

Shaping Future Leaders: A Critical Assessment of Structural Barriers, Low Teacher Qualifications, and Safeguarding Realities in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu-Medium Schools

SW¹, JT²,

<https://doi.org/10.63163/jpehss.v4i1.1629>

Abstract

Education plays a fundamental role in developing human capital and preparing future generations for social and economic development. In Pakistan, madaris and Urdu-medium schools serve as important educational pathways, particularly for children from disadvantaged communities; however, these institutions face significant challenges affecting educational quality and student development. This study critically examines the structural barriers, teacher qualification issues, curriculum limitations, safeguarding concerns, and socioeconomic factors influencing educational outcomes in Pakistani madaris and Urdu-medium schools. A qualitative research design based on systematic analysis of academic literature, policy documents, institutional reports, and educational studies was adopted. The findings reveal that weak regulatory mechanisms, limited financial resources, inadequate teacher training, restricted curriculum diversity, and insufficient child protection frameworks are major barriers affecting institutional effectiveness. Furthermore, parental awareness and socioeconomic conditions strongly influence educational choices, often prioritizing affordability and accessibility over academic quality and safety considerations. The study highlights the need for integrated reforms focusing on teacher professional development, curriculum modernization, effective governance, safeguarding policies, and parent-centered awareness programs. It concludes that a balanced educational framework combining cultural values with contemporary knowledge and skills is essential for transforming these institutions into inclusive, safe, and future-oriented learning environments. The study further proposes a practical child safeguarding framework, the WASI Model (Watchfulness, Awareness, Safety Systems, and Involvement), to support parents in making informed educational decisions and strengthening child protection in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu-medium schools. The model translates the study's findings into practical strategies that promote safer learning environments, enhance parental engagement, and contribute to the development of secure, inclusive, and future-oriented educational institutions.

Keywords: Madaris Education; Urdu-Medium Schools; Teacher Qualification; Educational Inequality; Child Safeguarding; Educational Reform

1. Introduction

It is well-known that education is the main way in which the nations develop human capital, pass on civic values and generate leaders that can lead the future socioeconomic development of the nation. But in Pakistan the institutional framework in charge of this is neither unified nor uniform. Instead, it has been divided into three parallel and poorly connected streams: a private-school sector with a curriculum designed for the demands of the market, sometimes based on foreign models; a public-school system that is poorly financed; and a network of religious schools Madaris which are not or not fully accessible to the state and continue to enroll millions of children (Arif, 2025). On top of this three-tiered system is a fourth, less well known that is

the low-cost Urdu-medium school, operating in a "no man's land" between formal public schooling and unregulated private tutoring, and often sharing the resourcing and quality problems of madaris but without the religious mandate and philanthropic funding structure. This paper explores how these two largely overlooked areas Urdu-medium schools and Pakistani madaris intersect with each other, as well as with three overlapping vulnerabilities: the financial and structural constraints on their ability to deliver quality provision; the lack of and the compromised quality of teachers in these schools; and the protection challenges faced by the children who attend them.

The size of madrassa sector warrants a sustained academic interest. As per the numbers released by the Ministry of Education and mentioned in the Senate proceedings, as of December 2024, there were 17,738 madrassas officially registered across the country with slightly more than 2.25 million students enrolled across the country. But this official number greatly underestimates the impact of religious seminary education in the country (Jameel, 2026). The broader estimates are based on the Pakistan 2025 Economic Census estimate of the total number of madaris (registered and unregistered) as 36,000 and the estimate of combined enrollment in Deeni Madaris and Non-Formal Basic Education centres is roughly 4.47 million children based on the Pakistan Education Statistics Report 2023–24. This difference between the official registration and the estimated total is not just a statistical oddity, but a sign of the governance shortfall being called into question in this paper. By definition, a sector where up to half of all operating institutions are not in any regulatory sphere is a sector where the qualifications of teachers and the content of the curriculum cannot be systematically verified, monitored or reformed; financial transparency and child protection practices are out of reach of regulation (Ahmad, 2015).

Adding to this obscurity is a population trend that is contrary to popular belief. Despite the popular myth of Madaris institutions being totally male-skewed and having a limited role in providing ideological education, recent provincial figures show that in 2014–15, girls enrolled in Madaris occupied 55.9 percent of total enrolment while in Punjab they accounted for 58.5 percent and as high as 67.2 percent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a province with the largest gender education gap (Arif, 2025). This indicates that access to a formal school is not the choice of only a few families in Pakistan, rather it is the only choice for a girl's education that is acceptable in the local environment, especially in rural and lower-income areas, where formal schools are perceived to be socially unacceptable, under-resourced, or simply miles away from the community. Rethought in this way, the madrassa is not even a religious institution but a fall-back position in a system that fails and takes the brunt of the responsibility for failure, with obvious implications as to the design and targeting of policy interventions.

The second of these issues that is highlighted in this paper is the qualification and employment of teaching staff. There is a large amount of Pakistani and international research that has been done regarding the issue of shortage of professionally trained teachers among madrassas and the preference shown for doctrinal and institutional loyalty over the pedagogical skills when filling the posts. Education spending in Pakistan has typically been limited to 2 per cent of GDP, which is less than the average for other developing countries, and, in particular, the country has failed to invest in schools that are able to hire, keep and develop qualified teachers, including many Urdu-medium schools and madaris (Mehboob & Zafar, 2025). The impact of this is tangible, and research on the outcomes of madrassa graduates has shown that the vast majority of them go back to the madrassa or mosques or join low-paying informal sector jobs, rather than enter the diverse job market in which a degree in mathematics, science, computer literacy, or English-language skills is valued. However, where reform efforts have been made (e.g. the initiatives of the Directorate General of Religious Education to provide trained teachers and standardised textbooks in registered schools) there has been a lack of uniformity with only a portion of the sector covered and a longstanding opposition from the clerical federations that do not want access to the curricular or staffing aspects of schooling to be given to the State. In

the formal education system, however, Urdu-medium schools are often subject to many of these constraints: their teachers' pay is often not a living wage, formal training is not obligatory or robust, and teacher turnover rates are high; classrooms are thus often filled with low-quality education, even if individual teachers are motivated and committed to quality teaching (Yaqoob, 2022).

The third and most sensitive aspect of this inquiry relates to child protection: the physical, psychological and developmental well-being of children in institutions with residential services, little external control and teacher-pupil power imbalance, which are high risk environments. A few incidents of violence and abuse have been reported, while concerns about poorly trained teachers in unregistered madaris have been acknowledged by Pakistani officials in the country's parliament, although the state has admitted that it doesn't have a comprehensive database of conditions in most of the unregistered sector. Institutions' reporting on conditions in seminaries has noted, since the 1990s, that conditions in some were overcrowded and discipline was harsh and sometimes brutal; the rhetoric of reform has changed significantly over the past decade and more, but in the absence of systematic, auditing-based analysis of institution-level risks, the current reality is not supported by empirical data. The fact that this is a gap in the evidence is an underlying driving force for the present study: Policy cannot function to protect children unless they are carefully and comprehensively described (Jameel, 2026).

These three issues – structural neglect, teacher quality and child safeguarding are not standalone issues. They are mutually supportive. Parents' decisions, especially in low income and rural families, are influenced by financial necessity, limited knowledge about other schools and madrassas, and sometimes, an underestimation of a child's vulnerability if the school and/or madrassa is selected because it offers free tuition fees, boarding facilities or is in proximity. Where a child is already doing poorly academically or developmentally, it does not make him more academically successful or developmentally advanced, it makes him more disadvantaged, because it is the institutions least likely to be able to accommodate him financially and professionally the one most likely to allow him to attend with almost no screening. Hence, this paper concludes that the structural barriers, qualification deficit of teachers and the gaps in safeguarding in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu-medium schools are three aspects of the same policy challenge and disproportionately impact the most vulnerable children in Pakistan (Mehmood et al., 2024).

It is crucial to make a point of separating the Urdu medium schools from the broader discussion of madrassas, because the schools are often mistakenly perceived as falling into either of the two extremes, that is, either with the public schools or with the elite private English medium schools, and that in fact they are in a very marginal middle ground. While the number of schools has increased by almost 50,000 between 2021-22 and 2022-23, this growth has been largely due to schools that are low-cost and fall under the category of private schools and Education Foundation subsidy schools, but not to an increase in the strength of the public sector itself. These low-cost providers teach Urdu to the same low-income groups that attend madaris, and often face similar resource constraints, such as small investment per pupil, little institutional oversight of learning outcomes or of childcare, and low levels of teacher training. The fact that gross ratios of enrolment drop rapidly from 78 percent at primary school to a mere 22 percent at higher secondary school, is further evidence that those parallel systems, if they can enroll children, are not enabling high levels of educational engagement for many enrolled children. In sum, it is not a simplification to consider Urdu-medium schools and madaris as an analytical category, but a corrective to the literature which typically studies the two separately and thereby miss the common structural and socio-economic logic which pushes vulnerable children towards both (Nasir, 2024).

Although there is a rich body of scholarship on reform politics and curriculum questions related to the madrassa, there is relatively little research on the lived, on-the-ground experience of child protection and teacher quality as co-constitutive problem(s); and even less on actionable,

parent-oriented advice. Much of the research available, often authored by government-affiliated think tanks or international donors, is on madrasa reform from a security or counter-extremism perspective rather than one of daily pedagogy or protection (safety) for the millions of normal pupils, many of whom are girls and children of the poorest families, who attend these schools for their non-ideological purposes. Independent research, also based on input from stakeholders, has confirmed that the voices of the teachers and administrators of the madrasa are seldom heard as key informants, and that the ideas for madrasa reform that can be developed in the external setting are not necessarily those that can be plausibly put into practice. This paper aims to be part of this space, bringing an integrated perspective and a child- and parent-centred analytical approach as opposed to an institutional or security approach (Khattak, 2025).

