficult task to do”.

I have asked this issue of difference between the medium of instruction and the medium of examination from a high school teacher and she replied “Teachers should deliver the knowledge in the same language; the student has to produce in the exams i.e. English language. Some students can tell me concepts orally but when I ask them to write it on paper they are not able to do it. They require memorization for it”. According to this teacher, the teachers in this high school does not deliver the lectures in the English language which is the official medium of instruction of their school and they should do that. She highlighted the importance of delivering lectures in English language.

In her opinion, a lecture should be delivered in the same language, in which a student is required produce in the examinations. She stated the same point which was raised by many students of the primary as well as the high school students. The students do understand a lesson or concept which the teacher taught them while speaking in Urdu language, while the students have to produce it in English language in the exams. So some of the students are able to give the answer orally but still unable to come up with exactly the same answer in written form. Apart from the issue of concept building, this problem of inability to write is also a major factor behind memorization by the students. According to her, when the medium of textbooks and examination is English language, then why the medium of instruction used is not English language.

I inquired about the knowledge of students regarding the parts of a sentence. It includes 47 students from grade 1 to 10. Only out of 47 students knows the right answer. This student of grade 7 told correctly the names of all parts of a sentence. This student acquired early education from ROOTS International School and this was her first year in this public high school.

## **Theme 7: Issues at the policy level**

### **Profession, not Passion:**

The questions, which inquire about the passion of the teachers in their early lives, were one of the parts of my semi structured interview guide. I have asked these questions from all the teachers which aimed at finding out their level of satisfaction from their jobs. During the process of interviewing I have found very interesting facts regarding this phenomenon. I have also come to know about the difference in the profession and passion of certain teachers in the primary as well as high school. I have asked from the students about the impact of this difference on their studies.

While explaining the complex nature of teaching profession Dr. Huma haque said “A teacher shouldn’t be a teacher out of coercion. He can be a marketing manager this way in order to earn money. But teaching is a distinct profession. A person who just wants to earn money shouldn’t be hired as teacher in any way. Teaching is so pivotal. If teachers are out of passion, so everyone would be capable be it doctors, engineers, accountants. There should be a strong criteria. Good interviewers are able to judge that who is wanting that job out of passion”. Dr. Haque, brought my attention towards the elements of passion and money making.

In her opinion, a teacher should choose the profession of teaching only when it is their passion. It is because teaching is not like other professions, where every person can fit through having related education and training. It is a unique profession, for which ineptest and passion are prerequisite. A person should not become a teacher if he is indifferent to all available options. Only such person should be hired as a teacher who has a strong aspiration to become a teacher. She suggested the way of judging the passion of the teachers by the interviewers during the recruitment process. Only those candidates are hired which have strong desires of becoming teacher and not just earning money.

When I asked a High school teacher about the passionless teachers, she replied “Unfortunately, only those people become teachers who could not become anything. I told you I was a teacher out of passion, I did not want to become anything other than a teacher, majority of teachers are doing their jobs just to earn money. Their passion is something else”. This teacher highlighted a very unfortunate reality of our education system. In her opinion, a person who is so incapable that he cannot become anything in his life eventually becomes a teacher.

A vast majority of the teachers in the public sector schools are having no keen interest in their jobs. According to her, a vast majority of the teachers working in this high school are working just to earn money. The people have to kill their passions due to several reasons, but everyone needs a job for financial security and securing future. For a number of teachers, teaching is just an option to earn livelihood and they have no specific interest in this profession.

As I mentioned earlier, I have also asked this question regarding the passionless teachers from the students of high school. While sharing her views on this issue, a student of grade 10 said “If a person has no patience he should not be a teacher at all. This job requires a lot of patience and understanding. Some teachers have no patience and they get annoyed when a student asks a slightly irrelevant question”. According to this student, a teacher should have a lot of patience, because she is needed to deal with the children. Children in their teens are not perfect mature human beings, they are just children. So a teacher teaching at a primary or high school should consider the childishness of the student in his mind. In her opinion, the teachers who get angry or irritated over the questions asked by the students are the ones who are quite misfit in their profession. This 16 year old girl built a very important argument in this way. A teacher should be patient enough to tackle these things in a mature way. The lack of interest, of a teacher in her profession, can be assumed through his way of tackling such issues.

Dr Parvez Hoodbhoy also explained the reason behind the incapability of the teachers in the following words “A person who cannot become anything becomes a teacher, we have various attitude problems that are embedded in the teaching body the most. Some teachers consider asking questions and making arguments by students a sort of misbehavior”. He also endorsed the fact that people become teachers only when have failed to get any other job. Mostly teachers have no passion for their profession. There is a difference between their profession and passion as I mentioned earlier. According to him, the non-serious and incapable people become teachers, the inefficiency can easily be seen in their behaviors.

A student of grade 7 said “Some teachers are misfit in their professions, our Math teacher should be an actor or something like that. She doesn’t like what she does i.e. teaching”. This 13 years old student made a very funny statement while explaining her viewpoint regarding the misfit teachers. She, along with her friends, has observed the acting qualities in the teacher who teaches them Mathematics. In her opinion, this particular teacher has made a wrong career choice and hence is misfit in her profession. Even the students who are in their early teens manage to observe this idea of difference in profession and passion of their teachers. The teachers teaching in the public schools do not take teaching as a passion, in fact it is just a job for a vast majority.

### ***Job Security:***

I have asked a teacher of primary school about the impact of job security on quality of teaching, she replied “Teachers teaching in private schools are better because they have no job security, they work wholeheartedly, we have highly educated teachers but they don’t work wholeheartedly because they don’t have work insecurity, they know no one can fire them”.

According to this teacher, there is no lack of qualified teachers in the public schools but there is a huge lack of good performance by these teachers. The teachers do not perform well because they have no fear of getting fired due to poor performance. They have no incentive to work hard. No one is able to



fire them from their jobs because of poor performance. The public school teachers enjoy absolute job security in Pakistan.

