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Jammu and Kashmir's Education System: Contemporary Issues and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

The education system in Jammu and Kashmir is confronting significant challenges across all levels, from primary to higher education, largely due to nearly three decades of conflict that have severely disrupted progress. Despite recent movements towards peace, the education department's lack of focus on human resource development remains a critical issue, leaving many children entering primary schools unprepared for subsequent stages. This study aims to highlight these urgent concerns and advocate for necessary reforms to revitalize educational opportunities in the region. Historically, education in Jammu and Kashmir has seen fluctuating progress influenced by political dynamics. While advancements were made during the Sikh era and following India's partition in 1947, ongoing unrest since 1989 has undermined these gains, disrupting the socio-economic fabric essential for effective learning. Although the current educational structure is based on democratic principles, it reveals a complex hierarchy that struggles to meet modern educational demands. This paper advocates for decisive policy-making and strategic implementation to foster a transformative educational environment that enhances both literacy and holistic student development. This paper examines the contemporary challenges and historical context of the education system in Jammu and Kashmir, highlighting the adverse effects of prolonged conflict and government neglect on educational outcomes. It underscores the urgent need for comprehensive reforms to revitalize educational institutions and enhance student development in the region.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The article presents an overall scenario of the contemporary challenges and issues of the education system at primary to higher level education in Jammu and Kashmir. It highlights the history, position, and condition of education in Jammu and Kashmir. The present status of the educational system up to higher education level has been incorporated in detail by discussing the outlays and outcomes of education in Jammu and Kashmir. The stagnancy and incompetence of the education is evidence of the disappointing conditions and circumstances of the educational institutions.

The neglect and disinterest of the government are ascertained by the fact that the state had been under the influence of conflict for close to three decades. With the advent of peace in the state, the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation in terms of development and developmental activities has shown some momentum and positivity. However, a minor concern about the need and location of human resource development has been addressed by the state education department. The school or institutional system is found in a dismayed state. The children entering primary schools of the state are not supposed to pass secondary stages of education since education in Jammu and Kashmir schools is merely for name and not for developmental purposes also. In this essay, an attempt has been made to understand and talk about the contemporary issues and challenges of the education system in Jammu and Kashmir.

2. Historical Overview of Education in Jammu and Kashmir

The recent phase of the conflict disrupted all the socio-economic activities in the region, including education. The lingering conflict has created enormous problems and challenges for the educational system in the region. However, the history of the development of the education system in Jammu and Kashmir has seen several ups and downs. Education in Jammu and Kashmir has passed through many stages of development and progress. The education system has been greatly influenced by different rulers who ruled the state from time to time. The Islamic period had created an enormous impact on the educational setup. The development of education during the period of Chak rulers was not much appreciable, but during the Sikh rule, schools for primary education were opened in different parts of the valley. However, the major transformation started with the rule of Dogras who gave more emphasis and thought for better education in the state.

In 1911 and 1931, new educational policies and a ladder system of education were introduced, which contributed to the spread of education in Jammu and Kashmir. After the partition of the Indo-Pak Subcontinent in 1947 and the tribal attack in 1948, Jammu and Kashmir got a pretext of Indian finance and technical assistance for upgrading the standard of education in the state. This led to a substantial increase in educational facilities in the state, due to which the literacy rate jumped from 7.2 percent in 1947 to 22 percent (in 1971). However, of course, rapid political and social developments in the post-1989

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situation have had their own ramifications on the social fabric of this region, having a tremendous impact on the educational system in Jammu and Kashmir. The political movement has not only affected the educational setup but also disrupted the socio-economic structure and the ethical values.

3. Current Structure of the Education System

The present chapter examines the structure and functioning of the educational system of Jammu and Kashmir, extending primarily from the elementary level to the university system. It includes a description of the organizational framework within which the educational institutions function, the hierarchy of the institution, the functions performed by them, and the staff working at different levels of responsibility. In addition, it also provides a profile of the participation of different constituent groups in the field of education.

