

## Overcoming Challenges of Education: Effects of Structural Violence and Advances in Quality Education in Colombia and Pakistan

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### ABSTRACT

Far from solely direct, structural violence moves stealthily within the very frameworks of society, injuring in ways not seen. Its harms manifest not in physical blows but through the architecture of injustice, through inequities etched into policies, laws, norms. Having this in mind, the main goal of this paper is to present how structural violence takes place in the sustainable development goal of Quality Education (SDG4) in Colombia and Pakistan. To make it possible, structural violence will be defined, as well as the sustainable development goals, and in particular its goal 4 about quality of education. Likewise, it will be analyzed how SDG-4 correlates with other sustainable development goals. This study adopts a cyclical and exploratory approach to theory development as its scaffolding, specifically Grounded Theory methodology. data collection and analysis techniques follow the mixed method with a transformative theoretical design prioritizing qualitative interviews findings. Results highlight the current status of SDG 4 in Colombia and Pakistan, illuminating how ingrained systemic biases and discrimination undermine equitable quality education. Experts outline interlinked recommendations such as sustained investment in education systems, building societal recognition of education as a human right, engaging communities to shift discriminatory beliefs and norms, and centering marginalized groups' agency in political and social reform efforts. A multifaceted approach combining top-down resource provision and bottom-up consciousness-raising is advocated among other recommendations. Overcoming structural violence requires transforming systemic structures while simultaneously shifting societal mindsets perpetuating discrimination in education.

**Keywords:** structural violence; sustainable development goals; quality education

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# **Superando Los Desafíos de la Educación: Efectos de la Violencia Estructural Y Avances en la Educación de Calidad en Colombia Y Pakistán**

## **RESUMEN**

Lejos de ser únicamente directa, la violencia estructural se mueve sigilosamente dentro de los marcos mismos de la sociedad, dañando de maneras nunca vistas. Sus daños no se manifiestan en golpes físicos sino a través de la arquitectura de la injusticia, de las desigualdades grabadas en políticas, leyes y normas. Teniendo esto en cuenta, el objetivo principal de este artículo es presentar cómo se produce la violencia estructural en el objetivo de desarrollo sostenible de Educación de Calidad (ODS4) en Colombia y Pakistán. Para hacerlo posible, se definirán la violencia estructural, así como los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible, y en particular su objetivo 4 sobre calidad de la educación. Asimismo, se analizará cómo el ODS-4 se correlaciona con otros objetivos de desarrollo sostenible. Este estudio adopta un enfoque cíclico y exploratorio para el desarrollo de la teoría como su andamiaje, específicamente la metodología de la Teoría Fundamentada. Las técnicas de recolección y análisis de datos siguen el método mixto con un diseño teórico transformador que prioriza los hallazgos de las entrevistas cualitativas. Los resultados resaltan el estado actual del ODS-4 en Colombia y Pakistán, iluminando cómo los arraigados prejuicios sistémicos y la discriminación socavan la educación de calidad. Los expertos esbozan recomendaciones interrelacionadas, como la inversión sostenida en los sistemas educativos, la creación de reconocimiento social de la educación como un derecho humano, la participación de las comunidades para cambiar las creencias y normas discriminatorias y el centrar la fuerza de acción en los grupos más marginados por medio de reformas políticas y sociales. Entre otras recomendaciones, se aboga por un enfoque multifacético que combine la provisión de recursos de arriba hacia abajo y la sensibilización de abajo hacia arriba. Superar la violencia estructural requiere transformar las estructuras sistémicas y, al mismo tiempo, cambiar la mentalidad social que perpetúa la discriminación en la educación.

**Palabras claves:** violencia estructural; objetivos de desarrollo sostenible; educación de calidad

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to focus on identifying and analyzing the main barriers structural violence does in the accomplishment of the sustainable development goal four (4) about the quality of education. The main question of this research is “What is the impact of structural violence on the progress of Quality Education (SDG4) in Colombia and Pakistan?”. In order to give response to it, a deeper view of structural violence will be presented, sustainable development goals will be identified, and in particular, sustainable development goal four about the quality of education in Colombia and Pakistan.

Violence need not manifest in outright brutality to inflict its harms; it can operate through deprivation and injustice encoded into social architecture. Scholars delineate diverse modalities of such violence that operate structurally, through unequal access, systems of oppression, and the omnipresent threat of retaliation for resistance. There are three forms of structural violence manifestation proposed by Chroback (2022), they are social injustice, direct violence caused by an unjust social system, and a permanent threat embedded in the social system.

