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Education for All by 2015: will we make it?

Pakistan

Country case study

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Progress Since Dakar: Pakistan Country Review for EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008

Abstract

Pakistan education system is registering improvement but not fast enough to meet the EFA targets set at Dakar for 2015. On the positive side, since 2001 the NER has increased by close to 8 percent; a major push towards public-private partnership has resulted in innovative models to improve access and equity and bridge gender gaps; and, the ODA flows to primary education have increased from .7 million US dollars in 1999 to 41.9 million US dollars in 2004. On the negative side, the challenges to UPE are huge: illiteracy remains high and disparities in educational attainment on regional, income, and gender basis are significant. Plus, increase in enrollment is attributed primarily to a rapid expansion in the private sector and an active donor supported NGO sector than a real reform of the public education system. Little reform has taken place within the public education system either in terms of access or quality despite apparent policy commitment: the Ministry of Education remains heavily understaffed and under-resourced with the result that despite need for increased resource allocations at all levels, less than fifty percent of the funds allocated for non-recurrent expenditure within the Ministry of Education are utilised. To accelerate progress towards EFA targets, it is critical that the state makes increased resource allocation to education sector, and the federal ministry strengthens its planning and coordination role at the federal level as well as across the provinces so that the efforts of the donors, NGOs, and the government are coordinated to strengthen the planning and administrative capacity of the Ministry rather than all actors implementing ad hoc educational projects.

Executive Summary

Since 2000, Pakistan has registered progress towards EFA goals set at Dakar for 2015 but in measured term. Net Enrollment Ratio has increased by close to 8 per cent, the policy environment has been conducive to dialogue, and many innovative experiments to increase access and improve quality are underway. However, much of this activity remains uncoordinated and outside the state schools.

Within policy planning, on the positive side, the government has paid serious attention to policy formation and documentations and the process has been marked with extensive consultations with the donors and NGOs. Commitment to improved policy has resulted in the government undertaking the first National Education Census, which was released in 2006. On the downside, the education policies continue to ignore Dakar goals 1,3,4 failing to develop concrete strategies to address the issues of adult literacy, Early Childhood Education, and skill development. The budgetary planning to support the proposed policies is missing and consultation with NGOs has not necessarily translated into adoption of proposed strategies. Most importantly, while increasing emphasis on external consultations, little effort is being made to strengthen the human resource within the planning wing of the Ministry of Education.

In terms of increasing access, the state facilities remain inadequate. The number of state schools remains far below the required number. The increased enrollment is being attributed to private schools and a state sponsored push towards non-formal education programme implemented through NGOs. The private sector enrolment at primary is viewed to be between 30-36 per cent of the total enrolment. This over reliance on private sector is making even poor parents opt for private schools, which are often only marginally better than the government schools.

As compared to the problems of access, the challenges of improving quality remain even more daunting: 61 per cent of the primary state schools having no electricity and 23 per cent are without text books, Sindh and Balochistan have on an average only two teachers per primary school, and district monitoring teams remain understaffed. Government attempts at improving quality have consisted of ad hoc measures often consisting of public-private partnership programmes rather than a coherent strategy: 'Adopt a school programme' is one popular model. In addition, NGOs with expertise in teacher training are also being contracted to train government schoolteachers. These efforts are bringing positive changes within the system, however, being piecemeal they have little impact and fail to counter the systematic problems of quality within the system.

In light of increased aid flow, the donors have formed donors' coordination units but most donor projects operate in isolation. The donor agencies need to sustain the increased aid flows to education and make their inputs more responsive to the needs identified by the government rather than sponsoring too many individual NGO projects. The donor agencies also need to devote some attention to secondary education as low access to secondary education also results in higher dropouts at the primary level. The NGOs in turn need to work more closely with the government to strengthen its capacity. They also need to develop

their education advocacy skills so that their primary focus remains on making the government deliver better rather than becoming acting solely as service providers.

The government needs to commit at least 4 per cent of the GDP to education as opposed to the current investment of 2.1 percent and the Ministry of Education should focus on systematic and interlinked reforms across various tiers of the Ministry rather than taking ad-hoc measures. The federal government should minimize its role in direct implementation and focus more on need identification, planning, and coordination among the federal level ministries involved in education and then link the programme with provincial level authorities. This will enable the Ministry to improve its coordination with the donor agencies so that the development agencies will be able to help improve the system in a systematic manner.

1: Introduction

The policy documents of the government of Pakistan express solid commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and the EFA targets set at Dakar for 2015. This report examines the progress made and challenges faced by Pakistan since 2001 in meeting these targets. It reflects on the state of primary education and literacy in Pakistan today as opposed to 2001 in terms of policies as well as the actual measures put in place to increase access, and improve quality. The paper examines the role of the government, civil society organizations, as well as the international development community in order to assess Pakistan's potential of attaining the EFA targets by 2015.

The analysis presented in this paper, draws upon review of existing documents plus interviews with multiple stakeholders. Key documents consulted include the government policy documents, Ministry of Education statistics including the recently completed National Education Census; reports of international development institutions, academic articles and reports by Pakistani NGOs and think tanks. Interviews were conducted with multiple stakeholders including senior government officials, leaders of prominent education NGOs, and representatives of multilateral and bilateral donor agencies during August 2006-March 2007. For country level statistics the paper draws upon the UNESCO and the World Bank data sets while for in-country provincial and district level comparisons Government of Pakistan data has been used.

