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ICT IN DISTANCE EDUCATION: IMPROVING LITERACY IN THE PROVINCE OF SINDH PAKISTAN

Abstract

Education is the support and everybody knows the significance of education no nation can stay alive without quality or modern education, that builds the nations and become the cause of affluence it gives the path that leads towards bright future so every country's education policy should be made according to the era time and situation of our religion. The goal of teacher excellence for each and every one is proving tough to attain rural areas. Teacher excellence is an input characteristic/determinant of students' involvement rates and accomplishment levels. It also affects the accomplishment of community impartiality in terms of fairness in educational excellence for students. One contributor to teacher excellence is dedicated expansion though limits on its accessibility. This research paper describes how distance education and ICT improved access, fairness, and brilliance in professional expansion for rural areas in the province of Sindh Pakistan can help increase the literacy rate of the country.

Introduction

Education plays an important role in human resource development. It produces productive and well informed people and helps to generate good opportunities for the poor and deprived people. Philosophy of Education emphasizes that on a learning process through which knowledge, skills and experience are transferred from one generation to the next generation through teaching, training, research and development that ultimately replicate the socio-economic development of the country.

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Globalization has made economic life more competitive and demanding, making human expertise development more significant. Only as educated workforce equipped with modern skills can compete and benefit from exploiting the opportunities created by globalization. (UN, 2006)

Pakistan is a country which is mostly dependent on agriculture. Total 70% of the country's entire population lives in the rural areas (Memon, G.R, 2007). According to article 37-B of Constitution of Pakistan (1973) *"the State shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimum possible period."*

According to Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey, 2010-11, Literacy rate of Pakistan is 58% which is far behind to get to the race of developed countries. Following table shows the overall situation of literacy in Pakistan.

Table: shows Province/ Area wise male/female(Urban/Rural) literacy rate

	Male %	Female ^o %	Total
Pakistan	69	46	58
Rural	63	35	49
Urban	81	67	74
Punjab	70	51	60
Rural	64	42	53
Urban	80	71	76
Sindh	71	46	59
Rural	60	22	42
Urban	82	68	75
KPK	68	33	50
Rural	67	29	48
Urban	77	50	63
Balochistan	60	19	41
Rural	54	13	35
Urban	79	40	61

Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey, 2010-2011,

Structure of the Pakistani Educational System

Before the passage of 18th amendment, Education was the federal subject and Ministry of Education Government of Pakistan was the central agency to oversee it along with the provincial governments.

The Federal government was also responsible for the official approval of the grants to Provinces and for development of national curriculum. But now the education has become provincial subject.

Pakistan educational system is structured into following five levels

1. Primary (class one to five)
2. Middle (class six to eight)
3. High (class nine and ten)
4. Intermediate (class eleven and twelve)
5. University level [undergraduate, graduate and higher degrees] (Hassan. J .A,2007),

Major Issues Responsible for low literacy

Awareness

Poverty

Government policies

Teacher training

Punctuality

Excess of students in the class (Choudhry. A.M, 2005),

Sindh Province

The provincial government of Sindh is carrying out all possible measures to resolve the issue of the lack of education facilities for girls in Sindh. Some of the important measures are provision of monthly stipend and free text books to girls in rural areas. These measures have brought encouraging results and now the enrollment rate of girls in schools is increasing in rural areas and dropout rate is also improving. However, it is not enough and still much has to be done for enhancing the female literacy rate and for the promotion of female education in the Sindh province.(Yasin.Z and Faoqi.M.N, 2009)

Due to above efforts, the gender gap is narrowing down and more efforts if put in, the process would gain full momentum and consequently the right of basic education to every child will be achieved and protected.

The dream of those parents of girls from rural areas who want to see their daughters in the schools and getting educated like their male children may come true if the proper schooling facilities should be provided to rural and inaccessible areas which are lacking schools. Generally in Pakistan and especially in the province of Sindh, the main reason of backwardness in education is lacking of financial resources which is the root cause of children's shortage of their right to education. (Retrieved from <http://www.pakstudy.com/web>)

It is also unfortunate that allocation of national budget to education is well below in Pakistan as compared to other South Asian countries. Because of this, problem of high illiteracy among females especially exist in Pakistan Private sector is also important sector to enhance the access to schooling. The expansion of private sector participation in educational sector can no doubt help to increase access to education in rural areas in Sindh province .The government should also take care private sector contribution in education along with public sector. (Daily Times Pakistan, 2008).

