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Descriptive Analysis of Accelerated Learning Program Centers to Provide Access and Quality Education to Out of School Children in Quetta

Abstract

This study aims at analyzing empirically the provisions of access and quality education to out of school children (OoSC) currently enrolled at Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) centers in district Quetta. The ALP centers are providing education to out of school children (OoSC) facing to miss enrollment in school going age, the children who never been to school or dropped out at any primary stage. ALP education provisions are aimed at reducing OoSC ratio. The study provides novel primary data from a number of 14 ALP centers located in district Quetta. The data is collected via full-pledge questionnaire designed for this study. The findings show that ALP centers are providing access to education to OoSC in Quetta. The findings also show that quality education via ALP centers are provided to the OoSC in study area. The results imply that ALP centers contribute to the retention rate of dropouts and OoSC in the areas of the district where ALP set up exists. ALP environment is safe and providing primary education to OoSC and fulfills the needs of OoSC.

Keywords: Accelerated Learning, Out of School Children, Dropped Out, Access to Education, Quality Education

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Introduction

Accelerated learning (AL) is commonly defined as a process through which students complete required learning faster as compared to standard educational programs running in regular schools through the education departments throughout the world. These are specialized educational programs to provide education to out of school children (OoSC), children at risk, children who are provided enrollment chances due to any reason, and dropped outs. The acronym AL has been used over 40 years or so to describe how brain research has been applied to learning. AL methods do not apply to a specific group, age range or ability level. There are no ways to play catch up, hothouse or fast track learners. AL starts from the individual needs of the learners, motivates and actively involves them, and is interesting and fun based educational and literacy enhancement programs. As such it is accelerated because it allows learners to fulfill their potential and reach levels of achievement that may seem beyond them within the shortest period of time. The learning is faster, deeper, and more proficient. Students understand their learning preferences better and develop lifelong skills in the process of learning via AL (McKee & Conner, 2007; Caroleo, 2014; Colney, 2002).

Early research on the application of AL methods focused on foreign language learning in adults. AL methods have since been adopted and used extensively in the corporate workplace. AL principles and practices have more recently been used in schools throughout the developed world with notable success. They have been used with disadvantaged groups, the disabled students with learning disabilities, low income or marginalized groups and to improve standardized test scores.

Smith was one of the first practitioners to write about the application of adult AL methodology to children in the classrooms. He pulled together findings from the world of

neuroscience and cognitive neuropsychology, human motivational theory and performance psychology, learning theory and school improvement and effectiveness research. He combined the AL principles and practices that focused on the learner, with the factors effective in raising student achievement in a learning environment focused more on the school. Smith believes that AL offers a structured system in which knowledge about the learner, learning and the learning environment comes together.

An accelerated learning program (ALP) promotes access to primary and secondary education for disadvantaged groups and older OoSC, at-risk and drop outs. In an ALP, the required learning is completed in a shorter span of time and the goal is completion of primary education or integration into the formal system at an appropriate age level. Most of the ALPs complete two grades of schooling and education in only one year of time. The ALP curriculum incorporates appropriate life skills subjects, basic literacy and numeracy and may include vocational education. ALPs encompass activities like micro enterprises and business start-ups as well. The ALPs are frequently donor funded, short term in nature, and focused on access, retention and completion of life skill subjects of general education and vocational trainings to the children at disadvantaged position from the formal and regular programs of learning in developing societies of the world.

To assess the case of education in Balochistan, there are many factors like, the sparse population, common backwardness, tribal set-ups, rural based population nature, lower socio-economic status of the people, lower economic opportunities, demographic issues, poverty, malnourishment among population under-5 years of population, and many other socio-economic issues, that make educational services provision much challenging for educating all the children. The available data indicates that 1 child in 10 has to travel more than an hour to get to nearest school.

There are more boys than girls' schools—out 10,929 primary schools, only 27% are girls' schools and few mixed schools for approximately 2.7 million of population group of 5-16 years in the province. The situation is not any better in respect to middle and secondary levels of literacy rates that is only 42% of the total 1,182 middles schools and 31% of total 838 secondary school, respectively, are exclusively for girls. A similar gender disparity partner exists in respect of teachers. Data from Academy of Educational Planning and Management (2016) shows that only 29% primary school teachers in Balochistan are women (BEMIS, 2016).