Here it is important to state that the National Education Census because of representing the latest government statistics has been used as the primary source for in-country comparisons along with the latest Economic Survey 2005-6. However, it must be borne in mind that the data in the Census is at times inconsistent with government's earlier educational survey data. This issue has been discussed below especially in reference to estimates of private school provision. Also, some NGOs maintain that the number of private schools in the Census is under reported. Even the government schools have not been covered 100 percent: the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2005-6 shows 157,158 primary state schools in 2004-05 as opposed to 105,526 schools recorded in the Pakistan Education Census. Therefore, the data has to be used with slight caution: it is more useful for interregional comparisons than for judging the absolute numbers.

Another point to note is that the White Paper, which is the latest government document on the status of education, does not provide the actual figures for many of its estimates. For instance, the actual budgetary figures for the estimate that 50 per cent of the development budget at federal level remains unspent are not provided; the paper simply states that statistics have been checked by the education planning and statistic wing. Therefore, when referring to estimates from the White Paper it is not possible to provide the actual figures. However, it is important to refer to the estimates given in the White Paper as the statistics quoted in the White Paper reflect how the issue is viewed within the Ministry.

2: Background: brief account of the education system of the country

Pakistan has a federal system of government. According to the Constitution of Pakistan:

“The state shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory primary and secondary education within minimum possible period.”

Article 37-B, Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 (GoP 2003a).

However, to date the state has failed to expand its services to legally guarantee primary education to all (UNESCO 2006). The political domination of the feudal and military elite has resulted in low investment in education: maintaining the historical trend, education got 2 percent of the annual GDP in 2004 while military spending got 4.0 percent (World Bank 2007a; 2007c). In the financial year 2006-7, the government has announced an increase in education expenditure to 2.4 percent of the GDP but the real figure can only be determined at the end of the year given that in the past years the government has repeatedly revised the development expenditure downwards.

Another, significant aspect of the education financing in Pakistan is that a high proportion of the education budget is allocated to recurrent activities and evidence from all provinces shows that recurrent funds are spent predominately on salaries (Aly 2007). Table 1 shows that recurrent allocations have ranged from 75 to 86 per cent of the total allocations over recent years in the four provinces.

Table 1: Education budget allocation in Pakistan by province 2004-5

	Federal education budget			Provincial budget		
	Total Rs. Millions	Development as % of total	Recurring as % of total	Total Rs. Millions	Development % of the total	Recurring as % of the total
Punjab						
1998-2005 average		7	93		14	86
2004-2005	12561	34	66	267849	17	85
Sindh						
1998-2005 average		9	91		13	87
2004-2005	4838	46	54	153371	24	76
NWFP						
1998-2005 average		15	85		18	82
2004-2005	15804	16	84	58845	28	72
Balochistan						
1998-2005 average		20	80		25	75
2004-2005	3095	59	41	46438	28	72
Pakistan						
1998-2005 average		12	88		16	84

2004-2005	52299	36	64	1434881	19	81
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Source: DfID & USAID 2006.

What further aggravates matters is the weak absorption capacity where even by government's own admission less than fifty percent of the funds allocated for development expenditure of the Ministry of Education at the federal level are actually utilised (Aly 2007). The document does not provide actual figures on which this estimate is based, but another government document titled, "Expenditure on Education 2004-5" (GoP 2006) shows similarly low utilization rate for development funds at the provincial and district levels (See Table 2).

Table 2: Development budget allocation and utilization
(Rs in million)

Development Budget	Allocation	Expenditure	Percentage utilization
Punjab			
Federal ESR Funds	127.595	78.016	.61
PSDP Allocations	10557.813	6422.245	.60
Sindh			
Federal ESR Funds	--	--	
PSDP Allocations	615.028	418.750	.68
NWFP			
Federal ESR Funds	201.536	52.969	.26
PSDP Allocations	1980.000	1942.000	.96
Balochistan			
Federal ESR Funds	--	--	
PSDP Allocations	1156.990	761.403	.65

Source: Calculations based on data drawn from *Expenditure on Education 2004-5* (GoP 2006a).

A major reason for this underutilization of funds is the complex financial allocation and release system where authority to allocate and release funds rests at the federal and provincial levels while actual utilization of funds is highest at the district level. Having a federal system of government, the Ministry of Education has traditionally maintained a two-tiered system

where responsibilities are divided between the federal and provincial authorities. The federal government is primarily responsible for policy formulation, planning, curriculum development, and establishing regulatory frameworks, the provinces are responsible for textbook development, teacher training, registration of private schools, and issuance of detailed policy guidelines to the district government. Since, 2001 due to the devolution process, another tier of government has been developed at the district level. The district government is responsible for planning human resource, physical, and financial needs of the education sector at the district level. However, the devolution process continues to suffer from many problems, a major one being the failure to devolve financial responsibilities.

The major share of educational funds is provided through federal revenues, which is distributed to the provinces under the National Finance Commission. The provincial revenues contribute only 10 percent of the actual requirement (Aly 2007). The districts in turn receive the money through the Provincial Finance Commission and the capacity of districts to mobilize funds is even more constrained (Aly 2007). Yet, as shown in the table below, most of the expenses are incurred at the district level.

Table 3: Education expenditure at the three tiers 2006-2007

Federal	Provincial Govt		District Governments	
26.663	Punjab	9.047	Punjab	29.50
	Sindh	3.267	Sindh	14.852
	NWFP	2.713	NWFP	8.250
	Balochistan	1.967	Balochistan	3.590
26.663		16.995		56.337

Source: Aly 2007

Thus, while the largest amount of education funds are to be disbursed through the district government, the allocating and disbursing authorities remain at the federal level. The low investment combined with inefficient utilization of available resources has meant that Pakistan's education statistics present a bleak picture especially when compared with rest of South Asian: the literacy rate at 50percent for 2004 remains below the South Asian regional average of 60 per cent and that of 61.7 percent for low-income countries; the Net Enrolment Ratio of 66.2 percent also lag behind the regional average of 87.1 per cent (World Bank 2007).

