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Basic Education in Pakistan

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FOREWORD

This study pertains to Basic Education in Pakistan with the focus on Critical analysis of National Education Policies and Plans on primary education, identification of problems and obstacles in achieving universal primary education, examining the role of private sector in the development of Basic Education, Learning achievements and outcomes which are directly related to the growth of schools and trends in expansion.

The Government has implemented Education Sector Reforms (ESR) program with emphasis to provide access to basic education. This study investigates the extent of availability of basic education through various National Education Policies and interventions. The role of private sector in the quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of education in the country has also been explained.

I would like to express my gratitude to the faculty members/officials of AEPAM for their hard work especially Kh. Sabir Hussain, Deputy Director (Research) for managing and reporting the study. The services of Mr. Muhammad Akram, Stenographer are also appreciated for composing the report.

Dr. Pervaz Aslam Shami
(Izaz-e-Fazeelat)
Director General

Executive Summary

This study was designed, to serve as a comprehensive research report on basic education with the aims to give particular attention to important changes that occurred in the education sector since independence. The efforts have been made to analyze and review all National Education Policies, Development Plans and Strategies, which were adopted for providing basic education in the country. So that reader would be able to get crux of the situation.

The study is divided into nine sections. The first section comprises of introduction of this report whereas the second section explains constitutional responsibility of providing education to the citizens. In the third section situation analysis on primary education, review of National Education Policies, Development Plans and objectives of ESR Program have been explained. In addition, future estimated figures about primary education have also been discussed in this section. Reasons of high dropout rate, causes of low learning achievements and major problems of providing basic education have been described in section four. Fifth chapter has a lot of information about Adult Literacy, Literacy and Plan Allocations, Targets and Strategies and Adult Literacy Project. Early Childhood Education has been explained in section six of the report. Seventh chapter explains information regarding Goals of Private Sector in the expansion of basic education in Pakistan. Section eight describes Education for All in the perspective of Dakar Conference. In addition, it contains EFA Plan to District and Union Council level. Ninth section consists of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

This study attempts to review and examine the country's specific policies and programs, existing provisions and strategies, which have been adopted to enhance access for basic education in Pakistan.

In this context, the study will focus on:-

- i) Critical analysis of National Education Policies and Plans on primary education
- ii) Identification of problems and obstacles in achieving universal primary education
- iii) Examining the role of private sector in the development of Basic Education
- iv) Learning achievements and outcomes
- v) Adult Literacy

Major findings

1. According to the constitution, education is a provincial subject. The public education delivery structure is based on a multi-tier system, with provincial

Education Secretary being the executive head. It slips down through district and tehsil levels, to the village level. The red tapism and frequent transfer of teachers, seriously affect the working of schools. More importantly an overly centralized management hampers effective day to day administration of local schools.

2. Lack of access to basic education is the foremost of all issues. Statistics clearly indicate not only primary enrolment rates are generally low, but wide disparities exist in enrolments across provinces, genders and locations (urban vs. rural). Besides these, the tribal, ethnic and social taboos and minorities are hurdles in providing education to the people.
3. Apart from access, the quality of education is very poor, especially in the public sector and rural areas. A dilapidated infrastructure, lack of proper facilities, irrelevant curricula, etc., along with untrained teaching staff, staff absenteeism, paucity of books and teaching aids adversely affect the quality of education. This results in low levels of learning achievement, and wastage of resources through grade repetitions, and high drop-out rates.
4. Majority of boys and girls could not be enrolled in the schools because of Expensive education, Non-availability of schools, Remote schools, No facility for further education, Providing help at home, Teachers' harsh behaviour and Less conveyance to remote schools. The reasons for leaving school during the academic year were expensive education, Lack of parents' interest, Large family size, Remote schools, Security problems, Non-availability of good teachers, harsh behaviour of teachers and corporal punishment.
5. The participation of local community at the grassroot level is key to the success of basic education programs, especially in the rural areas. This participation has been lacking in the countryside, where parents and communities neither understand the value of education nor contribute to it in any way. The recent non-formal basic education (NFBE) program, which focuses on girls' education, requires active community involvement. The "home school" based on accommodation provided by the community, and the setting up of parent-teacher associations and village education communities ensure regular participation and monitoring by the parents, and other village influentials.
6. The Social Action Program (SAP) focused on the improvement of access, and quality of education. To encourage girls' enrolment, some provinces had revised their recruitment rules for teachers, allowing experienced female teachers to resume job even after a gap in service. Some provinces