ALPs are introduced for those children's who are out of school, dropouts and at-risk. These programs are structured for (9-13) years of children's who never been to school or dropout from school at different primary stages. These programs were started in august 2014 in various parts of balochistan, and till three batches have successfully completed their primary education in ALP centers. These programs are contributing their services to out of school children's and dropout children's to provide primary education and mainstream them into traditional school setting. The ALP centers are providing education to those children's who never been to school or dropped out at any stage.

Based on the above mentioned context, this study describes empirically the effectiveness of ALP centers in terms of access to and quality education provision to OoSC in district Quetta. The ALP centers are located in "Madrassa" (informal religious schools), community place, any government or private school depending upon the number of OoSC in the nearby area and the interest of the applicants for the establishment of ALP centers in a specific community or dwelling place. The study findings could be used to assess and inform policy decision makers of education department whether ALP centers provide access to and quality of education to dropped out, OoSC, and

children at-risk in any part of the province and country. The ALP centers visited promote academic performance, behavioral change, functional skills, career education, character education, and high expectations and support.

The contribution of this study may include novel data collection about ALP centers and a novel questionnaire (scaling) designing for assessing the ALP performance for access to and quality education to the literature of the study disciplines of education, ALP education, literacy promotion, human resource development, and human capital formation in the people.

The conclusions of the study are coined in terms of strong empirically strong arguments building for the establishment of ALP center to provide access to and quality education to OoSC though its establishment in high illiterate poor societies of the district. Policy recommendations are put forth to setting the objectives of ALPs program, its development, continuous review and revising ALPs regulations, providing an action plan that endorses the ALPs mission in poor societies.

Research Methodology

Research methodology devised for conducting this study is empirical in nature. It uses mixed and descriptive analysis in a field survey to different ALP centers located in district Quetta. Specifically, the study utilizes a descriptive field survey to target the population of all ALP centers in Quetta. Out of the total of 29 ALP centers in Quetta, 14 ALP centers were selected as a sample for this study through systematic random sampling technique for primary data collection specific to provisions of access to and quality education for OoSC enrolled at ALP centers.

For data collection, a full-pledge questionnaire was designed for ALP related variables and key indicators of the study to give descriptive picture of the ALPs about the main objectives of this study. The indicators for the variables of the study were made more specified as per the nature of the ALP centers and

relevant literature about ALP studies. The indicators consists upon physical environment, learning environment, characteristics of ALP teachers, content delivery skills of ALP teachers, lesson planning & implementation and ALP students assessments and many more aspects of ALP centers (see Appendix-A of the questionnaire)

The data was descriptively analyzed in numbers, percentages and frequency distribution. For meaningful description of the data, tables and figures are constructed by using the 25th version of Statistical Package for Social Sciences "SPSS-25".

Results and Discussions

Demography of the ALP Centers:

The demographic location of the ALP centers were established at marginalized communities, in those areas where the community demands and the where the ratio of out of school children's and drop outs were in maximum recorded. Most of the ALP centers were established in informal religious madrassas where the number of boys and girls were studying religious education. The ESP provided the chance of education to those children in madrassa to get their primary education. The ALP centers exist where there was no government or privet school, or in number of areas where traditional schools exist but it was not functional due to many reasons that is unavailability of teacher, no school building, weak and poor community and political issues. In most of areas the ALPs exists in rural areas, far and long areas where in 4 Sq.km any government school did not exist as per UNICEF policy.

1) Physical Environment of ALP Centers:

1. Table 1 Frequencies and percentages of the physical environment of the ALP Center.

Statements		S.D		D		N		A		S.A	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	The center is accessible for out of school children's	1	7.1	1	7.1	4	28.6	6	42.9	2	14.3
2.	Adequate light to see black/white board and learning material	-	-	2	14.3	5	35.7	4	28.6	3	21.4
3.	There is sufficient place to move in the classroom					11	78.6	2	14.3	1	7.1
4.	There are relevant posters, charts and illustrations displayed in classroom	-	-	5	35.7	5	35.7	-	-	4	28.6
5.	The items of teacher kit were displayed	1	7.1	4	28.6	4	28.6	3	21.4	2	14.3
6.	Time table displayed on classroom wall	-	-	4	28.6	4	28.6	2	14.3	4	28.6
7.	Seating arrangement encourage students participation.	-	-	5	35.7	5	35.7	4	28.6	-	-
8.	Students are preparing quality presentations and their work is being displayed in the classroom.	2	14.3	3	21.4	4	28.6	5	35.7	-	-

Table (1) presents the frequencies and percentages of the physical environment of ALP centers. The 14 ALP centers were assessed; the data shows that 57% ALP centers are accessible for OoSC and 14% ALP centers are not easily accessible to OoSC. It is shown that only 50% ALP centers are found adequate light to see teaching materials in the classrooms. In 43% ALP centers, timetable was displayed in the classrooms in a proper way while in 29% classrooms time table was not displayed. It is indicated that 35% ALP classrooms are found without any teaching material, charts,

and illustrations, teaching kits and student's homework and the seating arrangements was disagreed as per scaling.