With the annual population growth rate sustaining at 2.4 percent till 2005 (World Bank 2007c), the education system is faced with a tough challenge not only to provide for existing out of school children but also to cope with the new-entrants. More recently, the education system has faced another set back. The devastating earthquake that hit Pakistani areas of AJK and NWFP in 2005 leaving 73000 dead, 70,000 injured and 2.8 million without shelter also destroyed the educational facilities in the areas. In the three affected districts of AJK, out of the total of 3879 government institutions from primary to college level, 95 per cent were either completely destroyed or damaged to the point that they were dangerous to use. In the five affected districts of NWFP, out of a total of 7577 educational institutions from primary to college level, 53 per cent of the schools were demolished or damaged. Further, an estimated 853 teachers and 18,095 students were lost to the earthquake (GoP 2006b; World

Bank website). There is thus an additional challenge for the government to rebuild the education system in this region.

Traditionally the government has been the primary provider of education at the primary and secondary level and continues to be so till now. Since 1980s, however, the role of the private sector in education provision is increasing at all levels. GMR 2007 does not give estimates of the share of private sector enrolment in Pakistan but the World Bank education statistics and government's own data claim that private sector, defined as all non-state providers including NGOs, enrolment constitutes between 30-36 per cent of the total primary enrolment (MoE 2006a; World Bank 2007a).

The NGOs have become active players since 1980s especially in non-formal education: a DFID funded study of education NGOs in Punjab shows that out of the 233 education organizations surveyed in Punjab, the majority (84 per cent) were established in 1980s and within southern Punjab, around 60 per cent were established in the 1990s (Zafar & Rashid 2003). They also constitute a significant number: another survey of NGOs in Pakistan shows that after religious education, primary education is the top priority activity of the registered voluntary organizations in Pakistan with 8.5 per cent working in this field (Ghaus-Pasha et. al 2002). Another sign of their growing influence is that under donor funded projects, the government is increasingly contracting teacher training of government teachers to NGOs and allowing them to adopt government schools (Sarwar 2006).

3: Post Dakar: Policy and Performance

Since 2000, there has indeed been some progress towards EFA targets but at a measured pace. The table below records performance on the key indicators. After that the paper presents an analysis of the policies as well as their formulation process. It then compares the policy plans with actual performance.

Table 4

No	Dakar Goals	2000	2005
1	Early Childhood Care	Got little attention in initial policy documents	Features a separate section in the White Paper but lacks a concrete plan of action
2	Access to all by 2015	NER: 58.2 (2000) GER: 71.2 (2000) Source: World Bank 2007	There has been progress NER: 66.2 (2004) GER: 82.1 (2004) Source: World Bank 2007
3	Appropriate learning and life skills	Received little attention in initial policy documents	Responsibility rests with Ministry of Labour rather than Education thereby impeding integration with primary and secondary education
4	50 percent improvement in adult literacy	35 percent (1990) Source: UNESCO 2006	There has been progress 50 per cent (2004) Source: UNESCO 2006
5	Eliminating gender disparity by 2005	Gender gap in literacy was 26 percent in 2001-02.	Gender gap in education indicators still exists: gender

		Source: (GoP 2006)	gap in literacy is 25 percent in 2004-05. However, there is improvement in trends in primary enrolment: as opposed to only 36 percent literate women against 63 percent literate men in 15 and over age group, over 58 percent of women are literate as opposed to 76 men in 15-24 age group in 2004.
6	Improving quality at all levels	Quality was a serious concern at all levels	It is a key concern in all policy documents but signs of improvement are weak.
6.1	Teacher-training	Government training system remains obsolete	There is little systematic reform of the government teacher training institutes. Increasingly, government is contracting out training to NGOs as part of donor-funded projects.
6.2	Number of teachers; salary structures	Teachers number is far less than the need	The ratio of teachers per primary school in Sindh and Balochistan is 2 and in Punjab and NWFP 3 (MoE 2006a). Permanent positions are being replaced by annual contracts without actual increase in salary.
6.3	High levels of grade repetition and dropout	Drop out rates were high	Even in 2004, the school life expectancy is only 5.2 years as opposed to 9.2 for India (UNESCO 2006).

3.1: The policy environment

The policy environment in Pakistan since 2001 has been conducive to consultations over EFA targets but there are continuing challenges. On the upside a number of policy documents have been developed and integrated with cross-sector development plans including Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the Local Government Ordinance 2001; the process of policy formulation has been very consultative; and, a visible commitment has been made to gathering better education statistics. On the downside, the education policies continue to ignore Dakar goals 1,3,4 failing to provide a concrete plan of action; the policies are not leading to detailed budgetary planning; and, consultations with NGOs do not necessarily translate into adoption of proposed strategies.

Positive developments

Better policy documents

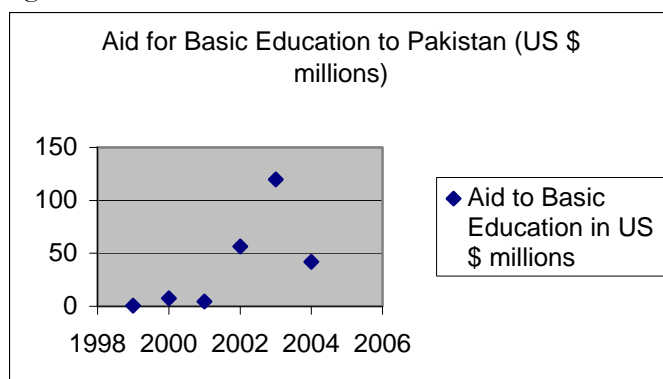
Since 2001, the government has formed a number of policy documents in order to develop plans to meet EFA targets. The main reference document that is the National Education Policy (1998-2010) was prepared prior to Dakar, but since 2001 while retaining the National Education Policy (1998-2010) as the overall reference point, the Ministry of Education has developed a number of interrelated policy documents which have been developed after active consultations with NGOs and international development agencies. The most significant policy documents in this respect include: the 10 year Perspective Development Plan (2001-00); National Plan of Action on Education for All (2001-2015) prepared in 2003 in collaboration with UNESCO; and short and medium term action plans like Education Sector Reform Plan 2001-2005. The PRSP also devotes attention to EFA targets especially goals 2,5, and 6.