The first one consists of social injustice, it is when people are treated unfairly because of aspects like their race or where they come from. For example, when children and teenagers may not be able to go to school because of lack of access to the education system, or due to families’ economic barriers (Lawrence and Karim, 2007). The second way structural violence is manifested is when people are hurt by the actions of a system or an institution. For example, prisoners may be treated badly in jail to the point of committing suicide. This way of manifestation of structural violence is an act of direct violence. The third way is a constant threat such as when people are scared to speak out because they are afraid of what might happen (Chroback, 2022). This is called dormant violence, and it can be used to control people even though it is not visible. Within the socio-political system, structural violence comes up as a pervasive influence. Structural violence, intrinsically, flourishes within settings marked by prejudice, impoverishment, disparities, and deeply entrenched systemic prejudices. This is why it is important to explore some of the indicators and how structural violence comes to impact them such as education, economy and health.

## **Educational Inequalities: Barriers to Quality Education**

Structural violence and educational disparities are closely related in a number of important ways. These include institutional obstacles to high-quality education. Inequitable access to education and learning opportunities is frequently caused by systemic discrimination (Noltemeyer, et al, 2012) against low-income minorities (Darling-Hammond, 1998), and marginalized identity groups (Yoon and Lubienski, 2017). “Common examples of structural violence include racism, sexism, poverty, hunger, discriminatory policing, and health inequalities” (Dutta, et al, 2016, p. 2). Lack of access to education is intimately associated with structural violence, which is represented by race, gender, caste, indigeneity, and economic inequality.

Additionally, underfunded schools in disadvantaged districts perpetuate cycles of limited opportunity, low literacy and skills (Bishop, 2014), and intergenerational poverty (McEwen and McEwen, 2017). This represents routinized injustice and harm at scale. Harassment, bullying, and stigma in school settings pushes certain students, especially those facing discrimination, to drop out altogether (Bishop, 2014). The distress causes enduring psychological damage and are also barriers to quality education.

Why are children of poor parents more likely to be poor as adults than other children? Early-childhood adversities resulting from social structures and relationships impact children's bodily systems and brain development through recurrent stress. These socially patterned biological processes influence social reproduction. Social support and interventions can prevent or compensate for the early biological effects of toxic social environments (McEwen and McEwen, 2017, p. 445).

Physical and sexual attacks on students and teachers often happen because of unfair systems and bad attitudes towards different identities. Also, not teaching minority-language students in their own language and using lessons that only focus on one culture make it hard for them to feel connected and learn properly (Howes, 2016). These things are big walls that stop students from getting a good education. And when people try to speak up for fair education, they might get in trouble or face threats from those in charge, which just shuts them down and stops them from

making positive changes (Sharif, et al, 2022). It shows that there are big problems in education that need fixing so that everyone can learn in a fair and inclusive way.

In essence, barriers to education access and quality education reinforce the status quo of inequality across racial, socioeconomic, gender and other divides, enacting distress, limiting potential, and forcing people into restrictive life trajectories based solely on their identity or circumstances of birth. Transforming structures perpetuating educational marginalization thus requires dismantling broader systemic violence. Progress on SDG 4 necessitates confronting unjust systems restricting human dignity, freedom and possibility from our youngest ages. More equitable educational opportunities can catalyze change across generations.

### **Economic Injustices: The Perpetuation of Poverty and Wealth Inequality**

Economic injustice and wealth inequality are direct outcomes of the unfair systems built into policies, cultural norms, and how things are governed. Some big factors include laws, subsidies, and tax rules that often favor rich people more (Kaplow and Shavell, 2000), letting wealth and assets pass down through generations among privileged groups. This sets up a kind of hidden everyday violence. Unfair global trade rules (Goldstein and Krasner, 1984), laws about who owns ideas (Drassinower, 2006), and big international company plans gather money and power in rich, former colonial countries, making them stronger and poorer nations more dependent. “Wars and coups keep low-income countries from growing and hence keep them dependent upon exports of primary commodities” (Collier, 2008, p. 37).

Richer countries using a lot of resources, along with governments not doing much about it, make climate change worse, hitting poorer countries the hardest economically. This unfairness in the environment will make future poverty worse. “Because they stay poor [meaning developing countries], stagnant, and dependent upon primary commodities they are prone to wars and coups” (Collier, 2008, p. 37). People being forced to leave their homes because of climate change or violence also mess up their jobs and how much money they have, starting a cycle of getting poorer. Government corruption, lack of responsibility, big companies taking control, and other problems with how things are governed make markets work in ways that help rich people more

than those who are left out. This is why Collier (2008) concludes that “wars and coups feed on themselves in other ways that make history repeat itself” (p. 37).

### **Structural Violence in Colombia**

Structural violence in Colombia refers to the systemic inequalities and injustices embedded within the social, economic, and political structures of the country. These inequalities perpetuate violence by depriving certain groups of access to basic resources, opportunities, and rights. Several key factors contribute to structural violence in Colombia.