The system of education in Jammu and Kashmir is organized and administered on democratic lines. The head of the state is the supreme authority in all matters relating to education. The Governor of Jammu and Kashmir is the overall executive chief in the matter of education in the state, who guides and supports the SSA projects in all kinds of matters for their execution. The advisor, headed by the Education Department, and other staff like administrative and accounts staff from the respective departments. All the administrative secretaries concerned with the Education Department play a vital role in policy-making and implementation of projects that are being managed and located now at different levels in the Education Department and also monitor the activities of the different departments. The Deputy Commissioner heads the district administration and subsequently the educational set-up. He is assisted by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, the District Planning Development Commissioner (District funding administrator) at the district level. He has further sanctioned staff like Joint Director, Headmasters, Teachers, and other administrative & ministerial staff at the district level whose job is to make a project successful and get results from the field. In the field level, the head of the school or the teacher in that school directly involved in the already identified job.

4. Key Stakeholders in the Education System

Education is a task that requires collaboration and coordination among different agencies and sections of society. Hence, different interest groups, including teachers, students, bureaucrats, government, and even the community, have an interest in the policy of provision of education in the state. The government of Tibet, United Nations, etc. are also interested in the education of Tibetan refugees, some of whom study in Jammu and Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir state is a part of a democratic and secular country. Hence, the study of the education system is very crucial in a national perspective. The mainstream or governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other communities are

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also interested in the study of the education system in Jammu and Kashmir. What are the problems and suggestions to improve the education system is the main bunch of activity for most of the people.

Hence, for the study of the problems of the system of education and suggestions for the improvement and development of the education system of Jammu and Kashmir, we must have to study all the main and major organizations and their functioning in the contemporary period of Jammu and Kashmir. Governance of Jammu and Kashmir had been classified for the study and training of the executives under different levels from time to time during the sovereignty of Dogras as well as Britishers. As it has become an important subject, the majority of education in the contemporary period still depends on the study of the traditional looks of the system. The activities related to education administration of the different organs of the state can be classified into governmental and non-governmental activities. Importantly, the functioning of these organs highlights the implementation of the laws, orders, and so on in the system of education.

5. Legislative Framework and Policies

The Jammu and Kashmir traditionally enjoyed a lot of autonomy in matters of education. The state has a rich legacy in education. The Shaikh Mohammadin company schools became high schools in 1919. In fact, in 1921, the government introduced an ambitious plan for providing free and compulsory primary education to all children between the ages of 5 and 9 years old. The project envisaged the establishment of 1450 schools/institutions with a total budget of Rs. 20 lakhs. This ambitious project towards elementary education continued up to 1932-33. After 1932-33, there is a gap as to the development of education, without the 1931 Right to Education Act was repealed by the Sadar-i-Riyast government, who promulgated the PSCST Act and a new set-up and commission was established for the regulation of education.

Revolts and disturbances in the state, as well as changes in the country, led to the suspension of educational activities, as well as the transfer of a large amount of money being spent on education for setting up a rehabilitation program for community despoiled, like the Kashmiri pandits. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has, however, a developed education system with detailed rules, guidelines, acts, and other landmark regulations with education as the subject of education law, are in vogue in the state. These guidelines, rules, and acts are from the point of view of the right to education, as well as provide other modern and important features of education.

6. Quality of Education: Assessments and Indicators

There are various indicators of educational outcomes applied across the world, and even in India, for the same purpose, each setting their own benchmarks and assessment structure, but with a common goal—to assess the quality of education provided/served. While the United Nations focuses on conceptual and policy indicators, the World Bank

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calculates 'learning-adjusted years of schooling' (LAYS) – taking into account the number of years of schooling that are discounted by the quality of learning in attendance, with the cut-off point in education at the ROC (receiver operating characteristic) curve at 66.6%.

The government of India has unanimously accepted the assessment tool developed and monitored by an independent agency known for its electoral opinion and exit polling and determining the trend of the market shares of brands. In India, such assessment is done to measure education quality based on learning outcomes among all age groups. For school education, the Indian Government has come up with National Achievement Surveys (NAS) from 2017-18, which vary subject-wise and give projections for each state/UT based on an estimation procedure.