2) Learning Environment of ALP Centers:

2. Table 2 Frequencies and percentile of the learning environment of the ALP Center.

	Statements	S.D		D		N		A		S.A	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1)	Classroom routines (Tilawat, Reflection, Break time, work individually and groups etc.) established and students are following them.	-	-	3	21.4	3	21.4	5	35.7	3	21.4
2)	Teacher organizes the students in groups so that they can share their ideas, experience, knowledge and skills with each other.	-	-	5	35.7	3	21.4	3	21.4	3	21.4
3)	Teacher facilitates the students while working in group activities.	1	7.1	3	21.4	6	42.9	3	21.4	1	7.1
4)	Students are asking content /lesson related questions to teacher.	-	-	5	35.7	3	21.4	3	21.4	3	21.4
5)	Providing opportunities for independent learning to students.	1	7.1	4	28.6	4	28.6	3	21.4	2	14.3

- 6) Variety and types of questioning: Closed (factual) , Open (Analytical, explanatory , Problem solving) - - - - 3 21.4 8 57.1 3 21.4

Table (2) presents the learning environment of ALP centers. The classrooms routines activities, recitation, break time and group-works were assessed in 57% ALP centers. The data shows that in 21% of classroom it was not observed. It was also assessed that the teachers organizes students in groups and facilitates the group activities in 43% of ALP centers and in 36% of the classrooms the group-works were not agreed in scaling of the questionnaire item

3) Characteristics of ALP Teachers:

3. Table 3 Frequencies and percentages of the characteristics of ALP teachers

	Statements	S.D		D		N		A		S.A	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
15.	Appearance of teacher (Neat , tidy and formally dressed up)	1	7.1	-	-	2	14.3	7	50.0	4	28.6
16.	Teacher attitude is friendly and cooperative with students	1	7.1	1	7.1	4	28.6	6	42.9	2	14.3
17.	Teacher uses daily life examples to clear the conceptual understanding of contents.	1	7.1	1	7.1	7	50.0	2	14.3	3	21.4
18.	Teacher concludes the individual/ group activities with the objective.	-	-	3	21.4	6	42.9	5	35.7	-	-
19.	Teacher considers the time management during lesson.	1	7.1	6	42.9	6	42.9	1	7.1	-	-
20.	Teacher is using materials/ presentations/ teaching kit items to deliver	-	-	2	14.3	7	50.0	3	21.4	2	14.3

	sessions.										
21.	Teacher has command on the content.	-	-	2	14.3	6	42.9	5	35.7	1	7.1
22.	Teacher is keeping record.	2	14.3	-	-	4	28.6	5	35.7	3	21.4

Table (3) presents the characteristics of teachers of ALP programs. It was observed in 78% ALP centers the teachers were formally dressed up in ALP centers. It was observed in 57% ALP classrooms that the teachers were friendly with students. The data show that 50% of respondents indicated that teaching staff use daily life examples for understanding the conceptual understanding the contents in ALP classrooms and consider the time management during the lesson plan as well as command on the content. Furthermore the teacher keeps the student's record in 57% ALP centers properly in this study.

4) Content Delivery Skills of ALP Teachers:

4. Table 4 Frequencies and percentages of content delivery skills of Alp teachers

Statements		S.D		D		N		A		S.A	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
23.	Teacher content delivery method.	1	7.1	-	-	4	28.6	9	64.3	-	-
24.	Teacher is using resource material effectively.	3	21.4	1	7.1	7	50.0	3	21.4	-	-
25.	Teacher uses activities (Ice breakers) to create unity in classroom so that the students know, interact and cooperate with each other.	1	7.1	2	14.3	6	42.9	5	35.7	-	-

Table (4) presents the content delivery skills of the teachers of ALP centers. The data indicates that in 64% of ALP centers, the content delivery method was consistently better. The data also show that teacher was using teaching resource materials in 21% of ALP centers effectively. However, the data show that 50% teachers were using resource materials in classrooms indicated neither disagreed nor agreed with their proper usage.

