

EDUCATION



Introduction

Education being the fundamental right of child is the most important element of national development. It is the tool that enables children to understand their rights and recognize their responsibilities to fight against odds in the path of human evolution. Under Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan every child is entitled for free and compulsory education from age five to sixteen. To achieve Goal 4 of SDGs “Quality Education”, state is responsible to provide equitable education, removal of discrimination, provision and up-gradation of infrastructure, skill development for sustainable progress, universal literacy and enhancement of professional capacity of teachers. In pursuance of these commitments state has taken commendable steps. One among these initiatives is development of Single National Curriculum (SNC). It will provide equitable opportunity in terms of curriculum, medium of instruction and assessment to students across the board.

Under eighteenth constitutional amendment education has been devolved to provinces since 2010. It opens a window of opportunity on the one hand as acceptance of diversity has given boost to regional identity and enabled provinces receive a good amount of fund to invest on education yet it poses a great challenge of capacity as well.

Education sector plans have been devised by the provinces, targets have been set and strategies devised to meet those targets. The chapter will critically review the progress made by the respective provinces on the set targets.

Moreover, provision of holistic education to children is a multi-dimensional challenge that needs to be tackled through incorporation of multi-sectoral approach. Teachers are too handicapped to fulfill children educational needs. It requires a continuous parental engagement,

community involvement and state support to educate a child. Studies have proven that power sharing by the school increases ownership by parents. How schools can share their power and ease down their burden of imparting knowledge to the children will also be discussed in the chapter.

A non-compromising consistent endeavor is needed to compensate the learning losses caused by pandemic.

Situation Analysis of Education in Pakistan

Human resource has been recognized as the most invaluable asset of any nation. That's why today nations invest on their human resource to optimize their assets. Education is one among three basic Human Development Index (HDI) indicators. Overall assessments of education statistics in terms of enrolments, number of institutes and teachers have shown positive improvement. According to the economic survey of Pakistan (2020-21) the total numbers of enrolments during 2018-19 were recorded at 52.5 million as compared to 51.0 million during 2017- 18, with an increase of 2.9 percent¹. The number of institutes has also risen from 262.0 thousand to 273.4 thousand during the stipulated period. Similarly, there were 1.76 million teachers in 2018-19 as compared to 1.77 million last year.

Yet the face of the other side of the coin reflects a de-shaped image of the state of Pakistan's children. A country that is one among the youngest nations of the world whose 45% population is below 18 years of age² falls at 154th position among 189 countries in HDI global ranking according to 2020 report³. The 6th most populous country with 2.4% population growth

¹ Pakistan Economic Survey 2020-21

² Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey (PDHS) 2017–2018

³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2276065/pakistan-ranks-154th-on-uns-human-development-index>

rate⁴, feeble economic growth of -0.47 and 2.08 percent in FY2020 and FY2019 respectively⁵ and one among the top three countries with highest out of school children in the world⁶, is a worrying statistic for a country whose current workforce is young, mostly unskilled, and poorly prepared for productive employment. It is an era of knowledge economies. A well educated, skilled and prepared workforce is the only way forward to face the forthcoming challenges of dynamic global economies.

Pakistan is ranked one amongst the top three countries globally with highest number of out of school children (PSLSM, 2019-20)⁷. The number of out-of-school children and the children who never attended school goes as high as 32% in the year 2019-20 nationally. The highest share of these children comes from Baluchistan Province followed by Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. UNESCO education inequalities indicator⁸ reflects that in Pakistan average 60% children complete their primary education while upper secondary completion average is 23.5%. South Asia is the home of largest number (31. 8 million) of out-of-school children and youth in the world⁹. Pakistan's share is the second highest (28.1%) after a war ridden Afghanistan (42.7%) in South Asia. Sri Lanka

⁴ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Pakistan 2021. Pakistan annual report, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/media/3631/file/Annual%20Report%202020.pdf>

⁵ Pakistan Economic Survey, 2020-21.

⁶ PSLM, 2019-20.

⁷ PSLM (2019-2020). <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/pakistan-social-and-living-standards-measurement>

⁸ UNESCO, 2021. https://www.inequalities.org/indicators/edu0_prim#ageGroup=%22edu0_prim%22&year=%222012%22&dimension1=%22id%22%3A%22sex%22%2C%22filters%22%3A%5B%22Male%22%2C%22Female%22%5D%7D

⁹ UNICEF, 2021. <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/children-south-asia>

remains at the top and India at the second with only 2% and 5% respectively (UNESCO, 2021)¹⁰.