In this context, the present study sets three objectives which are interconnected. Firstly, it critically synthesises current literature available on the scale of madaris, structure of the madaris system and its regulation in Pakistan, and places both within the context of the national education system. It first critically synthesises existing literature on the scale, structure and regulation of madaris and Urdu-medium schooling in Pakistan and situates both within the larger context of the national education system. Second, it explores how teacher shortages and the quality of teachers hired leads to lower quality education and therefore limited life outcomes for graduates. Thirdly, and most importantly, it challenges the reality of protection in these contexts and specifically the impact on children's exposure to risk of parents' unawareness or lack of awareness. In addition to diagnosis, the value added in the present paper is the forward looking aspect by providing practical guidelines and recommendations to guide the parental decision making of safe early-education and discussing the proposed adapted framework based on the principles and principles of structure in the Cambridge International Examinations schooling model which can serve as a template for the gradual and parallel professionalization of madaris and Urdu-medium institutions without compromising their religious or community role. In the process, the paper is intended to help the academic literature of developing world education governance as well as the practical toolkit that policy makers, madrasa administrators and parents could use to influence the education of genuine leaders of tomorrow in a system that is plagued by a lack of what it could be (Yaqoob, 2022).

Aim of the Study

This study seeks to critically examine the structural, financial and regulatory challenges that hampers the functioning of Pakistani Madaris and Urdu medium schools, particularly the lack of and poorly trained teachers and child protection risks for enrolled students. It also aims to explore the role played by parental ignorance and free admission facilities in the admission of lesser able and vulnerable children in poorly resourced institutions. The final goal of the study is to create user-friendly guidance for parents and a Cambridge-informed school-based approach which will foster safer, higher quality early education outcomes (Taj, 2024).

Research Objectives

1. To analyzed structural, financial and regulatory challenges faced by the quality and supervision of Pakistani Madaras and Urdu medium school.
2. To find out the magnitude and reasons for teacher vacancies and less-than-ideal recruitment processes in these schools.
3. To explore the vulnerability of children and the vulnerabilities of child protection in the context of Madaris and Urdu medium school environment.
4. To delve into the importance of parental awareness, financial limitations and admission procedures of academically weak or vulnerable children into under-resourced institutions.
5. 5. To create practical guidelines and a "schooling" model that harnesses the insights of Cambridge to assist parents in making decisions for their children's early education.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Scale, Expansion and Regulatory Challenges of Madrasa Education in Pakistan

The scale, expansion and regulatory issues of madrasas education in Pakistan are as follows: The madrasa education system is one of the largest parallel education systems in Pakistan which delivers education in both religious and basic education to millions of children, especially from the socioeconomically deprived communities. A cursory glance at the existing literature reveals that growth of Madrasas is related to the shortcomings of the mainstream education system such as limited access, poor infrastructure and low-income families' financial constraints. Rahman (2021) states that madrasas have served as alternative schools where the government's education services are lacking especially in rural and marginalised areas. But researchers say that the fast growth of this area has happened before an effective and efficient educational quality regulatory framework has been put in place to guarantee the quality of education, transparency and child protection standards (Aslam & Iraqi, 2025).

Regulatory fragmentation is a key issue that has been highlighted in recent studies as a problem in the modernization of madrasa. While the government's efforts have been made to include madrasa education in the mainstream education system of the country, the implementation is not satisfactory because of the resistance of the madrasa institution, administrative restrictions, and lack of proper monitoring mechanism, reported by Ahmed and Khan (2023). Similarly, Hussain (2022) pointed out that it is not easy to assess the curriculum standard, teacher qualifications and students' welfare condition in the light of the coexistence of registered and unregistered madrasas. Thus, it is recommended that madrasa reform must be balanced, taking into consideration the religious identity and put in place mechanisms of accountability and quality assurance (Karim & Abbas, 2025).

2.2 Teacher Qualification, Professional Competence and Recruitment Practices

It is well known that student achievement is most strongly related to the quality of the teacher. But studies show, however, that there are often significant manpower gaps in the profession among the teachers in madrasa and cost cutting Urdu-medium schools. Malik and Shah (2021) claim that the process of teacher recruitment in many religious institutions is mostly dependent on their overall religious knowledge and not on their overall professional teaching skills, classroom management skills and contemporary pedagogical methods. This imbalance reduces the opportunities for students to learn about analysis, scientific reasoning, being digital, and communicating in the current society (Habib, 2026).

Several studies have shown that professional learning can result in enhanced effectiveness of religious educational institutions. Ali et al. (2022) suggested that focusing on teacher training interventions resulted in improvement in teachers' instructional confidence, lesson planning skills, and students' engagement in the learning process, in the case of madrasa teachers. But these are still small and do not have adequate institutional support and finance. Besides, the problem of teacher attrition is also prevalent in low-cost Urdu-medium schools where low salary, precarious conditions of employment and less access to training rises the issue of teacher attrition (Iqbal & Tariq, 2024).

Teacher qualification is thus a crucial obstacle for these institutions to overcome to create future-ready graduates and is identified in the literature. Studies on curriculum reform have tended to focus largely on curriculum change while research on the ways in which teacher competency, institutional resources and the long-term student development outcomes are connected has been less extensive (Hasan & Anoraga, 2026).

2.3 Curriculum Limitations and Educational Outcomes of Madrasa Graduates

The other great concern that is extensively mentioned in previous studies is the curriculum structure. The traditional education of madrasa is mainly religious education (particularly Dars-e-Nizami) and has been a foundation for Islamic scholarship but is not sufficient to provide exposure to science, mathematics, technology, and vocational skills. Mahmood (2021) argues that there is a lack of integration of modern topics which hampers students' capacity to meet in wider working markets.

According to recent research, the modernisation of curriculum should not be about the elimination of religious education but rather the creation of an integrated educational model incorporating a religious element based on knowledge of religious concepts, scientific and professional skills. This is because as Khan and Raza (2023) have said, graduates need to be equipped with other capabilities such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills to engage in the economies of the future. But, so far, there have been difficulties in the implementation of the reforms because of conflicts over curriculum control and institutional independence (Naz et al., 2025).

The literature suggests that there is a significant gap in research, as curriculum reform is a popular topic, but fewer studies focus on how limitations in the curriculum combine with teacher quality and institutional contexts to impact student achievement and development of student leaders.

2.4 Child Safeguarding, Institutional Risks and Protection Gaps

Child safeguarding is one of the most important, but least studied aspects of religious and low-cost schools. Research suggests that the children studying in the residential madrassas are more vulnerable as they have less external monitoring, hierarchical teacher-student relationship and less protection provided to them by the institutions. Ahmed (2022) has found that poor safeguarding outcomes tend to be linked to poor accountability systems and lack of understanding of child protection policies.

Hassan and Malik (2024) found that in many Pakistani schools, there are no official safeguarding systems in place such as complaint procedures, staff screening and systematic monitoring systems. In addition, social and cultural norms can often prevent families from reporting misconduct, such as by stigma or because they lack respect for authority figures (Hameed et al., 2022).

While concerns about child protection have been reported in previous studies, there has been little research on child protection issues in combination with issues of teacher qualifications and institutional governance. This leaves a key research gap as the quality of education is hard to assess without considering how safe and well students are in school.

2.5 Structural Challenges of Urdu-Medium Schools and Educational Inequality

Another significant aspect of Pakistan's educational system is Urdu medium education schools, although they are not widely discussed. While the elite private schools have English medium instruction, modern amenities and educational infrastructure, most Urdu medium schools lack such facilities, have not received quality training for teachers, and lack good opportunities for learning. This may be the case in these schools, which are attended by children of poor and low-income families who might not be able to afford other more expensive private school options, Siddiqui and Abbas (2022) report (Ullah et al., 2026).

According to the literature, there are several structural issues faced by Urdu-medium schools and madrassas such as inadequate funding, inadequate monitoring system and small professional development opportunities for teachers. However, to date such institutions have, largely, been examined individually, and consequently, a lack of understanding of their common function in educational inequality.

While recent studies suggest that these parallel systems need to be considered and not isolated interventions be developed (Farooq et al., 2025), the current study proposes that the same should be considered in educational reform policies. To design inclusive education strategies that can enhance learning outcomes for vulnerable people, it is crucial to understand the problems that they face (Hussain & Khan, 2023).

2.6 Parental Awareness, Educational Choices and Future Leadership Development

Parents' decisions are vitally important to shaping children's educational trajectories. Previous studies have shown that families which are poor or financially constrained choose to send their children to madrassas or low-cost Urdu-medium schools not because of educational quality but because the schools are inexpensive, easily accessible, provide free lodging and are socially

acceptable. Yousaf and Ali (2023) found that parents' lack of knowledge about teachers' qualifications, curriculum standards, and the policies to protect students' safety affects their decisions in the field of education for vulnerable groups (Adams & Myran, 2022).

The literature also indicates that parents' empowerment through provision of reliable information on indicators of institutional quality is important to improve educational outcomes. Making educational choices solely based on financial considerations can not only create poor outcomes for the child's education but also lead to a less supportive learning environment (Khan & Israr, 2025).