I inquired about the same issue from a teacher of high school and she said “Government teachers perform badly because of job security, if they have job insecurity, then they would go to the illegal ways. These things won’t work, it’s your inner goodness and faith which matters, and teacher would then bribe the principal or administration, make friendships with parents in order to avoid complaints. A person goes towards right path when he fears God”. This teacher consider both job security and job insecurity not good. According to her, if the teachers face job insecurity they go towards certain illegal means to secure their job. It is the intention of a worker that matters. If he wants to do good work, he will do even if his jobs is unconditionally secured. Contrary to this, the workers with bad intentions will not perform well even if they face job insecurity. I agree to this argument to a certain extent, but not completely.

While explaining the negative impact of job security, Dr. Parvez Hoodbhoy said “When I was the head of department here in Quaid e Azam University, I wished to fire a highly incompetent teacher who had no knowledge of physics. I tried for three years to fire him but I failed to do so, then I got retired and he is still working here and will be for 30 more years and will keep destroying this department. So job security has many disadvantages, I think that job security should only be given to those people who have proved themselves to be competent, other people should have given renewable contracts”.

He went on to say “There is a need to balance these things, if there is huge security then the teachers do not work efficiently, if there is immense job insecurity then teachers would be so sad and unsatisfied which will again affect their level of efficiency. I don’t want the teachers to be unhappy but I want them to perform up to standards”.

According to Dr. Hoodbhoy, job security should be conditional. He pointed out towards providing a probation period to the newly recruited teachers. Only those who perform well should be given

permanent jobs. The rest of the teachers should be given renewable contracts while the most incompetent ones should be fired immediately. He rejected the idea of immense job insecurity, because it can also affect the quality of teaching of the teachers. It is possible that a competent teacher cannot perform well because of mental stress due to the element of job insecurity. It is the need of the hour to maintain a balance between the both things.

Another teacher of the high school shared her viewpoint regarding the issue of job security and said “Many teachers having them are not performing well: Because they have become so proud because of promotions and nice salaries. They think they are not energetic enough to perform well hence the daily wagers are there to perform. Teachers are not trained at all”.

This teacher brought my attention towards the impact of job security and high grades on the attitude of these teachers. It also shows discrimination towards the junior teachers who work as daily wagers. Both kind of teachers work in a same school and teach at similar levels but there is a huge difference in salaries. The senior teachers put more burden of work onto the daily wagers because they can't say a no to the senior teachers because of job insecurity. This means that job insecurity leads to hard work and efficiency. It is due to the wave of competition and securing jobs while getting a position in this competition.

Another teacher of the high school said on this issue “The people who are running the system are not capable and strong. If my administrator is strong and honest, I will have to be honest and hardworking”. In her opinion, the performance of a teacher is highly dependent on the administration of a school. If the administration is strict and dutiful, the teacher will work hard despite of having permanent jobs. The competency of the administration of a school matters a lot.

## **Theme 8 Issues faced by teachers:**

### ***Lack of Multimedia Facility:***

When I asked a teacher of the high school, about the lack of facilities in their school which affect their teaching, she replied “I asked the administration to provide us any digital medium/ multimedia which can be efficiently used to develop morality in students through telling them stories, they did not cooperate with us, now time has changed, children of their era learn from television and media, they don’t take mere lectures seriously”. According to this teacher, there is a lack of multimedia facility in their school. She needed a multimedia facility for teaching students about morality and ethics. She considers the availability of multimedia necessary for making students watch documentaries and videos endorsing ethics. In these times, media is an effective tool to teach students. Students learn a lot from electronic as well as digital media. When she approached the Principal of her school for this thing, she did not take it serious.

I inquired about the lack of facilities, from a Primary school teacher. She complained about the lack of multimedia and said “There is lack of technology and multimedia, there should be a screen in each and every class, and I once asked the principal to provide such things. She agreed to it, but couldn’t provide it”. This teacher was also concerned about the lack of multimedia facility in their school. According to her, the principal was willing to provide this facility and much aware of its importance. She was unable to provide it because of lack of facilities. It is because there is no policy by the directorate to provide issues funds for multimedia facility in primary schools.

While explaining the need of multimedia facility, a teacher of the primary school said “When I teach students social studies and discuss about a place, I want to watch them videos about that place, but we have no multimedia to show them that”. This teacher feels the need of multimedia during teaching the subject of social studies to the students. Whenever there comes a topic any country/city, she needs multimedia facility to show the graphics and videos related to that place for developing the interest of the students in the lesson.

A teacher of the high school who teaches Biology to matric level said “I need multimedia badly, I teach my students videos on my mobile phone. I asked a principal once to provide me that but she said we can’t have multimedia in classes, we have a computer lab for that purpose. I went to computer lab but they didn’t let me do that .I want chairs for my students in class, we just have stools here, and students get tired while sitting on them for hours”.

This teacher uses her personal mobile phone for the sake of showing students videos while teaching them Biology. She considers multimedia an absolute necessity for the teachers teaching Science subjects. She pointed towards the lack of coordination among certain entities within the school. The staff of the computer lab of the school did not cooperate with this teacher, despite of the fact that she was given suggestion by the Principal.

### ***Huge Size of Class.***

Another problem faced by the teachers of the high school is the huge size of classes. It is one of the most important issues faced by the education system of Pakistan. When the size of a class is huge, then the teachers are not able to provide individual attention to the students. The teachers are also not able to conduct enough tests and provide feedback to a class having huge strength. There is also a difficulty in building concepts of a huge number of students in a class. Another major drawback of huge size of class is difficulty in maintaining discipline and silence in the classroom.

I have observed a huge size of classes in both schools. The average size of the high school class is more than that of the primary school. When I asked a teacher of the primary school about the most important issue faced by the public schools, she replied “the main issue is of strength”. We have so many students hence we can’t give individual attention”. This teacher considered huge class size as the most important issues faced by the public education system of Pakistan. It leads to the lowering of the quality of education. A teacher cannot give individual attention to a class having a large size. The average size of any class in this primary school is 40-45.

