

Educational Reforms and Curricula in Developing Countries: Educational Policies and Socioeconomic Consequences

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Abstract

Despite all the efforts in education reforms in developing countries, traditional curricula remain inadequate and unrelated to labour markets; existing inequalities are difficult to address. They make it difficult for human capital to build and make economic progress. This study critically assesses the socioeconomic consequences of educational policies and curriculum reforms in developing nations regarding their impacts on fostering sustainable development. This research is important to provide policymakers with information regarding reform strategies' success in reducing the educational attainment gap in adverse socioeconomic circumstances. This study contributes to discussions on equal and quality education by analyzing policy frameworks and curriculum modernization efforts and their outcomes. Using this as a research method, a mixed methodology was used of qualitative content analysis of policy documents, structured interviews with education policymakers, and quantitative measurement of educational and economic indicators across a range of developing nations. The second objective is to evaluate the success of different reforms in increasing educational access, acquiring skills, and, subsequently, employment. It is found that countries with skill-oriented curricula integrated into a culture of inclusiveness perform better in terms of lower literacy rates, more employment opportunities and more economic stability. The study contributes to the need for holistic policy interventions to address educational reforms constantly, undertaking curriculum development, teacher training and industry-academia linkages to bring about meaningful reforms.

Keywords: Educational Reforms, Curriculum Development, Developing Countries, Educational Policies, Socioeconomic Impact, Human Capital, Policy Analysis, Skill Development

1. Introduction

Based on this fact, education is a basis for socioeconomic progress, contributing to individual development, national productiveness and global competitiveness. However, educational systems rarely keep pace with economic and technological developments in developing countries. Education cannot be used to create a tool for social mobility and financial development due to outdated curricula, poor implementation of policies and systemic inequity in education delivery systems (Yamanaka & Suzuki, 2020). Many countries have yet to undertake educational reforms to address these shortfalls; however, these reforms have not all delivered on the promise of improving learning outcomes, skill development and employability. The importance of education to form future generations and steer sustainable growth in developing nations requires the assessment of

the efficacy of educational policies and curricular reforms in the said countries (Verger et al., 2019). Education sectors in developing countries present many challenges, including negligible financing/infrastructure issues, shortage of teachers' training and challenges in bridging the gap between the educational content and labour market demands. Many of these countries' curricula learnt from the rigid colonial times have prioritized rote learning rather than critical thinking, problem-solving or skills (Tikkanen et al., 2020). This explains why many graduates do not meet the job market demands of contemporary times despite increased educational attainment, resulting in high unemployment rates. Furthermore, globalization and technology advancement accelerated speedily, allowing the limitations of the traditional education models in some of the Developing Nations to increase. Despite developing countries clinging to outdated

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pedagogical methods, digital tools, and vocational training, most developed countries have created space for it in their educational frameworks. This further widened the global knowledge gap and made socioeconomic inequalities worse because students from underprivileged backgrounds have no access to quality education w, which can boost their social mobility. There is also the side of the inequitable distribution of educational resources (Suwarma & Kumano, 2019). In rural and marginalized communities have extremely high shortages of adequately trained teachers, learning materials and technological infrastructure. Finally, gender discrepancies compound this problem: girls in many developing countries experience sociocultural barriers that make them unable to attend school and thus unable to realize personal and professional development (Suprpto et al., 2021). The basic structural deficiencies to such reforms demand that education in policy design and curriculum are brought in harmony, which calls for comprehensive educational reforms. For some time now, governments and international institutes have upheld that educational reforms are necessary and have been implementing several policies to enhance accessibility, quality, and suitability (Ruth & Ramadas, 2019). The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 underscores the importance of inclusive and equitable education for all, emphasizing lifelong learning opportunities. This goliath has led many developing countries to align their educational policies to its goal of equalizing access to education and fixing the flaws in its organization of the system, hence increasing their public investment in education, introducing free education at primary and secondary schools and reforms in the examination system to incorporate conceptual understanding over memorization (Senk & Thompson, 2020).