had even lowered the qualification requirements for female teachers, besides giving them extra financial incentives. Social Action Plan focused on achieving improved governance through decentralization. More powers with the local authorities would also require better standards of monitoring, which can be achieved through active participation of school committees, comprising parents, teachers and other local leaders.

7. The public resource base for education has not broadened over the past decade but, unusually low amounts were spent on primary education against higher amounts on universities and professional colleges. In addition, a recent survey has revealed the issue of “ghost schools” i.e., schools which only exist on paper, and cause huge losses to the exchequer. Viewed in the backdrop of the present economic constraints, it is not possible to substantially increase the allocation to education, or other social services. However, it would be practical to curtail investments in mortar and bricks, use the available infrastructure, and re-allocate funds by increasing user charges, in tertiary education (university and professional colleges), to cross-subsidize primary education. Hence in the face of financial constraints, the public sector can not tackle the issue alone. There is a need for community involvement and participation of the non-government sectors, to strengthen the education system, especially in the rural and deprived areas.
8. Although the private/non-government sector, has participated well in the provision of basic education, yet most of its investments are concentrated in the urban areas. The data show that 65% of private schools are located in urban areas. In the early 1990s, Education Foundations were established in the provinces, which announced matching contributions to private investors. Other kinds of fiscal incentives, such as tax exemptions to investments in rural schools, etc. are needed; but more importantly, the provision of physical facilities e.g., electricity, safety, water, sanitation, telecommunications, etc. is needed which would improve the quality of rural life and attract private investors.

Recommendations

Based on some major issues, which have emerged, the Study recommends the following:

1. The major issue in education in Pakistan is low financial public sector investment. Although education enjoys the highest priority on the social sector agenda, yet allocations are not provided according to the requirements. It is strange to note that in the federal and provincial budgets, public sector allocations to education have steadily declined over the past five years from 2.7% of GDP in 1995-97 to 1.8% of GDP in 2001-2002. It is, therefore, recommended that all efforts should be made to enhance the budgetary allocation to education to 4% of GDP. In addition, innovative approaches should be adopted to generate additional resources for increasing funds for the education sector, especially to primary education, adult literacy and early childhood education if Dakar targets have to be met by 2015.
2. It has been observed that at present, an extremely high proportion (over 95%) of education budgets at the provincial levels are spent on recurrent heads, particularly on salaries of teaching staff, with negligible proportions i.e., below 5%, remaining for development expenditures due to delays and budgetary cuts in view of shortfall in resources. It is recommended that developmental budget should be increased, so that infrastructure can be strengthened for providing basic educational facilities.
3. It was found that education suffers from inefficient financial management and outdated procedures which have adversely affected the implementation of education programs and projects. The development projects are prepared by the Ministry/Departments of Education, which are approved, by the Planning and Development Division/ Department (through PDWP, CDWP and ECNEC) but the funds are allocated by the Finance Division (through Priorities Committee, APCC, and NEC). It is not unusual to observe that funds particularly for higher-cost projects are seldom allocated according to the approved phasing due to thin funding. This is mainly due to low budgetary allocation to education, which entails repeated revision of projects based on escalated costs, hampering their implementation. It is recommended that obstacles in management and procedural systems hindering the efficient utilization of allocated resources should be removed through an overhaul of the financial procedures governing release of funds.
4. It was found that the overall enrolment growth rate was 13% in private sector whereas it was only 3% in public sector this indicates that private

sector is playing vital role in the development of education, but financial assistance is not being provided to private sector. It is recommended that financial assistance may be given to private sector.