Status of Primary Education in Sindh

The province of Sindh has 49% literacy rate. 62% population has by no means attended school which is of age group between 5-9 years. According to a statement there are 4,695 government's primary schools in Sindh, 12% of the total schools in the province, which are either closed or are on paper. (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2009-10)

According to the UNESCO (2010), 30 percent of children across the province of Sindh had no access to primary education 50 percent of them girls.

Gender-wise survey in Sindh

According to Annual Status of Education Report [AESR] Pakistan 2010, the following percentage is generated from the children in the province of Sindh. The learning level was checked by making the children read out the national language of Pakistan and the following statistics were generated

District: Hyderabad

Learning Level [Urdu]						
Gender-wise percentage of children who can read						
Gender	Nothing	Letters	Words	Sentences	Story	Total
Female	48.2	12.4	14.1	7.6	17.6	100
Male	31.8	21.1	19.4	4.6	23.1	100

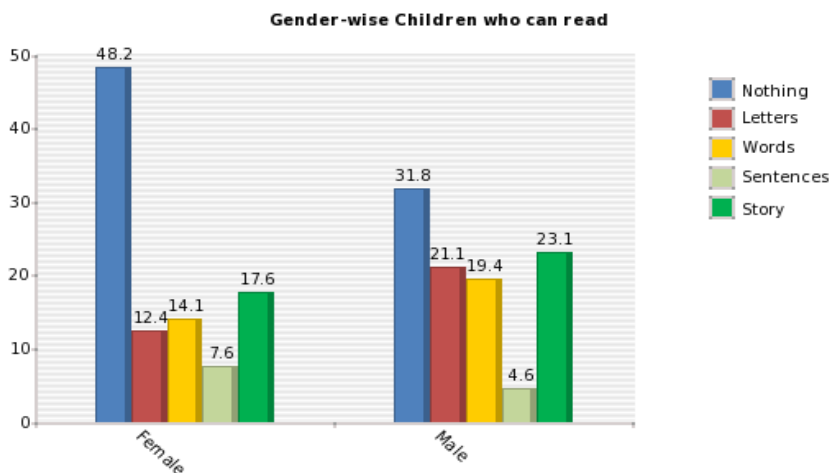


Figure 2: Result generated Gender-wise % children who can read for the district Hyderabad

Source: Annual Status of Education Report [ASER] Pakistan 2010

District: Jamshoro

Learning Level [Urdu]						
Gender-wise percentage of children who can read						
Gender	Nothing	Letters	Words	Sentences	Story	Total
Female	60	13.5	7.6	5.9	10.9	100
Male	50.2	18.9	11.6	6.6	12.8	100

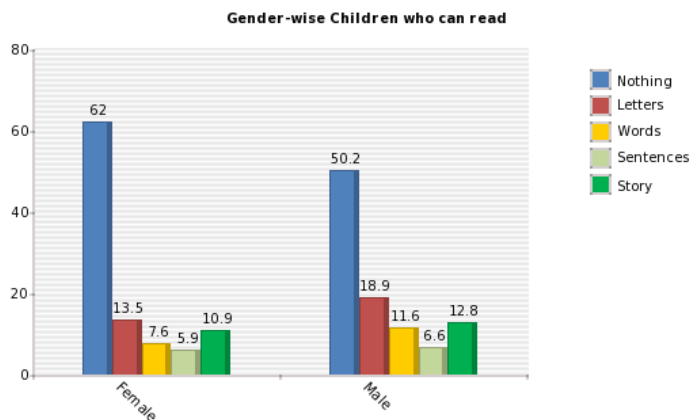


Figure 3: Result generated Gender-wise % children who can read for the district Jamshoro

Source: Annual Status of Education Report [ASER] Pakistan 2010

Systemic factors responsible for low primary enrolments in Sindh

1. The deficiency of school services within close nearness;
2. Non-attendance and lack of inspiration amongst teachers;
3. Inappropriate syllabus and sub-standard textbooks;
4. Weak systems of monitoring and administration; and
5. Lack of society contribution.