When I asked about any change, she wants in the school, a student of high school said “the class size should be 30”. A student of grade 8 suggested a reform to minimize the issues faced by the education system. This reform is to decrease the class size in these public schools. According to her, the maximum number of students in a class of a high school is 30.

When I asked her the current number of students in her class. She replied “76 and that is a huge number”. The strength of class 8th of this high school is 76. This is a huge number and reflects towards a criminal negligence by the administration of the school and the federal board.

When I asked a teacher of the primary school about the impact of class size on the quality of education, she replied “strength of a class should be lesser, the course of 1st and 2nd term should not be the part of final term, when the course is lesser, conceptual understanding would be possible”.

This teacher of the primary school told about the negative impact of huge class size on the quality of education. According to her, when the strength of the class is less and the course is divided according to terminal system, then eventually there would be conceptual understanding by the students. A teacher would be able to focus on the students and their level of understanding if the strength is less.

### ***Ineffective Teachers Training Programs.***

Teacher training programs are conducted by the Federal Directorate of Education on regular basis. I have inquired about the quality and efficiency of these programs as it was a part of my interview schedule. The quality of teacher training programs is directly proportional to the quality of education.

I have asked this question from every teacher about the number of such programs or workshops they attended. The answers given by each teacher was different in this regard. A teacher of the primary school attended 6 programs, while another one attended 12 programs. One of the teachers of the primary school has attended 30 programs.

A teacher of the high school has not attended a single training program. According to this 39 year old teacher, she was never asked by any vice principal to attend these programs in her 15 years long career. While another teacher of the high school lost the count she attended, according to her she attended a few workshops only. I am told by a teacher of the primary school that there is no compulsion of attending these training programs for any teacher. Sometimes, the directorate ask some specific teachers by mentioning their names to attend workshops. Most of the times, there is no mentioning of the names, it is up to the vice principal to nominate the teachers to attend workshops. According to this teacher, the vice principal mostly nominates the teachers already having some caliber for these trainings.

While explaining the quality of these training programs, a teacher of the primary school said “I got angry when I see the faces of the teachers who are giving us lecture in those programs, because they don’t know anything and they are not capable at all, they repeat boring things, we return back without any increase in knowledge and skills, we just enjoy the food and the tea”. According to this teacher, the teachers who teach in these programs themselves know nothing and are not capable at all. They share those traditional bookish points with them, which they already know about teaching profession. The quality of these programs is low upto the extent that we do not wish to attend these programs at all. According to this 56 years old senior teacher, teachers gain nothing through these programs.

Another teacher of the primary school said about the applications of the techniques learnt through these programs "I try to apply these techniques, but I do not care much about them. No one bounds us and asks us to apply those techniques”. This teacher highlighted a very important point regarding the truthful application of the newly learnt teaching techniques. She did not reject the effectiveness of these programs regarding the learning by the teachers. According to her, these programs are not useful enough because no one truthfully adopt these techniques in the classrooms after learning them through the training programs.

## **Chapter 5.**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Introduction.**

The Chapter 4 explained the results and discussion of the results of this study. In this chapter, I will conclude the results of the study. This chapter includes the recommendation and suggestions for the policymakers in the end. This chapter is the crux of my study. It summarizes the objective and conclusion of the entire research work.

#### **5.2 Conclusion**

This study aimed at analyzing the reasons behind the low quality of education in the public sector schools of the Federal Capital Islamabad. It has done to inquire about the obstacles in the way of provision of the quality education. This piece of research is also intended to examine the issues faced by the students and the teachers of the public schools. This study would be successful in answering the above mentioned research questions competently.

The results highlight a number of factors that are directly and indirectly responsible for the low quality of education in the public schools of Islamabad. The detail of these results is explained in fourth chapter. There is a huge number of factors which are responsible for the lack of quality education. According to the given data, I have observed the following major factors.

In Public schools of Islamabad, the major factors behind low quality of education are huge class size, obsolete pattern of examination, medieval teaching methodologies, ineffective administration, rote learning, lack of concept building, lack of critical thinking and incompetent teachers. These are just a few factors which, in my opinion, are responsible the most.

In the results section, I have focused the most on the lack of critical thinking because it develops reasoning and analytical skills in students, which is a major determinant of quality education. The

students of the public schools are not able to think critically at all. This concept is alien to the students of these schools. Critical thinking is necessary for the cognitive development of the students. There is no focus on the cognitive development of the students studying in these schools.

The quality of education has much to do with the quality of evaluation. The teachers will teach in accordance with the pattern of examination. The pattern of examination for the students studying in public schools leaves no room for critical thinking. The teachers do not bother about critical thinking by the students because it is not endorsed by the pattern of examination. Answering the questions in the exams does not require critical thinking. Instead it requires memorization and rote learning.

It is a fact that the portion of objective section is increased overtime, but it is not about the objective or subjective section. Rather, it is about the nature of question being asked in these sections. If the answer of the question, of either part, is exactly written in the textbook, then critical thinking is not required to answer such a question. So, the teachers are directly whereas the federal directorate is indirectly responsible for the lack of critical thinking and reasoning skills in the students. The authorities are failed in making policies to ensure cognitive development of the students.

The medieval teaching methodologies adopted by the teachers in the public schools are also responsible for the low quality of education. The teachers teach an entire lesson to the students without having a discussion or session of questioning with them. The teaching-learning process is absolutely one sided in these schools. Teachers are not concerned about the conceptual understanding of the students. Their only motive is to complete the lesson; they decided to teach in a period.

Another major yet unsolvable issue faced by the public education system is huge size of a class. If improvements are made in all other areas, still they will be of lesser use if the class size is not reduced in the public schools. How can the quality of education is ensured in a school, where there are more than 70 students studying in a single class? Such examples of criminal negligence lead to low quality of education. The students of primary as well as high schools require individual attention. They are



being deprived of this right by the Directorate through not making rigid policies in this regard. In my opinion, the whole focus of the policymakers is on quantity of the education rather than its quality. The huge size of classes confirms this fact. They want more people to get benefit of getting education at public schools at the expense of quality of education of these schools.