Nevertheless, policy implementation is a difficult task. Rarely do corruption, political instability, or bureaucratic inefficiencies enable a successful reform initiative to be executed. Furthermore, many policies are about expanding coverage to education but are not explicitly developed to address quality adequately. For example, improving school enrollment rates is a good step, but better learning outcomes are not guaranteed if schools have no qualified teachers, good infrastructure and modern teaching methods. Additionally, changes have been implemented worldwide to various countries' curriculum reforms to engage more with contemporary socioeconomic necessities (Pllana, 2019). Some nations have combined vocational and technical education in secondary school,

while others have initiated competency-based learning frameworks. While these reforms have had some positive results, their effect is unequal to the different factors as most depend on political engagement, economic stability, and social appropriateness (Pajarwati et al., 2021). The importance of conducting a critical analysis of these policy interventions is to identify best practices and motions for sustainable educational improvements that can be made. The importance of educational reforms as a driver of national economies and the societal well-being of a developing country is profound (Nasser, 2019). An inclusive education system enhances human capital development through higher productivity, innovation and economic growth through a well-structured education that takes everyone on board. Weak educational systems perpetuate, creating vicious poverty, unemployment, and social unrest cycles (Mukminin et al., 2019). Investigations reveal that countries with strong educational policies, such as modernized curricula, have higher rates of employment and entrepreneurship as graduated individuals possess the needed skills for the modern commencing labour markets. On the other hand, a big gap between graduates' skills and industry needs often results from countries that are not able to reform their educational settings, which causes degrees to be oversupply and few suits are able for the degree holders to have real job (Matsumoto, 2019). In addition, it is impossible to overestimate the link between education and social equity. Countries that are dedicated to having an inclusive education, meaning that there is equal access to education, irrespective of sex, socioeconomic status and place, see higher rates of lower income inequality and higher rates of social cohesion (Lavonen, 2020). On the other hand, policy for education can increase the entrenched disparities by creating obstacles to the education of the less privileged groups and making the social issues worse. It also impacts in educational promotion of civic engagement and democratic participation. People with higher levels of education tend to get involved in political processes to stand up for their rights and help in the development of the community (Inyega et al., 2021). It emphasizes that educational reform is important to society beyond economic interest. This study examines educational reforms and curricula in developing countries and their effectiveness in absorbing contemporary socioeconomic challenges. This research attempts to find out best practices and areas of further improvement through analysis of policy frameworks, curriculum design and reform implementation strategies. Thus, a mixed methods

approach that combines qualitative content analysis of policy documents and statistically mandated descriptions of educational and economic indicators about international education will be employed. This study will serve as an important source of data for global debates in educational policy making, making instrumental information to help governments, educators and international organizations improve the quality and points of view of education in developing nations.

2. Literature Review

Increasing recognition that curricula should be made more modern, education should be made more accessible and educational outcomes should be aligned with socioeconomic demands has impacted the discourse of educational reforms in developing countries. Despite the policy interventions over the past decades, these reforms are ineffective as they encounter static structural, political, and economic barriers to their intended impact (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2020). One of the problems in the literature is whether educational reforms improve the learning quality and economic opportunities or whether they are used as political instruments to meet international benchmarks. External-driven reform initiatives by global organisms tend to be much more than those based on national assessments of internally motivated needs (Haug & Mork, 2021). As a result, policies are not relevant to context and have few bad problems to solve for different countries. However, a major criticism of the educational reforms in developing nations focuses that they are more of the top-down approach wherein the views of teachers, students, and the community are more or less neglected. Reforms seen as progressive on paper often fail to be implemented effectively, as they are usually made at the national or international level (Gouédard et al., 2020). For instance, digital literacy and vocational skills are added to curricula as a reform strategy. However, poor investments in teacher training, infrastructure and resources make it slow to roll out in the various regions. In addition, huge scale assessments intended to measure learning results usually become its high-stakes testing mechanism that privileged rote learning but not critical thinking and some problem-solving skills. The second concern in the literature is the relevance of curricula to labour market demands (Campbell-Phillips, 2020). Reforms in education in developing nations have often focused on increasing school enrollment rates and reducing dropout rates, but they do not consider qualitative deficiency of education.