1. Educating During the Pandemic (covid-19)

- Distant learning initiative
- Education Quality and retention
- Compensating the loss

Corona virus pandemic has challenged every sphere of life across the globe. It has toppled down the existing patterns of life and put humanity on the verge of witnessing a paradigm shift in their traditional thinking and operational modes. More than 1.5 billion students have been affected by the closure of educational institutes across the globe¹¹. While at least 1 billion children are at the risk of falling behind due to schools closure in order to contain the adverse impacts of pandemic¹². In Pakistan 40 million children were impacted due to school closure¹³ due to covid -19 pandemic.

To address this development of abrupt and unprecedented situation various strategies are implemented by the states and technological use has emerged as the prime saver in this situation. But it has its own implications as well because the recommended usage of screen time for children was compromised. This may lead to a new autistic challenge in future. Moreover, in advanced countries, as a result of the pressing demands of public to include access to internet in basic human rights has leveled the ground for an uninterrupted and equitable access to internet but the situation is too different in Pakistan

¹⁰ UNESCO, 2021.

¹¹ <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/globalcoalition>

¹² <https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/covid-19/>

¹³ Idara e Taleem o Agahi (2021). Measuring The Impact Of Covid-19 On Education In Pakistan

Having one of the largest education systems in the world¹⁴, Pakistan responded to the situation immediately. Tele school system was launched at national level to impart education instantly. But, it has serious on ground challenges as well. As huge number of Pakistani population lives in poverty and access to these initiatives is beyond their reach. According to the World Bank latest report poverty ratio in Pakistan stood at 39.3 per cent in 2020-21¹⁵. Empirical evidence suggests that poorer households have far lower access to technology than their wealthier counterparts. Hardly 0.5% households have access to computer, 2.4 per cent to a television and only 2.8 percent have access to internet, while, access to smart phone in the poorest household is 8.5 percent¹⁶.

Inaccessibility of latest technology of almost half of the population failing every technology based initiative taken by the state to provide distant education to its children. Resultantly a rapid increase has been observed in learning losses of children of school going age. During the COVID-19 period, dropouts increased by 20 per cent. Share of dropped out children at primary level is 14 per cent during the pandemic; this share rises to 24 per cent at elementary level, and 38 per cent at matriculation level.

¹⁴ UNESCO (October, 2021). Situation Analysis on the Effects of and Responses to COVID-19 on the Education Sector in Asia. Pakistan Case Study.

Retrieved from

<https://www.unicef.org/rosa/media/16556/file/Pakistan%20Case%20Study.pdf>

¹⁵ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/852321-poverty-in-pakistan-up-from-4-4pc-to-5-4pc-wb>

¹⁶ Idara e Taleem o Agahi (2021). Measuring The Impact Of Covid-19 On Education In Pakistan

Compensating the loss

Learning during COVID-19 school closures

- About 60% of children currently enrolled in school spent less than an hour a day on their studies during school closures.
- 47% of children said that they struggled to study English, 4 % to study Arithmetic and 19 per cent to study Urdu on their own.
- While 32% of children report watching PTV's Tele School programmes only 2 per cent of them belong to the poorest wealth quartile. 63% of children report receiving learning support from family members and 17% from paid tuitions. Only 1.6 per cent receives support from radio.
- 31% of children report that their school provides them with learning material while 51% say that the school made no contact with them during the school closure period.
- About 40% of children in households with smart phones can access them for studying, and 6% have access to computers. Younger children (aged 3– 5 years) have 1.5 hours of access while those aged 6–16 years have two hours of access.
- 55% of children do not feel confident to study on their own if school closures re-occur¹⁷.

¹⁷ Idara e Taleem o Agahi (2021). Measuring The Impact Of Covid-19 On Education In Pakistan

School readiness for safe reopening

- Between 2019 and 2021, sanitation and drinking water facilities have declined in both government and private schools.
- A fifth of both government and private schools lack functioning hand washing facilities with soap in 2021.
- Fewer government schools have functioning computer laboratories in 2021 than in 2019 (declining from 73.5% to 62%), while private schools have seen an increase (from 19.2% to 28.5%).
- 54% of private schools and 30% of government are providing alternate-day schooling.
- Mask-wearing is enforced in 61% of government schools and 87% of private schools¹⁸.

School closures have led to learning crisis and its severity has more frequently affected children in two domains. Children who are in pre-primary or in early phase of learning are worst affected as they are yet to build foundational capacities to learn themselves while, the other one is the poorest quartile in particular as they have inequitable access to learning opportunities. The learning deprivation is deepened due to gender, wealth or geographic location. By bridging these continuously widening inequities can only ensure to achieve the ideal of “education for all”.

