

Contested Identities—Competing Accountabilities The Politics of Teaching in Pakistan

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About this country brief

The RISE Programme is a seven-year research effort that seeks to understand what features make education systems coherent and effective in their context and how the complex dynamics within a system allow policies to be successful. RISE had research teams in seven countries: Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tanzania, and Vietnam. It also commissioned research by education specialists in Chile, Egypt, Kenya, Peru, and South Africa.

Those researchers tested ideas about how the determinants of learning lie more in the realm of politics and particularly in the interests of elites. They focused on how the political conditions have (or have not) put learning at the center of education systems while understanding the challenges of doing so.

Each country team produced a detailed study pursuing answers to two central research questions:

- Did the country prioritize learning over access, and if so, during what periods?
- What role did politics play in the key decisions and how?

The full studies detail their analytical frameworks, their data, and sources (generally interviews, government internal documents and reports, and other local and international publications), and the power of their assessments, given their caveats and limitations. Country briefs extract from the full studies how leadership, governance, teaching, and societal engagement are pertinent to student outcomes.

Introduction

Official teacher policy reflects seemingly large political, bureaucratic, and legal reform to depoliticize teacher quality in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province. Lived experience, by contrast, reveals that decades-long politics of patronage and compliance are still critical mediators of teacher performance.¹ In addition, performance measurement does not seek to capture teacher effort embodied by teachers in their everyday routines. With outdated definitions of experience and seniority, the rules for performance continue to reproduce narratives of generalized bureaucratic practice. In an environment of personal logic (based on cultural, religious, ethnic, gendered, or other such drivers), such rules may be officially reported but are educationally irrelevant and collectively mocked by teacher collectives.

These longstanding informal values continue to entrench decision-making in frameworks of ad hocism and deprofessionalization—not focusing on pedagogy, reducing the time and qualifications to prepare teachers, assigning inexperienced teachers to challenging schools, and not allowing teachers to make curricular decisions for student learning. Although the focus here is on teaching in KP, the descriptions and findings generally apply to Pakistan's other provinces. Education sector reforms, such as lifting professional teaching certification requirements for teacher recruitment in 2014, have not improved learning levels in public education.

The missing notion of teacher voice and experience from the formal instruments of state governance—such as rules, notifications, or even training manuals—creates friction between the official and lived meanings of 'good' teaching. This tension persists through a recruitment policy that has led to a gradual deprofessionalization of teaching for almost a decade. But if anyone can teach, and teacher deployment has increased steadily over the time since this policy was announced, why has it not been met with a commensurate improvement in both teaching *and* student learning outcomes? Clearly, the provision of schools with more teachers does not automatically mean more or better learning.

One way to bring teacher recruitment into better alignment with an overall uplift to student learning is for the Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED) to reconsider the rubrics or testing process it uses currently for the induction of new teachers. Instead of depending on the currently problematic notion of general standardized tests as an effective filter for pedagogic ability, the system may need to reintroduce technical elements. One of the biggest motivations for removing professional teacher qualifications (such as a Certificate of Teaching or B.Ed.) at the point of entry was to have better qualified individuals consider teaching as a career. This was accompanied by the assumption that the state of technical qualifications (at the time) was insufficient to guarantee meritorious teaching on appointment.

But by stepping away entirely from educationally-anchored metrics or rubrics for applicant evaluation, the Department's intentions inevitably miss the requirements of a majority of its public schools—teachers who are motivated in the classroom, driven by a sense of professionalism and willing to meet the challenges that real classrooms send their way.

Pakistan's educational context

Pakistan's population of 220 million is one of the world's youngest, with more than a third of the population under 15 years of age. Yet the country has a literacy rate of only 56 percent, and in 2019, only 57 percent of students in grade 5 had grade 2 numeracy skills and 60 percent of grade 2 mother-tongue literacy skills.² What explains Pakistan's persisting poor performance in basic competencies—despite issuing more than 10 national education policy documents and making multiple international educational commitments—in the 70*odd years since its birth?