Traditional curricula do not align with industry needs, and a skill gap remains, making graduates unsuited for employment. However, some countries have tried to update curricula by adding STEM education, entrepreneurship, and competency-based learning but have failed to implement it fully (Bruns et al., 2019). These also occur when political cycles generate sudden policy changes and bring instability in educational planning and confusion among educators and students. And, in developing countries, as for educational reforms, the deep structural inequalities of the communities with marginalized status are mostly not dealt with. Despite this difference, gender disparity is still significant; there are still barriers, such as sociocultural and economic limits, that the girls have no access to education (Boyce et al., 2019). In countries where gender parity in school enrollment has advanced, subtle biases remain in the curriculum content, teaching methodology and career guidance, forcing women from participating in high-paying jobs such as technology and engineering. Likewise, rural and indigenous populations have systemic disadvantages of missing quality teachers, inadequate learning facilities, and curricula that do not reflect local cultural and linguistic contexts (Amon & Bustami, 2021). These inequalities act as a poison against social divisions already in place, not a responding drug to further division, and they confine education as a means to economic mobility.

The second controversial point involves the role of privatization in educational reforms. As many developing countries have increasingly confronted underfunded public education systems, these countries have resorted to the involvement of the private sector for access and quality improvements. As a rule, privately run schools provide better resources, infrastructure and teacher training than public schools, but such schools also increase social inequality. Education commercialization is part of making a dual system, which privileges some to have quality learning while reinforcing structural inequalities (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020). In addition, the absence of regulation in private education vitiates curriculum standardization, the integrity of assessments and the ethics of the provision of services. One major gap in many educational reform proposals is their assumption that teacher capacity building is not, in fact, a fundamental part of them. Instead, policymakers pay attention only to student-centric reforms and ignore educating teachers on embracing new curricula in practice (Alsaleh, 2019). Most teachers in developing countries lack pre-service training and cannot get continuous professional development. Thus,

insufficient teaching techniques mean learning outcomes are still suboptimal even when the most modern curricula are introduced. The further complication of this problem is that teachers are frequently compelled to follow archaic evaluation metrics that encourage upholding outdated ones while neglecting the key element of conceptual understanding and skill acquisition. However, it is not just a process in developing countries. Such reforms are hampered by political interests and instability (Akala, 2021). The introduction of education policy is usually on political agendas; reforms are adopted throughout a short period to attract public support rather than as a continuous endeavour to boost quality and accessibility.

Changes in government leadership are frequent and policy discontinuity occurs because the new governments revoke the previous reforms without having a satisfactory evaluation. Such inconsistency hinders the development of consistent progress in the long term when educational strategies demand a long-lasting commitment and successive improvement to be effective (Yamanaka & Suzuki, 2020). Corruption, misuse of funds, fraudulent recruitment of teachers and nepotism in an education system also bring down the reform efforts and shred the public's trust in educational institutions. Promoting technological advancements as a transformative solution for education in developing countries is not new; the impact, however, is still debatable. Digital learning tools, along with online resources and ICT integration, can have an impact on enhancing educational access and quality. However, their effect is limited to such extent as infrastructural readiness and ICT literacy levels of learners and educators (Verger et al., 2019). In many developing nations, however, the technological infrastructure and the lack of electricity provision and internet connectivity in rural areas make it almost impossible for digital learning initiatives to be successful.

