

Chasing Education for all goals: Evidence from Sindh Province of Pakistan

Rafiq Chandio
Aijaz Ali Wasan
Zohra Khatoon

Abstract

Pakistan was placed at 141st position (out of 182 countries) in terms of Human Development Index (HDI) (HDR 2009). The Government of Pakistan claims that situation is improving, but the state of education especially for children in rural areas of Pakistan is alarming. There is lack of educational facilities in the rural areas and there are higher gender disparities in education. Pakistan is one of the countries where equal distribution of resources and proper administrative support remains a big question to ensure the proper utilization of budgets that directly or indirectly benefit poor communities and their vulnerable children. Incidence of corruption in education systems of the country is believed to be high and corruption as an impediment to the effective delivery of education services is considered one of the key factors affecting deliverance and quality education. The level of corruption has not only been institutionalized but has entrenched into the behaviors of people resulting in absenteeism, acceptance of bribes in exchange for grades / or access to schooling, and the charging fees for students' access to textbooks and the utilization of school property for private commercial purposes.

The analysis of primary and secondary data shows that the performance of the Government Education Department in the Sindh province is very poor. The overall situation of education service delivery is alarming. The analysis of primary and secondary data presents the picture of poor performance of education deliverables in Sindh. Mismanagement and poor governance are evident in education department. There are also large number of closed or partially functional schools and schools with poor infrastructure can be observed with lack of basic facilities. The presence of 4As i.e.

Availability, Accessibility, Adaptability and Accountability of educational services needs immediate attention.

The analysis of primary data shows that there are huge flaws in the management of education services in the Sindh province. The overall situation of education in the province is alarming. There is large number of children, especially in the rural areas who remain out of schools. There is greater gender disparity in education at all levels. The proper and efficient monitoring and supervision is almost absent and there is lack of proper physical infrastructure and basic facilities in schools. The inefficiency of education system causes the vulnerable and weak segments of society excluded from educational attainments. Thus pushing millions of poor to abject poverty.

Introduction and Context:

The state is the central actor in any claim to the right to education. It is the primary duty of the state to provide the free, compulsory, easily accessible and quality education to all children of the country. The state must therefore, be judged or challenged on its central text on the right to education, be it the constitution, the laws or the policies.

Pakistan is signatory to more than one international declarations which assume that state is dutiful to fulfill the basic needs of its citizens. Education is considered to be one of the human rights, thus state is responsible to guarantee equal rights to all the citizens.

Pakistan is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and many other declarations like World Declaration on Education for All (1990), the World Education Forum: Dakar Framework for Action (2000), the Recife Declaration of E-9 Countries (2000) and the Beijing Declaration of E-9 Countries on ICT. Despite these international commitments on education, Pakistan did not make any progress to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). All the policy statements and target setting proves rhetoric in absence of tangible progress on primary education indicators. Pakistan is far away from achieving the universal primary education access and retention. Though, Pakistan is signatory to many international conventions regarding the quality education but since it is lagging behind in providing the universal accessibility focus remains on expanding the

primary educational services. Thus the educational managers and government seem to have a mind set of two steps approach rather than two pronged approach to address the quality and quantity issues simultaneously.

Unfortunately Pakistan is one of the countries where equal distribution of resources and proper administrative support remain a big question to ensure the proper utilization of budgets that directly or indirectly benefit poor communities and their vulnerable children. Incidence of corruption in education systems of the country believed to be high and corruption as an impediment to the effective delivery of education services is considered one of the key factors affecting deliverance and quality education.

The level of corruption has not only been institutionalized but has entrenched into the behaviors of people resulting in absenteeism, the acceptance of bribes in exchange for grades/or access to schooling, and the charging fees for students' access to textbooks and the utilization of school property for private commercial purposes. The primary education in Pakistan is deficient in many directions. In some areas schools are being run without proper building and other necessities, other areas are seriously short of funds to spend for purchasing educational material.

The social structures are another story to hamper a significant size of potential kids for primary enrollment, especially girls entitlement is jeopardized due to backward value system. The educational system does not meet these underlying impediments in society. The overall cost of the system failure is imposed on weak and vulnerable segment of society. The systematic shortfall of material resources to meet the total demand of primary education excludes a significant portion of society.

The study intends to make a policy case for Pakistan with special focus on Sindh. The study focuses on the data collected from three districts of Sindh i.e. Badin, Jamshoro and Qambar-Shahdadkot. In addition the discussion based on the secondary data collected from various sources such as Government of Sindh's SEMIS and Reform Support Unit related departments, review of available documents, reports and discussion with key education department personnel at three districts of Sindh. The report highlights on various administrative

flaws, mismanagement, corruption and malpractices affecting the overall performance of education department.

Literature Review

One year after the inception of Pakistan in 1948 education was declared basic human right, in 1966 it was reaffirmed in the international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, in 1979 following that a convention on the “Elimination of Discrimination against woman” was signed. Pakistan signed another convention on child rights on (1989). In 1990 Pakistan signed the World Declaration on Education for all at Jometian Thailand, after ten years of Jometian declaration the same was reaffirmed in Dakar, Senegal. The Dakar Conference re assured all signatories to pledge their commitment in terms of time and resources. The Dakar Framework called on all countries and UN bodies for 2015 dead line for six gaols to be achieved as a set of targets.