Close inspection of national education policies reveals fluctuating, often competing, ambitions of the Pakistani state.³ For instance, the 1970 New Education Policy underscored an emphasis on science and technology in the education system. Two years later, the 1972 policy undertook Pakistan's largest education nationalization agenda. By 1978, a third education policy (constituted through a military coup) made the case for privatizing education and heightened emphasis on Islamization of educational processes across the country. The introduction of religion into the Pakistani national education system through both policy and its accompanying legislation largely aligned with Pakistan's wider position in the geopolitical region. The confluence of politics, geography, and morality would drive a Pakistani child's learning. Similar tensions continue into today.

The educational aims in Pakistani policy documents are not, however, a product of state determination alone. Parallel tensions in educational aims and financial allocations are observable in the varying emphases of donor agencies, development partners and even civil society members throughout Pakistan's educational history. Although an education discourse built primarily around metrics of access and infrastructure has persisted since the 1950s, some questions of learning and its valid measurement have arisen since then, if infrequently or ineffectively.

The Pakistani teaching conundrum

Pakistani public teachers can spend nearly 50 percent of the academic year performing non-pedagogic activities. Much of this seems to emanate from how the teacher's role is positioned within, and by, structures of state and society. The contest between being a teacher and being a bureaucrat is not new to Pakistan, though it is underexplored as a driver of success for repeat education reform programs, which tend to frame teaching as a purely teacher training problem.

Ad hocism in teacher policy

In 2014, the Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED) took a significant and serious policy risk. It issued a notification declaring that permanent ("regular") government posts in KP's education sector could be routinely staffed with contractual hires. Primary school teachers would be appointed through ad hoc initial recruitment. The policy also led to the lifting of professional teaching certification requirements, which were seen as barriers to entry to the teaching cadre.

Prior to the 2014 policy, the Department would recruit teachers (especially for primary school) based on district-level counts of vacancies—that is, against a certain number of officially sanctioned posts in each district, but without specifying schools by name down to the village

level. As a result, although teachers were appointed to schools in their own district, they could frequently be posted far enough from their home to be left feeling unsettled, even stranded. This was especially likely for female teachers, who could often end up with postings in what are commonly referred to as ‘hard areas’ of districts—where access infrastructure is limited, commutes are lengthy and expensive (3,500–5,000 rupees a month, which can be 16–25 percent of a teacher’s pay), and schools are often run by one or two teachers resulting in considerable multigrade teaching.

Unintended consequences

Ad hoc behavior, just discussed, is echoed in the 2014 policy that legitimized contractual appointments to teaching posts. Much of this was done in the interest of covering persistent teacher shortages. Ad hoc decisionmaking was a deliberate effort to bypass a lethargic and inefficient recruitment process deeply entrenched in an inefficient state. Three main concerns were to be remedied through this policy:

- *A politicized understanding of “merit”* in which political party representatives (as patrons) frequently wielded authority over the bureaucratic domain by placing clients in educational positions of choice.
- *A long recruitment process* stretched by the requirement of a professional teaching qualification meant only a small number of candidates could apply to become teachers. Such frictions problematized targets to meet gaps in teacher allocation to schools across KP.
- *Misalignments between the supply of, and demand for, quality teaching*, largely a consequence of a poor articulation of the requirements for a career in teaching, such as through a Bachelor’s in Education (B.Ed.) or a Master’s in Education (M.Ed.)

The insistence that professional teaching certification among pre-2014 candidates did not add productive value to the education delivery chain became a cornerstone of the new teacher recruitment reforms. The professional degrees or certifications with which candidates applied for a teaching position ranged from a Primary Certification in Teaching (PCT) to an Associate Degree in Education (ADE) and even a full four-year Bachelors in Education (B.Ed.).