¹⁸ Idara e Taleem o Agahi (2021). Measuring The Impact Of Covid-19 On Education In Pakistan

2. Critical Review of Education Sector Plans (ESPs)

- ESP Goals and objectives

Goals:

The overarching goals that have been proposed to guide long-term priorities in education are to:

1. Ensure free and compulsory, universal, equitable and inclusive education for all children; at all educational levels including NFE, TVET and lifelong learning; with particular attention to children with special needs, marginalized groups and out of school children; creating safe, protective and enabling learning environments.
2. Ensure quality teaching and improved learning for all.
3. Promote effective leadership, management, governance and education service delivery, and availability of enhanced resources and their efficient use at all levels.

Objectives:

In order to contribute to the achievement of the overarching goals, the ESP has the following general objectives:

1. Promote quality education in a safe, inclusive and conducive learning environment for children
2. Improve teaching and learning practices for better learning outcomes
3. Provide adequate and sufficient access to education for children from pre-primary to secondary (including marginalized and children with special needs) and youth/adults
4. Strengthen governance of the education sector for equitable access and high-quality education

Source: Education sector plans

Key priority areas

Some very good efforts have been made during the last decade and all the provinces have come up with Education Sector Plans for their Provinces particularly. Areas have been identified and strategies made to address the grey areas on priority basis. Early childhood education (ECE) has been recognized as the key priority area in the education sector plans of all the Provinces. Under the ‘scaling-up enrolment’ initiative, districts with lowest enrolment rate has been focused and school councils have been recognized as the potential partners in bringing out of school children in classrooms. But, in the third decade of twenty first century despite of making promises in MDGs and then SDGs and pledging UNCRC for universal education Pakistan statistics on education is very disappointing. Since 2014 literacy level of 10 year plus population of Pakistan is dormant. It throws powerful questions on the systems in place and demands drastic systemic changes to break the stagnancy.

Province	Urban			Rural			Total			G. Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
	Pakistan	79	67	74	64	39	52	70	49	
Punjab	80	72	76	67	48	57	72	57	64	63
Sindh	79	66	73	53	23	39	68	47	58	60
KPK	80	53	67	69	31	50	71	35	53	53
Baluchistan	76	47	63	55	22	40	61	29	46	44

Literacy rate of 10 years plus population of Pakistan

Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey 2019–2020.

Range and volume of school education sector

Pre-primary education haven't yet been started in the public sector of Pakistan, however, children of pre-primary age do get admissions in public sector schools. About 9.489 million children are enrolled at pre-primary stage in total. Enrolment share of public sector is 4.830 million (51%), whereas the private sector has 4.659 million (49%) in Pakistan.

Province	Primary		Middle		High		Higher secondary	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Pakistan	65	35	66	34	70	30	89	11
Punjab	62	38	66	34	74	26	93	7
Sindh	60	40	57	43	58	42	88	12
KPK	76	24	76	24	77	23	88	12
Baluchistan	82	18	81	19	83	17	93	7

Percentage distribution of enrolment by sector & Province

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics 2017-18.

Concerns in education system

Assessment plays a vital role in the process of educational development. Serious issues have been identified by the independent experts in education sector of Pakistan. Three major areas have been identified in the assessments and Provinces have taken these points seriously and have adopted these points as priority areas strategically. These areas are (a) Quality of learning outcomes; (b) Access, retention and equity and (c) Governance and management.

Quality of learning outcomes

Various assessment mechanisms are in place to determine the quality of learning at schools. Two types of assessments are conducted in education system; summative and formative. Often systems rely on summative assessments because it's easier but formative assessment have proven more beneficial to enable teachers be prepared for multi-dimensional needs of their students¹⁹. Another mechanism is to judge whether a mentor values helping a mentee and is willing to expend the effort to provide quality feedback that will enhance the mentee's future performance²⁰. In Pakistan summative approach is preferred as it's easier to assess at macro level. It has many flaws as well. In Pakistan there is only focus on the evaluating how many children scored certain percentage of marks. The criteria have served as a breeding ground for creating acceptance of booty culture within school examination system.

