

“Marxism Conflict Perspective in Comparative Education: Is Pakistani Education system Responsible to Maintain Status Quo in Pakistan?”

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ABSTRACT

Education inequality is deeply rooted in our society. All spheres of life are subjected to this disparity even educational institutions are no exception. Different sociologists have explored underlying factors behind this phenomenon. One of the most prominent figures among these is Marxism conflict perspective which believes that between the two classes (ruling and the subject); first one remains on same positions due to economic superiority over the years as compared to the proletariat who experience restricted social mobility. Keeping in mind the existing educational structure based on class position as determined by Karl Marx theory, this study aimed to see whether Pakistani education system responsible to maintain status quo in Pakistan or not? In this regard, secondary data and an overview of public and private schools fees and amenities was given on the basis of observation. Preliminary findings of the study suggest that Pakistani education system is responsible to maintain a status quo in Pakistan. This phenomenon is quite relevant to Karl Marx conflict theory which confirms that power group has access to resources and life chances which unprivileged have not. It is social class which determines the choice of educational institution and consequently future success. This study presents the true depiction of existing educational inequality in Pakistan and will help to re-initiate a debate for policy makers to overcome the educational inequalities in Pakistani education system.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tactically, comparative education has tended to employ the nation as the major unit of analysis. Strategically, it has been concerned to preserve, rather than challenge. National traditions in education, Inequality is considered as an inevitable result of capitalism. Education system along with other institutions is assumed likely. It exhibits and funds the existing inequalities in the culture through schooling. Now education has turned into an industry which gives birth to a breeding ground and apparatus for reproduction of same social thought over the generations (Greaves, Hill & Masuria, 2007).

This education industry has also been flourishing in Pakistan with a mushroom growth of private institutes especially schools. The increase in private institutes means more difference in educational opportunities on the basis of income. Highly paid schools maintain certain standards of education and are linked with societies' elite whereas in government schools quality is linked with availability of teachers and resources (Bari & Sultana, 2011; Bowles & Gintis, 2013). Research on educational quality of public and private schools demonstrates the fact that performance of children in private schools is higher as compared to public schools in developing countries. The most prominent factor towards choice of schooling is income. It is observed that poor people due to resource constraints get their children admitted to government schools. On the other hand, those who can afford send their children to private schools (Cox, Donald & Jimenez, 1991; Kingdon, 1996).

Class analysis in sociology purely indicates the educational inequality. Sociologists (Ball, 2004; Lawler, 2005; Skeggs, 2004) related the choice of schooling to availability of resources. This resource distribution in the

society is exploitative; rich have an access to resources and they have better life chances than poor who have limited access to resources and minimum life chances. Historical evidence suggests that working class is still a determinant of educational opportunities for individuals. Current education system is an extension of past elites prejudices system. It serves the interest of elites in private sector and at public level it is more oriented towards lower middle class interest (Reay, 2006). This context of inequalities led the researcher to explore the existing education system with reference to Marx conflict theory.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are many discrepancies between public and private education system since the establishment of Pakistan. Therefore, the main aim of this paper was to investigate "Is Pakistani Education system Responsible to Maintain Status Quo in Pakistan?"

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.

The main objectives of the study were to:

- Explore the application of Karl Marx's conflict theory is Pakistani Education system responsible to maintain status quo in Pakistan?
- Find out whether Pakistani education system responsible for maintain status quo in Pakistan.
- Determine the difference between public and private schools' facilities that discriminate the social class?

4. RESEARCH QUESTION.

1. Is Karl Marx's conflict theory implemented inside Pakistani Education system?
2. Is Pakistani education system is responsible for Maintain status quo in Pakistan?
3. Is there any difference between public and private schools' facilities that discriminate the social class?