Graduates from these institutions were largely unable to demonstrate rigor in teacher training, as a result of which the very names of these degrees (B.Ed., for instance) became synonymous with inferior academic, and hence, career potential. In an extreme case, one university’s name became known for fraudulent transactions, even an epithet for deceptive academic behavior because of its proven notoriety for awarding bogus qualifications in exchange for handsome tuition fees. Unable to trust the pledges of merit made by the higher education domain, policymakers in school education sought to change the norms for teacher merit in KP.

By lifting the barriers to entry that previously prevented educated, but not professionally qualified, individuals from seeking a teaching post in the government, the Department attempted to communicate a new paradigm for improved learning outcomes across KP public education. Not only could teaching professionalism be gained through the Department’s own induction program (initially three, then six months; then extended to nine months in 2018), *anyone* could

teach as long as they were able to clear a third-party standardized test to required benchmarks (designed, administered, and evaluated by the National Testing Service).

Although there have been minor ups and downs in the percentage change year-on-year of both training allocations and expenditures, the overall trend signals an expanded investment in teacher training at the point of entering the system. In contrast, however, the performance of teachers still does not emerge clearly in ESED's accountability frameworks. This tension applies not just to teacher performance, but also to how systemic misalignments contribute varying to the notion of *teaching*, whether in the classroom or as a profession.

The expanded budget and the plethora of training manuals that now populate the province suggest an inclination toward schools as “real seats and abodes of learning by transforming teachers and educational managers into forward-looking change agents through consistent, innovative and strategic training interventions.” KP has also revised teacher ranks in government to correspond to revised pay scales.

The intention of the 2014 recruitment reform to transform KP's primary school by teacher talent that was previously excluded from the system was not realized. Despite recent revisions to pay scales and salary structures, primary education remains one of the lowest financially valued components of KP's education system. If new recruits (especially men) continue to explain their entry into teaching in the same language as most senior teachers in the system (no alternative employment), they serve only as an echo chamber for a narrative oriented *away from the learning* that the Department is already advocating:

Assessments undertaken by the Directorate for Curriculum and Teacher Education demonstrate that the 2014 policy to expand the teacher base has not delivered improved student learning outcomes or enhanced teacher performance.

Responsibility and service

As officers of the state, teachers in KP's public education system straddle a fine line of divergent responsibilities. On the one hand, they must follow departmental orders, regardless of their nature. On the other hand, they must be the teacher in a classroom who enables and facilitates student learning, a role that often requires drawing upon reserves of creativity and innovation to keep students engaged, learning, and happily returning to school throughout the year. The last point is especially pertinent because the large number of out-of-school children in KP (3.8+ million) may expand through dropouts caused by household perceptions of meaningless learning environments in public schools.

Teacher compliance with instruction requirements is tracked through joint monitoring efforts by officers from the provincial Implementation Monitoring Unit as well as district education management hierarchy. In its most literal form, teacher performance is measured through a set of indicators incorporated into a reporting tool called a District Scorecard. Although classified as a combination of metrics that help gauge teacher quality, the scorecard metrics do not correspond well with what actual measures of teaching quality should look like:

1. *CPD participation rate*: an attendance metric for professional development days.

2. *Induction program participation rate (face-to-face)*: attendance metric for the induction program through which all new teachers must pass.
3. *Induction program monthly assessment result*: the only metric that assesses teacher learning, but applies only to newly recruited teachers.
4. *Induction program completion rate*: assumed to be a learning metric, it does not accurately capture learning or performance quality.

In the official language for reporting district performance, the scorecard captures this quality index as effective teachers, not effective teaching. Instead of indicating a process for learning outcomes to be affected by teachers, the official narrative remains structured around descriptions of the actors themselves—descriptions not well aligned with teacher performance.

Two of the four indicators rely on an outdated approach in which teacher presence (even if in a professional development cycle) is considered a valid proxy for teacher performance. The assumption here is that being in a classroom or attending training will lead to effective teaching or learning.⁴ This approach overlooks a key aspect of real-life circumstances in KP's public schools: teacher effort may just not be enough to overcome the systemic constraints within which schools have to operate or children have to learn.