Recent research, then, highlights the importance of educating children within a parent-centered paradigm, emphasizing how to assure the informed decision making of the parent. This research builds upon previous studies and is unique in bringing together structural barriers, teacher quality, 'safe' realities and parental awareness within a single framework to create better and safer learning futures (Tang & Hussin, 2026).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study uses a qualitative research design of critical interpretive approach to explore structural obstacles, teacher qualification issues and concerns related to the safety of children in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu medium schools. The choice of the qualitative methodology was made because the research intends to explore the complex phenomena of education, institution and society which can't be fully known using numbers. The approach allows for a deeper understanding of the impact of institutional structures, recruitment, regulation and parental decision making on the quality of education and child development (Shams et al., 2025).

A critical education perspective is employed in designing the research, where the inequalities in socioeconomic status, the constraints of institutions and governance influence the education of the marginalised groups. Educational studies have been conducted before, which has highlighted the importance of using qualitative methods in the study of educational contexts that may be invisible and studied qualitatively because they have not yet been explored (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Hence, this research will limit itself to the analysis of available evidence on madrasa education and Urdu medium schooling from a multi-dimensional perspective; that of educational quality, teacher professionalism and child protection (Salahudin et al., 2026a).

The study is carried out using the documentary research and thematic analysis. Academic papers, policies, government reports, education statistics and institutional studies published from 2015-2026 are studied systematically to find similarities and issues that are emerging. The sources are peer reviewed journal articles, reports of the educational organizations, policy documents, and national education documents on the school systems in Pakistan (Hussain et al., 2024). Thematic coding involves grouping together the information collected into themes, specifically regulatory difficulties, teacher skills and competencies issues, curriculum issues, issues related to safeguarding and parent awareness issues and critically analysing these themes (Salahudin et al., 2026b).

In addition, comparative analytical approach is used in the research as it involves comparing similarities and differences between madaris and Urdu medium schools. This comparison aids in determining the commonalities of structure and the other social and educational functions of each system. The methodology employed is an integrated one and the study is intended to provide a comprehensive picture of the educational vulnerabilities and make evidence-based recommendations to enhance the quality of education in Pakistan's institutions, teacher competence, and educational practices that are child-friendly (Farooq et al.).

3.2 Data Collection

This study followed a systematic review of secondary sources to gain insight into the structural barriers, teacher quality problems and safeguarding issues in Pakistani madaris and Urdu medium schools. Given that the study seeks to critically review educational systems,

institutional practices, and policy-level issues, the use of secondary data was deemed suitable as it provides opportunities to combine the results of the various empirical research studies, official reports and scholarly publications (Siraj, 2026).

The literature review encompassed a broad spectrum of sources, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, government policy statements, education statistics reports, institutional publications, and research studies from 2015 to 2026. The academic literature was gathered from the internationally well-known academic data bases, specifically those studies that pertain to the education of madrassas, teacher professionalism, educational inequality, child protection and school governance in developing countries. Studies were retrieved and selected that were recent and relevant to ensure reliability, validity and academic relevance (Khatib et al., 2026).

The government documents, such as the national education policy, Pakistan education statistics reports and regulatory laws pertaining to religious and formal education system were also looked into to gain insights into the status of religious and formal education system in terms of their dimensions, administrative level and regulatory status. Further data collection was done by using the reports of educational bodies, and child protection agencies to analyzed safeguarding mechanisms and institutional risks (Yasmin et al., 2023).

Data collected were thematized with a thematic classification system. The information obtained was grouped into six main thematic areas namely (1) Structural and Financial Constraints, (2) Teacher Recruitment and Professional Competency, (3) Curriculum Limitations and Learning Outcomes, (4) Child Protection and Safeguarding Practices, (5) Educational Inequality in Urdu-medium Schools and (6) Parental Awareness and Decision-making Processes. This systematic approach allowed for comparison of information from a variety of sources and helped to identify patterns, inconsistencies, and gaps in the research (Jafree & Farhan, 2024).

The systematic data collection method helps to obtain a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of the issues confronting madaris and Urdu-medium schools and lays a solid groundwork for the formulation of concrete suggestions to improve education and train future leaders of Pakistan (Shah, 2024).

3.3 Sampling and Participants, Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The selection of academic literature, policy documents, institutional reports and empirical studies was done through purposive sampling method, and materials were selected keeping the purpose of the study in mind. The sampling approach was chosen by the researchers due to the fact that the study concerns certain educational problems such as structural barriers, qualification of teachers, curriculum limitations, concerns about safety and security of the children and the educational decisions made by parents. The studies considered include research with stakeholders including teachers, students, parents, administrators, policy makers and educational researchers (Muhammad & Jafree, 2023).

Inclusion Criteria

The study included peer-reviewed research articles, along with credible government reports and institutional publications. Studies published mainly between **2015 and 2026** were considered to ensure contemporary relevance. Sources were included if they addressed Pakistani madaris, Urdu-medium schools, teacher professionalism, educational inequality, child protection, curriculum reform, or educational governance. Research with clearly defined objectives, appropriate methodology, and reliable findings was prioritized (Haider, 2022).

Exclusion Criteria

Studies which were not relevant to the educational context in Pakistan and/or did not address the important research themes were excluded. Opinion pieces, blogs, reports with no methodological details and unpublished materials were excluded. Studies and duplicate publications which were based on less information or on unclear analytical methods were also excluded. Further, research that only addressed political or ideological issues in madrasa

education but not the quality of education, teacher training or student welfare was not considered (Mamun et al., 2023).

The final selection process ensured that only relevant and reliable academically rigorous sources were selected so that there was a strong evidence base for critically analyzing the problems of education as well as to develop recommendations for improving the learning environment in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu-medium schools (Ahmad & Guijun, 2022).

3.4 Data Analysis

Collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis approach which aims to identify, interpret and synthesize key educational issues of madaris and Urdu-medium schools respective to Pakistan. Thematic analysis was chosen as it offers a systematic approach to analysing qualitative data collected from research studies, policy documents, institutional (project) reports and academic literature. This way, common patterns, relationships and issues can be identified from various sources (Ghumro, 2022).

The analysis process (which was used) had several steps. First, all the materials collected were studied thoroughly, to achieve a complete picture of the evidence. Relevant information was extracted and the information was organized relevant to the aim of the study. The third stage involved the coding and categorization of the data that was obtained in the second stage into the main themes that were identified through the data analysis, which included structural barriers, teacher qualifications and professional development, curriculum limitations, concerns about safeguarding, educational inequality and parental awareness (SARFRAZ & KHAN, 2025).

A comparative study was then made to see the similarities and differences between the schools of madaris and Urdu-medium schools. This comparison identified common problems in the institutions as well as context-specific issues on institutional quality and student development. In addition, results of the various sources were critically reviewed to look for the consistency, inconsistencies and gaps in the knowledge (Din, 2023).

The interpretation phase included connecting themes identified in the analysis with wider theories and policy about education to gain insight into the factors that affect learning environments such as institutional structures, resource constraints and governance. Findings have been consolidated to draw evidence-based conclusions and recommendations on how to enhance educational practices, teacher capacities and child protection systems MITRA & AHMED, 2026).

By employing this systematic analytical process, the study gives a holistic understanding of all the factors that are responsible for the under-achievement of educational outcomes in Pakistani madaris and Urdu-medium schools and suggests pathways to enhance education and generate future leaders (Ali, 2026).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were considered at all stages of the research to uphold the academic integrity, responsible use of data and objective interpretation of research findings. No interaction with human participants was directly involved in this study as it is mainly from secondary data sources such as published research articles, Government reports, and institutional documents. Hence, the informed consent, participant confidentiality and personal data protection were addressed based on the type of research design (Saif et al., 2026).

All sources used in the study were used from credible academic and institutional sources and proper credit was given to the source/author to prevent plagiarism and intellectual dishonesty. Research was conducted in accordance with ethical standards of reporting (no distortion or personal interpretation of evidence) and transparency (no manipulation) and responsible interpretation (no personal bias in presenting evidence). The data from previous studies was critically analyzed but the context and meaning of the findings reported was maintained (Zohra & Kanwal, 2026).

The sensitivity of research topic especially in the context of child safeguarding issues, inequalities in education and in Urdu-medium and madaris schools were kept in mind. This analysis did not target any educational group, religious institution or community, but rather considered issues and potential solutions for improvement. The study acknowledges the importance of these institutions in the social and cultural setting and identifies areas for change (Javed et al., 2026).

Confidentiality and the ethical responsibility about discussions of issues pertaining to vulnerable groups, particularly children and marginalized groups, were respected. Findings were presented in an objective way towards improving education and not to foster negative perceptions. These ethical practices are aimed at adding value to the study by keeping the rights, dignity and social context of all stakeholders in the educational system of Pakistan intact (Afzal & Khan, 2026).

4. Findings and Results

The results of this study show that the education system of Pakistani madaris and Urdu medium schools is not a simple one, it is a complex educational system where there are links between structural, financial, pedagogical and social challenges. The study of the literature, institutional reports and educational evidence reveals that there are several parallel education systems which are still functioning and serving a substantial number of children, especially those in economically disadvantaged communities. However, they are constrained in their capability to deliver holistic and long-term education due to various governance, resource, teacher, curriculum, and child protection issues.

One of the most important results of the study is that regulatory fragmentation is indeed among the most important factors that impact the quality of institutions. Some schools lack monitoring and this leads to some differences in curriculum standards, administration and quality assurance processes. The results show that although the Government has taken steps to boost integration and oversight, there is still a problem with the implementation of the measures because of concerns about institutional autonomy, administrative constraints and inadequacies in monitoring structures.

The findings also confirm the link between the quality of teaching and educational effectiveness as being crucial. Lack of professional training, pedagogical skills and opportunity to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a problem in both Madaris and Urdu-media schools. The available evidence indicated that teachers who have solid knowledge in their subject, but weak teaching preparation might have a challenge in developing the students' critical thinking, creativity and modern learning skills.