5. METHOD AND PROCEDURE

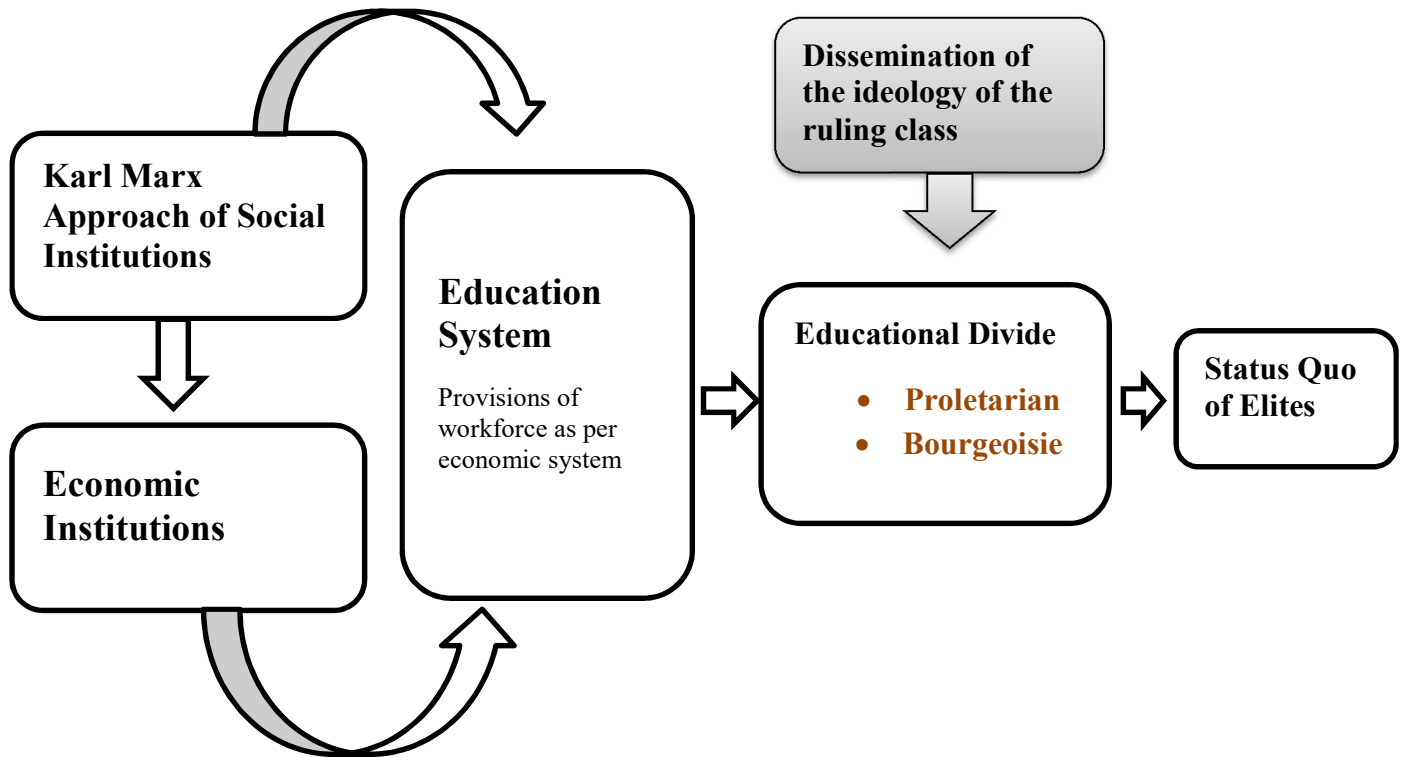
1. . The study was descriptive in which researcher used an observation method to seek data for achieving the objectives of the study.
- 2.
3. All the public and private higher Secondary School in Sargodha district Punjab, Pakistan were the population of the study.
4. Researcher selected 16 higher secondary schools (8-public & 8-private) as sample through convenience sampling method.
5. The researcher visited 8-public sector and 8-private sector higher secondary schools for observation.
6. The observation form was comprised of five indicators such as:
7. Student's enrollment, Accountability, Cost of attendance, Curriculum and books, and Equalization of educational cost.

6. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Karl Marx sees society as an arena of social conflict. To him, function and role of social institutions can be best understood by its economic system. As per his doctrine, social institution; education system strengthens existing class system that contains two main classes: bourgeoisie, haves; and proletariat, have notes. In this system "haves" own the means of production, base and run the social institution while proletariats have not the base, they can only sell their labor at cheap rate for their survival. According to his approach, educational institutions provide the workforce to bourgeoisie class. The ideology of ruling class is disseminated by education system which establishes status quo. For this, two type of school system are in so prevailing society: public and private. Public schools are for those people who cannot afford high fees and they are supposed to send their children to common

masses schools. The other types of schools are private in which those pupils got admission whose parents has more resources and life chances with power and wealth. These schools serve the purpose to maintain status quo for elites. In contrast, the public schools seed the ideology of submission in the children of proletariats.

Fig: 1 Karl Marx Conflict Theory and Educational System



Marx believes that current education system is reproducing social classes; the students passed out from the public schools have least social mobility. Bowls and Gintis (2013) support his argument “Education reproduces the attitudes and behavior for divisions of labor. It teaches people how to accept their position, to be exploited, and to show the rulers how to control the workforce (p.03). As Marx claim that education system supports the wealthy in society and helps them in perpetuating status quo that means the students enrolled in elite school system have more exposure, facilities and chances of getting higher position and social prestige in the society. Keeping in mind the context of Karl Marx theory, this study is an attempt to apply his theoretical approach in Pakistani education system. Researcher analyzed the private and public school facilities, fee structure and position in annual results at secondary and higher secondary level.

7. PAKISTAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

In a developing country like Pakistan, where gaining knowledge is not as easy as other countries, some exceptionally hardworking people are still vying to strive for education. These few people still know that life is of no use without knowledge and education. Double thumbs up for them! But the tragedy, that our education system is, still needs to be restructured if we want our country’s name to be included in the list of developed nations. The ways to gain education and knowledge remain uncertain for most people. Which education board, school, college or university should they choose in order to acquire the best education? But wait, does education tend to be good or bad? I am always confused when I hear people or advertisements of various universities, schools and colleges stating, “Providing you the best education since this and that time” and “Best Quality education providers” etc. Since childhood we have all been hearing about the word ‘Education’ and no one has ever told us about the types of education. Even from an Islamic perspective, the hadith about education says: “To acquire education is the

obligatory right of every Muslim, man or woman”.

I never heard about the ‘best’ or ‘worst’ education until the educational institutions of the present decade introduced this very term of course, for their own competitive and profit-seeking purposes. And this is where our education system got obliterated. The profit-seeking institutions who claim to provide us the best and quality education are the major contributors to an ever-increasing knowledge gap between people of different classes. These institutions are facilitating the elites of the society in a way that a normal person cannot even perceive. So how about viewing this dichotomy with a Marxist perspective?

Just like Marx’s idea of the bourgeoisie ruling the proletariat in a way that they are not even aware of the demons of this setup, our education system has also inherited this tradition. This mismanaged and unequal system has created more issues in the society. Different education boards like Pakistan education board, Cambridge International Education Board, Edexcel Board and other educational systems including local and international systems (O/A Level, Metric) have made it even more complicated for people to choose. I’ve seen most of the people carrying out an extensive research before choosing what they should opt for with regards to the educational system and institute for their children. And believe me, the search for the best education system matters to them more than education itself.

Now what happens after that process is over is that some people choose O/A Level while the others go for Matriculation/Intermediate and then my dear fellows, the comparison begins. The ‘knowledge gap’ comes in and widens the space between both, which becomes the actual problem. There is a massive disparity between the thinking capacities of O/A level and Matriculation/Inter students, but of course the latter should not be blamed for this. This is a major flaw in our own country where no government (older or newer) has ever tried to emphasize on equal standard of education.

