

MANAGING QUALITY EDUCATION AT PRIMARY LEVEL IN PAKISTAN: CURRENT PRACTICES AND FUTURE HOPES

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan has made few international commitments to provide quality basic education to everyone as a basic right. As per the constitution of Pakistan, "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law" National educational assessment system (NEAS) reported alarming situation regarding the performance of 3rd and 5th grade students. The main focus of this article was to analyze the current practices of managing quality education by the heads of the institutions and to understand what we can expect in near future regarding provision of quality primary education in Pakistan. Research was of mixed method and data were quantified as well as qualited. Heads of 30 public primary schools comprised the sample. A questionnaire having both open and close ended questions was used focusing on managing the active participation of different stakeholders, facilitating improvement of pedagogical skills, building healthy relationship with staff, distribution of responsibilities, ensure use of low cost no cost materials, updating content, application of the conceptual learning approach, guide how to integrate bookish knowledge to real life situation etc. as a research tool. It was found that most of head teachers tried to involve different stakeholders in improving the performance of schools. It was also found that relationships among teachers and heads of the institutes were not good. Professional development opportunities for teachers were also scarce. It was suggested that capacity building of the heads of the institutes may be ensured for smooth functioning of the system.

Key Words: Managing quality education, primary schools and different stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

Improving and sustaining of quality education is of paramount importance in any society rounding the globe. Only quality education can ensure economic, social, mental, psychological and emotional growth of individuals on the right direction. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) also declared quality primary education as the basic right of all people. According to (Hoy, et al, 2000), many developed and developing countries have attained or near to the goal of universal primary education. Now the focus has been turned to the quality of students' learning and it is quite justifiable not only for those countries which have attained quantitative targets, but it is also valid for those countries who are striving to achieve the target of EFA and MDGs

like Pakistan. Quality of education requires standards set in order to develop assessment tools, compatibility of programs and propose someone as accountable for to meet the targets. Pakistan has made its commitments in all international forums of basic education to make it accessible and of high quality. Commitments of Pakistan with the international community are as under;

International Commitments

Pakistan was one of the 48 member states who voted in favour of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948. According to article 26 of this declaration, "Everyone has the right to education" and "Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be

compulsory”. The convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the UN general assembly in 1974 but Pakistan acceded to the convention on March 1996. As a signatory to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995, Pakistan is committed to promote “people-centered sustainable development through the provision of basic education, lifelong education, literacy and training for girls and women” (Article 27), and ensuring “equal access to

Dakar Framework for Action

Pakistan was among 164 countries who adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting Our Collective Commitments at the World Education Forum. All 164 countries acknowledged education as a fundamental right for all people, regardless of gender or age, recognized the need to make comprehensive efforts to eliminate gender discrimination. The Dakar Framework is a collective commitment to achieve all EFA goals and one of these is “ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality”

The Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals

Pakistan, including 192 members of United Nations countries has agreed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) developed/framed at the Millennium Summit in New York in 2000. All members States agreed to work towards achieving all the MDGs,

and equal treatment of women and men in education” (Article 30).

World Declaration on Education for All (2000)

As a signatory of this declaration on Education for All (EFA), Pakistan agreed that every person should be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs, and called for an expanded vision of education, encompassing factors such as universalizing access to education and promoting equity.

including goal 2 “to achieve universal primary education” by 2015.

Constitution

Through a constitutional amendment # 18, free and compulsory education for the children aged 5 to 16 years has been declared a fundamental right. Article 25-A of the Constitutions provides that: “The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by the law.”

National Plan of Action (2001-2015)

To honor the international commitment made in signing the Education for All Dakar Framework for Action (April 2000), the Government of Pakistan developed the National Plan of Action (NPA) on Education for All 2001–2015. The objectives of the NPA are to ensure access to education for disadvantaged rural and urban population groups, particularly girls and women; to promote community participation and ownership of basic education programmes; and to improve the relevance and quality of basic education.

National Education Policy (2009)

As per nature of the current situation of gender and rural-urban disparities regarding access of education, the New Education Policy aims to revitalize the education system. Policy also aims to

enable Pakistan to fulfill all its international commitments regarding education on different forums and summits in general and EFA and MDGs in particular.