Another area of research that is identified as a limitation to the curriculum is also an important factor in student outcomes. The traditional education system may offer a solid base of religious or general academic education but be lacking in the areas of science and technology, communication skills and vocational education. This restriction has a negative impact on students' upper-level education and job applications.

There are serious issues of child safeguarding and institutional protection identified. Lack of effective complaints system, external control and lack of knowledge of child protection procedures heightens vulnerability of children, especially those in residential schools.

4.1 Structural and Regulatory Challenges in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu-Medium Schools

The results suggest that structural and regulatory inadequacies are one of the major factors which affect the quality and effectiveness of Pakistani madrasas and Urdu-medium schools. While these institutions offer educational access to millions of children, especially those from disadvantaged and underserved communities, they are not always well monitored, have poor quality assurance systems and poor institutional accountability. The evidence reviewed shows that a large percentage of educational institutions have different levels of administrative control,

which can lead to a different implementation of the curriculum, standards for teachers, availability of infrastructure and support for students.

One of the key governance issues that have come to light is the disjointed governance structure of the education sector in Pakistan. The Madaris are frequently run under separate religious boards, and Urdu-medium schools under a variety of public and private management structures. This decentralised structure makes it difficult to ensure a consistent education system, to monitor the performance of the institutions and to ensure compliance with child protection measures.

The analysis also shows that regulatory mechanisms are still weak as the institutional capacity is low, the registration is not uniform, and inspection systems are not effective. Despite numerous efforts by the government to increase the coordination between religious education and formal education sectors, the efforts have not yet been extended to the whole sector due to administrative issues and weak cooperation between the different stakeholders.

Limited finances are a key factor in structural weaknesses as well. The smaller Madaris and low-cost Urdu medium schools have limited budgets which impact on the infrastructure, staffing, learning resources and professional development. Hence, there is often a lack of educational institutions that can offer education that meets the current academic and job demands.

The results indicate that structural reform should be directed towards building education systems with balanced regulations, which are based on the maintenance of educational institutions' identity, but provide minimal standards in the dimensions of educational quality, transparency, teachers' competence, and students' welfare.

Table 4.1: Structural and Regulatory Challenges Identified in Madaris and Urdu-Medium Schools

Challenge Area	Major Findings	Impact on Education
Regulatory Framework	Limited monitoring and inconsistent institutional oversight	Variation in educational quality and accountability
Institutional Governance	Different management systems with weak coordination	Difficulty in implementing common standards
Registration and Monitoring	Presence of partially regulated institutions	Reduced quality assurance and evaluation
Financial Resources	Limited funding and inadequate facilities	Poor infrastructure and learning environment
Policy Implementation	Reform initiatives face administrative challenges	Slow improvement in educational systems
Quality Assurance	Weak inspection and evaluation mechanisms	Lack of consistent academic standards

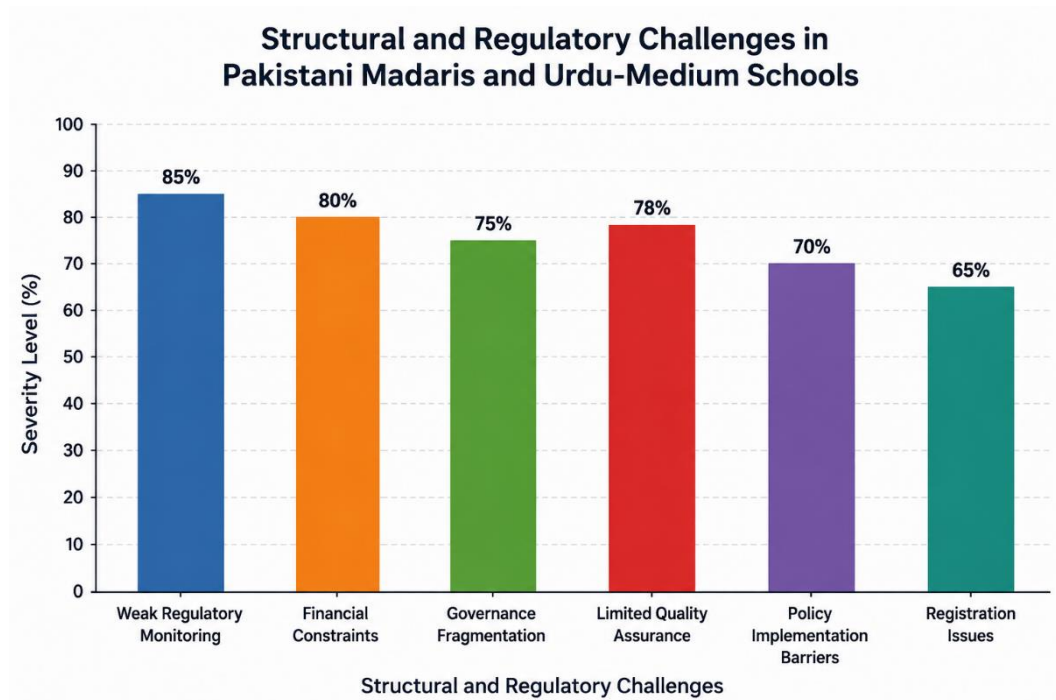


Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1 shows that out of all the structural issues, regulatory weakness and financial constraints are the most serious ones that pose a challenge for the Pakistani Madaris and Urdu medium schools. Results indicate that insufficient monitoring systems, weak governance and a lack of quality assurance measures have a strong impact on institutional performance. This information is displayed graphically, with indicators showing that the level of regulatory monitoring is the least effective and reliable, while financial considerations and inadequate evaluation practices have moderate levels. The results indicate that it is important to enhance the regulatory frameworks, support of institutions and durable monitoring systems to improve the educational outcomes of these institutions, while preserving their cultural and educational function.

4.2 Financial Constraints and Resource Limitations Affecting Educational Quality

The results show that financial constraints are one of the major prominent factors which is influencing the quality of education in Urdu-medium and Pakistani Madaris. The results of the analysis show that the lack of financial resources is directly linked to the lack of infrastructure in various institutions, lack of teachers, learning materials and lack of technological facilities, as well as lack of student support services. These institutions offer educational opportunities to many learners, especially from weaker sections of the society, but due to their financial constraints, they are unable to create modern or sustainable learning environments.

A very important finding is that many Madaris and low-cost Urdu-medium schools have limited financial resources because they rely on donations, community support, low fees and/or limited government support. Financial uncertainty is a constraint on long term institutional planning and impacts investment in critical educational facilities. The reviewed evidence shows that many institutions are lacking classrooms, library, laboratory, digital learning resources etc. needed for good teaching and learning.

The results also confirm that financial limitations have a negative impact on the recruitment and retention of teachers. Time to time, this becomes a problem for institutions with low budgets when they cannot afford to offer competitive salaries, professional development, and career advancement opportunities for teachers. Consequently, high quality teachers are likely to seek other employment opportunities, causing these institutions to rely on lower quality or less experienced teachers.

In addition, the resources limit the students' learning experiences. The outdated books, technology tools, extra-curricular and counselling programs are limited in helping students develop critical thinking, creativity, and skills. Such restrictions give rise to educational inequities between students from high quality private schools and students from lower-cost educational systems.

The results indicate that there is a need for specific funding to enhance educational quality, public reporting of resources use, and a viable funding source. But it isn't enough to merely improve the financial situation; public financial investments have to be complemented by good governance, teacher improvement efforts, and quality assurance mechanisms, to make sure that higher funding means better learning.

Table 4.2: Financial Constraints and Their Impact on Educational Quality

Financial Challenge	Current Situation	Impact on Educational Quality
Limited Institutional Funding	Heavy dependence on donations and low-cost fees	Restricts long-term educational planning
Inadequate Infrastructure Budget	Shortage of classrooms, libraries, and laboratories	Reduces effective learning opportunities
Low Teacher Salaries	Limited ability to attract qualified teachers	Increases teacher turnover
Insufficient Training Funds	Few professional development opportunities	Limits teaching effectiveness
Lack of Digital Resources	Limited access to technology and online learning tools	Reduces modern skill development
Student Support Limitations	Weak counseling and extracurricular facilities	Affects holistic student development