The necessity to conduct multigrade teaching in the classroom has recently been incorporated into a classroom observation tool used by the lowest tier of district education management (assistant district education officers). This reflects the realities in which KP's teachers must perform.

But multigrade teaching is contingent on teachers having enough space, resource material, and time to delivery effectively over a 40-minute period. This is not the case in most of KP's public schools, especially in rural areas.

Assistant District Education Officers are required to undertake field visits to 35–45 schools a month. These visits cover both infrastructure and teaching quality indicators, using a checklist of more than 20 indicators. Officers are constrained by transportation issues and accessibility challenges due to KP's topography.

An expanded scope of “duty”

Teachers are expected to undertake duties that support the running of their schools and the learning of their students. This includes pastoral care beyond the call of official duty, and informal tasks to enhance the learning environment.⁵ Many of these activities are not reflected in official evaluation instruments such as the Classroom Observation Tool.

The Classroom Observation Tool is based on the Teacher Competency Framework developed by the Directorate for Curriculum and Teacher Education under Pakistan's National Professional Teaching Standards. KP is the only federating unit in Pakistan to have this tool, but its use does not adequately capture the needs of education policy.

Issues ranging from as basic as the provision of stationery to more complex questions of parental interest in a child's education or relationship management with district education managers to flex rules governing service delivery are all part of the everyday for a public schoolteacher. In

other cases, too, teachers report behaviors that actively bend system rules to cater to the particular circumstances or norms of their teaching responsibilities.

In districts like Swat, which has a recent history of combating socially conservative narratives, male primary teachers and their head teachers make an additional effort: household heads (men) are often in other cities where they are employed, and the mothers left in their stead are not comfortable engaging with male teachers, so conversations have to be curated that much more carefully.

Measuring teacher performance

Two important parameters define the space that teachers must navigate in KP's public system, but which do not feature in official narratives and metrics for teacher career progression:

- The clever balancing act required between noneducational and educational/teaching activities that are regularly performed by schoolteachers even if not officially mandated.
- Motives steeped in values that cut across the economic, social, and—above all—cultural (predominantly Pashtun) logic to performance.

In addition to the unconventional efforts teachers may have to make to fulfil their *teaching* responsibilities, nonteaching activities consume a proportion of teacher time. There, too, a personalization of rules suffuses the strategies through which teachers navigate the everyday field of education service delivery. Although nonteaching activities are officially described as lesson preparation, making teaching and learning resources, marking student work and co-curricular activities, such activities actually extend far beyond official definitions. Often, they stretch into noneducational realms, taking teachers into a sentiment of powerlessness echoed by their counterparts in other poorly managed state education systems.⁶

Senior teachers (10+ years of service) express such disillusionment with the system. Despite the pedagogic experience they seem to have built up over their years in the system, many have not been able to secure a promotion out of primary school. Others have had to wait very long to receive salary-scale increments in primary teaching. During these long waiting periods, the system seems to have eroded their resolve.

The sense of being uninfluential or unimportant in a very large mechanical system provides an important point for reflection. Does a lack of effective performance prevent such teachers—with their long history of service to the public sector—from attaining promotion? Promotion through public service is not fundamentally linked to the quality of teaching. To the contrary, the resource constraint that prevents new post-primary school investments in the province also features in the long-term career prospects of teachers recruited 10+ years ago. Without a significant expansion in sanctioned posts beyond primary school, there will not be a sufficient supply of jobs beyond primary for which primary school teachers can even plan to compete.