One significant aspect that perpetuates structural violence in Colombia is the historical context of internal conflict and social disparities. As Maher and Thomson (2018) explained, Colombia has faced a long history of armed conflict, leading to widespread violence and displacement, particularly affecting marginalized communities. “Colombia has one of the largest internally displaced populations in the world, standing at 6.8 million at the end of 2022, with over 1 million new displacements since the signing of the Peace Agreement in 2016.” (United Nations Refugee Agency, p. 1). Socioeconomic inequalities further perpetuate structural violence. As demonstrated by Garcia-Ramirez, and et al (2020), disparities in income, education, healthcare, and access to basic services are prevalent in Colombia. Marginalized populations, including Afro-Colombians, Indigenous peoples, and rural communities, bear the brunt of these inequalities (Berents, 2013). Land distribution is another critical factor contributing to structural violence. Land ownership concentration has resulted in land dispossession and conflicts over resources. This has a profound impact on poverty levels and opportunities for development (Faguet, et al, 2020). The effects of structural violence are evident in the education sector. According to the report by Thomas, et al. (2018), marginalized communities often face inadequate school infrastructure, a shortage of qualified teachers, and limited access to educational resources. These disparities perpetuate social inequities and hinder social mobility.

Addressing structural violence in Colombia requires comprehensive approaches grounded in social justice principles. As advocated by López and Valdés (2000), strategies such as land reform, economic empowerment programs, investment in education and healthcare infrastructure, and policies promoting social inclusion are crucial for reducing structural violence and fostering

a more equitable society. Structural violence in Colombia is rooted in historical conflict, socioeconomic disparities, land distribution, and educational inequalities. Understanding and addressing these underlying structural factors are essential for promoting peace, justice, and sustainable development in the country.

### **Structural Violence in Pakistan**

Pakistan is a country that faces numerous deeply-entrenched inequities that enact violence—both seen and unseen—upon marginalized groups. Key markers of identity like gender, religious affiliation, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status broadly dictate access to resources, economic opportunities, security, and political representation (Zulfiqar, 2022). Decades of discriminatory laws and underinvestment in development have reinforced a social hierarchy that structurally disadvantages minorities and vulnerable populations.

A prime example lies in access to education. Due to a shortage of public schools, 25 million children lack access in Pakistan (Naviwala, 2016). The disparity falls heavily along gender lines; less than half of low-income girls complete primary schooling due to cultural barriers, including early marriage (Naviwala, 2016). This lack of educational access for girls and women has intergenerational impacts, contributing to the cycle of poverty among marginalized populations (Naviwala, 2016). It represents a form of violence that maintains the status quo.

While less visible than overt interpersonal violence, these forms of structured violence still inflict psychological and material wounds for those impacted, constraining life choices and potential on a mass scale (Shaheed, 2009). They also curb cultural and economic contributions to wider society by marginalizing entire groups from accessing opportunity. In addition to these systemic inequities through biased policies are issues like forced conversions of religious minorities and child marriages that represent active oppression by unjust social structures (Shaheed, 2009). Religious minorities report coercion to convert under threat of false blasphemy accusations (Shaheed, 2009). Early marriage for young girls also violates bodily autonomy while locking them into cycles of poverty (Shaheed, 2009).

Meanwhile, activism or dissent from oppressed groups often faces violent backlash or the threat thereof. Human rights defenders highlighting issues impacting women, religious minorities, and

marginalized ethnic groups frequently endure retaliation, judicial harassment, and baseless legal cases in response to their work (Landman, 2006). This climate of intimidation and fear represents a chilling effect on any resistance to structural violence.

However, despite harassment and barriers, activists and civil society groups across Pakistan continue drawing attention to and resisting sources of structural oppression. Collectives like the Aurat March and Human Rights Commission of Pakistan actively advocate for marginalized groups through awareness, legal help, and pressuring policy reform (Saeed and Batool, 2021). They underscore the links between raced, classed, and gendered policy gaps and violence. Though the challenges persist, their work represents hope for restorative justice.

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure peace and prosperity for all people by 2030 (Jeremić and Sachs, 2014). Specifically, the 17 SDGs outline a blueprint for shared progress across:

- Ending poverty and hunger
- Improving health, education, gender equality, clean water and energy access
- Promoting decent economic growth and jobs
- Tackling climate change
- Preserving oceans, forests and biodiversity
- Promoting justice and partnerships between governments, private sector and civil society

(United Nations, 2024)

The SDGs provide a common framework for addressing the world's biggest sustainable development challenges, with targets and indicators to track progress across economic, social and environmental dimensions (Kanbur, et al, 2018). Achieving the SDGs requires coordinated efforts across policy, financing, innovation, data monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The 2030 deadline aims to spur immediate and impactful actions over the next decade to put all countries, collectively, on a path towards more equitable and sustainable development (Kanbur, et al, 2018).

The SDGs build on the Millennium Development Goals while encompassing additional key issues like responsible consumption, climate action, peace and justice (Hales and Birdthistle, 2023). They represent universal objectives that all countries have a shared stake in achieving. Progress on the SDGs is thus critical for people and the planet.