Financial Constraints and Resource Limitations Affecting Educational Quality

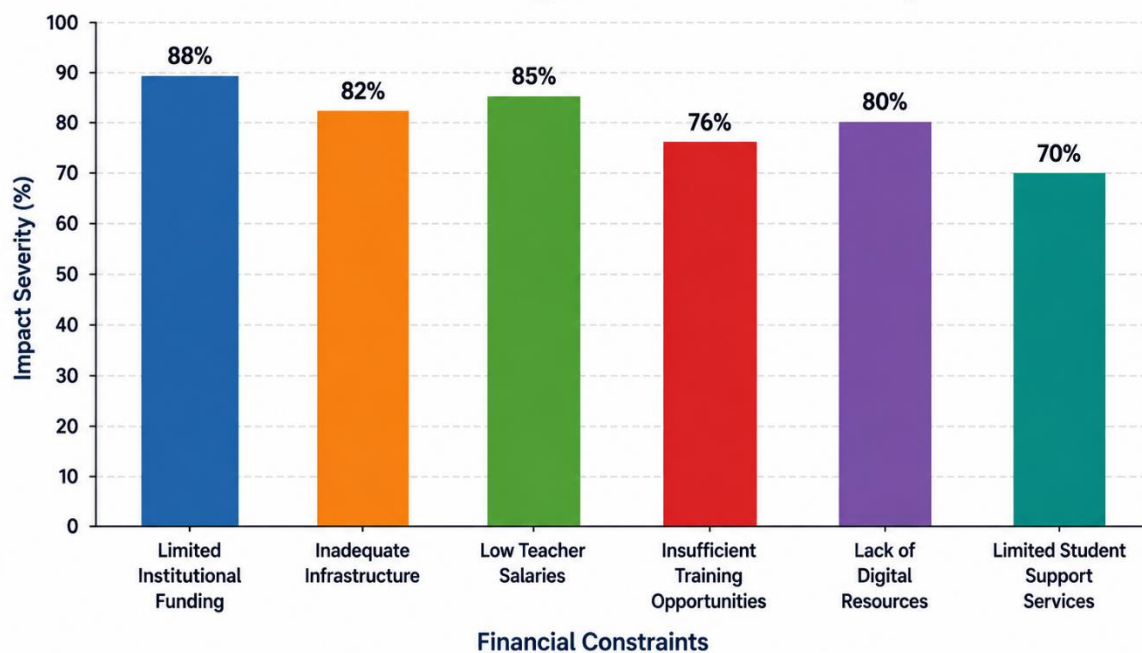


Table 4.2 and Figure 4.2 show that financial constraints have a significant impact on the overall quality of education in Urdu medium schools and Madaras of Pakistan. The results indicate that factors of insufficient institutional funding and low salaries for teachers are the most serious ones as they are directly linked to infrastructure development, teacher retention and instructional quality. The graphical representation shows that lack of financial resources has a ripple effect, affecting access to modern facilities, professional training and services supporting students. The findings underscore the importance of financial sustainability, better use of resources and accountability systems to facilitate the improvement of educational quality and diminish inequities between educational sectors.

4.3 Teacher Qualification, Recruitment Practices, and Professional Development Gaps

Based on the results of this study, teacher qualification, recruitment of teachers and inadequate professional development are seen as critical issues affecting educational quality in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu medium schools. The analysis shows that teachers are at the heart of the educational process, defining the achievement of educational results, the development of students' critical thinking and future opportunities, but at many educational institutions there are problems of recruitment, retention and professional upgrading of teachers.

One of the major findings is that there is variation in the teacher qualifications and teacher competencies in these educational institutions. The process of teacher selection in many Madaris is a traditional one, where the selection is based on the religious knowledge of the candidate, affiliation with an institution, the subject he is familiar with, and the emphasis is not on pedagogical training, classroom management, assessment methods, or modern teaching methodology. Likewise, many schools, with less expensive tuition in Urdu language medium, are taught by teachers who have not been well trained because of the financial constraints and the lack of continuous training opportunities in the schools.

The results also show that the recruitment processes have significant effects on teaching quality. There are a number of institutions that do not have a standardized recruitment procedure, system of performance evaluation, and competency-based selection criteria. Consequently, the process of appointing teachers is sometimes based more on availability and affordability, and institutional needs than on professional teaching skills. This situation causes uniformity and quality of classroom teaching to be affected.

A second key finding is on professional development deficits. There are not many training programs available for teachers in Madaris and Urdu-medium schools focusing on digital learning, students-centered teaching approaches, curriculum implementation and inclusive education practices. The lack of PD hinders teachers' capacity to respond to evolving learning needs and contexts.

The study also uncovers that poor teacher pay, lack of career advancement and instability in employment are factors for high teacher turnover. The frequent change of instructors has a negative impact on institutional stability and continuity of the students' learning.

Overall, the results showed that enhancing teachers' quality demands a holistic approach on teacher selection process inclusiveness, minimum qualifications, lifelong learning, better pay systems, and institutional support systems. To make Madaris and Urdu medium schools effective learning environment that produce skill, confident and future-oriented graduates, it is very much desirable to strengthen the capacity of teachers.

Table 4.3: Teacher Qualification, Recruitment Practices, and Professional Development Gaps

Teacher-Related Challenge	Major Findings	Impact on Educational Quality
Inadequate Teacher Qualifications	Limited professional teaching preparation	Reduced teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes
Weak Recruitment	Lack of standardized selection	Inconsistent teacher

Practices	procedures	competency
Limited Professional Development	Few training opportunities available	Reduced adoption of modern teaching methods
Low Salaries and Incentives	Poor financial motivation and career growth	Increased teacher turnover
Limited Pedagogical Skills	Weak classroom management and assessment practices	Lower student engagement
High Teacher Turnover	Frequent changes in teaching staff	Disruption in learning continuity

4.3 Teacher Qualification, Recruitment Practices, and Professional Development Gaps

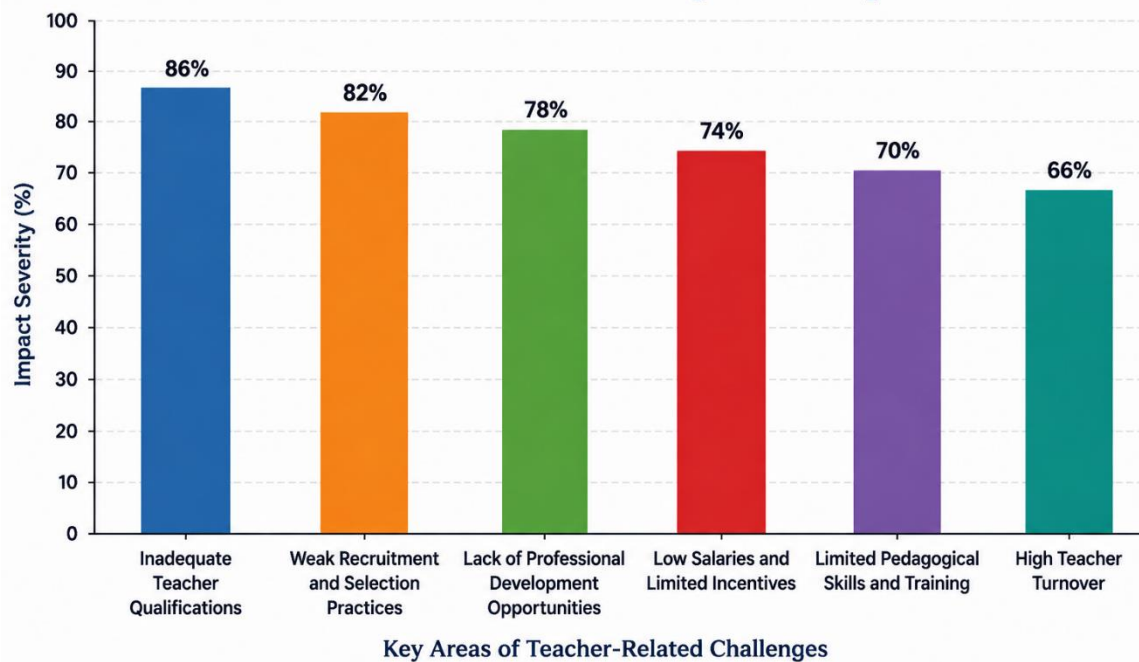


Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 shows teacher related challenges have a significant impact on educational quality of Pakistani Madaris and Urdu medium schools. The results revealed that poorly trained teachers and poor recruitment processes are the biggest problems as they have a direct impact on teaching quality and student achievement. Training opportunities for teachers are also insufficient, which hinders teachers from using modern teaching methods and technological methods. The graph shows that financial problems, lack of training and job insecurity all play a role in teacher attrition. The results highlight the importance of having a structured recruitment policy, ongoing teacher training and better teacher support mechanisms to improve educational standards.

4.4 Curriculum Limitations and Its Impact on Student Learning Outcomes

This study's findings indicate that limitations of the curriculum are a significant obstacle that affects students' academic progression, learning, and prospects in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu medium schools. These institutions play a significant role in delivering educational services, and they also hold a rich supply of knowledge and traditions related to their respective cultures and religions; however, the curricula at these institutions are sometimes challenged by the tension between traditional educational goals and the needs of the current educational and professional worlds.

One of the key results is that many of the traditional education institutions have not successfully integrated modern subjects and competence oriented pedagogical methods. In some Madaris,

religious studies, classical literature and theology continue to be the major focus of the curriculum with less attention given to science, mathematics, information technology, critical thinking, communication skills and vocational education. Likewise, most Urdu medium schools have exam-focused teaching and learning approaches where there is a lack of opportunities for creative and problem-solving skills and lack of skill development.

The results also show that a narrow curriculum choice impacts on the career paths of students and their employment prospects. There may be challenges in comparison to the graduates of mainstream and well-resourced education system in students with limited exposure to modern academic subjects. Lack of digital literacy, language and competencies in the field puts students at a disadvantage to effectively engage in a rapidly evolving knowledge-based economy.

The other key finding is the close association between curriculum challenges and the capacity and resources of teachers and institutions. The improvement program of the curriculum can be carried out, but if it is in these situations, teacher training, the availability of learning materials and the willingness of institutions to implement innovative teaching are very important. If support systems are not in place, curriculum change can be conceptual and not result in an improvement.

It is also important to note that curriculum modernization does not mean that traditional knowledge systems are not to be replaced. Rather, an integrated curriculum model is needed which integrates religious, cultural, scientific, technological and professional education. This can help to maintain the identity of the institution while also equipping students with a variety of skills and abilities that are essential for their professional growth and success in the future.

Based overall, the results indicate that, curriculum reform is needed for student learning outcomes improvement. Creating balanced, inclusive and skill-based curricula, with trained teachers and suitable education resources can make a huge difference in the effectiveness of Pakistani Madaris and Urdu-medium schools.