How long motivation will last is indeed shaped by the amount of leverage teachers feel they have—or will eventually have—over the system. Unlike the experiences of much older teachers, newer recruits (three years or less in service) have witnessed circumstances in which teacher collective behavior has effectively pressured the state—such as regularization protests to convert contractual hires into permanent (long-term) employees of the provincial government. The

ability to negotiate permanence in the public sector through collective action is an important mechanism that signals to newer teachers the power that rests in their shared voice.⁷

The exclusion of public teachers' non-teaching/non-educational/innovative activities from official accounts of teacher performance is a symptom of KP's public education system does not cohere around effective learning. As bureaucrats, teachers can be asked by the provincial government to perform specific tasks that are beyond the immediate terms of their contracts or teaching duties. The effect of such asks on teacher time is one that the state's own metrics still do not recognize or capture. Time *is* the most important resource available to teachers in an already input-constrained environment. Every additional task that does not directly improve the condition of a student or the teacher's own professional development inevitably requires a tradeoff against what might ideally be the most important performance outcome of the teacher bureaucrat: student learning.⁸

But if the state's own accountability and rewarding mechanisms do *not* hold learning—whether demonstrated through teacher's performance in a classroom setting or student outcomes—as key mediators of career progression, the time allocated to ensuring student learning loses value. In such a situation, none of KP's conventional accountability metrics actually present an opportunity to distinguish one's own teacher self from or above others. By relying on *time in service* as opposed to *time on teaching* in a meaningful way, the state's evaluation narrative does not align or incentivize teacher performance with improved student learning. The presence of meaningless competition (just spending enough years in schools) is as poor a policy choice as the absence of competition (everyone gets a promotion).⁹ Neither orients teaching in an education system toward improved learning.

Teacher policies remain incoherent for learning

It is unsurprising, then, that primary school is the educational site from where most teachers seek to exit, and the one in which the greatest amount of dissatisfaction starts to accrue. The friction between the state's definition of meritorious performance and its everyday embodiment by public school teachers decelerates attempts to institutionalize learning reforms. Teachers will manage as they must and, as soon as an opportunity presents itself, will seek to escape the low-value trap of primary schooling. What is officially presented by the state as a learning-oriented strategy becomes, through its various adaptations by teachers, a contested site for learning improvements across KP's public schools.

Although far more academically qualified teachers now enter primary schools in KP (about 40 percent hold an M.Sc. or higher degree), the original intent through the 2014 policy of the provincial government to steep the education system in merit. But minimizing and possibly eliminating political intervention in public sector teaching at point of entry into the system was met largely through reliance on a standardized test.¹⁰ Until the 2020 challenge to the credibility of this standardized test, its mandatory submission as part of the application process was seen as an effective mechanism to slowly eliminate political influence from district-level recruitment of teachers.

Much of what the ESED struggles with in its attempt to get the teacher quality approach right is its framing of the idea of merit. Narrowly interpreted as a set of marks based on a third-party

general test of aptitude, ESED's explanation is not rooted in the language of pedagogic practice or excellence. By equating the idea of political influence on merit with the adverse effects of *electoral* interference at point of recruitment, the Department overlooks politics of power that mediate teacher performance even after their entry into the sector. It assumes that a singular entrance filter can ward off all contests of power or authority further down the teacher career path.

The intersecting political and bureaucratic domains of contestation for these struggles for importance and value to play out are not eliminated; their influence on teacher practice just operates at a different point in time. In this sense, the deprofessionalization of the public school teacher is a rudimentary solution to the demanding ask of attracting the right amounts of relevant candidates toward public sector teaching *careers*, not *posts*. Although lower barriers to entry have made it easy to come into teaching, they have not effectively signaled to candidates or new entrants the realities of technical requirements needed to be a teacher in a real school in KP.

The population of eligible applicants and the available *pool* of individuals available for teaching may have increased, but so have competing incentives that can drive these teachers to exit (especially from primary school) from this low-value proposition within government service as soon as the opportunity arises. Teachers will evaluate and seek to bend existing rules using whatever sociocultural capital they have to move into better parts of the public system (a higher rank or better sector). Since the concept of merit is not intellectually or educationally expanded through this field of bureaucratic service, the notion of 'school-based' merit from the 2014 reform is unlikely to translate into improved and meaningful learning outcomes.

To the contrary, the reform only *delays* the contests that continue to orient the education system away from learning, and toward preserving the status quo. This may happen through an erosion of both motivation and trust, it may encourage teacher exits from the low-value trap of primary schooling.