The Jometian Conference set following six goals to achieve universal primary education in less developed countries.

- Goal 1:Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children.
- Goal 2:All children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to free, quality and compulsory primary education by 2015.
- Goal 3:Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
- Goal 4:Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Goal 5:Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Goal 6:Improving every aspect of the quality of education, and ensuring their excellence so that recognised and measurable

learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. Among all goals following two must get an enhanced focus of countries and donor institutions. Ensure that all boys and girls' complete primary schooling by 2015, Eliminate gender disparities in primary education by 2005 and at all levels by 2015. Reach the education target despite the fact that numerous efforts were made by the international community a significant funding was also supplied despite all these interventions all reports show that Pakistan is far away to reach the Dakar Framework goals.

The national education statistics (2011) shows that female girls education ratios in Sindh Province is as low as 42 percent however girls education in primary for urban and rural shows that rural girls is lower than average 37 percent against urban girls figure which stands at 46 percent in Pakistan.

Pakistan's national Education policy (2009) emphasises girls education with special focus however, girls education remains do show an encouraging picture. Many studies provide ample evidence that gender disparities in educational levels show widening gaps between girl students enrolment and boys enrolment these gaps translate into the student retention for upper classes as well (UNDP 2012) confirm the above statement that girls education in rural areas is considerably lower on average and comparing with urban areas.

Pakistan Government has considerably improved its strategy to enhance the girls educational levels in terms of enrolment and retention. Number of international humanitarian organization like OXFAM (GB) Action Aid US Aid and UNDP and other organizations are also supplementing provincial government efforts by intervening in to enhance the enrolment and quality of educational services.

Objectives of the Study

- To highlight systematic and structural flaws affecting quality of education and to draw attention of policy makers to the exclusion of vulnerable communities especially their children from educational services at primary level.
- To identify malpractices, mismanagement and/or negligence while proposing policy recommendations and concrete measures aimed

at enhancing accountability and transparency to ensure effective delivery of education services and to fight corruption in education sector.

Study Methodology

To achieve the objectives of the study the team carefully developed the methodology for primary and secondary data collection and analysis.

Sampling

random sampling was adopted for selecting a representative sample size. The complete list of all target villages and households was collected from three target districts of Sindh.

In total 365 household in 28 villages were covered in three target districts i.e. Badin (149), Qambar-Shahdadkot (86) and Jamshoro (130).

Tools

The study was based on the mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches. A primary data collection tool was used to collect the field data from three target districts. The questionnaire was semi-structured having combination of the closed-ended and open ended questions. The questionnaire had two major sections i.e. Household Survey and School Questionnaire. The Household part was completed with the head of household, randomly selected in the target Development Area (DA) of Action Aid in three target districts. However the school questionnaire was completed with the Head Teacher/Senior Teacher of the School in the target villages visited. Focus Group Discussions were conducted with key educational personnel at each district using guiding questions.

Findings of the Primary Data

The major findings of the primary data are presented below.

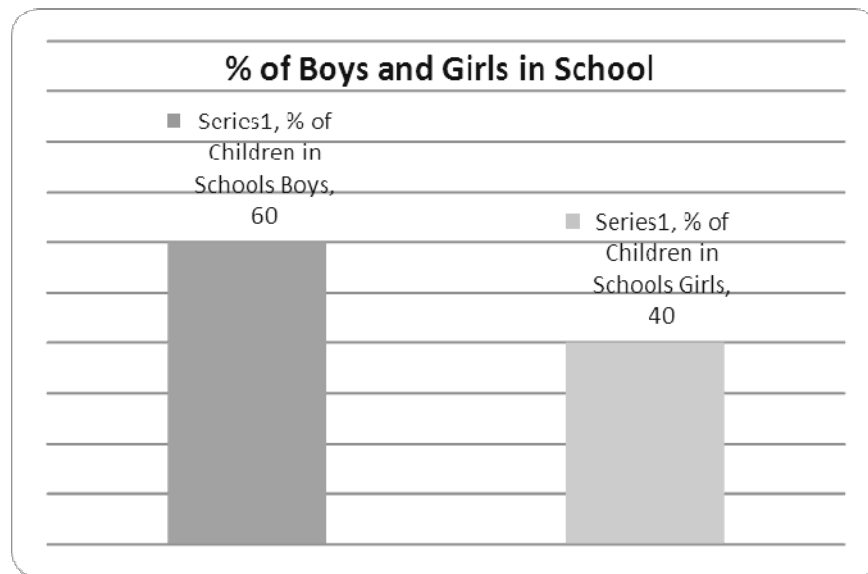
Community Profile

Most of the community members/respondents were reported in poor category. Major sources of income of people in the target areas were

reported as agriculture (farmer), labor, livestock, small shops and jobs. The average monthly income of the household was reported was Rs. 7000/- for an average household family size of 10.27, which is much higher than the average household size of District Badin i.e. 5.3 (Source: Sindh Government Website). This shows that trend of large family system in the target areas visited for the study. Although the response given by the community can be based on their understating of joint family system, where head of family and his sons living together and consider them as one family. The data given in the primary data analysis section is based on what the community perceive about the education facilities available to them. There is possibility that community shows satisfaction over various educational services, because of their lack of knowledge and exposure about their rights towards access to education and lack of courage to report poor performance.

