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**STUDY ON ACCESS AND EQUITY
IN BASIC EDUCATION**

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PREFACE

This is the first study on access and equity in basic education in Pakistan with the focus on those factors directly relating to the access. Due to time constraints and limited resources, the study targeted only fourteen districts out of 105 districts of the country.

Present government is implementing Education Sector Reforms (ESR) action plan with emphasis on universalization of primary education. This study investigated the extent of availability of primary education, reasons of repetition and dropout were also explored, which help in the implementation of Education Sector Reforms. As the study was confined to fourteen districts of Pakistan, (including FATA, FANA and A.J.K), the findings of this study therefore cannot be generalized to the entire country. However, there is a great deal of information on the access and equity in basic education in Pakistan.

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Executive Summary

The study was designed to investigate the access and equity in basic education in Pakistan. Fourteen districts were included in sample on the basis of socio-economic indicators i.e. language, population, total literacy rate, female literacy rate, availability of water, electricity, Radio, TV, medical facilities and other civic facilities. Islamabad district was included in the sample as a model district of Pakistan. Sample distribution is given below:

S. No	District	Parents	Adminis-trators	Head Teacher	Teacher	
					Male	Female
1.	Islamabad	119	16	12	3	15
2.	Multan	107	2	14	7	13
3.	Attock	120	9	12	6	14
4.	Bhakkar	122	10	12	5	11
5.	Thatta	111	9	12	11	13
6.	Khairpur	117	16	12	9	14
7.	Khuzdar	130	4	13	9	16
8.	Zhob	107	7	12	9	12
9.	D.I. Khan	115	6	12	10	11
10.	Kohistan	120	6	12	14	2
11.	Khyber Agency	109	12	12	11	10
12.	F.R. Kohat	108	5	12	15	7
13.	Gilgit	113	1	12	11	13
14.	Rawalakot	135	0	13	13	16
Total		1633	103	172	133	167

The major findings are presented below:

Access to primary school was confirmed by assessing the extent of the availability of primary school for boys and girls. In all the fourteen districts of the sample, 54% children had access to schools whereas 46% children had not school facility at primary level. Overall 59% boys and 49% girls had access to primary schools. In the region-wise perspective the highest percentage of 69% children in Kohistan were found out of school followed by F.R.Kohat. In Islamabad district 20% children were found out of school, which was the lowest percentage among the fourteen districts. It was further found that in most of the districts boys and girls had almost equal opportunity to get education except in the district of Thatta, D.I.Khan, Kohistan, Khyber Agency, F.R.Kohat and Gilgit.

There were many reasons for not enrolling boys in the schools. Some of the main reasons were: In the opinion of 82% parents, education was too expensive, according to 62% parents, schools were not available, 59% parents said that there were no opportunities for further education, 58% parents considered distance of school and the same number of respondents thought that earning for the family was more important as compared to education that is why the parents did not enroll their sons in the schools. The reasons offered by the parents for not enrolling the girls in schools were: 81% parents considered education too expensive, 67% parents complained non-availability of schools, 63% parents wanted their girls to provide help at home, 59% parents did not allow their girls to enroll in the schools because there were no opportunities for further education.

Reasons offered by the teachers for not enrolling children in the schools included as: 73% teachers considered expensive education as one important factor, 67% teachers told that the children had to help their parents at home, 66% teachers considered non-availability of schools another reason, 62% teachers thought teachers' harsh behavior as a reason for not enrolling the children in the schools.

The equity is very important for enhancing enrolment at primary level. It was found that co-educational institutions in both rural and urban areas had more physical facilities than boys and girls institutions in these areas. As far as the availability of drinking water, electricity, boundary walls, toilet and furniture is concerned, co-education institutions had more facilities than boys or girls school in both urban and rural areas. Whereas dispensary, playground and library had been found more in rural boys' schools than rural girls' schools.

The equity can also be assessed, by examining availability of equal numbers of qualified teachers in both boys and girls institutions. It has been found that in urban area girls' schools had more qualified female teachers than boys' schools as 22% female teachers had masters' degree as compared to 18% male teachers, in rural area 24% male teachers possessed masters' degree and only 15% female teachers were found master degree holders. 47% male teachers had been found graduate in urban area and 42% in rural area. Professional qualification of the teachers is very important for the professional competency. Female teachers had been found more professionally qualified than male teachers in both rural and urban areas. In urban area, 25% female had B.Ed degree as compared to 20% male teachers. The greater number of female teachers had M.Ed degrees than male teachers in rural and urban areas.

Among reasons of repetition, lack of guidance at home, difficult syllabus, lack of qualified teachers and lack of student interest were found very important reasons of repetition. Reasons of repeating a class in the case of boys such as: 85% parents considered lack of guidance at home, 74% parents thought lack of students' interest as main cause of repetition in a class, 73% parents told that child's absenteeism was another reason to repeat a class, For 59% parents, difficult syllabus was another reason for boys to repeat a class. In case of girls, major reasons of repeating a class as stated by parents were: According to 86% parents girls had to repeat a class due to lack of guidance available at home. For 74% parents' lack of students' interest could be a reason, 72% respondents told that children's' absenteeism was another reason to repeat a class, 67% parents reported that students' weakness in studies might be a reason of repeating a class.

The reasons of high drop-out were investigated by the parents and the teachers. It has been found that too expensive education that is not affordable to common people was found very important reason of dropout.

Further mores:

- i. For 85% administrators, lack of interest of parents was a reason;
- ii. For 83% administrators, expensive education was another reason;
- iii. For 78% administrators large family size of the child might be a reason;
- iv. For 76% respondents, lack of good teachers might be a reason;
- v. For 65% respondents, difficult syllabus was a reason of dropout;
- vi. For 60% administrators long distance of school might be reason for leaving the school;

Many other reasons of drop out included security problem, repeated failures, teachers' harsh behavior, students' unwillingness, non-availability of physical facilities, and physical punishment.

The family related factors for drop out such as help in domestic work, lack of parents' interest, large family size, and security problems were also found very important reasons of the students' dropout. Moreover, early marriages of the children were also a reason of leaving the schools, as 42% parents called this important for boys, 59% for girls and 54% teachers rated as important for boys and 33% for the girls as a reason of leaving the school. Physical facilities such as drinking water, electricity and toilets etc. were also considered very important by most of the parents and teachers. It was also found that difficult syllabus is hindrance in completing the education as 53% parents said this reason as very important for boys and girls, whereas 50% teachers said as very important for boys and 50% for girls' for leaving the schools.

ACCESS AND EQUITY IN BASIC EDUCATION