During 2006, the government initiated another major consultative process to assess progress since 2001, which has resulted in a series of Green Papers followed by a White Paper released in December 2006 and a revised edition produced in March 2007. The revised version of the White Paper incorporates feedback from donor agencies and NGOs. The White Paper gives an honest assessment of the challenges facing the Ministry in meeting EFA targets set in Dakar. Thus, in terms of the target of preparing comprehensive national EFA Action Plans by the end of 2002 to facilitate early dialogue with international agencies for enhanced level of funding, Pakistan has done well.

Consultative Process

The other positive development has been that the process of policy formation has been very consultative. Development agencies are also taking active part in the policy formulation. Aid flows to primary education in Pakistan have increased from .7 million US dollars in 1999 to 41.9 million US dollars in 2004 (UNESCO 2007) though it has not been a steady increase (See Figure 1). EFA Partners (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP and World Bank) in Pakistan has set up EFA International Development Partners Forum (INDPF) comprising all the development partners including bi-lateral and multilateral agencies and international NGOs (INGOs). Coordination and resource mobilization for EFA are the main functions of INDPF. The NGO sector has also been willing to cooperate and many of the NGO representatives are sitting on different education reform committees.

Figure1



Source: UNESCO 2006a

Better data for planning and monitoring

Most importantly a conscious effort has been made to improve the policy formation and monitoring process by gathering better education statistics. Thus, the first ever National Education Census (NEC) has been undertaken by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Federal Bureau of Statistics. UNESCO and USAID also supported this project.

Limitations on the policy side

Despite these positive developments, there continue to be serious challenges.

Ignoring certain goals

EFA targets featured prominently within all the documents. Out of the six goals set at 2000, however, the focus remained mainly on: gender, access and quality, with adult literacy, ECE and skill training receiving less than the deserved attention. This prioritization is justified in government documents with reference to severe budgetary constraints faced by the Ministry of Education. But part of this neglect is to do with lack of commitment and inefficient management: it is not that these goals are completely missing in the policy documents; the problem is lack of resource commitment, absence of a realistic implementation plan and poor utilization of resources which are allocated.

For instance, ECE has been included as an important component of education in the Education Sector Reform Programme and in the White Paper, a separate curriculum for ECE has been prepared, and an ECE Cell established under the Ministry of Education. But, there is a lack of understanding of the concept and the government's White Paper notes that despite developing a good curriculum for ECE, the concept could not be disseminated among the lower tiers. ECE has still not been introduced widely in the public sector and is often being run in form of pilot ECE programmes by donor agencies. The provinces of Balochistan and NWFP do have a tradition of Katchi class, which is a class before primary. However, even here the teaching is done through formal prescribed textbooks and is not in line with ECE curriculum (Aly 2007).

Similarly, technical education and skill training component remains very weak within middle and secondary schools. The National Technical and Vocational Education Commission is housed outside the Ministry of Education thus making integration of technical skills within primary and secondary schools difficult. Adult literacy has also received much attention on paper whereby almost 15 major literacy programmes/projects have been launched in the country since independence. However, most were terminated before completion (Aly 2007). Since 2002, the National Commission for Human Development, a government established autonomous institution for increasing literacy and basic education, has launched a literacy programme at the national level, initially in 16 districts (4 in each province) and later expanded to 105 districts. The Commission has so far launched over 6000 basic literacy centers however effectiveness of its literacy programme is yet to be independently assessed.

Weak budgetary planning

Although the education reforms have been closely linked to the ongoing governance reforms through the devolution process started in 2001, the process has not resulted in detailed analysis of the budgetary and human resource needs of the Ministry to implement the proposed reform strategies. Thus, the operationalization of the proposed policies remains a

problem. Another, big problem is that the financial data is not centralized and coordinated so that it is very difficult to know the flow of education finances within different tiers of the government (DfID & USAID 2006). It is often very difficult for the officials themselves to know what funds are available for utilization.

The related problem is that even the recently completed Education Census statistics are open to questioning, as discussed above even many state institutions have been left out in the Census. Also, the Census design was limited and focused mainly on infrastructure related data rather than student specific indicators: main focus of the Census is on establishing the total number of institutions, gaining student enrolment data and gathering data on the teaching and non-teaching staff within these institutions and the conditions of the physical facilities.

Lack of coordination

Despite establishing EFA coordination forms, there is lack of coordination in need assessment and project design and implementation within the government and the donor agencies. First of all, there is lack of coordination among the six different federal ministries, which are linked to implementation of education policies (Aly 2007). These ministries include, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Special Education, Ministry of Science and Technology, National Technical and Vocational Education Commission (NAVTEC), which rests in the Prime Minister's Secretariat, and the Higher Education Commission. There is hardly any coordination among these ministries (Aly 2007). In addition, a number of other ministries are involved in implementation of smaller education projects. Then there is hardly any coordination between the federal and provincial governments. Consequently, the Ministry of Education fails to develop a comprehensive strategy to reform the public education system.