Situation Analysis

Primary Enrolment Rates

Table 1 : Gross Primary Enrollment Rates (%) by Province and Sex (2011-12)

+	Baluchistan	KPK	Punj.	Sind.	Glt.B	ICT	FATA	AJK	Pakistan
Boys (%)	70	116	91	86	103	85	101	73	92
Girls (%)	55	85	84	71	87	90	53	73	79
Both (%)	63	101	88	79	95	87	77	73	85

Source: 1.National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) Database 2011-12, AEPAM, MET, Islamabad & Population Projection 2005-2025, NIPS, 2013

Pakistan as a signatory to world community regarding making its effort to achieve universalization of primary education (UPE) is still a dream yet to come true. By utilizing less than 2 per cent of GDP, how it can achieve its targets in education sector. For the achievements of set targets it needs to raise the share of

GDP for education and then assures transparent mechanism of implementation strategies to provide access and quality education for all. Increases in grass enrollment shows sincere efforts are being made and Pakistan has to multiply its efforts to achieve target of UPE.

Table 2: Net Primary Enrollment Rate of age 5-9 years (2011-12)

	Baluchistan	KPK	Punj.	Sind	Glt.B	ICT	FATA	AJ&K	Pakistan
Boys (%)	56	92	73	69	82	68	81	58	73
Girls (%)	44	68	67	57	69	72	42	59	63
Both (%)	51	81	70	63	76	70	62	58	68

Source: 1.National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) Database 2011-12, AEPAM, MET, Islamabad & Population Projection 2005-2025, NIPS, 2013

Survival to Grade 5

Table 3: Primary School Survival Rates (2011-12)

	Balochistan	KPK	Punj.	Sind.	Glt.B	ICT	FATA	AJ&K	Pakistan
Boys (%)	52	68	80	60	32	86	80	86	71
Girls (%)	54	65	72	67	31	97	44	89	68
Both (%)	53	67	76	63	32	91	66	87	70

Source: 1. National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) Database 2011-12, AEPAM, MET, Islamabad 2. Calculated through UNESCO Reconstructed Cohort Model

Quality of Education in Pakistan at Primary Classes

Findings (Summary)

	Territory	% Children											
		Access					Quality						
		(Age 3-5)		(Age 6-16)			Attending paid tuition (Govt. & Pvt. schools)	Class 3			Class 5		
		In Pre-school	Out-of-school (All)	Out-of-school (Girls)	in private school	Who can read sentence (Urdu / Sindhi / Pashto)		Who can read word (English)	Who can do subtraction	Who can read story (Urdu / Sindhi / Pashto)	Who can read sentence (English)	Who can do division	
Rural	Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK)	47.2	7.4	3.7	35.0	13.5	52.1	62.0	44.2	64.9	58.4	44.3	
	Balochistan	22.3	34.1	21.3	3.8	1.9	22.3	25.5	20.3	36.1	31.9	33.7	
	Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA)	33.9	25.3	14.7	23.4	4.1	42.3	57.2	44.6	45.5	49.7	41.8	
	Gilgit-Baltistan	43.7	16.6	8.8	41.5	13.8	55.3	73.4	59.2	56.0	67.9	55.5	
	Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT)	56.1	5.3	1.9	38.0	14.3	65.5	81.8	69.3	55.0	62.4	56.0	
	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	35.1	16.2	9.4	29.4	7.6	44.6	59.6	48.6	43.3	47.1	44.1	
	Punjab	50.8	15.9	8.4	30.0	22.2	57.3	63.1	52.3	66.7	61.3	55.6	
	Sindh	38.8	32.4	16.6	9.0	5.0	33.8	24.7	22.2	40.3	25.4	26.9	
	National	37.1	22.8	12.9	22.6	11.3	42.6	49.2	39.9	50.9	48.0	43.8	
Urban	Punjab	55.1	8.4	3.2	50.6	45.4	70.6	79.1	72.5	73.9	73.5	62.5	
	Sindh	62.4	7.4	2.6	60.1	50.6	46.7	53.6	36.3	32.6	44.9	24.8	
	Balochistan	48.1	5.3	2.9	44.2	14.1	62.5	69.2	56.7	89.1	77.3	82.7	
	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	49.1	6.8	4.1	74.9	6.1	48.5	65.3	53.1	37.6	39.8	39.1	
	National	55.2	7.2	3.1	56.8	34.0	57.3	66.2	54.0	59.6	60.1	52.8	