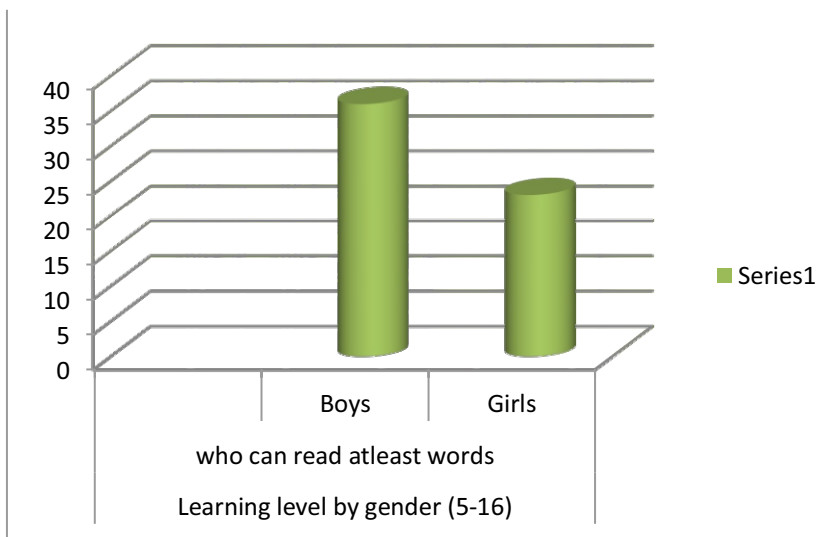
¹⁹ ET, O. D. C. (2008). Assessment for learning formative assessment.

²⁰ Yambi, T. D. A. C. (2018). Assessment and evaluation in education.

Access, retention and equity

There is a clear shift of households opting for private sector education and statistics since 2014-2019 shows a considerable increase from 70% to 77% during the period. It speaks volume about the state of public sector schooling.

Learning losses are something that haunts the child throughout life. Learning level by gender is marked with the clear signs of deprivation as female children are left behind despite of being the part of mainstream education system. Only twenty six percent (26%) girls can read a sentence as compared to thirty six percent (36%) of boys.



Source: ASER Pakistan, 2019

Moreover, imbalance of male and female teachers also serves as a causative ground for poor retention. Retention rate of girls from class I to X is 34% as compared to boys that is 39%.

Governance and management

Governance plays a vital role in the implementation of policies. After 18th constitutional amendment Provinces have liberty to invest in education. They have developed independent programs to upgrade the sector of education in their respective jurisdictions. Punjab has the Directorate of Staff Development (DSD) to provide pre-service and in-service training to teachers that is being further transformed into the Academy for Educational Development. Provincial Institute for Teacher Education (PITE) and the Curriculum Wing are responsible for teachers' capacity building and training. Sindh has also taken a giant step and established Sindh Teacher Education Development Authority (STEDA) in 2010–2011 that will play a regulatory role in the respective Province. The Provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan do have PITEs to perform their respective functions. However, NFE is the shared responsibility of Federal and Provinces that suffers lack of coordination. Yet to play the coordinating role is the responsibility of Council of Common Interest (CCI).

Governance in education sector needs to revisit the data and realign the resources accordingly. Serious loophole does exist that itself speaks a lot. It compromises the quality of teaching learning in school system. At primary level schooling there are 62% of institutions, with 67% of enrolment and having 28% of teachers in Pakistan²¹. The teacher-pupil ratio at the stage is 44.08 when minor children need more attention from their teachers; while global average in 2018 based on 87 countries is 24.13

²¹ Pakistan Education Statistics 2017-18.

students per teacher²². At middle level the institution, enrolment and teacher percentage triplet is 21:15:26 which is more balanced as compared to the primary level. However, it must be the concern for policy makers to prioritize the primary and pre-primary schooling as it is the most crucial period of child life.

²² https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/rankings/student_teacher_ratio_primary_school/

3. Challenges in the School Education Sector in Pakistan

Education system in Pakistan is faced with multi-dimensional challenges that need a multi-sectoral approach of intervention to address them holistically. However, some of the most pressing ones will be discussed in the coming paragraphs. State of participation in education, quality of learning and inequities in educational outcomes will be examined one by one.