Facilities Missing at Primary Level in Sindh

According to Education and Literacy Department Government of Sindh the facilities which are missing for the students in primary level are as:

Shelter Less:	12794
With no electricity:	34386
With no boundary wall:	26669
Lacking lavatory block:	23349
Lacking drinking water:	25237

(Retrieved from <http://www.sindh.gov.pk/dpt/education> final)

ICT and Literacy

There are several ways to overcome the problem of illiteracy. One method is distance and formal education, and using ICT technique to make sure that education spreads all over the province. The focus will be on primary education. It is because primary level is the initial level of education. If the students are given educational requirements in this level then they will become aware of the technologies and distance educational thought and then in the higher grades of education they will require less hard work on using Information and Communication Technologies for their future aspects. (Meek.M, 1998)

ICT and Distance Learning

In distance learning system, the students or those who want to learn are at a remote location. Due to the limited resources it is not possible to every area. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a prime resource to overcome such limitations. In conventional system, learners are able to network with one another face-to-face, which is a requirement to more significant social communication.

Since, there is no such provision in the distance learning, web-based student learning and sustain organization shall be urbanized and implemented using ICT to give services at all different phases in student education life cycle and also for knowledge and information contribution as done in a conventional scheme of education. (Baggaley. J, Belawati. T, 2009)

Distance learning has remained and become feasible choice for the people who wish to get education through easy access. Distance mode is economical in a sense that it does not require **classrooms** and physical infrastructure. Students in rural areas especially girls can highly get benefit and those families who do not allow their girl child to attend schools regularly may take great advantage form distance mode. The integration of ICT has now made distance mode easier and more accessible.

Now Students can study whenever they have the time that fits into their schedule. Distance mode of education also provides the opportunity to students to select the courses of their own choices and interest which keep them in in the educational process. (Sayo.P, George. J, Pradhan. G. 2009)

Distance education has become more economical with the application of ICT and It requires less budget because there is no need of buildings, uniforms, travelling for getting education. ICT has made inaccessible communities to have easy access to all sort of quality education at their door step through easier and cheap means.

For the enhancement of Literacy rate drastically Non-formal education can be provided through following means with application of ICT;

1. Non-formal fundamental tutoring group of people or “home schools”;
2. Vocational/skill training centers/institutes;
3. Fully developed literacy/functional literacy centers; and
4. Deeni Madrassahs [Religious schools] (Sangi, 2005).

Role of ICT in distance education

Distance Education can be enhanced in an advance level of providing education to the remote areas of the country. There are three modes of ICT to be used:

1. Learning with Multimedia
2. Computer based learning
3. Online learning (Ansari. S, Saleem. S,2010)

Functions of ICT in distance Education

Information and communication technology provides various techniques to from a stronger and broader and powerful distant system of education. To develop the content, tools like text editing, audio editing, video editing, slide editing and through website.

For communication purpose the students can communicate through email, forums, chat groups and audio/video conferencing. Learning Management System [LMS] can be developed. Administrator can control the date to be fed, manage the contents and to check out what are requirements of the students towards the subject and can communicate with the students. ICT in distance education for the student it has better aspects as it is independent of time and place. (Zafar. I, M, 2004)

Conclusion

Using distance education and ICT has the potential to deal out with opportunities for learning more broadly and justifiably transversely the teaching power. It can also improve the excellence and selection of the capital and sustain easy to get to teachers, opening up new avenues to competent expansion. In rural areas of Sindh the primary schools are filled with male teachers and again that makes parents go into a negative though.

With the help of computers and information technology it makes easier for girls to get education at their own home proving the parents the satisfaction they require and in this way the literacy percentage can increase.

If common fairness is to be achieved through evenhandedness of educational option and services, the requirement needs to be planned in ways that build it reachable, available, satisfactory, and impressionable to all teachers empowering them to construct choices in what and how they turn out to be expert at. It also needs enabling policies in prop up of these aims.

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