A teacher is one of the major actors of the system of education. The competence of the teachers is a determinant of quality education. The teachers teaching in these public schools are neither competent nor well learned. I can make this claim after analyzing the data, I collected. 12 out of 13 teachers, I interviewed, do not read books at all. It indicated towards the fact that majority of these teachers are not well learned, they are just degree holders.

The competence of a teacher can be judged through the extent of conceptual understanding of his students. Concepts can only be made clear when a teacher answers the questions of the students. In these public schools, there is no trend of questioning by the students. A good teacher is the one who encourages as well as provokes the students to ask questions and then answers to their questions. Only then the students will be able to learn conceptually. From primary to high school, students complained about the lack of conceptual understanding due to which majority of the students have to take tuitions in the evening. These tuitions, on one hand cost their parents and on the other hand, increase the time duration of study in a day. This mess having a chain effect is created due to the incompetency of the public school teachers. The good quality of education cannot be ensured unless and until the quality of the teaching faculty is improved.

The teachers do not try to capture the interest of the students during the course of teaching. They do not consider it a part of their job. Neither do they bother about the concept building, nor do they focus on capturing the interest of the students. A teacher just considers teaching the whole syllabus to the students as her job. Nothing more, nothing less.

The two factors i.e. rote learning and the lack of concept building are highly connected to each other. Lack of concept building leads to rote learning. When the students are learning by rote, it indicates towards the poor quality of education. It is just like a litmus test. If the policymakers analyze the elements that force a student to learn by rote, they will surely be able to know the factors behind the low quality of education. Any student, who is getting quality education, would not learn by rote at all. It is because he would not feel the need to do it. A vast majority of the students learn by rote and memorize the lessons in the public schools of Islamabad. I have discussed in detail about the factors that lead to rote learning in chapter 4.

Lack of conceptual understanding as well as the inability to write leads to rote learning by the students. When a student has no concepts, he would memorize. When a student has knowledge but is unable to produce the knowledge in the written form, he would memorize.

While analyzing the issues of rote learning, I have figured out the factor of difference in medium of instruction and medium of examination. The students have no grip over writing in a language which is the medium of examination. This is one of the main issues faced by the students of the public schools.

Another determinant of quality education is the role of administration of school in enhancing the quality of education. The administrators of the public schools are not successful in this regard. They are unable to make the teachers deliver their best. They are just holding the position and running the administration of the schools. They do take care of the punctuality of the teachers but what a teacher does in the classroom is not a matter of concern for them. They do not focus on anything related to quality education except the percentage of final results of the students. The principal of the primary school blamed the negligible role of household for the lower level of understanding of the students. It is difficult to ensure quality education, when the Principal of a school is highly clueless about this term “quality education”. Understanding the definition, application and importance of a work is compulsory for doing that piece of work.

I have analyzed a lot of issues faced by the students of the public schools. Apart from a number of academic issues like lack of concept building, rote learning and difference of mediums, the students face a number of non-academic issues too. The students of the public schools lag behind in the race of life in their professional lives. It is because they lack social capital. They may achieve good degrees from reputable universities, but they fail to achieve good jobs especially in the private sector. It is because they are least confidence and having poor English writing and speaking skills.

The students face a number of such issues in the public schools for instance suppression of confidence, personal attacks made by teachers, ridicule, and corporal punishment and psychological pressure. The confidence level of the students is suppressed in these schools due to beating and unnecessary insults. The teachers do judge and personal attacks on the students of the high school. These things, on one hand, lead to the suppression of confidence and on the other hand destroy the teacher-student bond. When teacher hold grudges against their students, they can't become role models for their students. There is a huge relation between the teacher student bond and learning of the students. The lack of confidence and element of fear caused by the rude behavior of the teachers discourage the students to ask question from teachers in the class. It is a major reason behind the lack of conceptual understanding by the students. Development of concepts is only possible when the students ask questions. This is not the entire fault of the students. They are the victims of the wrong behavior of the teachers.

There is an immense lack of practical work, creative activities, class presentations, oral testing, dramatic and sports activities in these public schools. The students are neither given adequate opportunities, nor are they encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities. These things are neither mandatory, nor graded here. There is no effort regarding developing creative skills in the students. The class presentations are not mandatory, and no teacher takes them. The schools are not provided with sports equipment. There is no trend of oral and open book testing.

Another thing which is mandatory for ensuring the quality of a service is feedback. Adequate and formal feedback is not taken from the students. No committees are present for listening to the issues of the students. The class teachers are not concerned much about solving the issues and problems of the students. The idea of respect is vague. The provision of feedback by the students to the vice principals is considered as disrespectful act by the teachers.

Apart from the factors mentioned above, there are certain other factors too that create obstacles in the provision of quality education. These problems have much to do with the policymakers and the government. There are a number of elements that are responsible for the incompetence of the teachers. Other than the fact that the teachers are incompetent and not well learned, the question is that will these teachers perform in the same way if they work for the private schools. I have analyzed the failures at the policymaking level too.

In the public schools of Islamabad, the teachers do not work hard in terms of concept building, because they have no incentive for doing that. A private school teacher would work hard to ensure job security and the promotion. Government school teachers enjoy absolute job security. Their promotions are based on time scale. It means that a teacher, who performs good or bad or even worse, will eventually get promoted to the higher grade after a certain length of time. There is no incentive for the teachers working in public schools to work hard and in accordance with the new trends of teaching. Their jobs as well as promotions are secure.

The critical thinking has never been encouraged through making respective policies. This cannot just be a mere act of negligence. The critical thinking is discouraged by the policymakers and the descriptive pattern of evaluation is a proof of that. It is a matter of policy. This is the reason that the students of the public schools do not have analytical and reasoning skills. They are just good at describing and explaining things because of the widespread trend of rote learning and memorization.

The teacher training programs are incapable of bringing a considerable change. It is because they lack consistency and they are not mandatory for each and every teacher of these schools. Secondly, there is no check on the truthful application of the techniques taught by these programs. They are just an activity for the teachers and nothing else. There is an absolute lack of research centers in the schools which are crucial for training the teachers within their schools on regular basis.