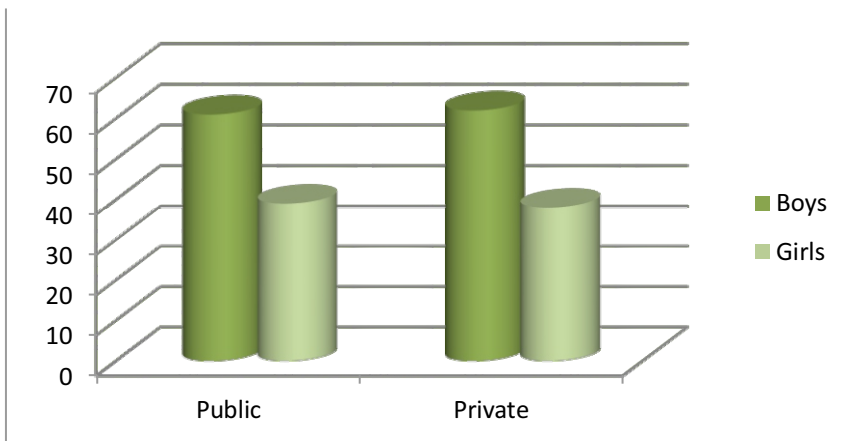
Participation in education

It is enough to know that Pakistan is the second country with highest rate of out of school children in the world. Thirty two percent (32%) children are out of school of the age of 5 to 16 years in Pakistan²³.

Wide variation does exist across genders, different socioeconomic groups, geographic areas, and districts within provinces when it comes to access, retention and equity in education. The majority (80%) of public schools in Pakistan are primary schools with only 10% being middle schools and 8% high schools. The statistics itself speaks volume about the nature of education system and drastic drop out rate after primary education.

Evidence suggests that serious gender disparities exist in access to school by gender and type of school in Pakistan. Data on enrolment by gender and by schools status reflects clear disparities as in public school system 61% boys while 39% girls are enrolled while in private schools enrolment is 62% of boys and 38% of girls.

²³ https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files//pslm/publications/pslm_district_2019-20/tables/2.15.pdf



Source: ASER Pakistan, 2019

These disparities are also apparent when looked at the out of school children percentage as well. Girls are consistently the most left over segment among children as shown in the table below.

Out of school children by gender			
	2016	2018	2019
Boys	15	11	11
Girls	19	17	18

Source: ASER Pakistan, 2019

Quality of Learning in School Education

Who can read (Class wise % of children)						
Class	Nothing	Letters	Words	Sentences	Story	Total
3	10.4	8.9	35.5	27	18.3	100
5	9.4	3.4	9.3	18.8	59.1	100
8	3.1	1.3	2.8	6.6	86.2	100

Source: ASER Pakistan, 2019.

Despite of improvement in learning levels serious vacuum still exists at primary level as 82% children of class three and 41% of class five still unable to read story in Urdu/Sindhi/Pashto language. The state of “learning poverty” a term coined by World Bank has to be addressed by 2030 under Sustainable Development Goals target 4 (SDG-4.1.1).

Learning outcomes can only be improved by implying a clear policy and management level change immediately. To improve learning outcomes it is recommended to;

- Increase the amount of quality teachers
- Measure learning and imply formative rather than summative approach of assessment
- Engage teachers for effective policy dialogue
- Implement participatory learning techniques²⁴.

²⁴ <https://inschool.adra.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/adra-global-education-report.pdf>

Inequities in Education Outcomes

The state of learning poverty is more deepened when focused through gender lens. Girls lag behind in the literacy and numeracy skills.

- 46% of boys and 38% of girls could read at least sentences in Urdu/Sindhi/Pashto.
- 48% boys could read at least English words while 39% of girls can do the same.
- Similarly, 43% of boys were able to do at least subtraction whereas only 36% girls could do it.²⁵

Over all learning poverty in relation to economic development in Pakistan is as high as 75% at the age of 10 which is much higher as compared to the countries of the similar development phase i.e Vietnam, where learning poverty of the same age group is 2%²⁶.

²⁵ ASER Pakistan, 2019.

²⁶ <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/507811571223576855-0090022019/original/EAPEACVFNMLPBRIEF.pdf>

4. Overview of Single National Curriculum (SNC)

The most important aspect is to understand the difference between Curriculum and the Textbooks. Curriculum provides you with standards to achieve through any desired set of text books. For teachers, it is crucial to be aware of standards of each subject before they pick and choose any text book related to that specific subject. Everybody including textbook developers, program planners, teachers, disseminators, education officials, and parents have a strong role if they intend to achieve the standards. It is a great step indeed. It was always wanted and struggled by SPARC to explain to the teachers but there was no clear and aligned document available to address the clear link between curriculum standards and the text books.

Yet, by publishing text books centrally is a step that is diminishing the impact of giant step taken by the state. To meet the standards maintained in SNC provinces and school systems must be at liberty to adopt any method suitable to them taking into account their respective ecology. Over emphasize of religious education rather than preparing the nation's future with latest technology based learning is another area under serious criticism.