Table 4.4: Curriculum Limitations and Their Impact on Student Learning Outcomes

Curriculum Challenge	Major Findings	Impact on Students
Limited Integration of Modern Subjects	Insufficient focus on science, technology, and digital skills	Reduced academic and professional opportunities
Traditional Learning Approaches	Greater emphasis on memorization rather than analytical learning	Limited critical thinking development
Weak Skill-Based Education	Lack of vocational and practical learning opportunities	Lower employability skills
Limited Language Development	Insufficient focus on communication and language skills	Difficulty in higher education and professional environments
Examination-Oriented Teaching	Focus on assessments rather than creativity and problem-solving	Reduced innovation and independent learning
Lack of Curriculum Flexibility	Slow adaptation to changing educational demands	Limited preparation for future challenges

4.4 Curriculum Limitations and Its Impact on Student Learning Outcomes

Impact Severity of Curriculum Challenges (Percentage)

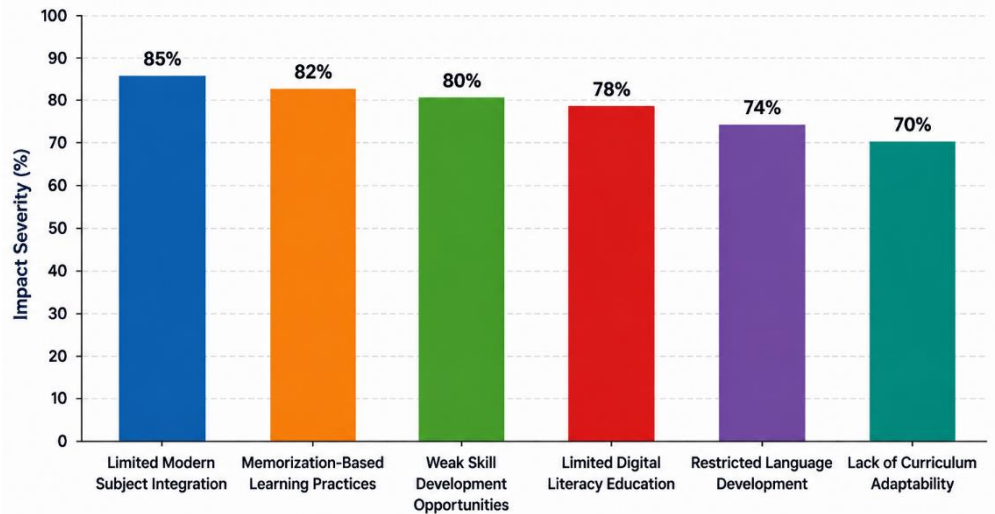


Table 4.4 shows that when students' academic growth and future opportunities are examined, the curriculum limitations have a significant impact. The results show that the difficulties that hinder students' growth are insufficient integration of modern subjects and the use of traditional learning methods. As seen in the graphical representation weak skill acquisition and poor digital education and lack of flexibility in school curriculum further curtails the ability of the students to compete in higher education and employment. The outcomes highlight the need to design a balanced curriculum by integrating traditional knowledge with scientific, technological and professional competences to enhance the learning outcomes and to prepare future-ready graduates.

4.5 Child Safeguarding Risks and Institutional Protection Mechanisms

Based on the results obtained from this study, child Safeguarding has been identified as one of the most important issues of educational environment in Urdu-medium and Madaris schools of Pakistan. The analysis shows that, while these institutions are a source of education for millions of children, there are some gaps in institutional protection mechanisms, monitoring and awareness of child rights which can create some vulnerabilities for students. Safeguarding risks are especially high in contexts where children's ability to complain about the problem is restricted, the external monitoring of children is lax, and the power and control structure within the institution is a centralized one.

One of the key findings is that in many educational institutions, there are no formal child protection systems or frameworks, or the ones that exist are poorly developed. The evidence reviewed shows that some institutions do not have clear policies and procedures for student safety, complaints, staff screening and complaint reporting. This limitation will make it harder for institutions to be held accountable and could make it difficult to swiftly identify and resolve safeguarding issues.

The results also illustrate teacher–student power dynamics and the lack of external monitoring as risks to the safeguarding. In some learning environments, there may be fears of punishment, social pressure or respect for authority figures that means that inappropriate behaviour may not be reported. The requirements for effective supervision, trained staff and reporting systems may be greater in some Madaris, where children are housed to receive their education.

An additional achievement is the lack of awareness and practices about Child Protection among the staff of the institutions. Teachers and administrators are not always professionally trained on topics such as child psychology and positive discipline strategies, identifying signs of abuse,

and response procedures. If not trained, institutions may find it difficult to provide safe and supportive learning environments.

The results also show, however, that there is scope for improvement in safeguarding with structured interventions. Child protection policies, enhanced monitoring systems, background checks on staff, child protection training, and confidential complaints systems are all examples of practices that can make a huge difference in creating an environment that is safe for children in institutions.

The results overall highlight the need to put the quality of education in the context of child wellbeing and protection. To ensure safe learning spaces it is necessary to have a holistic approach to safeguarding through institutional accountability, teacher development, parental awareness, and effective regulation. These are all key steps necessary to make Madaris and Urdu-medium schools safe, welcoming and nurturing environments for children's learning and wellbeing.

Table 4.5: Child Safeguarding Risks and Institutional Protection Mechanisms

Safeguarding Challenge	Major Findings	Impact on Students
Lack of Child Protection Policies	Limited formal safeguarding guidelines in institutions	Increased vulnerability of children
Weak Reporting Mechanisms	Absence of confidential complaint systems	Underreporting of safeguarding issues
Limited Staff Training	Insufficient knowledge of child protection practices	Poor response to student concerns
Weak External Monitoring	Limited institutional inspection and accountability	Reduced safety assurance
Teacher–Student Power Imbalance	Students may hesitate to report problems	Increased risk of hidden misconduct
Limited Parental Awareness	Parents may lack knowledge of safety indicators	Reduced protection and intervention

Table 4.5 shows that child safeguarding issues are still great in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu medium schools. The results indicate that a lack of formal child protection policies and weak reporting mechanisms are the greatest concerns as they directly impact institutional accountability and student safety. Lack of staff training and monitoring further compounds vulnerability, as it reduces how well staff can take action to prevent and respond. From the graphical analysis, it is concluded that protecting risks are interlinked and need multi-sectoral institutional approach to solve them. To ensure safer and more supportive learning environments, it is crucial to enhance child protection policies, increase teacher sensitivity, and establish clear reporting systems.

4.6 Educational Inequality and Learning Opportunities in Urdu-Medium Schools

Based on the results of this study, educational inequality is a significant problem in Urdu medium schools in Pakistan especially in terms of less availability of resources, lack of quality teaching, less availability of learning facilities and less availability of modern educational opportunities. The analysis indicates that Urdu medium schools remain vital for educational access for children from low-income and marginalized communities; however, they do not have the resources to offer children education of a comparable quality to that provided by well-resourced private schools and elite schools.

An important discovery is the inequity in the distribution of education facilities in Urdu medium schools and in other education sectors. Many Urdu medium schools have inadequate infrastructure, libraries, lab facilities and access to digital learning technologies. This resource constraint limits students' access to learning experiences and modern educational tools, resulting in a huge gap between students from different social economical classes.

The results also indicate that language-based educational inequities have a bearing on language learners' educational and professional trajectories. Urdu is a medium of instruction that is easy to learn, however, due to limited exposure to English language skills and international learning resources, it might be a challenge to enter higher education and employment. Students who are coming from Urdu medium schools may have more challenges in the transition to the academic and professional environments that are dominated by English language.

The other significant finding is the variations in teacher quality and teaching methods. It is found that many Urdu medium schools suffer from lack of professionally trained teachers, inadequate professional development of teachers and comparatively inappropriate use of student-centered approaches in teaching. Students can therefore be taught more towards preparing for tests than critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills.

The analysis also shows that the education opportunities are significantly influenced by the socioeconomic conditions. While access to Urdu-medium schools is a major concern for the families, their choice of Urdu-medium schools may be influenced by their lack of awareness about the quality of the school, learning outcomes, and future academic plans of study.

The overall findings indicate that the key solutions for reducing educational inequalities will be to enhance the infrastructure, to improve teacher development, to extend digital learning opportunities, and to adopt the inclusive curriculum approaches. The issue of education through Urdu-medium schools should not just be considered as a low-cost alternative and a place where targeted investments and policy interventions should be planned for equipping these schools to deliver an education to all students.

Table 4.6: Educational Inequality and Learning Opportunities in Urdu-Medium Schools

Inequality Factor	Major Findings	Impact on Students
Limited Educational Resources	Shortage of libraries, laboratories, and digital facilities	Reduced learning exposure and academic development
Language Barriers	Limited English proficiency and communication skills	Difficulties in higher education and employment
Teacher Quality Differences	Limited training and professional development	Lower teaching effectiveness
Socioeconomic Constraints	Dependence on affordable education options	Restricted educational choices
Digital Learning Gap	Limited access to technology and online resources	Reduced digital literacy
Curriculum Limitations	Less focus on practical and skill-based learning	Weak preparation for future careers

Table 4.6 shows the most important factors that cause educational inequality in Urdu-medium schools. The results show that the factor of limited educational resources is the main challenge, while the other challenges include language barriers and difference in teachers' quality. The drawing shows that access to technology, educational practices and the teaching of skills is unequal, which leads to unequal opportunities for learning for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. These inequalities have a negative impact on the progress of students, on their chances of higher education and on their employment prospects. The results highlight the need of prioritizing the investment in education in a targeted manner, strengthening teachers' capacities, and promoting inclusive learning approaches so that the Urdu-medium school is an environment of equitable and quality education.