Availability of Educational Services

In total 36 government schools were available in 23 villages; however 5 villages were found without any school during the study. As reported by the community members 20% government schools have support from Action Aid. In addition 6 schools were also reported running by NCHD and SEF (Sindh Education Foundation). All the schools visited were either mix (co-education) schools or boys' schools with girls enrolled. There was not a single separate girls' school in the villages visited. This shows the disparity in separate educational services for girls. According to the data 60% of school age boys were in School, however only 40% of school age girls were in School. Again this shows a greater gender disparity for the provision of educational facilities for boys and girls students. The data also reveals that a large number of children are out of schools. The major reasons for children being out of school mentioned by their parents were being overage (for girls), poverty, and dysfunctional school, early marriages of girls, disability and lack of interest of parents.

Graph 1: Percentage of Boys and Girls in Schools

91% households reported access to school, However this data is for both boys and girls and not separately for girls. The qualitative data reveals that less number of families has access to the schools in case they want separate schools for girls having female teachers.

In total 5.5% of school Building were reported running in a Hut, 11% building were constructed as Katchi (mud) and 36% buildings were constructed with cement but were reported as in poor condition. In total 33% schools were reported without boundary wall, 61% schools have no playground, 53% schools have no Toilet, 61% schools don't have arrangements to provide drinking water and 64% schools have no electricity

Community Perception about Educational Services

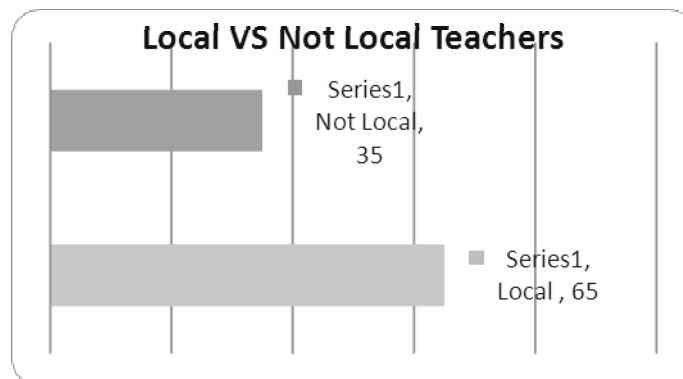
Community view education as an expensive activity for their children. The average monthly expenses on education per household were found as high as Rs. 790/- per month. This includes cost of books (Copies), transportation, refreshment etc. In case of middle and high schools children, the cost can be much higher than primary .

Despite all these facts 90% of people were reported satisfied with performance of school. However 28% people feel their children

face discrimination/difficulty at school. The discrimination/difficulty was stated as corporal punishment, long distance of school from home, no electricity in the school, not availability of running water in the school etc. Around 40% community members complained that there is no arrangement of drinking water for children in the school, and children either go to their homes to drink water and take their water with them. The shortage of furniture, unavailability of toilet, boundary wall and electricity were also reported by the majority of parents interviewed.

In total 95% household reported having their mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the school where their children are enrolled. 16% of people reported that they are not satisfied with the vacation plan and they want number of school days should be increased. 7% people were reported being not satisfied with hygiene conditions of the school and 27% people were not aware about hygiene conditions of the school. Almost 10% parents complained that their children do not receive the free textbooks from the government. As per the information received from the community 35% teachers are not local and they come from some other village/town. However 97% people reported that the teacher is regular.

Graph 2: Percentage of Local and Not Local Teachers



In response of the question that who monitor the performance of the school 30% parents named supervisor/education officer of the education department, 10% named the partner NGO and 60% parents did not respond to the question or said that they are not aware.

School Management Committees (SMCs)

In total 20% parents reported schools without having a School Management Committee (SMC) and 25% parents shared that they don't know whether SMC exists or not. However as per the School Profiles 90% schools having SMC (School management committee) was reported by the Head Master / Teachers interviewed.

In the schools having SMC, the average number of meeting per year by each SMC was reported by parents as 3 meetings per year. There was little awareness about the SMCs among the community members interviewed. Most of them were unaware about the purpose of forming SMC and the roles and responsibilities of SMC members. However, more than half community members were able to mention the names of some of SMC members. In total 30% parents feel that SMC is active, remaining parents interviewed either responded that SMC is not active or not responded.

Conclusion

The primary data results show that educational services availability is not ensured to the all. This simply means that educational services are not sufficiently available which in turn creates an other dimension of reduced accessibility of educational services in Sindh Province. In order to keep international commitments under the EFA (Education for all) it will impossible to achieve the commitments and goals.

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