

Changing Language-in-education Policy in Pakistan

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Background

- Pakistan is a federal state comprised of four provinces, one autonomous and one self-governing region
- The country is home to more than 70 languages
- Only Urdu, which is the mother tongue for 8% of the national population, has the status of national language and is the medium of instruction in gov't-owned schools
- English, a remnant of colonial rule, is still used as an official language and medium of instruction in some private schools
- Until recently only two indigenous languages, Sindhi and Pashto, were used as the medium of instruction and taught as a subject in their respective areas



Changing...

- The federal gov't released a new education policy in 2009 which stated that the teaching curriculum should include Urdu, English and a regional language.
- In 2014, for the first time, the 'Standing Committee on Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage' of the National Assembly invited speakers of indigenous languages and discussed issues related to the languages.
- The committee enlisted 22 languages to be given the status of national languages and also recommended the establishment of a central level public organization to deal with the languages issues.
- The bill was rejected by another committee saying that it is against the national unity
- February 2017 the Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights of the Senate, the upper house of the parliament, held a public meeting. The drafts of two bills of the constitutional amendment were discussed at the meeting. Both of the bills demanded "national language" status for some major languages.

Changing...

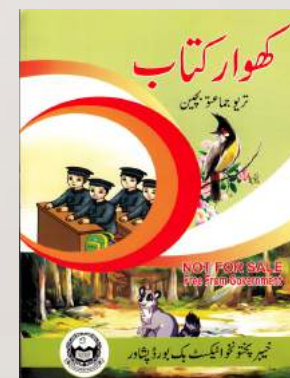
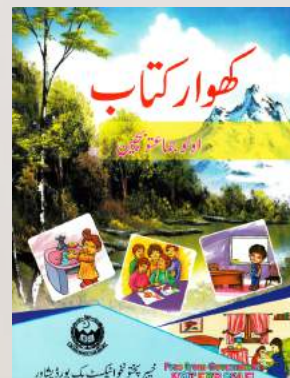
- At the end of 2011, the provincial cabinet of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa decided to include five indigenous languages Pashto, Hindko, Khowar, Sariaik and [Indus] Kohistani in the school's curriculum.
- The KP government also passed the Regional Languages Authority Act 2012 in the provincial assembly to establish a public organization to safeguard the languages of the province.
- The government has since developed curriculum guidelines for the five languages.
- The development of books in four languages is in progress. Textbooks from kindergarten through grade 3 have been developed and distributed in schools so far.
- Books for grades 4 are currently under review, and grade 5 books are in the compiling process.

Number of Books Supplied to Dist. Ed. Officers in 2018-19 by the KP Text Book Board

Language	Year	Primer	Book-1	Book-2	Book-3
Hindko	2018	126,900	88,840	Ready for Print	
	2019	102,680	71,905		53,187
Khowar	2018	18,330	13,880	Ready for Print	
	2019	12,031	10,060		9,012
Pashto	2018	1,063,000	768,000	Ready for Print	
	2019	891,867	780,487		610,575
Saraiki	2018	31,250	21,470	Ready for Print	
	2019	28,350	16,400		11,700

BOOKS DEVELOPED BY KP TEXT BOOK BOARD

Books of Khowar Language



Changing...

- In Balochistan, in January 2014, the provincial cabinet decided to include Balochi, Brahui, Pashto, Persian and Sindhi in educational curriculum of the province.
- In January 2014, the Balochistan Assembly passed a bill called “The Balochistan Introduction of languages, as Compulsory Additional Subject at Primary Level Act, 2014.”
- The bill asked provincial government to develop books in the mother tongues for the schools.
- The development of books in three languages is in progress. Textbooks from kindergarten through grade 3 have been developed and distributed in schools so far.

Changing...

- In Gilgit-Baltistan(GB) the provincial government revised its educational strategy, stated there that up to grad three medium of instruction will be in the mother tongue of children
- Five languages have been included in the process
- The GB government allocated funds in its budget for the development of the languages
- The GB gov't held meetings of local writers to address the orthography issues of the languages
- The GB gov't sponsored a conference hosted by Karakorum University in the province. Scholars from other provinces were invited to the conference to seek their advice for the development of the languages
- Th government is also in process of establishing a public separate body for the promotion of the languages spoken in the province and to include them in school curriculum.

Factors which have Caused Policies about Language in Education to Change

- There is a growing body of **research and documentation** about the languages in Pakistan.
- There is an increase in **language activism** committed to revitalisation and fostering a grassroots' movement to influence policy-makers.
- A recent **constitutional amendment** allows provinces to develop their own educational and cultural policies
- The **media has played a crucial role** in providing a platform that continues to raise awareness about marginalized ethnolinguistic groups.
- **Language and identity factors** have increasingly influenced nationalist politics, which in-turn has led to more language-inclusive policies
- The recent **creation of the new province** of Gilgit-Baltistan provided new opportunities to preserve and promote cultural and linguistic diversity

Discussion and Conclusion

- All these initiatives have come from the smaller provinces of the country. We are still waiting for (and hoping that) the bigger provinces, namely Punjab and Sindh, to take similar steps.
- The provincial government of Punjab, the largest province, has the least interest in considering these language issues. Most Punjabi speakers are also pro-Urdu in language matters and prefer Urdu over their own mother tongue.
- Saraiki is another big language of the Punjab province. While this language has received official status in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it has not in the Punjab because of the attitudes of those in that provincial government.
- The smaller provinces have not yet incorporated all languages within their jurisdiction.
- Each of these languages which have been incorporated into the school curricula are only being taught as subjects not officially used as a medium of instruction.
- There are other challenges in implementation of these policies. For example, government officials responsible to develop the curricula lack the necessary skills to do so effectively

Future Research

- Future research should explore in-depth the factors which hinder the implementation of effective language-in-education policies, and subsequently present some helpful recommendations.

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