5) Lesson Planning & Implementation:

5. Table 5 frequencies and percentages of lesson planning and implementation in ALP centers.

Statements	S.D		D		N		A		S.A	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
26. Teacher has written lesson planner.	1	7.1	3	21.4	7	50.0	2	14.3	1	7.1
27. Teacher is clear about the lesson objectives.	-	-	1	7.1	7	50.0	4	28.6	2	14.3
28. Recourse material is prepared for the lesson.	-	-	1	7.1	10	71.4	2	14.3	1	7.1
29. The teacher prepares lesson plan and maintained lesson planner/ register.	-	-	3	21.4	7	50.0	2	14.3	2	14.3
30. The teacher delivers the lesson according to lesson plan and is using activity to explain concepts.	-	-	3	21.4	8	57.1	1	7.1	2	14.3

Table (5) presents the lesson planning and implementation in ALP centers. The table indicates that in 22% classrooms of ALP centers, the teacher has written their lesson planner either displayed or wrote in teacher dairy, 50% of the teacher ranked as neutral and 29% teachers did not wrote their lesson planner for their classrooms. Up to 43% teachers were clear about the lesson objectives and resources material was prepared for the lesson. It is shown that only 26% teacher delivers the lesson according to lesson plan and was using activity to explain concepts, these teachers prepares lesson plan and maintained lesson planner register.

6) Student Assessment of ALP Centers:

6. Table 6 Frequencies and percentages of student assessment of ALP centers

Statements	S.D		D		N		A		S.A	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
31. The teacher uses on going observations/assessment tools to assess the performance of students.	1	7.1	1	7.1	7	50.0	5	35.7	-	-
32. Feedback through Question Answer of previously taught lessons.	-	-	-	-	10	71.4	4	28.6	-	-
33. How to check students	1	7.1	1	7.1	6	42.9	4	28.6	2	14.3

Table (6) presents the students assessments in ALP centers. The student's assessment in ALP centers was observed better consistently. The table shows that the assessments of students were practiced in 35% of ALP centers. It indicates that students' assessment is less practiced in ALP centers in district Quetta.

Results about Objectives of the Study:

There are two objectives set for descriptively analyzing the provision of access to and quality of education to OoSC through ALP centers in district Quetta. The descriptive empirical results are analyzed and described qualitatively with the help of research objectives 1) and 2) below.

Research Objective 1: To determine whether the ALP centers improve access to education for OoSC in Quetta:

According to the results of this study, current ALP centers are viewed as moderately effective in reducing dropouts, improving academic performance of OoSC which are enrolled at different ALP centers, reducing truancy, reducing at risk students and improving the attendance of at-risk students, changing target behaviors, their disrepute behaviors and assisting students in the development of academic learning and enhancing their literacy levels as main goals of the ALP centers. It implies that ALP centers are providing access to education to the target children of OoSC in district Quetta.

The ALPs were opened in community buildings, informal religious schools (madrassas) and at government and private school buildings in Quetta. The government buildings were utilized at afternoon and mostly second time. The geographical sites of most of the ALPs are located is satisfactory, safe and accessible to OoSC. The objective of accessibility of educational facility to OoSC by the establishment of the ALP centers are shown positively. It implies that ALP centers provide accessibility of education to OoSC in Quetta and it could be established in other district as well for the development of literacy enhancement

and educational provision mostly in far plunge and rural areas of the province.

Research Objective 2: To inform decision makers how ALP centers contribute towards improving quality education for OoSC in Quetta.

According to the results of this study, addressing the provision of quality education through the establishment of ALP centers in Quetta, it is shown that minimum level of moderate level of quality education is provided by the ALP centers to OoSC in the study area. It is observed that quality in terms of ALP mechanism of shortest and accelerated learning through ALP centers are viable as compared to the standard study programs of learning by the private and government schools in Quetta district. The students, parents and data based assessment of ALP centers address that academic performance and provisions of quality education by ALP centers to OoSC. Specifically, the teacher followed lesson implementation, content delivery skills, learning environment and students' assessment as per educational protocols designed for ALPs. However, the data of this study show that the teachers were not professionally trained and some teachers did not followed the provisions of quality education in only few ALP centers in Quetta. It is also observed that the quality attributes of implementing the learning environment, students' assessment, leaning content delivery skills and lesson implementations were not reported effectively in some of the Northern based (Kuchlak area) ALP centers established in informal religious schools (madrassa ALP centers). The most notable impact of ALPs is the increasing pressure from administration to reach performance goals is shown in this study. Individualization of academic programming ,finding ways to better transition students from ALPs to regular schools , providing intensive counseling services , teaching important life and social skills and balancing of demands of curricular and extracurricular activities with the issues of serving a challenging