Protecting teachers' voice

The presence of teacher unions in the public education system would, ideally, protect teacher voice—and even exert pressure on the system to conform to teacher demands. But this does *not* happen in KP the way it does in many other systems. One reason for this is the union's deliberate and widely publicized position of being apolitical. By attempting to argue on impersonal grounds of evidence, research, and other educationally relevant principles, the Association inevitably cedes space to other agents and stakeholders whose discourse is more closely aligned with personal aspects of educational decisionmaking.

In contrast, teachers who assemble *just on their own in groups* can generate more impact, whether outside the Peshawar Civil Secretariat or in Islamabad. This phenomenon manifests routinely in ESED's annual operations. Contractual hires from 2014, for instance, led a protest in Bani Gala—the residential neighborhood of the head of Pakistan *Tehreek e Insaaf* (Pakistan Movement for Justice), which led a coalition government in KP at the time—to be 'regularized' or appointed full-time permanent status as government officers. The demands were met in 2017, shortly before the ensuing election cycle.

Contractual hires since 2017 were also in a similar process of regularization through an Act of Assembly in the summer of 2021, which has since been approved. Acts are revered within the structure of the state, from which procedural rules are derived on the basis of which compliant and consistent policies are meant to be designed. The process exists to demonstrate, in theory, that the people's will is vested in the decisions of state machinery, including the expansion of the bureaucracy, through continued regularization of contractual hires.

So...

The lessons from this study may find applicability across Pakistan because of similarities shared by other federal units in teacher policies and non-academic constraints to education service delivery. The findings also have implications for a recently emerging literature on teacher education in South Asia, which finds teachers demand that expressions of service and care be recognized both in processes of training and in evaluations.¹¹ Above all, this study contributes to a large gap regarding what happens to two of education's most important actors public systems as large as those in the Pakistani context: the teacher and the student.

Public school teachers are agents with abilities to make choices despite the constraints of their surrounding structures. This provides an important departure from existing studies on teacher performance or sense of self in resource-constrained, misaligned systems like these.¹² It does not mean, however, that teachers are facilitated by the system to engage in meaningful pedagogy—largely a result of misalignments in the public system with decisions that inform student learning more directly.

Misalignment can be corrected by exploring the incorporation of teacher competencies into the recruitment process through a model that shares responsibility across multiple partners. For instance, the Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED) could rely on its own testing administration arm in collaboration with locally rooted intellectual or technical partners (such as research organizations or universities based in Pakistan or ideally KP) that source support from bodies like the Directorate for Curriculum and Teacher Education or Directorate for Professional Development. This could create a distributed governance model that spreads recruitment authority across multiple stakeholders, but with clearly delegated requirements and financial arrangements to match performance accountabilities with specific asks.¹³ Through this kind of approach, the Department could start progressing towards a quality recruitment process aligned with the aspiration of staffing KP's primary schools with 'good' fresh recruits.¹⁴

Much comes down to this question: in a resource-constrained and fragile economic environment with so many informal variables governing the politics of performance, how does the Department strike a balance between the need for large-scale recruitment and sufficient training for teachers to perform well from as early as possible? One solution might lie in paying attention to a consistently overlooked gap the system never plugged after deprofessionalizing teaching entry: higher education.

Here is where coherence becomes an important principle to evaluate in the effort to improve existing policy. If one of the motivations to lifting professional-qualification barriers to entry was to counter the dwindling quality of entrants with education-specific certifications or degrees, the move toward generalist recruiting should, ideally, have been balanced with a means to improving

teacher education programs *outside* the departmental bureaucracy.¹⁵ These could have included universities or other teacher-training centers regulated by the Higher Education Department or the Higher Education Commission with continuous feedback from the Department alongside a public sector job quota policy to incentivize performance and employment pathways amongst competitive students.