#### **SDG Number 4: Quality Education**

The fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-4) which is Quality Education is one of the most important ones, it is a keystone of the broader SDG framework. Education is broadly acclaimed as a powerful catalyst for transformative change and it obliges as a linchpin for the accomplishment of many other SDGs. In this section, the primary role of the SDG-4 within the global sustainability agenda is explored as well as its specific targets and indicators.

#### **The Multifaceted Role of SDG-4 in the Broader SDG Framework**

SDG-4, "Quality Education" surpasses its role as a standalone goal and comes up as a multifaceted cornerstone within the broader SDG framework. Its worth lies in its acknowledgement of education not as a secluded sector but as a transformative and intersecting force with the capacity to catalyze progress across the entire 2030 Agenda. Quality education is not merely a goal but it comes up as a facilitator for change having the potential to foster economic development, reducing inequalities, breaking the chains of poverty and promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

The UNESCO (2017) document "Unpacking Sustainable Development Goal 4: Education 2030" on the SDG 4 stipulates that, SDG 4 or SDG4-Education 2030, within the larger framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, puts a compelling emphasis on the importance of learning across various dimensions. This includes gaining vocational and technical skills for work as well as the development of global citizenship awareness in this more and more connected world. It pinpoints the locus of current learning in pre-primary, primary, secondary and adult literacy education. This document also shows that there is of course an inherent need for increased public funding for education. This means the provision of a specific percentage of public expenditure and GDP to education. A lifelong learning methodology is encouraged and there is a call for the formation of systems for identifying, corroborating and accrediting learning acquired outside formal education institutions.

As per this comprehensive document the SDG 4 not only revolves around education but is central to the core objectives of the 2030 Agenda. It incorporates a variety of indispensable aspects, which include the ensuring of universal access to quality education as well as promotion of lifelong learning opportunities and the recognition that the significance of learning is also for vocational and technical skills (UNESCO, 2017). In this way, the scope of SDG 4 is extensive and goes from pre-primary to primary and secondary education, as well as making sure that equal opportunity for effective quality post-secondary education and training is of extreme value (UNESCO, 2017). The most integral part of the goal is that it intensively advocates for inclusive and equitable education, available to all individuals regardless of their age, gender or background (UNESCO 2017).

It is also essential, as per the document, to understand that SDG 4 cannot be attained in isolation because it is interlinked with various other SDGs, for example by Target 3.7, which call for global access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services, including educational aspects. Comprehending the pledges of SDG 4 demands multi-stakeholder partnerships and coordination across all levels to integrate these aspirations into national education development initiatives. Furthermore, it also advocates for increased public funding for education, broadening of funding sources and transparency as well as shared responsibility among all partners.

#### **Targets and Indicators of SDG-4**

To translate this vision into perceptible outcomes, SDG-4 is designed around a set of detailed targets and indicators which are not only specific but also offer a detailed framework for measuring progress. These targets postulate a map for improving the education systems worldwide. They are key elements of the SDG 4 are briefly presented and analyzed below. In short, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 covers an in-depth vision for education and focuses on numerous aspects:

**Universal Primary and Secondary Education (4.1):** By the year 2030, the objective is to make sure that all children, irrespective of their gender get to receive free, fair and quality (UNESCO, 2017). This includes education on the primary and secondary levels and leads to consequential learning outcomes.

**Early Childhood Development and Universal Pre-Primary Education (4.2):** The goal is to deliver all children with accessible quality early childhood development and pre-primary education which will deem to prepare them for primary education (UNESCO, 2017).

**Equal Access to Technical/Vocational and Higher Education (4.3):** By the year 2030, the objective is to extend to equal and reasonable access to education including technical, vocational and tertiary education, which includes higher education for men, women, and other genders as well (UNESCO, 2017).

**Relevant Skills for Decent Work (4.4):** This aim concentrates on considerably expanding the quantity of youth and adults which have relevant skills which include technical and vocational skills, to attain employment and other entrepreneurship opportunities by the year 2030 (UNESCO, 2017).

**Gender Equality and Inclusion (4.5):** The main aim of this goal is to eradicate gender inequalities in the system of education and provide equitable access to education and vocational training for vulnerable marginalized groups which include persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in susceptible situations (UNESCO, 2017).

**Universal Youth Literacy (4.6):** By the year 2030, the objective is to make sure that all youth, as well as a considerable proportion of adults of all genders, achieve literacy and numeracy skills (UNESCO, 2017).

**Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (4.7):** The objective of this goal is to train all learners with the skills and knowledge to endorse sustainable development. This comprises human rights, gender equality, global citizenship and the positive reception of cultural diversity as a contributory factor to sustainable development (UNESCO, 2017).

**Effective Learning Environments (4.a):** The aim of this target is to structure and develop education facilities which are responsive to the requirement of children as well as with persons with disabilities and are gender sensitized as well (UNESCO, 2017). These services should encourage a safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environment for all.