Furthermore, technology-influenced reforms usually assume that learning outcomes improve when there is access to digital tools without accounting for pedagogical modes that enable engaging with digital resources. Other areas of debate relate to the international socioeconomic impact of educational reforms, namely whether education can lead the overall economic development (Tikkanen et al., 2020). On one hand, some scholars claim that improvement in the education quality and accessibility directly connects with the employment rates and economic growth; on the other, some scholars state that the reform in the education should be undertaken within the bigger

structural issues like labor market dynamics, industrial policies and economic diversification. Even in developing countries where intelligent persons get higher education when unreasonably high unemployment is measured, many of these persons who ever got an education fail to obtain a job because they cannot contribute outstanding productivity to their employers. Thus the industrial sectors are not yet strong enough, or the labour markets are not yet flexible enough to absorb these educated resources (Suwarma & Kumano, 2019). This begs whether such education reform, as isolated from the larger issues of economic stagnation and social inequality, can resolve any of those problems (Suprpto et al., 2021). But all of these things have been done; educational reforms have had a positive effect in some cases and in countries that have done comprehensive and integrated reforms.

Successful reform of education occurs when nations align the design of the policy, the reform of the curriculum, the training of the teacher and the planning of the economy. Vocational training programs, public-private partnerships in education, and evidence-based policymaking are some effective and implemented reforms (Ruth & Ramadas, 2019). Yet, such success stories remain exceptions rather than the rule. There is a need for a more rigorous evaluation of reform strategies to discern which constitutes promising practices that can be adapted to other national contexts. The current literature on educational reforms in developing countries has several research challenges that need further work. First, the policy frameworks are well studied in many studies. Still, very few studies have empirical research on the long-term socioeconomic impacts of such reforms in diverse cultural and economic contexts (Senk & Thompson, 2020). Second, most existing analyses on such reforms are narrowed at the national level and miss the localized implementation challenges at the community level. Third, inadequate assessment is made of how curriculum changes lead to labour market success, especially given the rapid technological disruptions and industry demands (Pillana, 2019). Gaps on this are filled by this study of comprehensive analysis on educational reforms and curricula in developing nations and effectiveness in tackling contemporary socioeconomic issues. This research attempts to draw a nuanced picture of the factors that lead to the success of reforms by combining qualitative and quantitative data from multiple case studies; it aims to provide policymakers as well as educators and international organizations interested in improving the education system in developing countries

practical recommendations for enhancing their reformable processes.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Based on this, this study uses a mixed methods design of research on educational reforms and curricula of developing countries. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined for policy frameworks, implementation effectiveness, and socioeconomic outcomes. The content of the component was to analyze policy documents, government reports and international educational frameworks to give the theoretical and practical components to the curriculum reform. Semi structured interviews with policymakers, educators, or stakeholders were also carried out to understand perceptions and challenges to the reform implementation. The quantitative component was a statistical analysis of education indicators, e.g. literacy rates, school enrollment, graduation rates, and employment outcomes, based on global databases such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and national education departments. They used regression models and comparative analyses to see the relationship between educational reforms and socioeconomic progress. By triangulating data from multiple sources, this mixed method approach improved the validity of the findings by adding to the body of knowledge the impact of educational policies in the same country and various contexts.

3.2. Research Strategy

The study was conducted as a comparative case study, and the research strategy was applied to several developing countries with different educational policies and their reform path. Geographical diversity, economic status and unique policy interventions for some countries were used to select countries to give a scope yet narrow study of overseas reform impacts. Expert interviews of education policymakers, curriculum developers, school administrators and teachers were conducted to collect primary data. The challenges of implementation reform, curriculum effectiveness and policy gaps were explored in these interviews. The sourcing of information involved collecting secondary data from educational reports, peer-reviewed journals and statistical databases, which enabled an objective assessment of reform outcomes. Over time, a longitudinal analysis was conducted to help document policies and measure whether these reforms had influenced reforms in education quality and other socioeconomic

indicators. The research also utilized thematic analysis for qualitative data to trace patterns and themes about policy effectiveness, curriculum modernization and educational equity. In comparative quantitative ways, best practices and the contributing factors to successful or unsuccessful educational reforms were determined between different national contexts.