Though considerable progress has been observed during the past decade in the participation of NGOs and private sectors in the field of education, especially primary and university education, but more involvement of NGOs and private organizations would benefit the delivery of education services. To facilitate this, the national and provincial education foundations also need to play a more active role in guiding and coordinating NGOs and private organizations in “adopting” public schools and supporting rural community schools to achieve rapid progress in achieving the Dakar goals.

Chapter # 1

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was designed, to serve as a comprehensive background paper on basic education. In this context, the study aims to give particular attention to important changes that occurred in the education sector since independence. The efforts have been made to analyze and review all National Education Policies, Plans and strategies, which were adopted for providing basic education in the country. A summary about the policy targets and strategies in primary Education was prepared, so that reader would be able to get crux of the situation. In addition plan-wise financial allocation and actual expenditure on primary education have been discussed.

The study is divided into nine sections. The first section comprises of introduction of this report whereas the second section explains constitutional responsibility of providing education to the citizens. In the third section situation analysis on primary education, review of National Education Policies, Development Plans and objective of ESR Program have been explained. In addition, future estimated figures about primary education have also been discussed in this section. Reasons of high dropout rate, causes of low learning achievements and major problems in providing basic education has been described in section four. Fifth chapter has a lot of information about Adult Literacy, Literacy and Plan Allocations, Targets and Strategies and Adult Literacy Project. Early Childhood Education has been explained in section six of the report. Seventh chapter explains information regarding Goals of Private Sector in the expansion of basic education in Pakistan. Section eight describes Education for All in the perspective of Dakar Conference. In addition, it contains EFA Plan to District and Union Council level. Ninth section consists of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study attempts to review and examine the country's specific policies and programs, existing provisions and strategies, which have been adopted to enhance access for basic education in Pakistan.

1.3 Focus of the Study

In this context, the study will focus on:-

1. Critical analysis of National Education Policies and Plans on primary education
2. Identification of problems and obstacles in achieving universal primary education
3. Examining the role of private sector in the development of Basic Education
4. Learning achievements and outcomes
5. Adult Literacy

1.4 Methodology of the Study

The study is a qualitative and quantitative analysis based on two kinds of information

1. Published or Secondary information

Recent information published in reliable national sources in the country.

2. Primary data or field-based information

Data regarding above analysis and actual situation about the availability of educational facilities have been presented. This data was collected by Academy of Educational Planning and Management through various research studies i.e. Access and Equity in Basic Education and National Sample Survey on Private Schools.

3. Review of Literature

- Financing of Education in Pakistan
- Literacy trends in Pakistan
- Basic Education in Pakistan
- Population Censuses Reports (1998) of the four provinces and federal areas i.e., Punjab, Sindh, NWFP, Balochistan, FATA and ICT;
- Population projections by National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS);
- Perspective Development Plan (2001-2011);
- Education Sector Reforms: Action Plan (2001-2005);
- Annual provincial and federal budget documents (various years);
- Foreign Economic Assistance (various issues);
- National and Provincial Educational Management Information Systems (EMIS);
- Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (1998/99 and 2001/02);
- District Education for All-Plans for district Chakwal & FANA; and the National Plan of Action for Education for All (2001-2015).
- Documents related to Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- National Plan of Action on Education For All (2001-2015), Pakistan.
- “A report of the Education For All 2000.
- “Education Sector Reform Action Plan 2001-02, 2005-06.
- A Study on Assessing Visual-Graphics Literacy
- Basic Education in Pakistan, 1999.
- Female Teachers in Rural Schools.
- Education for All 2000 - Assessment Country Report Pakistan.
- The Challenge of Basic Education in Pakistan 1991.
- Education for All 2001.

1.5 Delimitations of the Study

1. This study was delimited to analyze the National Education Policies, Development Plans, other official documents and research reports on basic education.
2. Data have been used from only official published documents.