**Scholarships (4.b):** By the year 2020, the objective is to notably enhance the availability of grants for students coming from developing countries. This should have a specific focus on least

developed countries including the small island developing states, as well as African countries (UNESCO, 2017). This funding ought to cover enrollment in higher education, vocational training, and certain programs in IT and communications technology, engineering and scientific disciplines in both developed and developing countries.

**Teachers and Educators (4.c):** The goal of this target is to significantly expand the pool of competent and skilled teachers, with a stress on international collaboration for teacher training in the developing countries. There is a focus on advocating for special attention directed towards the least advanced countries and small island developing states (UNESCO, 2017). This basically implies that there be a provision of support and resources to augment the number of qualified educators in these regions.

These objectives correspond to a detailed and consistent approach to education and encompass addressing issues of not just access but also quality education, relevance and most importantly, inclusivity with a robust emphasis on sustainable development and global citizenship. Moreover, the extensiveness of these indicators points out to the many-sided nature of SDG-4. In conclusion, SDG-4, “Quality Education” operates as a cornerstone in the wider SDG framework. It is not an isolated goal but is a catalytic target for progressing across many other dimensions of sustainable development (Boeren, 2019). By concentrating on precise targets and indicators, this goal envisages a world where high quality, equitable and inclusive education is accessible to all and it empowers individuals to drive transformative change and adds to the realization of the entire 2030 Agenda.

### **Correlation with Other SDGs**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal-4 which is about “Quality Education” has a crucial role in affecting and being affected by some of the other goals. This has created a very interdependent structure between the SDGs. In this section, there is a thorough examination of the elaborate inter-linkages existing between the SDG-4 and some of the other key goals, like SDG-1 (No Poverty), SDG-5 (Gender Equality), and SDG-10 (Reduced Inequalities). Additionally, this is a discussion on how development in education can chart the accomplishment

of these goals and vice versa, demonstrating the synergetic nature of sustainable development (UNESCO 2015).

Vladimirovaa and Le-Blanc (2015) observe that the United Nations reports successfully exemplify the links between SDG-4 (education) and various other SDGs, only the SDG-14 (oceans) remains an exception. These reports bring about the causal relationships running in both guidelines, suggesting the impact of education on other goal areas and vice versa. Amongst these connections, there is notable emphasis on the interplay between education and SDG-1 (poverty), SDG-8 (growth) as well as SDG-5 (gender). In contrast, links with SDG-7 (energy), SDG-6 (water), SDG-11 (cities), SDG-12 (sustainable consumption and production), and SDG-13 (climate change) receive comparatively less attention in the UN flagship publications. The interconnectedness between education and other SDGs exhibits noteworthy variation across the 17 SDGs, with certain goals in the sample missing any apparent links to education.

For starters, the SDG-4 and SDG-1 which is about eradicating poverty display an interesting connection because both emphasized the crucial role of education in fighting against poverty. This mutual relationship encompasses a vigorous interplay between these goals since quality education as well as poverty eradication are mutually reinforcing (UNESCO, 2017)

**Role of SDG-4 in Poverty Eradication (SDG-1):** Education plays a crucial role in poverty alleviation by providing skills and access to economic opportunities. Poverty reduction is also a prerequisite for achieving quality education, as poverty is a barrier to education access and attainment.

**Role of SDG-4 in Promoting Gender Equality (SDG-5):** SDG 4 aims to eliminate gender disparities in education systems and empower girls and women through inclusive, equitable education. Promoting gender equality is critical for realizing SDG 4, as it creates an environment conducive to equal educational opportunities.

**SDG-4 in Reduced Inequalities (SDG-10):** SDG 4 and SDG 10 have a reciprocal relationship. SDG 4 focuses on inclusive education, which directly contributes to reducing inequalities within and between countries (SDG 10). Providing access to quality education for marginalized

communities is a tool to break down inequalities and discrimination. Conversely, reducing inequalities is necessary to achieve SDG 4, as inequalities pose barriers to accessing education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The theoretical framework for this comparative study has a fundamental role to play in addressing the research gaps and offering an organized approach to understanding the relationship between structural violence and Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG-4). To guarantee an inclusive and detailed analysis, the proposed research employs ‘Grounded Theory’ as the theoretical framework, supplemented by a mixed-method research approach. Additionally, a transformative design typology will be used for the incorporation of quantitative and qualitative data to offer a well-versed understanding of the effects of structural violence on SDG-4.

### **Grounded Theory: Constructing Theories from Data**

Grounded theory is a qualitative research methodology that focuses on inductively constructing theories from empirical data, instead of testing predetermined hypotheses (Glaser, 1967; Strauss, 2017). Championed by Charmaz (2005, 2006, 2014), it offers a systematic approach to explore participants' perspectives and actions through fieldwork, ensuring theories are grounded in real-world complexities. Grounded theory is particularly useful for studying complex social phenomena like the impact of structural violence on education (SDG 4). Its inductive nature allows methodically exploring indices of structural violence and their influence on educational aspects through empirical, context-specific data (Bytheway, 2018).