The issues faced by the teachers include the huge size of class, low daily wages, lack of funding and lack of important facilities like multimedia etc. It is difficult for a teacher to provide individual attention and take questions from a class having huge strength. She has to have a lot of energy to maintain decorum of the class in this way. Another issue faced by the teachers of the primary as well as high school is the checking of homework notebooks. This is a real burden on a teacher when she has to check notebooks of 60 or 70 students. Things like that disturb the teachers and lessened their focus on teaching. There is a lack of helper teachers who are appointed just for checking notebooks.

The above mentioned facts answer the following research questions posed by this study in the beginning.

- 1. Which factors are responsible for the low quality of education in public sector schools of Islamabad?**
- 2. What are the issues faced by the students in the public schools?**
- 3. What are the problems faced by the teachers in the public schools?**

This study has answered all the above research questions. It fulfills the objectives mentioned in the beginning too. This research was conducted in two primary schools of Islamabad. The main focus of this research was on the factors responsible for low quality of education as well as the issues faced by the students in these schools. While interviewing the teachers, I inquired about their issues too. I have also discussed the issues faced by the teachers. This research would be of immense significance for policymakers. They can be able to know about the insight of these public schools because it is a

qualitative research. This study brings the scenario of the classrooms to its readers. They will be able to understand the core issues at the teaching, administration and the policy level. It throws light on the contribution of teachers, administrators, policymakers and the government to the provision of low quality of education in the public schools. I have tried my best to cover all aspects.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Following are the recommendations, I suggest for tackling the issues faced by the public schools of Islamabad. These are the suggestions which would be quite beneficial for enhancing the quality of education in the public sector schools. They are aimed at eliminating the hurdles in terms of management, teaching methodologies, pattern of examination and social structures. Once these obstacles in the way of quality education removed, the quality of education in the government run schools would be enhanced.

***Decreasing Cass Size:*** One of the major issues faced by the public schools of Islamabad is the huge size of the classes. There were 40-45 students in a class on average in the primary school, whereas in the high school the average size of a class is 55-60. The most populous class of the high school was having 76 students. This is a case of extreme neglect and the Federal Directorate of Education as well as the administrators of the schools are responsible for it. The Federal Directorate of Education must formulate and implement strict rules regarding the size of a class. Ideally, there should be 20-25 students in a class of high school. But considering the growing population of Islamabad, I would suggest a size of 30-35 students maximum for a high school and 25-30 students for a primary school. It is because the students of a primary school need more individual attention of a teacher as compared to the students of a high school. The reduction in the class size would definitely enhance the quality of education. The teachers would be able to provide individual attention, focus on concept building, conduct more written/oral tests, discuss results of tests on individual basis and efficiently maintain the discipline of the class in this way.

***Terminal System:*** There is a great burden of studies on the students of the public sector schools of Islamabad. I have thoroughly inquired the reasons behind this burden. One of the major reasons is that the students from grade 1 to grade 10 need to prepare the whole syllabus for their final examination. These students do have terminal examinations during a session, but still the whole syllabus is included in the course of final exams. A system of education, wherein the students memorize the entire textbooks and learn the lessons by rote, it is quite unjust towards them to prepare the whole syllabus for the final exams, parts of whom they did memorize for the terminal examinations. I would suggest a terminal examination system for the public sector schools like the one we have in our universities. There should be two terms of exams in the entire session. The syllabus which is covered in a mid-terminal examination should not be a part of the final term examination. It is because, in order to prepare the students for final examination, the teachers have to complete the entire course prior to the time of examination in order to make students revise the whole syllabus for approximately a month. This trend of revision decreases the time for teaching the syllabus. Due to this lack of time, teachers teach with a great speed without bothering for the concept building of the students. When we have terminal examination system in our schools, the teachers would not be worried for the session of revision prior to final examinations. They would teach slowly to the students and may focus on their concept building. On the other hand, it would be easy for the students to prepare lesser course for each term. It will reduce the burden of studies.

***No External examination for Grade 5.*** I have figured out a number of elements that contribute to the rote learning. An important factor which leads to rote learning by the students of a primary school in Islamabad is the external examination system for grade 5 students. According to a teacher of the primary school, they start encouraging rote learning among the students of grade 3 in order to make them prepare efficiently for the external examination of grade 5. This justification given by the teachers for this act reflects towards the fact that they want the students to get passed in grade 5 and promoted to grade 6. One of the effective ways to get good grades in external examination is rote learning. It is

because the examiners who check the exams of such kind prefers checking the answers having same wording to that of written in the textbooks. They prefer having identical answers. These are the causes for which the teachers encourage rote learning among the students of a primary school. In order to prepare a student for grade 5 final exams, the teachers start preparing him mentally 2, 3 years prior to performing in the board exam.

In my opinion, a student of grade 5 is too young to bear the burden of external examination. The fear of board exams kills the creativity in the students. They prefer memorization because of this fear. The idea of external exams is not appropriate for an 11 year old child. On the other hand, it promotes rote learning at a very young age of a student. A thing, which goes on with the students to the college level. Considering the evils of rote learning and psychological pressure, I suggest internal examination for the students of grade 5.

***Analytical and Critical pattern of examination:*** Another cause behind the widespread practice of rote learning among the students of the public sector schools is the low quality of examination. It is because the questions which are part of the exams are of descriptive nature. The material, which is required to answer these questions, is written exactly in the textbooks. So the rote learning and memorization is a perfect tool to prepare the answers of these questions. It is referred to the questions in the subjective part of all subjects except Mathematics, Statistics etc.