Technology is going to have a paramount effect on our lives. No field of life is beyond its control. The best service a state can do to the nation is to prepare its children for the future. It is rightly said in an ancient proverb that “fore-warned is fore-armed” and it equally befits today as well. Industry 4.0 is a concept emerged in Germany a few years back and today it has revolutionized almost every domain of business. Everything from the procurement of raw material till to the delivery to the end user is going to be automated. One of the basic pre-requisite is the prioritization of imparting latest education about technological advancement. Secondly provision of equitable and uninterrupted access to 5G internet because without it won't be possible to compete the fast changing world.

According to a study up till 2025, 85 million people will become jobless due to automation of industrial processes globally. But the good news is that till that time 97 million IT related new jobs will be created. The point is whether our children will be prepared for the new emerging market demands. So far our industry is less focusing on getting automated because of 2 reasons. One is cheaper labor force and secondly costly technology. But the equation will get reverse soon and labor will become costly than technology then the demand will be altogether different from the industry. India has developed a machine learning syllabus in collaboration with Microsoft from 6th to 8th class and it has not been imposed rather a website has been launched and children are introduced to get enrolled. Within a year of its launch 1.5million students get enrolled for it.

Where do we stand in this domain?

5. Key Issues and Recommendations

Availability of schools and teachers

Fifty six percent (56%) children are enrolled in public sector while enrolment ratio in private sector is 44% in Pakistan. But, when it comes to the availability of teachers, the ratio is reversed as 46% teachers are in public school while 54% in private sector²⁷. World Bank (2013) report unveils that almost half (49%) of public schools in Punjab have optimal PTRs between 20 and 40 pupils per teacher, 20% have PTRs that are lower than 20, while 21% have PTRs that are higher than 40²⁸. Annual census (2016-17) report of Sindh Province illustrates a wide variation of PTR within the province. It reflects that in Karachi PTR is as low as 15 but in rural areas as high as 38²⁹. This is a huge gap that affects teacher-pupil ratio in public schools hence impacting quality of learning.

Teachers training

Teachers' pre-service and in-service training is attributed to the retention issues in school³⁰. Trained teachers serve as a magnetic field to ensure children's interest and retention in school. Hardly one-third teachers are trained in the developing countries (UNESCO, 2014)³¹. In Pakistan the retention rate from class I to X is alarmingly very low falling at 36.5%³². Ministry of Education (MOE) policy and planning wing has drafted

²⁷ Pakistan Education Statistics 2017-18.

²⁸ World Bank. 2013. Punjab Social Sector Public Expenditure Review. Islamabad.

²⁹ SELD Reform Support Unit (RSU) data, 2017. Karachi.

³⁰ <https://inschool.adra.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/adra-global-education-report.pdf>

³¹ UNESCO (2014) Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2013/4. Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All. Accessed via <https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/>

³² Pakistan Education Statistics 2017-18.

National Professional Standards for Teachers since 2009 but these are yet to be implemented. Poor inter-departmental coordination and scarcity of budget for the training of teachers is a major stumbling block. Some positive steps have been by the provincial governments in this regards as minimum qualification for teachers was raised to bachelor with 4 years BEd degree as well. Recruitment was started through National testing Service (NTS) rigorous process to ensure merit based induction.

Availability of learning material in class keeps child wandering mind stick to learning. Dry and rote learning methods are often proved to be non productive in case of quality of learning and arousing children interest in studies. The DFID review in 2016 also suggested that the program should look more to coaching and mentoring and less to monitoring teachers.

Non-availability of basic facilities:

Non-conducive environment for learning in class rooms negatively affects students' focus and retention. It is another major contributing factor for lower enrolment and retention. Thirty nine percent (39%) primary and nineteen percent (19%) secondary schools still do not have basic electricity supply in Pakistan. Safe and clean drinking water is not available to the children studying in 32% primary and 18% secondary schools. Non- availability or non-functionality of toilets in schools is a key factor for the lower rate of enrolment and poor retention especially of girls. Twenty six percent primary and ten percent secondary schools still lack in the provision of basic facility. While 25% primary and 10% secondary schools are without boundary walls.

Quality of Learning

Pupil teacher ratio

Pupil Teacher ratio (PTR) is an indicator that testifies the better performance in educational planning. If the ratio is lower it is marked as the better chance for students to get teachers' attention. The higher teacher pupil chances of engagement lowers the chances of dropping out and increases the chances of better test scores. In Pakistan at public schools pupil teacher ratio is 33 at primary school level, 24 at middle, while 26 at high school level³³. According to a Jang development reporting cell Pakistan sits at the 9th position with higher pupil teacher ratio being the highest in South Asia³⁴. Second step towards achieving the ideal of higher learning outcomes is;

Measuring learning

It has already been discussed that summative approach is a generic approach that is applied to have a macro level of management. It is considered as less productive as compared to formative approach of assessment that includes deeper involvement of management and teachers in the designing and delivering of impactful lessons. Third step towards achieving the ideal of higher learning outcomes is;

Engage teachers for effective policy dialogue

Teachers are the potential players in translating educational policies into practice. Getting them involved in the policy formulation invokes more active role of teachers in learning process. Dialogues raises awareness

³³ Pakistan education statistics 2017-18.