### **Mixed-Method Approach: Complementing Insights**

By adopting a mixed-method approach, this research seeks to fill in the gap between quantitative and qualitative research while ensuring that a more multidimensional analysis of the issue is done. 14 interviews were applied to experts from Colombia and Pakistan, each nation conducted seven interviews using instruments administered in their original tongues (Urdu and Spanish), which were subsequently translated into English. The transcriptions of the interviews followed an Intelligent Verbatim methodology. The interview results will be presented in the light of statistical secondary information about the topics discussed, especially in the countries comparative section.

### **Transformative Design Typology: Integration Across Research Stages**

The research integrates quantitative and qualitative data sets across multiple stages using a transformative design typology (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). This typology, guided by Creswell and Clark (2017), goes beyond merely presenting findings by interactively incorporating both data types throughout conceptualization, methodology design, analysis, and inference stages (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). The transformative approach enables a detailed examination of the effects of structural violence on SDG 4 (Quality Education) by combining data throughout the research process. It fosters a deeper understanding of the interplay between structural violence, educational access, and quality. The interactive integration across stages aims to provide a comprehensive, multifaceted perspective on the issue. In conclusion, the research utilizes a robust theoretical framework which is 'Grounded Theory' to disentangle the complexities of structural violence's impact on SDG-4. The mixed-method approach makes sure that there are comprehensive insights, while the transformative design typology enables this integration at various research stages. This methodology is aimed at the contribution of a more nuanced and deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in achieving quality education as outlined in SDG-4.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents findings from 14 expert interviews in Pakistan and Colombia on impacts of structural violence on educational access and quality. Interviews were conducted in native languages, translated to English and cited using pseudonyms (Hassan for Pakistan, Maria for Colombia). Organized into emergent categories. The findings are organized in order to answer the research question and by emergent categories (deductive coding) representing the impacts of structural violence on education access and quality in the two national contexts of Colombia and Pakistan.

#### **How does structural violence affect the quality education goal in Colombia?**

The expert interviews highlighted how Colombia's internal conflicts and violence have severely disrupted education, especially in rural regions. Attacks on schools have left facilities destroyed (Maria 01, 04, 05, 07). Teachers also face threats forcing them to abandon schools (Maria 02).

Although overall enrollment rates suggest progress towards gender parity, dynamics still inhibit access - girls are confined to domestic duties while economic pressures compel some boys into work rather than school (Maria 01). Ultimately these security risks and socioeconomic barriers diminish both the provision and quality of education across Colombia. The experts emphasize how entrenched violence alongside gender and economic constraints intersect to obstruct educational access and advancement. This confirms what Fergusson, Ibáñez, and Riano (2020) state on their research about conflict and education in Colombia, “individuals exposed to violence during and especially before their schooling years experience a significant and economically meaningful decrease in years of schooling” (p. 335). Resolutions require comprehensive reforms addressing this complex interplay of systemic factors threatening the education system.

Maria 06 stated that *“forced displacement from climate change or violent conflict also severely disrupts livelihoods and income stability of affected populations, driving cycles of impoverishment”*. The expert rightly highlights how forced displacement, whether from climate change impacts or violent conflict, wreaks havoc on people's economic stability. Losing one's home, community, assets and access to resources thrusts families into extreme uncertainty, making it immensely difficult to earn income in the aftermath. Displaced individuals struggle to secure basic necessities, much less recover their former livelihood activities or market engagement. This sudden economic precarity and downward mobility then traps families in cycles of deepening impoverishment from which escape becomes even harder. Every instance of forced displacement thus threatens to sow destitution through the inherent loss of livelihood capacity. Importantly, the expert notes both climate and conflict as drivers, emphasizing the compounding interactions of environmental and violence-related crises in fueling contemporary displacement worldwide. The profound economic disempowerment caused by involuntary migration represents one of the most cruel impacts that global humanitarian challenges impose on vulnerable people. Addressing the income-destroying fallout from forced migration remains essential for human progress and sustainable development overall, alongside mitigating displacement drivers themselves. Analyzing this factor provides insight into one of the most damaging economic chain effects that climate and conflict can trigger among affected groups.