Donor agencies, which contribute almost 30 per cent of the development budget— in financial year 2006-7 out of a total of Rs 6,560,258,000 a total of Rs 159,956,000 came in foreign aid (MoF 2006a)— channel most of their funds through individual projects a major portion of which is implemented through the NGOs. For example, a UNESCO study mapping donor involvement in various education components in Pakistan mapped 28 different donor interventions within teacher training. Out of these 7 were exclusively focused on teachers. 7 out of 28 interventions involved loans, while the remaining were grants. The six loan interventions (five ADB and one WB) amounted to \$560 million, while the 14 grants amounted to only \$104 million. Thus, the actual aid money was distributed across many small grants: 13 projects involved government-donor collaboration, 11 involved NGO-donor collaboration, while 4 involved government-donor-NGO collaboration. This shows the higher involvement of NGOs in donor implemented projects. The interventions were also uncoordinated: four interventions (all ADB loans) were national or in the 3 provinces, 6 interventions were focused on one province, 2 interventions were in selected districts in all 4 provinces, 4 interventions were in northern areas, while most USAID support interventions were focused on selected districts in Sindh and Balochistan (UNESCO 2005). There is, however, a growing recognition among the donors to coordinate their activities within the education sector and work more directly with the government: DfID and USAID especially commissioned a study exploring the potential of direct budgetary support to Pakistan (DfID & USAID 2006); UNESCO also led a research conference to

analyze the current utilization of aid flows within education sector in Pakistan (UNESCO 2005). These efforts are positive developments but concrete plans to implement such ideas are yet to developed.

The need for better donor coordination is also important to ensure uniform progress across the country: projects implemented through NGOs randomly across the provinces and districts can in the long-term result in increasing regional disparities apart from wastage of resources due to overlap. For example, in the province of Sindh, the district of Thatta has over 16 international donor funded projects and the next district has none¹. These uncoordinated efforts can in the long term increase inter-district and inter-province disparities. Similarly ad hoc planning can create differences within state schools. A survey of six government schools in Rajanpur shows that one of the schools was included in a donor funded food-in-aid programme where students were provided canisters of edible oil based on their record. As a result the school pulled away students from the neighbouring government schools (VSO 2004).

Failure to strengthen the planning wing

Another problem with the policy formation process is that while there is increasing emphasis on increasing consultations and involving education experts sitting outside the Ministry, little attention is being paid to strengthen the planning wing of the Ministry of Education and to attract and retain good planners within the Ministry.

Consultation without implementation

Finally, although the government is involving civil society in the policy formation process, there are also complains that the government's engagement with the non-state sector does not actually result in action. Elaborating on the experience of one of the prominent Islamabad based think tanks, Khan (2004) writes "Despite much access, we were able to achieve little in terms of policy change, and the commitment to reform on the part of the military government seemed no more than skin-deep" (Khan 2004). He further adds: "The educational bureaucracy is large, unwieldy, and resistant to change. Despite, having an NGO background, the military government's Federal Minister of Education (which has now been replaced) made little headway in having true community participation adopted as a model for rural primary schooling" (Khan 2004). Also, even in consultations, the voices of the teachers have generally been missing.

3.2: Policies to promote equity

In terms of access to primary education, Pakistan has registered progress since 2000 but at a slow pace. The Gross Enrolment Ratio has increased from 71.2 in 2000 to 82.1 in 2004 and the Net Enrolment Ratio has increased from 58.2 in 2000 to 66.2 in 2004 (World Bank 2007). But, this expansion is primarily attributed to the private sector and non-formal programmes rather than an expansion of the formal state schooling system. At the same time, the disparities in access continue to be significant across the four provinces and across income, gender and urban/rural divide.

¹ Figure quoted by Dr Aly's office, author of the White Paper (GoP 2007), in an interview with Dr Aly on 27 February 2007.

The challenges: continuing disparities

There are great disparities in access among the four provinces; plus there are high variations in rural-urban education indicators. A large proportion of the literate population is concentrated in the national and provincial capitals. The areas with low literacy are also backward in terms of economic development (Husain and Qasim 2005). Punjab being the most populated provinces hosts the largest number of state schools, while Balochistan hosts the smallest number (See Table 5).

Table 5: Provincial level primary school & enrollment data

	No of state schools	No of private schools	Enrollment in state schools	Enrollment in private schools
Punjab	42736	10080	4,759,510	958,497
Sindh	28,854	2,582	2,590,230	308,464
NWFP	18,712	2,243	2,391,909	233,085
Balochistan	7,866	403	452,403	41,932

Source: MoE 2006b.

However, the status of education across the provinces is not equal. Literacy rate is highest in Sindh at 56 percent and lowest in Balochistan at 37 percent. This inter-provincial difference is most pronounced in literacy rates among females: as opposed to a female literacy rate of 44 percent in Punjab, in Balochistan the rate is only 19 percent (See Table 6).

Table 6: Literacy rates (10 years and above) for Pakistan and Provinces 2004-05 (%)

Province	Total	Male	Female
Pakistan	53	65	40
Punjab	55	65	44
Sindh	56	68	41
NWFP	45	64	26
Balochistan	37	52	19

Source: MoF 2006b

Further there is great variation in performance across the rural and urban areas within each province and across males and females. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) is as high as 111 percent in urban areas of Punjab while it is as low as 41 percent in the rural areas of Balochistan (See Table 7).

Table 7: Gross enrolment rate at the primary level by province and region

Province/region	2001-02		2004-5	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Punjab				
Urban	95	93	111	108
Rural	80	61	96	82
Sindh				
Urban	91	78	103	94
Rural	69	37	70	44

NWFP				
Urban	100	86	100	84
Rural	96	52	92	62
Balochistan				
Urban	98	75	101	86
Rural	73	38	79	41

Source: (MoF 2006b).