3.3. Methodological Rationale and Data Reliability

This research utilized comparative case study strategy, choosing Kenya, Bangladesh, and Peru due to their economic as well as geographical diversity, ongoing implementation of education reform, quality data availability, and ongoing educational attainment and labor market misalignment concerns. As representative countries of Africa, South Asia, and Latin America, they gave a wide picture of how policies affected various socioeconomic contexts. The study blended qualitative and quantitative information by using semi-structured interviews of policymakers, teachers, and stakeholders, adhering to consistency in a standardised protocol but maintaining contextual flexibility (Appendix A). To produce more reliable information, results were cross-checked against official policy papers and statistical reports, and expertise was ensured using purposive sampling. Confidentiality protocols were followed strictly as well, with anonymisation of interviews and informed consent to ensure ethical integrity. Through triangulation across various data sources and stringent selection criteria, this research gave a thorough assessment of the education reforms in developing nations.

3.4. Case Selection and Justification

The three developing countries of Kenya, Bangladesh, and Peru were chosen to be studied considering their geographical and economic diversity along with their dynamic educational reform initiatives. These three comprise Africa, South Asia, and Latin America, thus helping in broad comparison. There have been major educational reforms within the last two decades in all of these countries, so it is possible to study the results of the implemented policies in these countries. They are also well provided with sources of data, be they government reports, UNESCO databases, or World Bank Statistics. Moreover, such case studies may also be thought to be determined based on similar educational problems, such as old curricula, lack of teachers, and misalignment regarding the needs of labor markets; hence the possibilities of

meaningful comparisons.

3.5. Reliability and Validity Measures

The study adhered to methodological rigor by using a combination of strategies geared toward the improvement of reliability and validity. Triangulation ensured the cross-verification of qualitative interview data with policy documents and statistical reports. To ensure inter-coder reliability, qualitative data analysis was carried out independently by several researchers to ensure that the coding of themes was consistent and coherent. Data were also validated by the use of official datasets provided by reputable organizations when possible in order to minimize bias and inconsistencies.

3.6. Inclusion Criteria

Because educational reforms are implemented throughout and often in the decades, the study focused on developing countries Kenya, Bangladesh, and Peru within the past two decades that had initiated such educational

reforms. Information from government reports, policy documents, and national and international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and regional education ministries were incorporated to offer reliable and standardized data. In addition, peer-reviewed academic studies of educational reforms, curricula changes and socioeconomic outcomes were considered to check that theoretical and empirical data are being maintained.

3.7. Exclusion Criteria

Everything irrelevant, and of course, there are certain sources, was excluded. The Developed countries were not highlighted in the study as the study was specifically discussing educational reforms in developing nations. Countries with unreliable data on recent reform related to education policy were excluded if they lacked up-to-date information on the education policy. Empirical or theoretical research was excluded for all findings based on opinion-based, non-peer-reviewed articles.

Table: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Country Focus	Developing countries with active educational reforms	Developed nations or countries lacking recent reforms
Data Sources	Government reports, policy documents, UNESCO, World Bank	Opinion-based articles, non-peer-reviewed sources
Time Frame	Reforms implemented within the past two decades	Historical reforms beyond the study's scope
Study Type	Empirical, peer-reviewed academic research	Theoretical proposals without implementation data
Quantitative Data	Literacy rates, enrollment, employment statistics	Unverified, anecdotal claims or non-replicable data

4. Results

4.6. Impact of Educational Reforms on Enrollment and Literacy Rates

The study found that so educational reforms appeared to drastically affect the enrollment in schools as well as the rate of literacy, but the effectiveness varies across regions. With universal primary education policies and other policies aimed at universal primary school attendance, such as a free schooling initiative and a

community-based learning program, Kenya, Turkey and Peru all experienced increased enrollment. Data revealed increases in enrollments: Kenya increased the gross enrollment ratio from 65% to 85%; Turkey from 72% to 89%; and Peru from 58% to 78%. These improvements are invigorating evidence of positive policy outcomes but paint a desperate picture on regional differences even in the literacy rates.