Additionally, Maria 02 points that the main sources of structural violence in education in Colombia are “*government corruption, lack of accountability, regulatory capture by corporations, and other governance gaps distort markets in ways benefitting elites over marginalized citizens*”. The expert keenly connects Colombia's governance gaps and distorted economic policies to unequal access to quality education across socioeconomic lines. She argues that government corruption, weak accountability, and corporate cronyism consolidate resources among elite groups at the expense of marginalized citizens – systemic inequities that carry over to fuel disparities in educational opportunities. Wealthy and dominant groups shape public policies and spending to serve their own interests rather than meet the needs of disadvantaged populations, starving lower-income communities of investments in strong schools, teachers, and academic excellence. Consequently, the structural violence embedded in Colombia’s governing and economic institutions propagates educational inequality divided along income and privilege. Progress on ensuring equitable access to quality education first requires transforming the political and market systems that concentrate advantage in the hands of the elite versus vulnerable peoples. The expert incisively frames deficits in Colombia’s education system as stemming from deeper injustices in public and private institutions – inequities that must be confronted through good governance and economic reforms as a prerequisite to tackling unequal access to educational excellence across populations in Colombia.

#### **How does structural violence affect the quality education goal in Pakistan?**

The experts cite political instability, governance gaps, and deficient policymaking as key drivers of systemic inequality and violence undermining Pakistan’s education system (Hassan 01, 03 and 05). Specifically, they emphasize how partisan interests shape budgets and reforms more than evidence-based practices, yielding policies disconnected from ground realities while lack of accountability enables continuation of status quo inequities. Implementation and enforcement of policies meant to expand access also remains extremely weak, from the unfulfilled constitutional mandate of free schooling for children 5-16 years old to the imbalance in availability of primary versus secondary schools, trends that entrench disparities (Hassan 01). Furthermore, exclusion of insights from students, parents, teachers, and communities in policy formulation undermines

relevance while overcentralization concentrates power among out-of-touch bureaucratic and political elites (Haynes, 2013). These interconnected failures ultimately propagate an education system reflecting and reinforcing social inequalities rather than mitigating them. As a way to overcome this, Khushik (2021) proposes that “teacher training, basic facilities and community involvement can enhance and scale up the achievement of targets in SDGs” (p. 1) in Pakistan.

Inequalities and discrimination along economic, religious, ethnic and social lines persistently marginalize particular student groups in Pakistan, according to the experts. Hassan 04 notes how lower-income families face compounding barriers to education access and transitions, as "people in the low-income quartile have no access to education or poor access" at higher academic levels that require greater resources. These economic divides intertwine with other factors, as religious minorities (cited by Hassan 06) and rural populations (noted by Hassan 07) confront harshly disproportionate exclusion. Hassan 07 specifically highlights how rural marginalized children encounter discrimination negatively impacting the quality, practices and resources underpinning their education opportunities. Ultimately, the intersection of socioeconomic status with other identity factors propagates an inequitable education system denying the country's most vulnerable students. As Hassan 04 summarizes, the poorest quartiles struggle at every academic transition point while stacked discrimination further immobilizes minorities, rural residents and other marginalized learners. These dynamics reinforce education inequality and accessibility divides along economic, social, religious and geographic lines in Pakistan.

### **How does structural violence affect the quality education goal in Colombia and Pakistán?**

#### **A Comparative Study**

While Colombia and Pakistan differ substantially in history, demographics, and development trajectories, the two nations share the burden of violence, inequality and marginalization undermining education. This comparative analysis will continue illuminating common barriers alongside distinct drivers propagating disparities in each context. Understanding these dynamics is imperative, as quality education fuels human development and peaceful, just societies.

## **Violence, Insecurity, and Conflict**

Pakistan and Colombia share the unfortunate burden of protracted violence and conflict disrupting education access, though the nature and drivers manifest distinctly in each setting. As Hassan 07 describes, “*the history of conflicts in Pakistan affects education causing disruption, displacement, and resource scarcity. All fading into structural violence*”. Pakistan's history of conflicts has broadly affected education through displacement, resource deprivation, and systemic ruptures that entrench inequality - impacts still felt despite periods of relative peace. Maria 03 highlights both direct and indirect ways ongoing violence in Colombia also obstructs quality learning, from student substance abuse and educator threats to physical danger zones around schools themselves. However, Maria 03 additionally notes lingering taboos and polarization impeding open discourse as a legacy of past conflict, alongside periodic destabilizing flare-ups despite recent peace accords. She emphasizes the resulting uneven, unsettled landscape that continues thwarting equitable quality education there.

While both Pakistan and Colombia grapple with conflict-related blows to education across generations, the cases reveal variation in terms of specific channels of impact as well as their root drivers and surrounding social dynamics. Nonetheless, the overarching theme remains of violence erecting barriers to inclusive, quality educational opportunities through destabilization, discrimination, resource diversion, and ideological obstruction. Overcoming these will demand sustained peacebuilding measures tailored to each country.