There is a wide range of factors to establish the criteria for assessing the quality and effectiveness of education. Objectively, the performance of any system is determined by the established Acceptance Rate of Credit Transfer (ARCT) or the number of university waivers given during the admission process of a newly admitted student in any program by a university for a program they completed from another university. In simple terms, it is evidence showing the acceptability and desirability of the validity of academic programs. Whereas the Education Metric Reservation Policy would provide representation of marginalized groups to educational institutions, the same can precisely be used to judge and develop the quality standards of an educational institution.

7. **Access to Education: Gender Disparity**

In order to build a foundation for gender issues in educational policies to be assessed and analyzed, it is important to conduct a critical review of socio-educational opportunities and access to the system at different levels and in different educational institutions. A survey reveals that a huge number of female students are deprived of the norms and standards of education. Accessibility, enrollment, dropout rate, impact of socio-economic and physio-political factors on educational performance, achievements, educational models, identification of out-of-school children, curb and psychological problem, the role of NGOs, women and social workers in educational areas, and possibilities and problems of the informal system should also be priority areas of investigation.

There are disparities between males and females in the state. They are visible in different fields. Gender disparities are also widespread in schools. Teaching is widely translated as a male-oriented job. So people do not feel the need to send their daughters to schools. The dropout rate is also higher among girls. But the highest number of female out-of-school children is found in Lakhanpur Block of Bishnah Tehsil at 25 percent, followed by Samba Block of Bajalla Tehsil at 13 percent. Culture and religion promote marriage at a younger age in Jammu and Kashmir. Parents believe that girls should be married after further studies (age of 15 or more). Inadequate number of middle schools and trained

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teachers, distance, sex of teacher, unaffordable private expenditure per month, gender inequality, early marriage, absence of mother, conflict, etc., are some of the reasons for dropout. Girls' enrollment in schools decreases as the age increases.

8. Language and Curriculum Diversity

The J&K's education system is characterized by multilingual and multicultural aspects. Except for the coverage of Dogri areas, Kashmiri and Gojri are used as teaching languages in elementary schools. However, they have a scanty writing system and are confined to an area as dialects spoken by the minority population. In elementary schools of Jammu, Kashmiri is the mother tongue of the teachers and in the Gojri area, it is the mother tongue of elementary school students. Urdu and English, alongside other languages, are used as teaching languages in schools. In some private elite schools of CA Jammu and Kashmir, doors are kept open for the teaching of languages such as English, Urdu, Hindi, and other foreign languages as well.

In J&K, this diverse language curriculum in education systems offers a great challenge and at the same time provides a wider choice to the learners to excel in different languages taught in educational institutions. The learners have a lot of benefits if the language they use in school has some links with the community language spoken at home or in the locality. The language encounters misunderstandings in the communication process during teaching and learning because the child's language and the other languages come into confrontation with each other as the languages used in the educational institutions are either the mother languages of the pupils or the teachers. The multilingual and multicultural curriculum system adds strength to the educational system. The use of local languages at the initial stage may provide a shortcut to learning a foreign language. These may also give flexibility and freedom to determine the legitimacy of the language medium based on the multi-model potential possessed by the languages used in the natural setting. The major policy implementation structures and processes in curriculum development, development of textbooks and allied instructional materials, and the selection and supply of lab equipment, supplies of examination papers, and equipment are under the control of the central structure of the state.

9. Teacher Training and Professional Development

In order to capitalize on the potential of teachers in the classroom, it is important to provide proper training before they enter the classroom and continuously provide capacity-building opportunities. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005 and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 have emphasized teachers' role and have provisions for pre- and in-service capacity building of teachers. Although teacher qualification in the region is high as compared to other regions in the country, there is a need to build their capacity in new emerging skills and knowledge. There are very few teacher training institutions in the UTs, just 1 DIET, 3 IASEs, and 2 CTEs in Jammu and

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Kashmir. Given this shortage of teacher training institutions, there is a need for expansion and resourcing of the training facilities in order to provide a larger number of trained teachers.