The rates of transition from primary to middle also vary across provinces: during 2004-2005 the rate was 87.61 for Punjab, followed by 80.01 for Balochistan, 77.73 for NWFP and 65.98 for Sindh.

The access to education is also marked by income difference: the over all literacy rate among the poor is 28 percent, while that for the non-poor is 49 percent; the net enrolment rate is 37 percent for the poor as opposed to 59 percent for the non-poor (World Bank 2002). The enrolments remain the lowest among the poorest quintile and dropouts highest among this group. This pattern persists across rural and urban regions of all provinces (World Bank 2002). This becomes all the more worrying viewed against the fact that 65 per cent of the population lives below 2 dollars a day (UNESCO 2006).

The disparities in access on basis of gender also continue. The female enrollment rates are lower than males and drop out rates among girls are higher (World Bank 2002).

Table 8: Gender gap in overall literacy, GER and NER at the primary level (%) 2004-05

Province	Gender gap in literacy (%)		Gender gap in NER at the primary level		Gender gap in GER at the primary level	
	2001-02	2004-05	2001-02	2004-05	2001-02	2001-04
Pakistan	26	25	8	8	22	17
Punjab	21	21	4	5	15	11
Sindh	29	27	12	11	25	19
NWFP	37	38	15	13	41	28
Balochistan	38	33	15	15	33	34

Source: MoF 2006b.

These gender disparities are compounded not only due to poor supply of educational facilities but also due to cultural values and norms which makes it difficult to access education for girls: for example, religious and cultural emphasis on '*purdab*' makes parents reluctant to send girls to schools at a distance. However, the high turn out of girls in NGO run non-formal schools and the recent World Bank sponsored stipend scheme (see details below) suggests that the cultural values are not against female education, rather parents require institutional arrangements responding to their cultural requirements: for example, establishing schools close to home to ensure female security, providing female teachers to respect *purdab* (World Bank 2002; Sarwar 2006).

Against these challenges the government has failed to increase education facilities at the national level to meet the needs of all. It has also failed to develop strategies to bridge the disparities on basis of income, region, and urban/rural divide. The annual increase in the number of public primary schools is below the need: during 2005-6, only 1221 primary state schools were established (MoF 2006b). Emphasis is also being placed on opening state financed non-formal schools through NGOs. The Ministry of Education claims to have already established 10,374 Non Formal Basic Education (NFBE) schools across the country and aims to take the number up to 82,000 (GoP & UNESCO 2005). There are no independent assessments of the performance of children in these schools but according to government's claims they have a 75 percent pass rate in the government administrated fifth grade examinations (GoP & UNESCO 2005). A National and Four Provincial Education Foundations, which are government established NGOs, have also been set-up to promote community schools. Even if these schools are providing acceptable education, they confront the problem of mainstreaming. There are not enough state middle schools to absorb children completing primary in these schools. The NGOs are also unable to upgrade their own schools to middle or secondary due to lack of availability of qualified teachers in remote areas to teach at middle and secondary-levels. This low emphasis on middle and secondary educational institutions affects retention at primary level. There is a dramatic decrease in number of state schools from primary to middle and from middle to secondary (See Table 9).

Table 9: No. state schools at primary, middle and secondary level

Level	Institutions	Enrollment	Teachers
Primary	157,158	21,333,206	450,136
Middle	30,418	4,550,473	246,666
Secondary	16,590	1,880,021	282,113

Source: MoF 2006b.

Positive Developments

In terms of increasing access real push has come through the private sector, and through greater emphasis on innovative and non-formal school programmes implemented through or by NGOs.

Role of the private sector

The GMR 2007 does not provide data for private educational provision as percentage of total provision in Pakistan at the primary or secondary level, but the World Bank and the government of Pakistan data claim up to 30-36 per cent of the primary school enrolment to be in private schools (MoE 2006a; World Bank 2007a). According to a Census of Private Schools conducted in 2000 that identified 40,000 private schools in Pakistan, there was significant growth in private schooling in the country over the 1990s (World Bank 2002). In these documents, private sector is defined to include private commercial fee charging schools plus those run by NGOs and voluntary trusts. However, the NGO run schools in Pakistan are viewed to small in number: the 2000 census of private educational institutions, which included institutions from primary to graduate level, records self-owned private institutions as 28,811 out of a total of 36,096 private institutions. NGOs were only 2,580,

Trusts 1,134, and Foundations only 746 (GoP 2000). In policy papers the term is, therefore, mainly interpreted as private fee paying commercial schools.

Even in the Northern Areas of Pakistan a survey conducted in two districts shows that private schools have witnessed a rapid rise since 1990: 36 percent of the private schools surveyed were commercially owned (Harlech-Jones et al 2005). However, the national level data quoted above is open to questioning as it is based on survey data. The first ever National Education Census presents a much lower percentage. It enumerated total number of government primary schools to be 105,526 and private schools including NGO schools to be 21,141 with total enrolment of 10,761,355 and 1,671,885 respectively. This suggests only 20 per cent of the enrolment in private schools.

This figure is being challenged by NGOs who claim that the Census has missed out many schools. So, the debate is not a conclusive one. But, given that the government recent White Paper, which has been finalised after the Census and in collaboration with the Census team, has placed the figure of enrolment in private schools at 30 per cent, it means that within the government private provision is being viewed as a significant proportion of the total provision. The Economic Survey of Pakistan similarly claims that the private school GER increased by 33 percent during 2001-02 to 2004-05 as compared to only 15 percent increase in the government school GER (MoF 2006). Table 10 & 11 present the public and private schools and enrolment data as estimated in the Census.