4.7 Role of Parental Awareness and Socioeconomic Factors in Educational Decision-Making

The results of this study show that parental awareness and social-economic factors are important determinants in the educational choices of parents of the Pakistani Madaris and Urdu-medium

school options. Rather than a broad assessment of the quality of education, the competence of teachers and safeguarding standards, parents' decisions are influenced by financial constraints, availability, social norms and attitudes towards educational institutions.

One of the most significant findings is that the economic factors have a significant influence on school choice decisions. In many cases, low-income families prefer the Madaris and Urdu-medium schools over other schools because they offer the child a basic education, religious instruction, shelter and education at nominal and/or no cost. In many cases, such institutions are a viable alternative to access to education for socially vulnerable families, especially those without good public or private schools in their communities. But decisions based on affordability could have a negative impact on the ability of parents to consider the long-term implications of the education and career path.

The results also reveal that parents' limited awareness about the quality indicators in institutions has an impact on educational decisions. In many cases parents may be more concerned with factors like distance, cost, discipline and social acceptance and less about teacher qualifications, content of or opportunities available in the curriculum, learning resources, child protection mechanisms and opportunities available for academic progression. The lack of information can lead children to being placed in institutions where they may not be adequately supported in their intellectual, social and professional growth.

The impact of cultural and social issues on parent decision-making is one of the other key findings. Religious environment, enrolment of girls, and community trust are some factors that may influence families' choice of education institutions in some communities, especially in conservative and rural communities. These are all considerations to keep in mind, but they must not be at the expense of educational quality and student safety needs.

The results also suggest that the awareness of parents could play a significant role to enhance educational outcomes. Transparent information about the standards of quality in schools, safeguarding procedures, teacher qualifications and learning opportunities can help parents to make informed decisions.

The findings point to a need to integrate institutional reform, in addition to parental empowerment as active stakeholders, into education reform. Enhanced public awareness initiatives, transparency and creating Parent Centred Guidance frameworks are crucial for providing safe and better-quality educational options for children in Pakistan.

Table 4.7: Role of Parental Awareness and Socioeconomic Factors in Educational Decision-Making

Factor Influencing Decisions	Major Findings	Impact on Educational Choices
Financial Constraints	Preference for affordable or free educational options	Limits access to higher-quality institutions
Limited Educational Awareness	Insufficient knowledge about quality indicators	Reduces informed school selection
Accessibility Factors	Importance of distance and availability	Influences institution preference
Social and Cultural Expectations	Trust in religious and community-based institutions	Shapes educational preferences
Lack of Quality Information	Limited awareness of teacher standards and curriculum	Affects evaluation of institutional quality
Family Educational Background	Parents' own educational experiences influence decisions	Determines expectations and choices

Table 4.7 points out the important role that parental awareness and family socio-economic determinants play in educational decision making. The results demonstrate that financial

considerations and limited parental awareness are the most significant factors affecting school attachment, with many parents focussing on financial considerations and accessibility within school rather than on indicators of educational quality. The graphical analysis also shows that factors affecting the education decisions such as social influences and lack of institutional information, and family background are present in education choices. The findings highlight the need for awareness programmes by parents to disseminate information regarding the quality of the teacher, the quality of the curriculum, measures to protect children, and the value of children's education in the long-term. Parents can be more empowered to make decisions and enhance children's learning opportunities.

5. Conclusion

This study covers an in-depth analysis of structural challenges, teacher training issues, curriculum constraints and issues of protection in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu medium schools. The results show how important these educational institutions are in educating the masses, especially economically low-income and underserved children. Continued issues of governance, finances, teacher capacity, curriculum development and child protection mechanisms, however, hamper their capacity to offer quality and future oriented learning environments.

The study concludes that there are fundamental barriers to the educational quality, such as regulatory fragmentation and weak institutional monitoring. Variations in institutional performance are due to limited accountability mechanisms, inconsistent quality standards and inadequate resource management. In addition, finance plays a significant role affecting the development of infrastructure, the recruitment of teachers, availability of learning resources and use of modern approaches in education.

One of the biggest issues that led to poor student performance was the teacher. Poor professional training, poor recruitment, lack of pedagogical skills and insufficient professional development affect teaching quality and restrict children's mastery of critical thinking and skills. In the same way, the scope of the curriculum prevents learners from having access to the knowledge, skills and understanding in science, technology, digital literacy, communication and vocational skills that they need to thrive in the modern academic and work world.

The results also highlight the need to regard child protection as a key element of educational quality. Vulnerabilities exist due to the lack of reporting mechanisms, weak reporting systems, and children's rights awareness, and these must be addressed by institutions. Furthermore, parental awareness and socioeconomic parameters are significant factors affecting educational choices and greater access to accurate and comprehensive information about school quality, teacher credentials, and student safety must be granted to families.

Overall, the study puts forth the argument that for an integrated reform of Madaris and Urdu-medium schools, neither a single nor an isolated approach to reform can be used. Enhancing governance, teacher professionalism, curriculum, and school safeguarding measures, along with involving parents, are key to successful transformation. A comprehensive and well-rounded educational system that is grounded in cultural and religious principles and also includes modern academic skills could help these institutes to play a crucial role in producing competent, responsible and future-ready leaders for Pakistan.

6. Future Work

Future research should also include empirical field studies with teachers, students, parents, administrators and policy makers in Pakistani Madaris and Urdu medium schools to further explore the educational issues that they face. This study is an analytical study based on existing evidence, but future studies could be conducted in different geographical areas to gather primary data and understand the differences in institutions and challenges faced in these areas.

Further studies are needed to create and test comprehensive educational improvement models which incorporate religious, cultural, scientific, and professional learning models. Findings from experimental research of effective curriculum changes, teacher development programs,

digital learning interventions and student-centred teaching methods would be of great value to enhance the quality of educational gains.

It is also suggested that further research be conducted on child safeguarding systems specifically developed for religious and low-cost education institutions. The efficacy of institutional protection policies, complaint systems, teacher screening systems and awareness initiatives need to be explored about the creation of a safer environment for learning.

More focus should be placed on the influence of parents' awareness and the involvement of communities to enhance educational decision-making. Future studies could explore the impact of information-based interventions on measures of parent understanding of school quality, teacher competency, and child protection needs.

Lastly, comparison of the performance of the Madaris with Urdu medium schools, public schools and private educational institutions, would offer general understanding of educational inequality and policy making. Such research would inform evidence-based changes that would promote equitable and quality education systems that would equip future generations with the social, academic, and professional skills that would enable them to meet challenges.

References

- Adams, S. E., & Myran, S. (2022). Leader-parent relationships in the early childhood education context: An exploration of testimonial and epistemic justice. *Improving schools*, 25(1), 65-82.
- Afzal, S., & Khan, M. L. (2026). Translation and Validation of the English Version of the Interpersonal Difficulties Scale among Pakistani Adolescents and Young Adults. *Annals of Human and Social Sciences*, 7(3), 134-154.
- Ahmad, B. (2015). Radicalization in Pakistan. *The Radicalization of Pakistan and the Spread of Radical Islam in Pakistan*
- Ahmad, N., & Guijun, Z. (2022). Inclusion or exclusion: Language ideology and language-in-education policies in Pakistan. *European Journal of Language Policy*, 14(2), 181-203.
- Ali, R. (2026). 'We are still British or American colony, we are still a colony, we are not free': language ideologies, policies in education in Pakistan. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 27(1), 67-90.
- Arif, M. (2025). Language-in-Education Policies in Pakistan: Evidence for an Equity-Driven Multilingual Framework for Urdu, English, and Regional Languages.
- Aslam, A., & Iraqi, K. M. (2025). REFRAMING MADRASSA EDUCATION: INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES FOR COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN PAKISTAN. *Journal for Business Education and Management*, 5(2), 73-89.
- Din, F. M. (2023). Female Madrasas in Pakistan: Religious, cultural and pedagogical dimensions.
- Farooq, R. U., Qasim, M. I., & Saddique, U. CONTENT BASED EVALUATION OF SINGLE NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK OF PAKISTAN.
- Ghumro, A. K. (2022). The Growth of Madrassas and Perceived Radicalization: The Case of the Khairpur District, Sindh, Pakistan. *MJIR| Malaysian Journal of International Relations*, 10(1), 22-44.
- Habib, A. (2026). Madrasa Education as a Confluence of Tradition, Islam, and Secularism in Rural Bangladesh. In *Islamization in 'Secular' Bangladesh: Beyond Bipolar Opposition* (pp. 213-233). Springer.
- Haider, K. (2022). Perceptions on implementing single national curriculum in Pakistan. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices*, 1(2).
- Hameed, M., Khan, M., Ullah, S., & Wahab, H. (2022). Socio-Political Impacts of Madrassah Education: A Case Study of Balochistan. *SHAJAR*, 4(1), 120-129.