Additionally, initiatives need to be taken to establish multilateral partnerships with the national and regional experts in pedagogical training, ongoing professional development of teachers and teacher trainers, use of continuing education resources and reaching heretofore-unreached students, in addition to the application of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools in K-12 teacher development, in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Teachers are the building blocks of the educational system and are responsible for enhancing the cognitive, emotional, and motor capabilities of students. With the dynamic changes taking place in the education system leading to further psychological, sociological and cultural consequences on the lives of teachers as well as students, and hence, it is time to reorient and retrain teachers so that their responsibility can be effectively discharged. A teacher needs to be constantly acquainted with the new materials, methods, and new dimensions of teaching and hence, there should be a provision for continuous education and training for the teachers.

10. Infrastructure and Resources: Rural-Urban Disparities

'Jammu' of the yesteryears may have had more impressive educational institutions, along with equally impressive and effective infrastructure to patronize them. But gone are those days, as we said. Meanwhile, the growth of 'urbanization', particularly in Jammu part, is on, and in many places, it is found to have assumed disquieting proportions. The neo-urban Jammu may not be 'far west' as some of the wild critics tend to picture it. It remains as complex, as torrential and quagmired as ever, retaining in toto the centuries-old elements of feudal exploitativeness and tyranny including omnipotent subjection of women. The share of progress has yet to trickle down to the toiling masses to forge a real change in their lives. The admixture of these factors has affected the growth of the common man's priorities, particularly in the field of education. In a word, the more caring and the more energetic classes in the post-Independence era are migrating to urban centers, following the opportunities suited to their calibre.

The rural schools are facing the brunt of the deprivation of infrastructure and resources. They have to make do with whatever is thrown their way. The elite stratum of society, who detest attending village schools, looks for an urban ambiance to develop the all-round potentialities of their offsprings. The disparity in infrastructure and resources between urban and rural schools is widely acknowledged to be the root cause of falling standards in the rural institutions. In the backdrop of such a scenario, rural schools in the pre-Independence era could not attract the sufficiency of students from the elite class, nor the committed marginal classes in a fully consolidated manner. Therefore, the urban schools that emerged in time to come had and have an intricate process of mitigating

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institutional distortions through resource deployment, being inter wishes and capacity to a great extent, thus have successfully managed to steer the process of social exclusion and non-observance of affirmative action policies. The State-run basic education institutions, more particularly in the rural and tribal areas of Jammu province, have the lowest pupil-classroom ratio (36), followed by Kendriya Vidyalayas (35) and government schools (29), the majority of which are situated in similarly rural and tribal areas.

A question, therefore, needs to be asked: Will the big dreams of enrolling the marginalized section of children in schools be realized as long as classroom teaching remains traditional, dull, and lackluster in these infrastructurally deficient classrooms? Would we not be pushing the tribal kids to the wall by shepherding them to these disfavored and indifferently operated classrooms? The normative goals, therefore, of educational expansion in tribal areas could be mentioned by the universal and desirable features of education. But if schooling lacks the essential requirement of the meaningful teacher-student interaction, and disadvantaged schools languish under the patronage of functionless and deracinated human resources, the dream of liberal education for all tribal children would remain unrealized and merely utopian.

11. Role of Technology in Education

The extensive use of technological tools not only equips the learners with different skills, competencies, and attributes but also provides a rich pool of knowledge in the form of text, speech, images, videos, digital content, etc. for their learning facilitation. The development of technology-mediated learning tools in the present era has improved different aspects of the education and training sectors in terms of learners' knowledge, skills, socio-emotional and curricular support, whole school development, administrative and community facilities.

In the process, technology, with its go-together tools like "computer, internet, and digital resources," is helping the teachers, parents, and learners to access information from around the globe and solve critical issues, enhance emotional and personality development, teach creativity and other 21st-century skills, and engage them in lifelong learning.