Table 10: No of institutions

	Rural		Urban	
	Public	Private	Public	Private
Primary	95168	8695	10,358	12,446
Middle	12317	11669	2,017	9199
Secondary	6646	4,285	2,825	670

Source: GoP 2006c

Table 11: Enrolment in Public & Private Primary Schools

	Total	Urban	Rural
Public	10,761,355	8,680,849	2,080,506
Private	1671885	737535	934350
Total	12,433,240	9418384	3,014,856

Source: GoP 2006c

As opposed to this the Economic Survey of Pakistan, reports much higher number of public schools (See Table 12).

Table 12: Public Education Statistics 2004-05

Level	Institutions	Enrolment	Teachers
Primary	157,158	21,333,206	450,136
Middle	30,418	4,550,473	246,666
Secondary	16,590	1,880,021	282,113
Higher Secondary	1,604	268,595	44,663
Secondary Technical/vocational	747	113,664	7,356
Degree Colleges	677	422,931	15,653
Universities	103	520,666	60,633

Source: MoF 2006b

Another issue with private education is that the urban rural patterns of private schooling are different. The private provision in rural areas in terms of absolute number is lower than in urban areas, whereby urban private schools still outnumber rural private schools by 3:1, but the trend is growing. According to one estimate, more than 45 percent of the schools established since 1996 are located in rural areas (World Bank 2002). Also, though the increases in private school were most pronounced in the higher income groups, with private share in primary enrolment growing from 35 to 60 percent for the highest decline, the trend is also on the rise among the poor with private share in primary enrolment growing from 5 to 10 percent for the lowest decline (World Bank 2002).

Poor parents opt for the private schools, not only because of lack of access to state schooling but because the quality of education in state schools is perceived to be extremely low (Khan et al 2003). This means that private schools are often able to get away with poor performance because relatively uneducated parents have only abysmal government schooling to compare with private schooling (Khan et al 2003). This also has another negative effect: since anyone who can afford it is sending their child to private schools than the government, only the poor are really left in the government schools and due to this crowding out of relatively prosperous students those who remain in the government schools have even less resources or means to influence the government to improve the quality of education in these schools.

Also, while private schools are also increasing in rural areas they have a natural limitation on expansion in the rural population due to very practical modalities of running private schools. As Alderman et al (2003) based on their study of a rural and urban school in Balochistan argue, in the urban areas, the schools have advantages like attracting good managers and teachers at a relatively low cost and are particularly successful in attracting female teachers (Alderman et al 2003). As opposed to this, in the rural areas it is much more difficult to find educated women which can become teachers and managers in private schools. Andrabi, et al (2006) show how existence of a government secondary school in the rural areas has links to rise of private schools in the area as in the absence of a government secondary school there are unlikely to be sufficient number of secondary pass females in the area who can become teachers in private schools. Looking at the private schooling sector in Pakistan, Andrabi, et al (2006) argue that the key element in the rise of private schools is their low fees – the average fee of a rural private school in Pakistan is less than a dime a day (Rs.6)— and the

reason that they are able to keep the fee low is that they hire predominantly local, female, and moderately educated teachers who have limited alternative opportunities outside the village. In the rural areas due to lower availability of secondary schools, there are fewer of these educated females available and this limits the rise of private schools in these areas.

In general, while the expansion of the private sector is increasing access, it is also raising concerns about the poor being forced to opt for private schools which might be marginally better than the government schools but are still providing very low quality education. Over emphasis on private provision is likely to lead to lack of access or access to very low quality schooling among the poor. Also, given the Census data has given lower percentage enrolment in private schools than estimated in other government documents it is important to further verify these numbers so as the government policy does not end up attributing greater role to the private sector than the actual reality.

As for now, the government on its part is encouraging the current expansion of private schools. No regulatory mechanism has been put in place to monitor quality of education or the fee structures within the private schools, but since 2001 the government has introduced many monetary incentives for the private schools under public-private partnership programmes. Under one such programme, under-used and dilapidated government school buildings are being leased to private schools for an afternoon shift. The private provider has to upgrade the facilities of the government school, pay all utility bills for both public and private provision, contribute to other operating costs, and pay 10 percent of any profits to the government school council. This programme has, however, not gained much momentum. According to some reports, tensions have arisen as private providers feel that financial demands placed on them are onerous, raising criticisms that 'partnership' is resulting in extraction rather than facilitation (Batley et al 2005).

The other programme includes provision of direct monetary concessions to the private schools. These concessions include allocating free land to schools, charging domestic rather than commercial rates for electricity and gas bills, tax exemptions on imports, and exemptions from income tax. All private schools, including elite schools, can access these facilities. The programme is, however, not being applied in a systematic manner: it is up to the negotiating capacity of the individual school to win these concessions from the relevant authorities. The same is true for all the public-private partnership programme launched since 2001 to increase access and improve quality as there is no public-private partnership cell established within the Ministry of Education to centrally enforce or promote these programmes.

Role of NGOs and donors

The NGO run non-formal schools have also been considered as an important mechanism to increase access for children in remote areas especially girls. The NGOs are also taking a lead in introducing child centered teaching methods. They are also starting to mainstream their children into government schools: the children in non-formal schools are normally required to take government fifth grade exam. With an emphasis on improving education indicators, the government has further facilitated the mainstreaming process by allowing reiterative mainstreaming to many education NGOs. However, the insufficient number of middle and secondary state schools continues to pose challenge to the mainstreaming process. The donor agencies are also funding many innovating experiences in improving access to basic

education in Pakistan. The Table 14 lists the prominent agencies funding education in Pakistan.