Such type of questions do not require critical and analytical thinking by the students in order to prepare the answer. I would suggest a radical change in the pattern of examination for the public sector schools. The teachers who are given the assignment of making board and external exams should unlearn a few words. For example, they should unlearn the words such as “Explain”, “Describe”, “Give details”, “Enumerate” etc. Instead of these words, these teachers should learn some new words such as “Analyze”, “Suppose”, “Investigate”, “Explore” etc. With the use of such words, the teachers would be able to design a question paper that would urge the students to think critically and analytically



before answering the questions. The questions of an exam should not just ask the details of the phenomenon which are written in the textbooks. Instead, these question should inquire the relationship between two similar phenomena, application of the same phenomenon in entirely different scenario, possible substitutes of a certain idea mentioned in the textbooks. When such questions would be a part of the exams, the teachers as well as the students would definitely be discouraged from the use of rote learning as a tool to get grades. Rote learning will itself become a useless and obsolete thing in this way.

***Open Book Testing:*** Open book testing is a form of testing in which the students are not required to not cheat from their textbooks. They can take guidance from their textbooks during attempting the tests. The teachers of the public schools do make tests which are having questions of descriptive nature. This, in turn, is because the questions included in the exams are also of this sort. I would suggest the introduction of open book testing in the public schools. It is necessary because it would force the teachers to make questions which urge the students to think critically. It would be tough job for the teachers to do. Such kind of tests would promote the critical thinking and analytical thinking among the students which is quite necessary to enhance the quality of education. These questions can be of subjective or objective nature. Open book testing is much efficient as compared to the traditional sort of testing being practiced in our public schools since decades.

***Compulsory Discussion:*** Another thing which is hugely missing in the classrooms of the public schools is discussion. The teaching-learning process is considered as two way process where the teachers teach and the students learn and respond respectively. In the public schools, the teachers teach to the students and the students neither do ask any questions, nor do they respond to the teacher in any way. It is because the teachers do not engage the students in this process. It is the responsibility of the teachers which they don't fulfil at all. Their entire focus is on covering the whole lesson in a period. It should be compulsory for the teachers to dedicate one third portion of a period to discussion and

session of question-answers. This discussion is compulsory for better understanding of the students, but the teachers do not bother about it. It is because their employers do not bind them to do that. The teachers consider it an extra activity; hence some do it while the others don't. This process of discussion in the classrooms should be made compulsory by the Federal Directorate of Education. For instance, if the total time of a period is 45 minutes, a teacher should only teach to the students for 30 minutes and the rest of the 15 minutes should be spent having a discussion about the topic studied between the teachers and the students. The teachers should make it sure, that the entire class do participate in this discussion, especially the back benchers.

***Focus on English Writing and Speaking Skills:*** I have discussed in detail in the chapter no. 4 “Results” about this cause of rote learning. There are many students who have the clarity of concepts but still memorize the topics and sometimes the entire lessons. It is because they cannot write on their own. These students lack the ability to write a grammatically correct sentence in English language. There should be great focus on the English language in the public schools, not just because it is an international language. It should be focused on, because it is the medium of examination. It is the language in which a student produces the knowledge he has, in the exams. So this language should be given the more importance as compared to the other subjects. If a student has no grip over English writing skills, he would not be able to perform in any subject. I would like to recommend the introduction of a separate subject named “English writing & Speaking” for the students from grade 1 to grade 10. This subject would not be taught as a subject. Instead, it would be taught as a language. The students have stories and lessons in their regular English Textbooks. The curriculum designed for this subject would not consist of lessons, instead it would be focused just on making students read and write English language. This will include practice of English writing and speaking by the students, where the teacher directs groups of students to talk in English. It will also include writing assignments for the students on daily basis. If this subject is introduced in the syllabus of the primary schools, the students would be able to make correct sentences the time, they reach to the high school.

***Implementation of Corporal Ban:***

I have observed the practice of corporal punishment in the primary school despite being banned by the government. It was not observed in the high school at this time, but students told me about its practice in the past. I analyzed the reasons for the continuous practice of this punishment. According to the teachers, they practice it because the students provoke them to do so through their ill behavior. Some teachers justify this punishment because it is also practiced by the parents of these students at home. One teacher told me that the mother of one of her students asked to beat her son in the school to punish him for not studying enough. Some teachers say that teachers do beat students when they are facing frustrations in personal or professional lives. I have reached to this conclusion that these justifications for beating students are highly unreasonable. If the teachers do obey the Federal Directorate in every other aspect, then why don't they obey this order of the very same institution? When they are asked to not beat their students by their employers, then why do they still beat students. I have found two reasons behind it. Firstly, the beating of children is never considered a taboo in our society, if the beating is of corrective type. Parents do beat their children at home and state has never made any law to inhibit that. A child, who respectfully accepts the corporal punishment by the parents, is considered an obedient offspring. In the same way, teachers do beat their students in order to correct them and apparently for their greater good. Their intention may be good, but the way is very wrong. We can stop this practice of beating students only if we make beating a child or any person, a taboo in our society. The teachers should have enough knowledge about basic human rights and violation of these rights. Beating anyone is only justified as a self-defense or as a revenge. When a student does not raise hand over a teacher, then why do the teachers do that to the students? When the teachers do realize these facts, then there would be the end of practicing corporal punishment in the public schools in real.

I would suggest taking a formal feedback from the students as well as the parents of the students of the public schools by the Federal directorate of Education, Islamabad. This ban would effectively work

only, when the Federal Directorate, instead of waiting for getting complaints, effort hard to inspect the ground situation in terms of corporal punishment on its own, by taking adequate feedback.

**Graded Art and Creative Subjects:** I have inquired about the Arts subject from a teacher of primary school. There are no separate Arts/Drawing subject for the students of grade 1 to 5. They study a subject known as “General knowledge” from grade 1 to 3. There is no separate creative subject. I suggest inclusion of a graded Arts subject from grade 1 to 5 in the primary schools. Such subjects enhance the creativity of the students.

They provide the students a moment of relax from studying other dry subjects. They add an element of fun to the otherwise boring routine study of the students of the primary schools. As it is discussed earlier, the students of the primary school are too young to sit on the chairs and study for long hours. There is a dire need of element of fun for these students in order to make their school life entertaining.