8. FINDINGS BASED ON RESEARCHER’S OBSERVATION.

Comparative structure of General Indicators of public and private schools/colleges

Indictors	Public	Private
1. Students enrollment	All students are accepted and enrolled without any segregation.	Students’ acceptability and admission depends upon the cost of education, behavior and ability as well.
2. Accountability	There is proper mechanism and regulatory authority which monitor and see the working of public institutes	There is no accountability to general masses. Only in some cases accountable to parents.
3. Cost of attendance	At schools education is free of cost.	At private schools tuition, transportation, and Fees are charged from parents that also include cost for books, bags, uniforms etc. Only limited scholarships are available
4. Curriculum and books	Books are free and curriculum is prescribed by Government.	Curriculum and books are self-regulated. No legislative body see and decide the selection of curriculum
5. Equalization of educational cost	Equal education is provided to all without any discrimination.	No proper resource equalization is it depends on market competition and forces.

9. OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

For the sake of observation, researcher visited 8-public sector and 8-private sector higher secondary schools

in Sargodha district Punjab, Pakistan. It was observed that in public higher secondary schools in cities facilities regarding library and laboratory were available but there was no proper mechanisms developed to run these systems. In libraries books were out dated. Even the available books were not in approach of students. Culture of reading was not developed in students and they rarely issue any book for their reading. Due to limited resources students were not able to do their practical work in labs individually and have limited exposure for learning too. They had less guidance from technical staff. Schools of rural areas were also not as much equipped. Libraries were present there where books were available in small numbers. Similarly in labs equipment was insufficient to meet the needs of students and without proper technical staff.

Researcher also visited 8-private higher secondary schools. It was found that schools in urban areas of Sargodha district Punjab, Pakistan were well equipped with the library and laboratory facilities. In these schools, students were supposed to attend 1-2 library period (obligatory) in a week in which they were asked to read book on given topic and then teachers conduct discussion on the given topic. This is how habit of reading is developed among students. Matriculation students were attending LAB period on regular basis in which they were involved to do different experiments with help of teachers and technical staff. It was observed that private schools at rural areas were not well-equipped as compare to urban private schools. In rural schools; students belong to low economic strata, there was no library facility available. There were laboratory in some schools but lab material was not properly provided and at some places schools were taking their students to other institutes for doing practical/ experiments.

10. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of present research was to track the Karl Marx conflict theory of education in existing scenario of educational institution in Pakistan. Karl Marx's idea of class and societal gap was explored with position to the working of public and private educational institutions in Pakistan. In order to determine the application of his theory at educational institutions of Pakistan, secondary data analysis and observational study was conducted. Findings of the results confirms the assumption behind Karl Marx theory i.e. elites maintain status quo in education system, as upper class have more capitals and life chances to avail the opportunities and quality of education so the students of these institution get higher positions in examination system and have more chances to get high education and highly paid jobs. Perpetuation of precise ideology is observed in the education sector and confirms that private institutes are successful in establishing their status quo. Specifically, most important factor behind it is the lack of affordability and facilities at public schools. In public schools, those students get admission that are from poor families or lower middle class families, cannot pay high fees. At government schools, technical and lab facilities are limited and students in rural areas are specifically unattended. Students' enrollment is high whereas student teacher ratio is high and in this situation it is impossible for teachers to give individual attention to every student. At private institutions, schools are accountable to parents, they highly charged fees and in return maintain certain standard of education. It is ensured in schools that each and every student is attended individually. They are given the chances for personality development and grooming through innovative activities.

On the basis of study findings, it can be concluded that Pakistani private institution are successfully Maintain status quo as prescribed by Karl Marx conflict theory. In return, persistent pattern of social class over the generations are observed. Restricted social mobility is also an outcome of this situation for people of lower class. To change the existing patterns of social inequality at every level it is needed to revise educational policy of Pakistan and incorporation of a uniform and sustainable policy of education is required to be implemented.

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