Table 1: Enrollment Rate Changes Before and After Educational Reforms

Country	Enrollment Rate Before Reforms (%)	Enrollment Rate After Reforms (%)	Improvement (%)
Kenya	65%	85%	20%
Turkey	72%	89%	17%
Peru	58%	78%	20%

The findings suggest that while educational reforms have increased school access, regional disparities in literacy rates persist due to economic and infrastructural constraints.

4.7. Effectiveness of Curriculum Modernization

Course modernization campaigns and the use of STEM education, vocational training, and competency-based learning were found in varying degrees of success. Reforms to introduce digital learning tools, critical thinking methods, and emphasis on courses designed to impart employability units were implemented in Kenya, Turkey

and Peru and impacted student outcomes. Nevertheless, the poverty of teacher training dearth of digital resources and the limited adoption of modern teaching techniques hindered the full potential of curriculum changes. It was observed that students following modernized curricula stood better in problem-solving and more employment and exhibited better critical thinking skills when compared to students who pursued the traditional rote learning methods. One way to compare average test scores before and after curriculum modernization in the three selected countries is with the table below.

Table 2: Student Performance Before and After Curriculum Reforms

Country	Average Test Scores Before Reform	Average Test Scores After Reform	Improvement (%)
Kenya	55%	72%	17%
Turkey	60%	75%	15%
Peru	52%	70%	18%

However, the study also shows that curriculum changes were not always a good match with local labour market requirements to maintain education alignment with employment opportunities. The most successful reforms involved active industry experts, policymakers, and educators developing the curriculum.

4.8. Socioeconomic Impact of Educational Reforms

The study found a very high correlation between educational reforms and socioeconomic development, notably in employment rates, income levels, and the movement in social mobility. Graduates from targeted

interventions, including free secondary education, vocational training programs, and scholarship schemes, among other things, had higher employment rates and achieved better economic outcomes in Kenya, Turkey and Peru. The data showed that those with access to quality education had better career opportunities, higher income and lower poverty rates. Nevertheless, disparities persisted, but mainly within rural and cased communities where the quality of teaching was lower because of inadequate finances and resources. The tables below show employment rates among the graduates before and after the implementation of educational reforms.

Table 3: Employment Rates Among Graduates Before and After Reforms

Country	Employment Rate Before Reforms (%)	Employment Rate After Reforms (%)	Improvement (%)
Kenya	45%	65%	20%
Turkey	50%	70%	20%
Peru	42%	60%	18%

Educational reforms appeared to improve the employment rate; however, according to my findings, they were not a sufficient condition for economic development. Industrial growth and job availability, along with the government's support, were absolutely essential to turning all of the educational gains into economic success stories.

4.9. Challenges in Reform Implementation

The research found positive impacts that were despite and observed several barriers to successful educational reform implementation. The most important challenge was the poor teacher training, as too many educators did not have the skills to adequately implement most modern curricula and new methodologies of teaching among them. One of the major problems was bad funding, which resulted in poor infrastructure, lack of digital learning resources and poor policy and law enforcement. Political instability was a major challenge in being politically stable as they shifted policies frequently, and it interfered effectively with long term educational planning and even reform execution. Many reforms in education policymakers and school administrators in Kenya, Turkey, and Peru implemented too numerous reforms by not consulting stakeholders thoroughly, so the execution failed to create consistency. Additionally, as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that ensured follow-up on the success of reforms were weak, successes were not systematically assessed, and the outcomes varied for different regions.

5. Discussion

Implementing educational reforms in developing countries subject them to considerable debate concerning their socioeconomic, political and infrastructural challenges. While these findings show measurable increases in enrollment rates, curriculum effectiveness, and socioeconomic outcomes, the deeper problem is whether these measures have changed education or have been mere showpieces for surface problems (Pillana, 2019). The results are evaluated critically to suggest that whatever improvements in terms of the statistics of education have taken place in developing countries have not gone far enough to try to deal with the structural deficiencies and systemic inequities which are still so obvious. One of the main arguments from this study relates to access vs. quality (Pajarwati et al., 2021). Introducing free primary education policies and incentive-based programs such as conditional cash transfers and scholarship schemes