Similar decisions aimed at coherence could include a reevaluation of teacher promotion, performance, and other related rules. Teachers may currently be demanded to practice and deliver outcomes of a very specific nature, but their evaluation and career progression continues to be governed by generalist bureaucratic discourse and its ensuing rules. But even these rules do not meet established ideas of Weberian bureaucratic functioning. Continuously yielding to patronage or sociocultural logic, teacher performance is inevitably stretched across the competing accountabilities of compliance and innovation. Some of these behaviors may contribute to student learning; others may not. In either case, inconsistent pedagogic belief and practice compromise learning quality across the system.¹⁶

According to teachers in KP's system, it is not financially prohibitive or bureaucratically impossible to accommodate teachers with a motivational special status. Recommendations like publicly instituted recognitions of prestige and status—such as ‘teacher’ hours at public service desks or a provincial prize for performance—could go alongside more complex, but not impossible, determinations of primary school specialization.

The latter could be enhanced by involving *serving* teachers in policy arenas like curriculum development or even the design of specific parts of their own continuous professional development within the larger program sent to them from the Directorate for Professional Development. This would contrast with the space that currently exists for those with teaching backgrounds to contribute to such policy developments, but *only* after they have left an active teaching position for an administrative or subject specialist role in one of ESED's attached departments.

Building a variety of reasons and ways in which to demonstrate skill into teacher performance *and* linking them to both their everyday sense of self and their mid-to-long-term career journeys is critical.¹⁷ Many of these attempts at realigning teaching structures can go a long way in accounting for good teaching through teacher accounts of their time, effort, and experience on terms that emerge from within the field of pedagogic bureaucracy, not general management.¹⁸

Annex 1 Indicators of learning for RISE countries

A country's learning adjusted years of school combines the quantity and quality of schooling into a single indicator by multiplying the estimated years of schooling by the ratio of the country's score on the most recent test scores harmonized to 625 (World Bank data for latest year of assessment).

Learning poverty, a combined measure of schooling and learning, is the proportion of children unable to read and understand a simple text by age 10 (World Bank data for 2019).

The Human Capital Index is the amount of human capital that children born today can expect to acquire by the age of 18 given the prevailing risks of poor health and poor education. It combines the likelihood of surviving to school age, the amount of school they will complete and the learning they'll acquire, and whether they leave school ready for further learning and work. For example, a score of 0.5 means that they will be only 50 percent as productive as they might be with complete education and full health—and that their future earning potentials will be 50 percent below what they might have been.¹⁹

	Learning adjusted years of school	Learning poverty (%)	Human Capital Index (0–1)
Chile	9.4	27.2	0.7
Egypt	6.5	69.6	0.5
Ethiopia	4.3	90.4	0.4
India	7.1	56.1	0.5
Indonesia	7.5	52.8	0.5
Kenya	8.5	—	0.5
Nigeria	5	—	0.4
Pakistan	5.1	77	0.4
Peru	8.6	44.4	0.6
South Africa	5.6	78.9	0.4
Tanzania	4.5	—	0.4
Vietnam	10.7	18.1	0.7

Note: — = not available.

¹ Levy et al. 2018.

² ASER (*Annual Status of Education Report*) 2019. Lahore: Idara-e-Taleem-o-Agahi.

³ Siddiqui 2016.

⁴ Ehrenberg et al. 1989.

⁵ O'Connor 2008.

⁶ Aiyar 2015; Hossain et al. 2017.

⁷ Kingdon et al. 2014; Hossain et al. 2017.

⁸ Rasul, Rogger, and Williams 2018.

⁹ Khan, Khwaja, and Olken 2019.

¹⁰ Habib 2015.

¹¹ Setty et al. 2019.

¹² Aiyar et al. 2015.

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- ¹³ Levy and Walton 2013; Pritchett 2015.
- ¹⁴ Bruns and Luque 2015.
- ¹⁵ Goldhaber and Anthony 2007; Darling-Hammond 2020.
- ¹⁶ Levy et al. 2018.
- ¹⁷ Haertel 1991; Haefele 1993; Bruns and Luque 2015.
- ¹⁸ Pritchett 2015.
- ¹⁹ World Bank Human Capital Index for September 2020.

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