In the context of Jammu and Kashmir, the new National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, rightly expresses that the state and two union territories, hailed with the abundance of resources, have the potential to tap under the Atmanirbhar Bharat. They are highly rich in age-old scientific, technological, educational, and environmental awareness through their world-famous resources in the form of lakes, mountains, greenery, forests, flora "Chinar," fauna "Hangul," flowers "Tulips," vegetables "any vegetables of the world," etc. Thus, by using technological tools, they can expose the world to these resources.

The NEP, 2020, also ensures the transformation of the lives of the people residing in the remote area and the rural area of Jammu and Kashmir. By establishing Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan (UBA) at the national level, many technological tools were prepared by the

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Science Cities in convergence with the Department of Science and Technology (DST) for the integration of the local environment, entrepreneurship, new opportunities in businesses and professions of the students, farmers, technocrats, etc. This makes it possible and creates an unconditional differential situation within the parametrical boundary for the upliftment of the society in remote and backward areas.

The use of "Virtual Labs" is another example where students can conduct experiments within the four walls of the laboratories. In the mode of Hawa Mahal, theaters, playgrounds. The answer is there, one after the other, on the other side, in order to understand the impact of teaching and learning on creativity, so as to lose the old traditions of teaching in higher classes.

All these technological resources, when used in education, can bring about positive changes with some of the opportunities and challenges that need to be taken into account.

12. Inclusive Education and Special Needs

The present approach towards school children throws greater light on the principle of inclusion (or inclusive education). Indian philosophy of education has no comparison with the modern educational strategy of an isolated and segregated group defense. The system of inclusive education is quite a distant phenomenon in this context. Provisions for the education of children with special needs so far we have come across in the educational planning are based on something similar, i.e., replacement of defective children in the main education system (already running) and perceived from a psychological point of view. The 86th amendment in the Right to Education Act (RTE) says "Every teacher appointed in accordance with the provisions of clause (a) of section 23 shall mandatorily undergo a programme of training within a period of two years from the appointed day as may be determined by the academic authority, so designated".

In Jammu and Kashmir, there are about 27,268 students with special needs (SWANs) enrolled in different types of education centers. The Department provides uniform textbooks to them. A good number of books are also available in Braille. National Institute of Open Correspondence School also provides books in Braille. They are provided with Teaching Learning materials, hearing aids, spectacles, etc. and an attached Medical camp is held regularly. In addition to these, non-salary funds are provided which can be utilized at school and zonal levels. Swami Vivekananda Chair (SVC) sponsors the cost of boarding and lodging for the selected beneficiaries. This Chair organizes musical therapy classes in which visually impaired students from all parts of J&K participate. There are 5 Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) in J&K providing secondary teacher training giving the general scheme of teacher training. Various sensitization programmes are conducted for staff and disabled students. The State Social Welfare Department operates a programme known as one tree one life for disabled children. It also has a separate Directorate. There are six districts in Jammu region and six districts in Kashmir region. Each education zone

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has 35-60 Government schools. A few Quality Residential Schools have been established in Jammu & Kashmir Divisions under Budgetary Support.

13. Vocational and Skill-Based Education

The global concern is that our educational curricula are obsolete and are unable to cater to the requirements of labor markets. To address this issue, the Javed Choudhary Committee on Skill Development and the Knowledge Commission report have emphasized skill-based education. The UGC, which has restructured education in professional skills across the country, has launched many vocational programs in public universities, centers, and colleges. Many skill-development centers have also been established by the UGC across the country, recognizing the relevance of this type of education. Financing the curriculum certainly implies a basic shift in the mindset where a student who aims to become "something" must be considered, not who becomes "something." A part of the solution to this problem is proposed to redesign our education system so that it can provide multiple vocational aspects to make our students self-employed rather than searching for jobs in public/private organizations.