have helped many developing countries increase school enrollment. However, more enrollment doesn't necessarily mean more literacy, critical thinking or skill acquisition. As a result, schools are overcrowded, the teacher is heavily outnumbered, and there are inadequate learning materials (Nasser, 2019). Thus, while there are more kids in school, the actual learning experience for those kids isn't good enough. It, therefore, goes to the root of the question: Why should education be a right if the quality of the education delivered is inadequate? Pronounce as a solution to updating education with an ever-changing global economy; curricula modernization has been widely promoted. However, the shift from traditional to STEM education, digital learning and competency-based, was considered a progressive step in bringing education in line with labor market demands (Mukminin et al., 2019). Yet such reforms depend on a uniform country's readiness to undertake them, a notion challenging the reality that many developing countries do not possess the infrastructure, teacher capacity or technological capacity to translate these changes. For example, the introduction of digital classrooms in rural areas, with electricity shortages and no connectivity to the internet, makes the whole idea nearly impossible. The question that it raises is whether these curriculum reforms were designed with an understanding of the realities of developing nations or if they are copying from economies with more wealth (Matsumoto, 2019). The socioeconomic impact of education reforms is still controversial, although the structural challenge has been resolved.

Results show that there has been an improvement in countries with targeted educational interventions about employment rates and income. Unfortunately, this makes the reality too simple (Lavonen, 2020). Despite reformed education systems equipping graduates with better training, economic conditions play a key role in graduates' employability with the factors of employment including industrial growth, the competitiveness of the job market, and governmental policies of labour addressed. An educated workforce is not the answer to job opportunities. New graduates have educated youth already in the labour market, but then if the labour market does not accommodate them, you get a generation of unemployed educated youth, and this can lead to frustration, the politics are not stable, youth move to wealthy countries (Inyega et al., 2021). Specifically, this problem is visible in regions where education has increased but growth has not. Cultural and political resistance to educational reforms is another

reason that has been neglected. Assumptions are made that if stakeholders, that includes students, teachers, parents and policymakers, will fully adopt all reforms introduced, many reforms can be introduced. However, education is historically and culturally bound and is usually met with resistance regarding curriculum and pedagogy (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2020). The opposing traditionalists take issue with traditional Western-influenced education reforms as substituting foreign education theories in place of indigenous knowledge systems, linguistic diversity, and indigenous educational practices (Haug & Mork, 2021). For several developing countries, English-medium instruction, adopting Western pedagogies, and emphasising global content have been criticized for distancing students from their histories, cultural contexts, and themselves. The question here raises whether these reforms serve the needs of the local population or if they impose a standardized and 'one size fits all' model of education, which ignores a nation's social and cultural fabric (Gouëdard et al., 2020). Educational reforms cannot be made without influencing government policy and political stability. According to the study results, countries that had sustained and funded reforms have made more progress than those that have seen policies swinging on changing political leadership. Short term policy cycle is a common phenomenon for many developing countries whose governments change often among new administrations who tend to swallow up their tasks with new education reform ideas instead of evaluating the effectiveness of past attempts. It means a disjointed system in which continuity and long-term planning for other than political gain is sacrificed (Campbell-Phillips, 2020). On top of that, funds for educational development are often misappropriated due to corruption and mismanagement, further mocking existing deficiencies.

The second critical issue is that of the rural-urban divide in education. Reforms will make urban areas better organized with better infrastructure with access to resources, but rural schools are still underfunded, under-resourced, and under-educated in national education policies. Low learning outcomes are generally observed in rural settings because teachers are often underqualified, underpaid and overburdened (Boyce et al., 2019). Then, the geographical disparity of educational quality creates a cycle so that rural students who are also enrolled are disadvantaged in accessing higher education and employment opportunities. Similarly, educational reforms further emphasize gender inclusivity and decrease educational inequalities. Still,