- Hasan, M. M., & Anoraga, B. (2026). Qawmī Madrasah Education in Bangladesh: Safeguarding Islamic Traditions and Navigating Modern Challenges. *Islamic Studies Review*, 5(1), 59-90.
- Hussain, M., & Khan, M. M. A. (2023). Enlightened Moderation Policy of Musharraf Regime: A Critical Review in Preemption and Pseudo Vision (1999-2008). *Journal of Languages, Culture and Civilization*, 5(2).
- Hussain, S., Nawaz, M., & Issa, M. (2024). Impact of Medium of Instruction on Learning Outcomes at Tertiary Level: A Study on English Language Barriers in Baltistan, Pakistan. *Journal of Contemporary Trends and Issues in Education*, 4(1), 17-45.
- Jafree, D. S. R., & Farhan, M. (2024). Predictors of Islamic Religiosity in Youth who have Early Madrassah Education.
- Jameel, A. (2026). A Critical Analysis of Primary and Secondary Education Policies in Pakistan: A Retrospective on Objectives, Governance, and Outcomes. In *Education Policies and Practices in the Global South, Volume One: Basic Education* (pp. 171-204). Springer.
- Karim, N., & Abbas, M. (2025). Transforming Pakistan's education system: Opportunities, innovations, and persistent challenges in the 21st century. *Policy Journal of Social Science Review*, 3(10), 364-379.
- Khan, I., & Israr, M. (2025). Assessing the Impact of the Single National Curriculum in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: How Do Teachers in Peshawar and Swat Valley Navigate Implementation Challenges? *Policy Journal of Social Science Review*, 3(12), 616-628.
- Khatib, A., Fitri, A. Z., Ishomudin, A., Hosnan, M., Syafiqurrahman, Warits, A., & Haqan, A. (2026). Policy implementation of disability education in inclusive schools: a comparative case study of Islamic and public education systems in Indonesia. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 1-39.
- Khattak, S. S. G. (2025). *Voices of the Unvoiced: Women's struggle for education in Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, Pakistan*. Anthem Press.
- Mamun, H. A.-R., Bithy, S. A., & Khanam, S. (2023). Tale of education policy in Bangladesh: Development, changes, and adaptation approach. *British Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 5(3), 150-165.
- Mehboob, T., & Zafar, R. (2025). Language policy and medium of instruction in pakistan's education system. *ASSAJ*, 3(01), 1495-1509.
- Mehmood, S., Rashid, H., & Mukhtar, M. (2024). Perceptions of teachers towards Urdu language in private primary schools in Rawalakot. *International Journal of Contemporary Issues in Social Sciences*, 3(1), 182-191.
- Muhammad, F., & Jafree, D. S. R. (2023). Predictors of Islamic Religiosity in Youth who have Early Madrassah Education.
- Nasir, J. (2024). The Question of Education. In *Development Challenges of Pakistan: Constraints and Choices* (pp. 73-113). Springer.
- Naz, R., Akhtar, R., Ahmad, M. S., Fatima, F., & Abdullah, S. M. (2025). A comprehensive analysis of educational, environmental, and social challenges in Pakistan: Bridging policy, curriculum, and community development: An integrative review. *Social Science Review Archives*, 3(3), 756-778-.
- Saif, U., Hasan, A., Tahir, A., Geven, K., Ali, M., Masood, A., Rahman, M. A., & Fazili, S. (2026). Where Are Pakistan's Out-of-School Children?
- Salahudin, B., Khan, L., Gul, A., Shah, S. W. A., & Sadia, H. (2026a). Education Financing under Fiscal Decentralisation: Economic Implications of the 18th Amendment for KPK's School Sector. *Research Consortium Archive*, 4(2), 2825-2837.
- Salahudin, B., Khan, L., Gul, A., Shah, S. W. A., & Sadia, H. (2026b). Education Financing under Fiscal Decentralisation: Economic Implications of the 18th Amendment for

- KPK's School Sector (Public Finance and Devolution-Era Education Governance). Research Consortium Archive, 4(2), 2973-2981.
- SARFRAZ, D. R., & KHAN, M. A. (2025). A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF URDU AS A VEHICLE OF NATIONAL COHESION, ENGLISH AS LINGUISTIC CAPITAL AND THE STRUCTURAL ERASURE OF MOTHER TONGUES IN PAKISTAN'S SINGLE NATIONAL CURRICULUM. *TPM–Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, 32(3-September), 1630-1640.
- Shah, M. (2024). Educational leadership and the United Nations sustainable development goals in post-colonial Pakistan RMIT University].
- Shams, A., Lodhi, I. S., Ahmad, S., Mehmood, S., & Luni, F. (2025). Uniform System of Education for Pakistan: A Thematic Analysis. *Regional Lens*, 4(1), 232-240.
- Siraj, M. M. (2026). *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*.
- Taj, N. (2024). Girls' education and the cultural capital of Pakistan's urban middle class. *British Journal of sociology of Education*, 45(3), 363-380.
- Tang, J. K. K., & Hussin, W. S. (2026). Next-generation leadership development: a management succession perspective. *Journal of Family Business Management*, 16(1), 5-21.
- Ullah, I., Sohail, M., Haroon, M., Rehman, B., & Bibi, S. (2026). Physical Fitness and Academic Achievement in Pakistani Madrasa Students: Balancing Religious Education with Structured Exercise Programs. *Research Consortium Archive*, 4(2), 369-384.
- Yaqoob, B. (2022). Educated and Violent?: Sunni State-Formation, Education, and Sectarian Violence against Shi'a Muslims in Pakistan.
- Yasmin, F., Zaman, A., & Khan, K. (2023). Historical perspective and current practices of language in education planning in Pakistan. *Perennial journal of history*, 4(1), 62-81.
- Zohra, N., & Kanwal, W. (2026). Implementation Challenges of Pakistan's Single National Curriculum: Evidence from Primary School Teachers.

WASI MODEL FOR CHILD CARE (PAKISTAN)

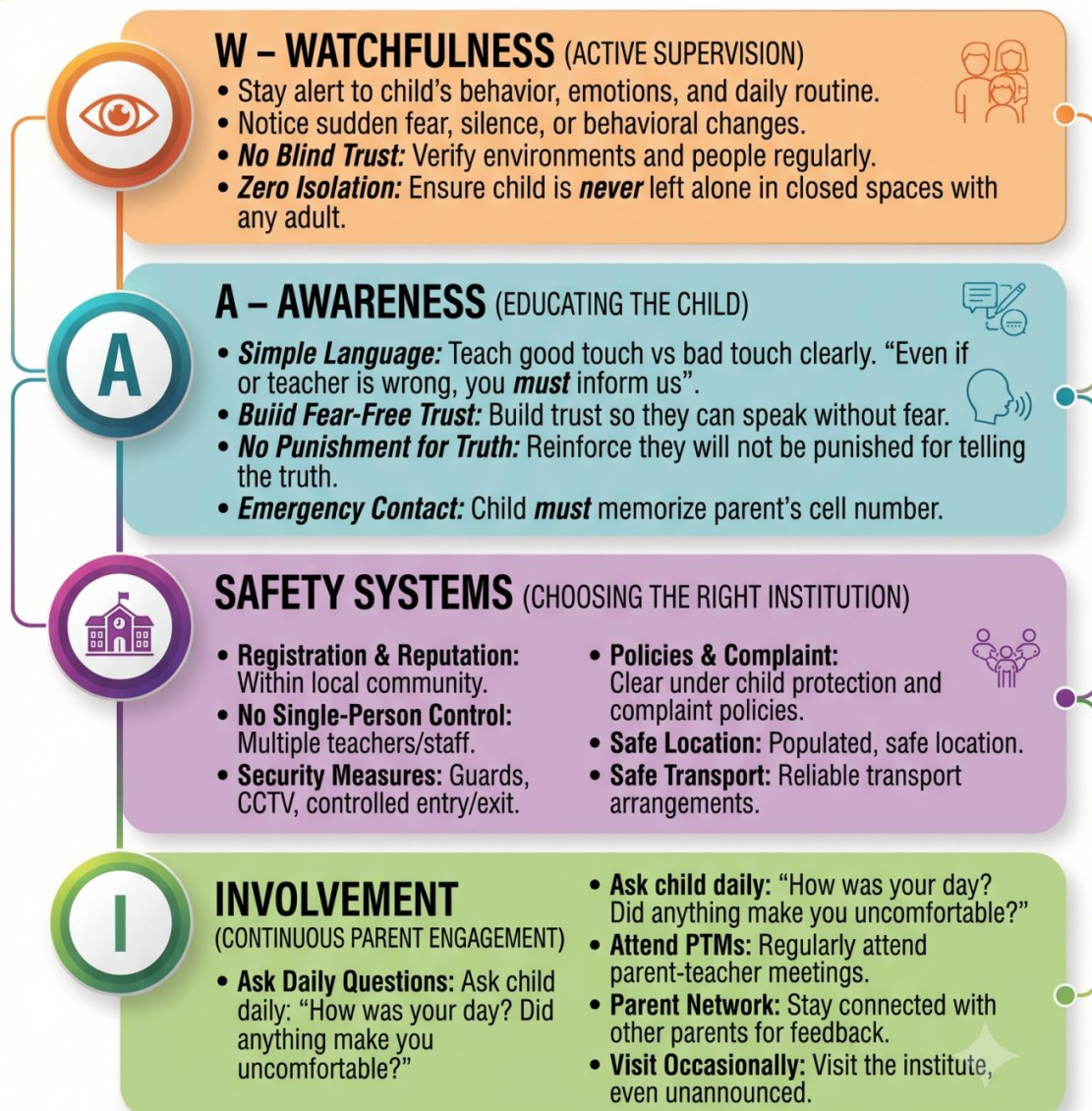
A Practical Framework for Safe and Responsible Parenting

CHILD SAFETY FIRST!

(PRIORITIZING PROTECTION OVER SILENCE)

Why This Matters

- **Child Safety Over Silence:** In our society, respect for elders is taught unquestioningly, but child safety is *more important*. The WASI Model ensures respect never leads to silence against abuse.
- **Breaking the Silence:** This framework breaks the cycle of fear and non-disclosure.



Break the Silence. Protect Our Children.