From time to time, vocational education programs have been introduced in the education system for developing skills in the learners. The need for introducing a program in the field of education was felt to provide employment as well as job opportunities for those learners who complete secondary education but cannot pursue education, aiming at grabbing some job opportunities. The subject of vocational education and training at the time has now picked up widely. In addition to the national policy, the importance of vocational education and training is recognized in the international fora and is reflected in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) negotiations. Vocational education and training (VET), also known as technical education and training (TET), provides job-specific, practical advice and skills to prepare learners for their careers, while also giving them proper experience in the workplace. Thus, our policymakers have to find sustainable short-term replacements for the labor market.

14. Higher Education Landscape

The higher education landscape of Jammu and Kashmir consists of one central university, one institute classified university, and two professional institutions, namely, Shere-Kashmir University of Agricultural Science and Technology (SKUAST) and National Institute of Technology (NIT). The region also has 18 state-run degree-awarding institutions, 30 professional institutions (both degree-awarding and diplomas), and 80-odd affiliated colleges in general and professional streams. The total enrollment of students in these institutions is around 1 lakh, including undergraduate and postgraduate levels of studies, which constitute nearly 35-40% of the cohort eligible for being enrolled in higher education. The rest of them go outside the region to pursue further studies.

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There are numerous challenges that have restricted the private sector from setting up such institutions in the region. Lack of basic amenities like electricity and water, poor communication and connectedness, structural limitations created by Article 370, and slow-moving bureaucratic procedures are some of the impediments. So many of our students have to travel outside the region to study, for which the total budgetary spending is around Rs. 500 crore annually. During the harsh winter months in Kashmir, places remain cut off, causing disruptions in the studies and mental health loss to the students. Parts of Jammu regions find it difficult to reach the institutions due to traffic congestion. Moreover, institutional academic activities have been seriously affected due to frequent strikes, hartals, and law and order problems in the region. With massive student protests and violence, the institution has been rendered dysfunctional for nearly 3-4 months every year, further aggravating the problem.

15. Public-Private Partnerships in Education

Public-private partnerships represent a mix of public jurisdictions and private undertakings which are able to provide education and carry out research. The partnerships can involve shaping and creating educational strategies, as well as carrying out training programs to prepare a workforce for the fact that new knowledge can become usable products that can be marketed. Interest, reflections, and developments in Jammu and Kashmir are taking place in this regard, and currently dealing with these developments is very far off in terms of assessing quantitative and qualitative progress that is taking place in educational research. Governments have recognized the fact that the excellence of life mainly depends upon performance, and the ones which suffer the most when conflict is there are the formal institutions of education. Community colleges and (degree and non-degree) programs for career development and adult/professional education have been targeted as a sector of educational studies.

Jammu and Kashmir is the most and the only state in India that has initiated multiple Asha schemes in the late 1980s and the early 90s in thousands of schools that were there in schools belonging to educational institutions before they could not ever come into existence. The Rashtriya Educational Initiative for Asha was granted but never implemented an action. The mid-day meal (MDM) Asha scheme of 2002 has a significantly critical version. For example, it shows that the government has been slower to respond in rural parts of the country in the form of "value-added" rather than "capital-intensive" projects, preferring to subsidize electricity prices or free overlay charges in urban areas for the rich and class clamor presented by taking inspiration from the poor. This version of public-private partnerships in education is vividly captured. Public-private partnerships in the educational sector in Jammu and Kashmir and several other areas result in increased literacy figures, increased and improved educational policy, infrastructure development at a higher level of secondary and upper secondary levels, as well as keeping a small number

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of higher secondary schools in capacity to carry out strategic projects to address the need for community people. Public-private partnership is really a welcome step in the scene. Educational levels and strategically important sectors will be privatization of vocational training. An effort will also be made in that direction through policy documents.