Source: ASER, Pakistan 2012

In several areas where access to education is not a problem, the quality of education is a serious challenge. With poorly qualified and untrained teachers, irrelevant curriculum, non-availability of textbooks and shortages of other learning materials, learning levels are low. Lack of regular supervision and monitoring has failed to check teacher absenteeism and misuse of resources. Quality of education can be improved by regular training of teachers, timely provision of textbooks, and effective monitoring and supervision. Besides, undertaking more public-private

partnerships, involvement of the community and participation of parents in school matters (through school management committees) should be encouraged. Lessons learned from public-private partnership experiences show that it produces better quality education at lower cost with improved management and greater coordination between parents and teachers. On their end, provinces will need to make higher financial allocations to education, both formal and non-formal and literacy; strengthen their capacities to design and implement education policy

and programmes; and develop a strong field force of supervisors and monitors for tracking progress (or lack of it) in the education sector. International development partners can assist Pakistan in its efforts to meet the international commitments. They can assist in:

1. Development of a well-organized consultative process among different stakeholders in education;
2. Establishment of a Consortium of Sponsors to Education in Pakistan;
3. Simplify the procedures required for approval of project/programme.

Model of Quality Control in Education

Adams (1993) included six elements of quality, i.e. reputation of the institution, resources and inputs, process, content, output and outcomes, and value added. Since the concept of quality control and quality management have come from industrial and management sciences, the models of quality control are essentially based on the same philosophy. The industrial models were later on applied and adapted to the educational settings. The educational planners have been defining the quality out-put and have been searching for educational quality correlates. The quality out-put is defined in terms of learning achievement in three domains, i.e. cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Other indicators of quality output are decreasing rates of dropout and increasing rates of stay-ins, number who complete the program cycle and, gender and social equality.

Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) in a study of developing countries have identified various input and process determinants of educational output. These include orderly school environment, academic emphasis in the form of clearly defined learning

Given the fast approaching deadline of 2015 for meeting the internationally agreed goals and commitments, the international development partners should come forward and generously support educational development in Pakistan, strictly in line with national priorities. Investment in the education sector will help improve quality of life of the people through improved awareness and lead to the creation of a literate, tolerant, and development oriented society in Pakistan.

outcomes and standards, curriculum, particularly the “implemented curriculum” (textbooks, other learning materials), time for learning, and effective use of school time, qualified teachers and healthy children. The developed countries show the similar results with a varying level of quality inputs. For example literature on Educational Reforms in the United States describes that standards of education can be improved through redefining basic curricula, and setting performance standards required from students at the completion of the program (Paliakoff and Schwartzbeck, 2001). Ferguson, as cited in Paliakoff and Schwartzbeck (2001), after his examination of student achievement in 900 Texas school districts concluded that the quality of teachers is the most critical aspect of schooling and that it has a direct impact on student learning.

The study:

The present study was designed to achieve the following objectives;

1. To analyze the current situation of primary education in terms of enrollment.

2. To find out the quality of education regarding academic achievement in different school subjects at primary level through different documents and
3. To devise a strategy of managing quality education at primary level in Pakistan.

Research questions:

Following research questions were constructed to guide the study;

1. What is the enrollment rate at primary level in Pakistan?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research design was mixed method. Qualitative objectives (Obj. # 1 & 2) and satisfactory answers of first three research questions (1, 2 & 3) were found through document analysis technique. Different national and international reports, online books, research articles and education policies were consulted. For quantitative part of the study a questionnaire was used. All the heads of primary schools of district Haripur constituted the population of the study. The convenient sampling technique was used due to time constraints. Only 30 head teachers were approached to collect data. A Questionnaire was distributed through personnel of district education office Haripur. Questionnaire was distributed in three parts mainly the quality inputs and quality process. Data were analyzed by content analysis technique.

RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE ASPECT

Research question # 1: What is the enrollment rate at primary level in Pakistan?

On average, Pakistan's gross primary enrollment rate (GER) is 85%, with 92% for boys and 79% for girls (Table 1 on

2. What is the completion rate or survival rate of primary education?
3. What is the academic achievement of the students at primary level?
4. How quality education can be managed in order to achieve millennium development goals (MDGs), objectives of Education for All (EFA) and targets of Universal Primary Education (UPE).

page 03). KP displays the highest GER of 101%, followed by Glt.B (95%), Punjab (88%), ICT (87%) and Sindh (79%).

In Pakistan, of all the primary-aged (5-9 years) children, 68% are enrolled in primary school (Table 2 on page 3). The highest net primary enrollment rate is in KP (81%) where 92% of all boys (aged 5-9 years) and 68% of all girls (aged 5-9 years) attend primary school. This is followed by Glt.B (76%); Punjab (70%); and ICT (70%). About two-thirds of children attend school in Sindh (63%) and FATA (62%) while only one-half children in Balochistan (51%) are enrolled in primary schools. ICT is also the only area in the country where primary enrolment rate is higher for girls (72%) than boys (68%) while AJ&K has almost an equal enrollment rate (58%-59%) for boys and girls.