The students of grade 1 to 5 do have a Games period but I saw them doing nothing during this period. There were no sports equipment for these students to play. They were not engaged in the sports activities, like they should have been. The inclusion of artistic subjects in the public schools should only be beneficial if these subjects would be graded. Otherwise they will not be of any use. The periods allotted to these subjects would be utilized by other subjects’ teachers to cover their syllabus otherwise.

**Graded Extra Curricula Activities:** I have observed an immense lack of confidence in the students of these public schools. On one hand, it is due to the suppression of confidence which is caused by the unnecessary insults and beating of students. On the other hand, this is because the majority of the students do not participate in the Extra Curricular activities. The teachers do not bother about this fact that 90 percent of the students of their class do not participate at all and there is just a tiny minority which participates each year in every function. The extracurricular activities do develop confidence in the students and enhance their social skills. The only way through which these students can be made participate in them is making them mandatory as well as graded. These activities should be made

mandatory for each and every student of the school. It should be made graded too. There should be a portion of participating in these activities in the total percentage of the final exams.

***Mandatory Class Presentations:*** From high to the primary school, there was no trend of taking class presentations of any subject by the teachers. I saw a serious neglect in this regard. Teachers do not take class presentations because some of them do not consider it important, whereas the rest of them do not take it because it is not made mandatory by the directorate. There are only very few exceptions, where one or two teachers take class presentations. Else it is not a norm in these schools.

I mentioned about the benefits of class presentation in terms of conceptual understanding and confidence development in detail in the fourth chapter. So I would suggest the making class presentations mandatory by the Federal Board of Education. Any step which is needed to enhance the quality of education would be adopted by the teachers only if it made either mandatory or graded by the directorate.

***Graded Viva:*** The students of the public schools, due to lack of clarity of concepts, are not able to perform well orally i.e. in the viva exams. As discussed earlier in the chapter 4, there are infinite advantages of oral testing. No viva exam is conducted from the students from grade 1 to grade 10 except for the natural science subjects taught to matric students. I recommend the introduction of graded viva exam from grade 1 to grade 10. It would urge the students to understand and focus on the concepts. It is the thing which can be easily ignored in the case of written exams. While writing, a student has enough time to bring stories to the related question and write them on the paper. It cannot be done in the case of oral exam, where the students need to answer the question asked by the examiner abruptly. So when a student knows that he would sit in front of an examiner and have to answer the questions asked by him, he would not rely only on rote learning or memorization. For performing well in a viva exam, the students will thoroughly study the lessons and understand the concepts.

***Introduction of a Feedback Mechanism:*** I consider the absence of any formal feedback mechanism as a chief reason behind the low quality of education in the public sector schools. Education is like a service and the students are customers of this service. How can a service be of good quality if there is no mechanism to take the feedback of its customers? It is like selling a service to a customer and not bothering about the concerns and issues faced by the customer. There should be a formal feedback mechanism in the form of computer generated survey for the students of high school. The students between the ages of 11-16 are surely able to provide their feedback in this way. As far as the students of primary school are concerned, the students of grade 4 and 5 are also able to give feedback orally to the Vice Principal. Considering the lack of time and strength of the classes, a number of students should be selected from the whole class for this purpose. This group should contain students of all kinds within a class. The most important thing in this regard is the confidentiality of the students which is not maintained otherwise when they approach the vice principals. The names of the students should be considered confidential, whereas their concerns should be discussed with their teachers. In this case, students would not get any backlash from the teachers and their problems will also be solved.

***Job Insecurity:*** During the process of data collection, I have found the reasons behind the idle behavior and lack of hard work by the teachers. One of these reasons is the greater extent of job security for the government teachers working in the public schools. Once a teacher gets a permanent government job, no one can fire him from this job. Unlike the private school teachers, the government school teachers have no fear of losing their jobs in case of poor performance. There is either no incentive for them to work hard in terms of teaching, conducting tests and building concepts. These things do not matter at all. There are many disadvantages related to job insecurity as well as job security. Too much security is disastrous and too much insecurity would be dangerous. The Directorate should maintain a balance between the two things. The criterion of promotion of the teachers should be regulated by the Federal Board. There is system of GPA currently prevailing. According to this system, the GPA of a teacher is calculated every year. The criterion to calculate this GPA is the final results of the students of the

teacher. The teachers whose class gets the highest result in the school will get the highest GPA through this system. In my opinion, this criterion to judge the performance of a teacher is faulty. It leads towards the trend of cheating too. The teachers whose students are going to have internal examinations like from grade 1 to 4 and 6 to 8, prefer to leak the question paper to the students prior to final exams in order to get good GPA. This happens in the primary school, from where I collected data. Another reason behind the inefficiency of this formulae is that the students may get good grades through rote learning and memorization. The final results of the students should not be the only criterion of judging the teacher's performance in this regard. It should include the class participation of students, group activities of students, number of written tests conducted, number of oral tests conducted throughout the session, extent of participation of students in extracurricular activities, number of class presentations taken, number of class discussions taken, feedback taken by the students and things like that. Government can make such a complicated system. I have suggested 8 ways above which should be a part of GPA along with the final results of the class. There should be a negative marking for the teachers who disobey the administration, misbehave with the students and are not punctual in attending and reaching to the class.

***Conditional Promotions:*** I have inquired about the criteria of promotion of the government school teachers in Islamabad by a senior teacher of the primary school. The teachers working in the public schools are given Time Scale Promotion. These promotions are related to the length of service provided by an employee. Through this system, a teacher is promoted when he or she has done their job for a certain length of time.

The promotion of a government school teacher has nothing to do with his hard work and teaching efficiency. An incompetent teacher would get a promotion if he spends a certain time doing his job. The quality of education in the public schools cannot be improved if the teachers would be promoted to next grade considering this criterion. Why would a teacher work hard and efficiently, learn new

teaching techniques and read relative new research papers, if he knows that he would eventually get promoted with the passage of time? There is no use of such things for his promotion. It is because the promotion of the government teachers is unconditional. I would recommend making the promotion of these teachers highly conditional. The promotion should depend on the results of the competitive exams, interviews and the GPA achieved by these teachers and that only if the GPA includes all those things mentioned above. There would be no use of it, if the GPA depends on the final results only.