16. Community Involvement and Parental Engagement

A social network can be important in contributing towards educational investment. In case of conflict-ridden zone like Jammu and Kashmir, where parents remain in stress, anxiety, fear, and depression on account of a situation of armed militancy, conflicts, violence, and related factors, children do face health-related ailments, psychological disorders, and related issues. The love, care, and teaching skills of the parents do provide a good foundation for the development of cognitive, social, and emotional behavior of young children and school-graded children. This aspect of education can be enhanced if the community members of any given village show concern for the educational development of an individual child, and if the village community is defiled by casteism and ethnicity by supporting children to acquire recognition with self-respect, self-dignity, and confidence. But the caste system does not allow individuals to enjoy equality, fraternity, and social harmony in life. Thus, the system of caste divides and weakens the unity of Jammu and Kashmir of the historical native people. Thus, community members and parents have to work shoulder to shoulder and with a uniform motive to make education a gainful investment in the State.

Sindh alone does not constitute any education system. Jammu and Kashmir alone does not constitute an education system in isolation from the society which desires to educate their children in schools. The relationship between the educational affairs and society goes back to the earlier period of the development of modern societies. What happens in the educational institution is linked with the events occurring in the society because it prepares the students to face the challenges of life with courage and determination. In this mission, members of the society, especially parents, have an important role to play. Children have the right to be brought in the environment made by their parents and society in which they feel comfort and ease. The school and society should work together and act in harmony for the all-round development of the child who always yearns. In this context, Director General of Unesco, Kouchner, in the Framing to 'World Declaration on Education for All' (EFA), said: "Above all, we must reaffirm that parents and local communities should have greater responsibility in decisions at the school level which affect their children. These include the setting of conditions of buildings, the choice of teacher, the 'school culture', the nature of school activities and the curriculum, the special arrangements to ensure pupils with different needs can be properly integrated during schooling, learning materials in children's languages, instructional methods adapted to local conditions, and enrichment of the school program with local cultural and scientific

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traditions. This implies greater powers to establish, control and manage the educational institutions in communities or at least determine their ethos in cases of national systems. Since a key to quality in education is involving teachers, parents, and local people in running schools, it calls for decentralization to the appropriate level. The level would, of course, depend on the national context, structure, and legal requirements".

17. Education in Conflict Zones

A different class of population is experiencing disruption today that is taking place in the conflict-affected areas and has considerably changed the education systems located there. It is said that this disruption converts the function of teachers from simple pedagogy to pedagogy covertly mixed with therapeutic psychology. A continual perception of fear has been transmitted by the armed conflict in Jammu and Kashmir. and others explicitly name the main challenges before the policy makers while they are going to sustain the provision of these services. Governance, economic devastation, poverty, violence, ecology, racism, ideology, beliefs, and policies created in response to conflicts today are causing an impact upon the access, dignity, rights, culture and safety of children's education around the world. With the view to prepare the new generation to face the siege in a challenging manner with dignity and psychological fitness, Chen Re Ming, a former then Chief Executive of Hong Kong in 2003, made efforts for introducing so-called "Life Education" into a new educational reformation. Today, the Manhattan-based "Non-Violent Peace Force" in Northern Sri Lanka is managing officer safety education for teachers and residents. IWC launched the Iraqi/al-Anbar Channel, a satellite radio channel providing women with basic education and empowerment programming in 2004. PTSD survivors from the U.S. and other countries today have been intensively involved in the Sri Lankan psychosocial empowerment programs conducted by Restoring Family Links and the Psychosocial Working Group at the Crisis and Trauma Healing and Community Development Center in Kalmunai, Sri Lanka. FACE Pakistan is another example of an organization that now provides psycho-social rehabilitation to mothers and the hearing impaired children who make up 70% of their beneficiaries.

Disruptions in educational systems when projected into formal structures can be classified into major six forms. Focusing on any form, one can experience multiple shades of policy issues in the country. The quality of education is stated to have declined in the examined country in response to the long period of conflict situations. Conflict has also affected the physical infrastructure of education in most of the locally affected areas of Jammu and Kashmir. The effect of conflicts at local levels in the study area can easily be gauged by children and the people who created their perceptions under the continuous observation of the day-to-day situation. Disruption in education creates individuals who, instead of resisting or controlling ordered frustrations, are willing to disintegrate and refrain from normalizing systemic situations for a motivation to cut ties from the association to