Research question # 2: What is the completion rate or survival rate of primary education?

For Pakistan, estimated information reveals that of all the children entering primary school, 70% reach Grade 5 (Table 3 on page 03). For boys this rate (71%) is slightly above than that for girls (68%). Among the provinces and areas, the

highest rate of survival is for ICT (91%) while Glt.B (32%) is lowest. In Sindh, FATA and KP, almost two-thirds of the children reach grade 5 while in Balochistan only one-half survive up to the final primary class.

Research question # 3: What is the academic achievement of the students at primary level?

According to ASER (2012), (table on page 04), analysis of reading ability in Urdu/Sindhi/Pushto shows that 43% of Class 3 students were able to read Class 2 sentences. 37% of Class 6 children and 28% of Class 7 children were not able to accomplish Class 2 English tasks. 56% of Class 5 students were not able to do 3-digit division sums compared to 63% of children in 2011. 33% of Class 7 children could not do these same Class 3 problems. Learning levels are much lower in English than in the local languages. Almost over a third of the children in class I and over a sixth of children class II can read nothing in the English language. In class V, 6% of the children can read no English at all. One-third of the children in class I and one eighth of the children in class II are unable to recognize even the basic digits.

RESULTS OF QUANTITATIVE ASPECT (QUESTIONNAIRE)

Research question # 04: How quality education can be managed in order to achieve millennium development goals (MDGs), objectives of Education for All (EFA) and targets of Universal Primary Education (UPE).

The following findings were emerged from data gathered regarding **Quality Inputs**;

1. Most of the respondents were of the view that school management

plays an important role in making the reputation of the institution.

2. Mostly head teachers were of the view that if a local head teacher works, he/she enjoys much cooperation from the community than any other head teacher come from outside communities.
3. Most of the head teachers acknowledged that through power sharing or delegation of authority and responsibilities in an institute, the better results in terms of enrollment, academic achievements and retention can easily be attained.
4. Head teachers also stated that building and physical facilities in the school matter a lot in achieving goals of primary education.
5. Head teachers also argued that the quality of teachers is a major factor contributing to the quality education. Academic as well as professional qualification of teachers is necessary for quality input in achieving the goals.
6. Most of the schools in rural areas have only 1 or 2 teachers to teach five classes and it's very hard to maintain the quality of education. Teachers in those schools can not avail in-service training and other professional development opportunities

Quality Process

7. Good school climate and psycho-social environment can contribute positively in promoting quality education
8. Teachers having less workload can improve the quality of education, but the schools where only 1 or 2

- teachers working the situation is alarming.
9. Most of the head teachers acknowledged the fact that good relationship among staff is very necessary for smooth work the institutions.
 10. Most head teachers were of the view that our teachers don't know new methods of teaching. They are old fashioned and treat the students accordingly.
 11. It was also stated that the examination and assessment system do not meet the requirements of 21st century academic achievement. Most teachers asked students to memorize the content.
 12. The positive and healthy feedback to students can yield better results, but this aspect is also missing at primary education level.
 13. The important and vital role of an individual attention in the promotion of quality education cannot be denied but this aspect is also missing in most of the primary schools.
 14. Parents do not bother to come in schools. Generally they do not share the progress of their children with teachers. Parent teachers meeting are held very rare and if conducted few parents attend those meetings.
- achievement was also good. They share their powers and involve most of the staff in different activities. It was suggested that the teachers on the basis of their leadership qualities may be assigned the duties of head teachers in primary schools.
2. It was also concluded that local head teachers performed well so it was suggested that local teachers may be preferred to appoint as a head teacher to enjoy maximum cooperation from the local community.
 3. Due to problems in unsecure buildings of schools and lack of physical facilities in rural areas parents do not send their children to school. The teachers also need training to update their own practices in order to achieve educational goals.
 4. Primary schools in rural areas need more teachers to have a bearable workload and free time to plan for better inputs.
 5. Community involvement is very much necessary for the achievement of educational goals.
 6. Head teachers need training of managing schools effectively.
 7. More incentives apart from free books, etc may be given in those areas where enrollment is very low.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following were the conclusions and recommendations

1. The institutions where there was a good management, enrollment, retention and academic

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