³⁴ https://www.eduvision.edu.pk/edu_news/pakistan-ranked-9th-lowest-country-in-student-teacher-ratio-jang-reports-news-2865

and increases their ownership hence ascertains the implementation phase in true letter and spirit. Fourth step towards achieving the ideal of higher learning outcomes is;

Implement participatory learning techniques

The technique ensures students active engagement invoking more active role of students in learning process.

Unsafe learning spaces

Safe and child friendly school environment is essential for child to learn and thrive. Violence against children in school is a serious problem that despite of prohibition of corporal punishment children faces it in schools. Empirical evidence suggests that abuse can harm child physical growth of mind up to 6%. This is one of the major reasons of children dropping out of school as well. Bullying at school by the peers is a serious problem that needs attention of the state. According to a study conducted by Abbas & Jabeen (2020) peers are one of the major perpetrators of child sexual abuse in Pakistan.

Non-formal education:

The most pressing demand to address the second largest lot of out of school children can only be met through the placement of a comprehensive non-formal education system in the country. The covid-19 pandemic has further worsened the situation and compelled a huge number of school age children discontinue their studies and support their parents in income generation. Sindh Province has launched its NFE policy but it still needs a lot to translate it into practice. Punjab first literacy and non formal basic education policy is launched in 2019 that too is in a nascent stage.

³⁴⁻¹ Abbas & Jabeen (2019) Prevalence of child abuse

A comprehensive non-formal education program revolves around a concept of basic guiding principles. The first principle of a good non formal education is that the learners rather than providers are to lead the learning program. Secondly it is based on a community school model. One size doesn't fit all so the providers must be vigilantly observing the on ground situation and must develop curricula in response to the genuine needs of the community. It is quite possible that a community may need some financial support, loan or skill base to get rid of the vicious cycle of poverty rather than training. But in reality, it is more complex and demanding flexibility of policy on the part of government coupled with the allocation of sufficient resources to reintegrate those children who have been missed out of formal education system.

The role of the state in the domain of non-formal education must be strategic and dynamic and it must evolve as the societal needs are evolved. It must incorporate private and NGO sector to play its vibrant part.

Early childhood education

Evidence supports that the investment made on early childhood education reduces the chances of drop outs and enhances educational outcome³⁵. A number of studies support that focus on early childhood education and development significantly affects socio-economic status of individual in

³⁵ Asia–Pacific Regional Network for Early Childhood. 2012. White Paper on Promoting Holistic Development of Young Children— An Imperative for the Advancement of Nations in Asia-Pacific.

later life³⁶. A return on investment model testifies that every dollar spent on high quality early childhood education saves 7\$-10\$ later³⁷. Thus the panacea to reduce the highest number of out of school children lies in the generous investment in early childhood quality education.

Under SDG 4 seven targets have been set by the state to ensure provision of free, equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Among those early childhood and primary education is the second top priority, yet according to the economic survey of Pakistan education report just 12.7 million children are enrolled in pre-primary in 2018-19³⁸.

Role of private sector

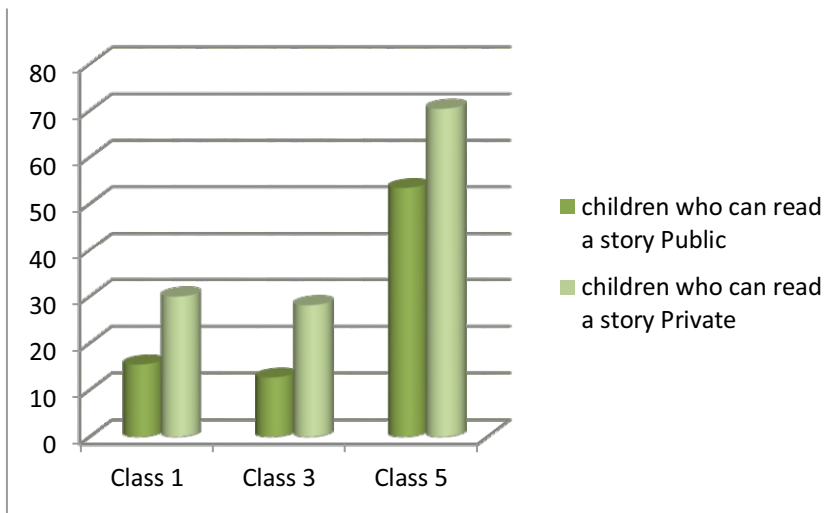
Given rise to the involvement of private sector in education sector especially in urban Pakistan, its importance in imparting education to 44% of children having share of 38% institutions and 56% teachers cannot be overlooked. LEAPS report illustrates a wide range of existing gap in quality education stating “The differences between public and private schools are so large that it will take public school students between 1.5 to 2.5 years of additional schooling to catch up to where private school students were in Class 3.”³⁹ ASER report also testifies that learning level in private schools is higher as compared to public schools.