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whom they belong. Disruption introduces an artificial situation, at which individuals become raw material for inappropriate activities. War-affected youth essentially par see "adventurous life" and mostly prefer a "job or any source of getting money-that is immediate," over migrating and forming communication networks can play a big role through mobile, social media, and other communication networking infrastructures. Negative external regulation by parental control can play a double role in mother's parenting styles for creating non-constructive developmental opportunities for their children. Involvement in midst conflict could make individuals resilient too through few positives outcomes. These children have developed the ability to cope with their hardships because they just endure the hardship and numb themselves from the pain. War-affected youth believes life is unpredictable with many actively seeking or passively awaiting a better future.

18. Impact of COVID-19 on Education

The recent outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the field of education across the globe. As a response to the pandemic, educational institutions were closed to prevent the virus from spreading among children, as children, as a section of society, are known to be the most potent carriers of the virus. Several challenges emerged post-closure of the educational institutions, which include providing quality education to the learners during this period of social distancing and the learners being primarily dependent on their teachers to get an exposure to education. The outbreak of the pandemic has evidently led to declining standards of education of the learners. Several ways for reaching out to the learners during this period were addressed and adapted by the educational institutions and the academicians responding to the crisis posed.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, online classes and examinations were conducted by some of the institutions to prevent the loss of education which was already taking place. Others are still in a fix as to what step to take during this adverse condition without deteriorating the teaching-learning experience of the learners. The biggest challenge in this transformation was to address the problem of those who could not get education due to lack of access or other factors. Adequate attention to the psycho-social welfare of the students other than teaching became essential to accommodate reasonable adaptations in the teaching-learning process.

19. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

As far as school education is concerned, there are some essential issues and critical challenges besetting the education system throughout Jammu and Kashmir. The biggest issue pertains to the lack of physical infrastructure and basic facilities. Further, the poor human resource like teachers has made the system beggarly worse. If education is the backbone of development, then the Jammu and Kashmir's school education has become like a tree unable to take the load of the fruits of future development and social, economic

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and political aspiration. In the recent years, man-made disasters and continuous conflict have fortified the atmosphere of education and also encroached mental disparities on the students and the stakeholders of the schools in Jammu and Kashmir.

The paper highlights 14 main problems and challenges in the field of higher education in Jammu and Kashmir. It also talks about the epic structure of the State and the composition of new segments in the department of higher education. The paper calls for access without equity in Jammu and Kashmir. It also draws the inequalities prevalent in this sector and suggests some initiatives/institutional restructuring to deal and address the issues. Perhaps, book touches some sentimental and factual dimensions of residents lacking certain requisites. In Jammu and Kashmir valley, the problem of access and excessive stress on examination-related curriculum takes a lockjaw as compared to Jammu and Ladakh regions. The research contributions to understand the position of the three regions are the need of the hour. Given these realities, the future directions and prospects appear grim.

20. Recommendations for Improvement

The educational system is the mirror for the development of a society. The people in general and students in particular are the consumers of a system of education. Therefore, the interests, aspirations, abilities, and aptitude of students should be kept into consideration when we plan our educational system. Eradication of unemployment or underemployment, rising of per capita income, establishing of democracy in the real sense, and setting up an egalitarian society are the main future aims of our planning. The service rendered mainly to the social system is more important than that mainly rendered to manpower. The process of education must not become more important than the product of education. Within the aim of democracy, the service of man and society are primary. One opinion is that the old education system needs improvement. The need is to improve and reform the education system.

Education is considered to be the most important enabler and instrumental in achieving sustainable development. In the state of J&K, the circumstances have added to the importance of education. Besides being a lever for socio-economic development and bringing people closer, the state education system has to additionally cope with other contemporary challenges that include the need for reformation and internalization after being ignored and isolated for many years. A cross-section observation and interaction with society, which is taking care of the day-to-day mechanization of education, unveils that there are a number of issues being faced by the state education system. Suggestions and measures that may help in tracing the problem to the solutions are enlisted in the following paragraphs.

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