## **Inequality and Marginalization**

Experts from both Pakistan and Colombia spotlight how marginalization and inequality intersect to deny quality education for minority groups, though the specific marginalized populations vary by context. As Hassan 07 describes, religious and ethnic minorities in Pakistan grapple with greater barriers, needing more attentive policies and interventions that remain lacking, fueling their exclusion. He particularly cites stark gender disparities limiting girls' education in Balochistan province. Hassan 03 explains how restrictive socio-cultural gender norms pose barriers impeding girls' access in particular. Additionally, discriminatory societal beliefs around certain groups' perceived rights and worthiness to pursue academic opportunities compounds

educational marginalization. These ingrained prejudices deny opportunities and fuels systemic inequality. Meanwhile Maria 05 highlights how Afro-Colombian, indigenous and other ethnic minority children face cultural disconnects and discrimination from national curricula and standardized policies detached from their realities. Migration and Displacement were visible in both the countries. Colombia is hosting an estimated 20% (614900 persons) Venezuela population as migrants (World Bank, 2021). The education of their children is compromised due to the language barrier. Pakistan is hosting 1.7 million refugees (Forbes, 2023) whose children have either no access to education or poor quality of education.

### **Inadequate System Resources and Governance**

Experts from both nations cite chronic under-resourcing and governance failures propagating inequality in education. Hassan 02 from Pakistan points to limited resources alongside discrimination denying marginalized groups, particularly rural minorities, quality access. He also spotlights economic disparities as a key driver, calling for increased government funding and more inclusive, equitable policies. Maria 04 from Colombia likewise highlights how lofty mission statements and policies promising inclusive, differential approaches to serve displaced children's needs often lack actual implementation by institutions and administrators. Pakistan's education budget for 2022 was 1.97% of GDP while Colombia's education budget in 2019 was 5.27% of GDP (World Bank, 2022). Despite appearing progressive on paper, governance and resource allocation fail to match rights and needs in practice.

### **Transforming Structures: Recommendations towards Quality Education in Colombia and Pakistan**

The experts outlined several interlinked recommendations for overcoming structural violence to advance equitable quality education. As Hassan 07 argues, education fuels broader human development, such that compromising education compromises judiciary, legislation, policymaking and thus overall national progress. Hence adequate resourcing and prioritization of education is imperative. Meanwhile, Maria 06 highlights grassroots advocacy and awareness-raising to mobilize communities, alongside teacher training and accountability mechanisms to directly combat marginalization in classrooms. She also cites empowering marginalized groups

themselves as key stakeholders in reform efforts. Ultimately, the experts call for multifaceted approaches: sustained investment in the education system itself while simultaneously building societal recognition of education as a human right, engaging communities to shift beliefs and norms underpinning discrimination, and centering the agency of marginalized groups in enacting policies and pedagogies addressing their needs and experiences. This combination of top-down resource provision and bottom-up consciousness raising can overcome ingrained systemic bias and violence. As another way of recommendation, the experts call for multifaceted approaches: sustained investment in the education system itself while simultaneously building societal recognition of education as a human right, engaging communities to shift beliefs and norms underpinning discrimination, and centering the agency of marginalized groups in enacting policies and pedagogies addressing their needs and experiences. This combination of top-down resource provision and bottom-up consciousness raising can overcome ingrained systemic bias and violence.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The interviews uncovered major issues in Colombian and Pakistan's education system. Violence, Insecurity, and Conflict negatively impact schools. This includes damage to schools, students and teachers facing harm, and creating an environment where learning is difficult. There is unequal access to quality education and resources based on factors like income level, ethnicity, gender and geography. This leads to groups facing disadvantage and fewer opportunities which set back the advances of the SDG-4 of Quality Education. When the system resources and management from Colombia and Pakistan were analyzed, deficiencies in how Colombian and Pakistan's education system is resourced and governed were identified. Issues exist around funding allocation, decision-making policies, infrastructure, and distribution of materials/supports. Significant improvements are needed. The major migration into Colombia strains school capacities to serve additional students, especially those with language/cultural barriers and trauma. This adds complex pressures affecting education quality and delivery. These interlocking challenges of violence, bias, misgovernance and migration dynamics pose multifaceted problems restricting education access and quality for many students. Addressing these shortcomings

requires comprehensive solutions considering the root causes and diverse manifestations of structural violence permeating Colombian and Pakistan's education landscape currently.

While marginalization dynamics manifest distinctly, the overarching theme across both nations is minority groups confronting amplified educational barriers rooted in cultural devaluation, poverty, and policy apathy towards their needs. Reforms depend on targeted, culturally responsive interventions, as both Hassan and Maria emphasize. Progress requires recognizing where standardization fails students from non-dominant backgrounds and rectifying exclusionary biases that propagate unequal access and quality along ethnic, religious and gender lines. Inadequate governance, discrimination in deploying limited resources, and overall underinvestment fuel gaps in quality, inclusive education for vulnerable groups in both Colombia and Pakistan. Structural violence persists through rhetorical commitments exceeding actual delivery of equitable, culturally responsive schooling. Progress requires not just stated values but accountable leadership and budget priorities targeting those furthest behind first.

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