***Ban on teachers for working in Tuition Centers:*** A teacher of the high school told me about the working of mostly the male government teachers in the private academies. According to her, these government teachers do not teach well in the public schools, so they can have more and more students in the academies they teach. I find this whole scenario very disturbing. In my opinion, it depicts a serious conflict of interest. Why would a teacher teach efficiently in a school, if he wants to make money from the students in the academy? I suggest a complete ban on the government school teachers to work in academies privately. This ban would nullify the opportunities for the teachers to earn money privately. When the teachers know they cannot ask the students to join them in academy in the evening time, they would teach them with the utmost importance in the schools. So the Federal Directorate should look into this matter seriously and inquire about all those government teachers who either run these academies or just work there. The government servants should not be allowed to do the same work privately which they do in the government offices. It is because there would be a conflict of interest. They would not work hard for the government sector in order to gain new customers privately for earning money.

***Make Policies to Encourage Critical Thinking:*** There is an absolute dearth of critical thinking in the public sector schools. The teachers have the excuse in the form of lack of time and burden of syllabus. I analyzed the real reason behind this neglect. It happens because there is no official policy to encourage critical thinking among the students. This problem can only be solved if the critical thinking



would be encouraged at policy level. As discussed in details in the previous chapter, there are many hurdles in this regard due to societal and ideological values. I would recommend the directorate to encourage the critical thinking in a way that does not affect the values of any kind. The thinking abilities of the students should be built in terms of natural sciences, Mathematics etc. The teachers teaching Science subjects and mathematics should be at least asked officially to encourage the critical thinking while teaching the students in the class.

***Distance Learning:*** Distance learning is also known as online education and has become quite famous worldwide. Students can get quality education through internet in this way. It also enables the students to get benefit from the teaching abilities of a diverse range of people. I would recommend the inclusion of distance learning in the public sector system of education. It would be very beneficial for the students. The students would be able to listen to the explanation of topics by the most competent teachers internationally. In this way, they would have better understanding of concepts. There is a huge lack of concept building by the teachers of public schools. The policymakers will be able to overcome this lack through introducing distance learning in the public schools.

For instance, when a teacher teaches a lesson to the class, she would select a video on internet related to this topic and ask the students to watch this video in order to prepare the upcoming test. The students will only watch the video, when they know that the test would be made out of the material taught in the video lesson. In this way, a student will first listen to the teacher and get a basic know how of the topic. Then he will watch the video and develop best understanding of the concepts. It will make him think critically and able to answer the analytical questions in the final exams.

***Development of Research Centers in High School:*** Some schools in Japan have research centers within the premises of the schools in which research work is conducted. In these primary schools, the research seminars for the teachers are organized on weekly basis. These seminars are helpful for the teachers to learn certain things which improve their ways of teaching. The teachers are made aware of

the different interests of the students. Teachers are urged to respect the individuality of their students. The schools in which teachers are trained through regular research sessions have a great reputation.

I would like to recommend the development of such research centers in the public sector schools of Islamabad. The aim behind this development is to enable the teachers to conduct and attend seminars related to teaching methodologies. Research, Meetings and Discussions would also be conducted in these research centers. They help the teachers to get updated about the new techniques and methodologies of teaching adopted by the teachers worldwide. Through this research, the teachers can be able to extract extra material to teach students and provide them extra notes. Mutual discussions among the teachers would be beneficial to create new ideas and ways of teaching to the students. It will add to their teaching capabilities. These things can be done through teachers training programs but it does not work because of lack of consistency. When a teacher attends a workshop or training program in years, it would not be able to increase its teaching efficiency. A senior teacher of that primary school considers these training programs quite useless. The teachers can be trained through conducting research, meetings, discussions and seminars on regular basis in a research center situated within the premises of their school. The consistency of this work will eventually bring result one day. The Federal Directorate of Education should build the research centers in all the public schools of Islamabad.

The administrators of the schools are unable to make sure the application of techniques teachers learn in training programs. It is because only a few teachers attend the programs in one time and secondly they are not bound by the administration to share their learnings. When the administration is not aware about the methods they learnt, it is not capable of implementing them. The research centers will be located in the schools so it will be easy to implement the ways and methods taught in these centers.

***Development of Seminar Rooms in high schools:*** The above mentioned research centers are just for the training of the teachers. I would recommend development of separate seminar rooms for the

students of the primary as well as high schools. The auditoriums of the schools can also be used for this purpose. The purposeful point here is the compulsory attendance of the students in these seminars. The academic seminars should be conducted in the schools aiming at enhancing the intellect and knowledge of the students. It is just like the universities conduct seminars for their students.

These seminars would be related to the subjects, these students study regularly. Apart from that, it would be conducted to share general knowledge, motivational speaking and ethics with the students.

**Lack of Funding:** According to the Principal of the primary school, the public schools remain out of funds all the time. They have very little fund for development activities. The teachers themselves fund certain activities like decorating classes, photocopying test papers etc. There is a huge lack of facilities in these school, with the lack of multimedia on the top of the list. A number of teachers made complaints of this deficiency. There are no multimedia facilities for the students of the primary as well as high school. I have not seen a single projector in any classroom of both schools.

A teacher who teaches Biology told that she had to use her personal mobile phone to show the students videos regarding certain microorganism at one point. The teachers badly need the facility of multimedia in the classrooms. They should be provided with laptops, multimedia, and required internet facility in the schools. With the help of multimedia, students would be able to watch videos, 3D pictures and documentaries in the classrooms. A student is able to learn more through this kind of visualization. It is required for every subject even for the theoretical subjects too. If a student watches a thing on multimedia, his concepts would become clearer and he would be able to get many things which he cannot get otherwise through just studying theory. This is compulsory for science subjects.

**Helper Teachers:** Another problem faced by the public school teachers is the burden of checking notebooks. This problem can indirectly be solved through reducing the size of class. Another way to tackle it is to appoint helper teachers who will assist the subject teachers in this regard.

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