populations are realities that have been shown in this study. It implies that ALP centers provide moderate levels of quality education to OoSC that may be comparable in terms no lesser than quality intact at education provision by the formal government and private schools running by district educational authorities in Quetta. The results of this study show that ALPs are effective in terms of provision of access to and quality education to OoSC in Quetta district.

Conclusions

The ALPs are rightly designed by the donors and education department of the province for enhancing literacy growth and educating OoSC in weak and poor parts of societies in developing countries of world like that of the poor communities of Quetta. These programs could easily accelerate access to education and provision of quality education in shortest period of time to OoSC. The mandate and merit of these programs could easily be used for achieving the educational and literacy growth targets of sustainable development goals (SDGs) for low literacy areas and countries. These are special programs to targets the literacy and educational growth of the marginalized and at-risk children that are out of schools due to any known reason in Quetta. The study of 14 ALPs are clearly indicative for the access to and quality education provision to OoSC in Quetta and the results of this study validates the arguments put above.

The environment of the ALP is safe, orderly and conducive for learning. There is an identifiable program plan for each year/class in place in each school to ensure course schedule, daily break schedule, teaching of course planning and order of daily activities. There are locally accredited administrators in each ALP center to direct the day-to-day operations and management of the schools.

Each ALP center has established goals that support the mission of access and quality provision of education to OoSC in

Quetta. The objectives of the program are developed, reviewed and revised regularly, providing an action plan that endorses the ALPs mission.

Educational design of all ALP centers are designed to offer academic and educational services to children who are earlier deprived of educational facilities due to inherent socio-economic issues inflicted upon their parents and families. The studies at ALP centers are conducted daily by qualified and certified personnel, they apply a daily schedule based on educational standards for teacher-to-student ratio, teaching time per day, access to counseling services, and referral opportunities to other agencies to help students respond to their needs.

The ALPs mechanism makes the involvement of parents and educational authorities obligatory to the management, teachers, and students of ALP centers to make sure the very objectives of accessibility and quality education to OoSC in district Quetta. It implies for the effectiveness of ALP centers to maintain promoting academic performance, positive behavioral change, functional skills, career education, character education, and high expectations and support and literacy growth in OoSC in district Quetta. These ALPs meet the needs of students who can usually be satisfied as much as in a regular and formal school setting. They provide a smaller school environment conducive to learning to the OoSC and their educational needs in shortest possible period of time. The environment allows a smaller teacher-pupil ratio for teaching delivery mostly at ALP centers in the study area. It also creates more opportunities for students to succeed in their studies through access and quality education provision by ALP centers in Quetta.

Recommendations

1. The objectives of the ALP centers are to provide educational accessibility, opportunity, and meeting the

needs of OoSC so its establishment is one of the necessary conditions for educational development in weak and marginalized communities of the world.

2. The non-solving and since continuous issues of low enrollment rate and high dropped-out ratio could easily be solved with the help of the establishment of ALP in developing countries of the world.
3. The age factor of aged population could easily be compensated by the establishment of ALP centers as the educational provision is possible with the shortest period of time through AL programs.
4. Alternative educational opportunities need to go beyond monitor the development of education and it must include the development of professional and personal skills.
5. AL programs must also be started for old age, adults and illiterate segments of the population.
6. Proper recognition and accreditation of ALPs must be ensured on equal fronts as recognition is awarded to regular and formal learning programs of the education department.
7. Future studies are needed on continuous bases to evaluate, make effective and devise policy options for the development of the remaining 300 ALP centers of the province to streamline the AL programs for achieving the targets of education and literacy development envisioned in Strategic Development Plan of the province and Vision-2025 for educational development.
8. Parents and community members must be involved in designing any future AL programs for enhancing literacy rate, reducing drop out ratio, increasing accessibility of educational provision and providing life-long learning skills to the poor, disadvantaged, at-risk and OoSC in developing countries of the world.

9.UNICEF must take into account the findings of this study and involve the ALP research experts in policy planning for ALP establishment in the province.

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