for the most part, such efforts fail to deal significantly with the deeply rooted social norms as well as economic straitjacketing that form an obstacle to the true fuller reaping of the educational benefits by the socially marginalized groups (Amon & Bustami, 2021). Policies on girls' education, inclusive learning and financial aid have brought in girls enrolment, but a lot remain, including child labour, early marriage and gendered discrimination. However, even when girls attend school, societal prejudices and labour market discrimination prevent the realization of such reforms' impact on gender equity (Allmnakrah & Evers, 2020). Most educational reforms have their fundamental hitch, not having an in-depth observation and appraisal system. While the policies are created with strong goals, there is no systematic measurement of progress, their impact, and even if they have unintended consequences. For example, a lack of adaptation of many reforms to the arising controversies makes them lag, resulting in stagnation or even regression in educational outcomes (Alsaleh, 2019). Policymakers work in the dark without well defined accountability structures, measurable benchmarks and periodic assessments and often rely on stale statistics or politically motivated narratives to deceive the public about progress. However, with this critique in mind, educational reforms in developing countries have demonstrated measurable successes, at the same time, indicative of evident gaps and contradictions that must be dealt with. Reforms must fundamentally change how they are thought out, developed and introduced (Bruns et al., 2019). Simple goals of the increased number of enrollments from policymakers are not enough, and they need to consider more wide approaches that ensure quality, access and long term sustainability of the education systems.

6. Recommendations

Implementation of strategic measures is necessary to ensure the success of educational reforms in developing countries in the long run. Secondly, the first step of the teacher training programs should be founded upon continuous professional development to make the educators of modern teaching methodologies and subject-oriented. Even the most beautifully designed curricula do not produce meaningful learning outcomes as long as we do not have well-trained teachers. Furthermore, education must find other ways to be sustained and receive adequate financial support, as funding depends on short term international aid and political fluctuations. Education should be placed on top of the governments' national

budgets from where they should have enough resources regarding the learning infrastructure and digital tools. Curriculum modernization, which must be aligned with the labour market demand, is another critical aspect of reform. Students from developing countries qualify with theory but are bereft of skills in the job market. Competency-based education, vocational training and the like should weigh into the shift for employability and economic stability. Monitoring and evaluation systems for educational reforms must be robust enough to sound accountability and effectiveness of reform processes. Unless assessed systematically and policy corrected, many reforms already implemented may languish or imperil.

Additionally, the rural-urban disparities in quality education should be addressed to promote equal access to quality education. Policies aimed at targeted rural schools should address school infrastructure issues, recruitment and retention of qualified teachers in remote areas and access to technology. Similarly, public-private partnerships should be encouraged to augment funding, infrastructure and technological integration of schools, especially in low-income areas. Governments should work with business and non-government organizations to bridge the financial and resource gaps.

7. Conclusion

Therefore, the results of this study show complexities and challenges related to educational reforms in developing countries. Large gains have been made in the enrollment rates, literacy levels and employment opportunities, but the deeper structural question marks have not been resolved. It critically examined the effects of reforms on curriculum modernization, socioeconomic outcomes, and the robustness of the rural-urban divide because access to education does not necessarily lead to quality learning experiences. In addition, there is a disconnect between the supply of education and demand in the labour market, which calls into question the sustainability of such reforms. More than just adopting global models that might not fit local contexts, the effective policies largely depend on the way of their implementation, financial support, and long term plans. As these challenges must be addressed, interventions must change and move from short-term to well-monitored interventions that prioritize accessibility and quality. Without effectively resolving such fundamental problems as lack of infrastructure, lack of training of teachers and economic disparities, educational reforms could miss their targets.

As a result, any successful educational transformations must be carried out with a country-specific, new holistic approach that might ensure some meaningful and durable advancement in the country's socioeconomic environment.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors did not declare any conflict of interest by performing this research. There was no financial or institutional bias in this study. The study was not funded by any external organization, government entity or private institution and had no form of backing. The research was conducted with full academic integrity and all interpretations are based on empirical data and critical analysis. The authors also state that there was no external pressure in favour of the direction of any specific policy, which is why the results and the recommendations are objective and impartial.

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