³⁶ The Heckman Equation, “Four Big Benefits of Investing in Early Childhood Development,” available at <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/4-big-benefits-of-investing-in-early-childhooddevelopment/>

³⁷ Heckman, J. (2015). The Heckman Equation-Four Big Benefits of Investing in Early Childhood Development. <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/4-big-benefits-of-investing-in-early-childhood-development/>

³⁸ Pakistan Economic Survey 2020-21

³⁹ Andrabi, T et al. (2007). Pakistan Learning and Education Achievement in Punjab Schools: Insights to Inform the Education Policy Debate (LEAPS). Washington, DC: World Bank.



ASER, 2021

A successful model of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the form of Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) and Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) has proven credible in the respective provinces and efforts are in place to replicate the model in KPK and Balochistan as well. PPP model is formed on three basic indicators;

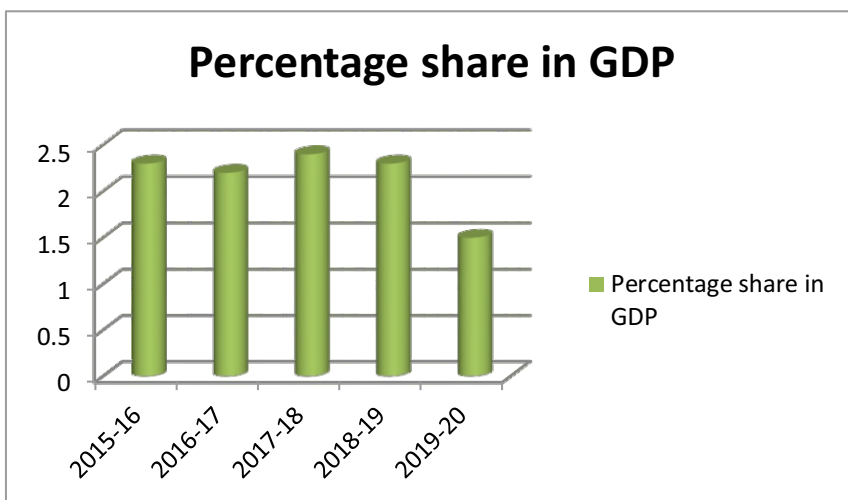
- Size of the out-of-school children population (6–10 years),
- Distance to the nearest primary school, and
- Gender disparity in primary school participation.

Various schemes like PEF education voucher scheme was launched in 2006, foundation assisted schools program was also inaugurated through which foundation funds students in low-cost private schools. Second category under PPP model is privately managed public schools. Education management Organization (EMO) model has been developed in Sindh recently. In 2015 SED in Punjab launched public school support program,

under the model lower performing schools are handed over to private partners. Adopt a school program falls in the third category of PPP model. Under the model government of Punjab has handed over 5000 worst performing schools to PEF and within 6 months they have doubled their enrolment⁴⁰.

Budget allocation

Share of any sector in budgetary allocation determines states priorities. Education is the most neglected and least priority area for the state of Pakistan. Finance is the life line for the growth and development of educational performance of the state.



Source: PRSP Budgetary Expenditures, External Finance Policy Wing, Finance Division, Islamabad

⁴⁰ School education sector assessment, 2019.

None of the areas pointed above can be improved and vacuums be filled without sufficient allocation of financial resources. Be that the issue of non-availability of sufficient schools, shortage of teachers, provision of basic facilities, equipping of teachers with sufficient training and skills, maintenance of laboratories, engaging children in extra-curricular activities or effective monitoring and evaluation of the wide range of education sector, at least 5% of budgetary allocation is utmost essential to address the education and learning crisis of Pakistani children.