Table 14: Key educational donors in Pakistan

Loans	Agency	Area	Year	Amount in millions US\$
	World Bank	Sindh, Punjab and NWFP	2004-07	625
	ADB	National	2004-2009	293.200
	IDB	National	2003-07	35.24
Grants				
	ILO	National	2003-07	11.427
	UNDP	42 Districts	2004-08	9.300
	UNESCO	National	2005	.351
	UNICEF	23 Districts/ All provinces	2004-08	14.60
	WFP	34 poor Districts/ provinces	2004-08	52.00
	CIDA	National	2000-09	75.447 (70.) Debt Swab)
	DFID	National	2004-08	14.505
	EC	Sindh and Northern Areas	2001-08	85.566
	GTZ	NWFP and Punjab	2004-08	43.358 (Debt swab)
	JICA	National	1997-2006	43.1
	NORAD	6 districts in Punjab, NWFP and FATA	2002-08	49.6 (Debt swab 26.00)
	USAID	Some national coverage	2002-06	5.299

Source: MoE 2005.

Innovative programmes

The government as well as the NGOs and donors are continuing to experiment with innovative projects to increase access. Some innovative programmes to increase access have included, Tawana Pakistan, which gives daily meals to children in selected areas, stipend scheme in 15 districts of Punjab in collaboration with the World Bank, and innovative and flexible community schools to cater to needs of working children.

Tawana Pakistan

Tawana Pakistan is a school nutrition package for girls between the ages of 5 and 12 years. An initiative of the Ministry of Women Development and Social Welfare and Special

Education, the programme was implemented between 2002-2006 in 29 of the poorest districts of all provinces of Pakistan. The programme had multiple targets including improvement of nutrition of girls of early school going age, increasing and sustaining school enrolment, reducing gender gap in school enrolment, developing community participation and ownership and involving local NGOs and the private sector. There is no independent evaluation to confirm increase in enrolment due to this programme but by May 06, 2005, the programme had been initiated in about 4,000 schools in 29 districts.

Stipend and Voucher Programmes

The Female Secondary School Stipend programme is being implemented in Punjab, Pakistan's largest province, as part of the education reform plan totalling \$300 million from the World Bank's concessionary International Development Association. The stipend program targets girls in grades 6 to 8 in 15 districts of Punjab where literacy is below 40 percent. The girls receive a stipend conditional on her being enrolled in grade 6- 8 in a government girl's school in a target district and conditional on her maintaining a class attendance of at least 80 percent. Eligible students receive Rs. 200 per month. For households, which were going to send their daughters to middle and secondary schools anyway, this is essentially an income transfer (Chaudhury and Parajuli 2006). Funds are transferred directly to the student and student's household through a postal money order through the Executive District Officer (EDO) Education, which has a special account at the provincial programme monitoring and implementation unit of the education department. An important difference with the Bangladesh FSS programme is that females are eligible for the stipend only if they attend the public secondary schools (Chaudhury and Parajuli 2006). One of the long run objectives of the stipend programme is to increase the supply of female teachers and other female service providers in the programme areas. Another component of the programme includes provision of free textbooks to approximately 9 million elementary school students (Chaudhury and Parajuli 2006).

According to The World Bank, within one year of the programme's inception, enrolment in government primary schools increased by 13 percent compared to the previous trend of less than 2 percent a year. And girls' enrolment in grades 6 to 8 in the low-literacy districts receiving the stipends, increased by 23 percent. Recent household survey data show that net primary enrolment rates increased from 45 percent in 2001 to 58 percent in 2004/05. This translates into one million more children enrolled in Punjab schools since the launch of the reform program (World Bank 2005). However, the programme is yet to be fully evaluated: World Bank is currently awaiting results from an independent study commissioned by it to study the impact of the programme.

The Punjab Education Foundation, a government established autonomous institution, has also established an Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) to provide quality education to children in urban slums of Punjab. The scheme, which aims to give poor children access to good quality schooling, provides poor children with a voucher worth Rs 300/- to be redeemed at any of EVS partner schools. Currently, in the pilot stage in the Sukh Nehar area

of Baghban pura, the scheme has 10 partner schools located within a radius of 2 kms from the target area to ensure easy access. The Foundation aims to increase number of vouchers from 1000 to 5000 in near future but the impact of the programme is yet to be assessed.

Non-formal programmes for working children

In addition, many NGOs and the National and Provincial Education Foundations are implementing non-formal education programmes for working children. These programmes aim to provide flexible teaching hours. However, most of them are small in number in terms of total outreach and are relatively recent. A recent study by Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) profiled some prominent NGO led innovative models. The following section, drawn upon a few case profiles developed in the SEF study (Sarwar 2006).

Godh, an NGO, which has been running *Community Schools for Gypsy Children* since 2000 works on the notion of mobile schools which move with the community and focus on gypsy children in the age group of 4-18 years. The system utilizes internally developed material that caters to the requirements of older illiterate children but reverts to state curriculum in class 5 to facilitate mainstreaming. The schools generally operate on the principle of multi-grade teaching with one classroom and one teacher.

SAHE, another NGO, has been running a *Community Based School Program (CBSP) for Girls* since 1998. At present the program comprises 220 schools and teachers with an enrolment of 6340 girls in the 3 districts of Pakpattan, Lodhran (2003) and Vehari (2004). The program is spread over 6 years where 5.5 years are for regular schooling and 6 months for a pre-primary class, as it has proved effective in improving retention. SAHE uses a combination of government textbooks and those developed by the Oxford University Press. In addition, it tries to localize geography textbooks to the district concerned (Sarwar 2006).

Zindagi Trust addresses issues of functional literacy with a focus on English, Urdu and Math: these subjects are considered to be directly relevant to the working child's needs in routine communication and calculation. Its "Paid to learn" program maintains that any attempt to induct working children into schools needs to compensate for the income they will be expected to forgo during class time. The field officer of the Trust interacts with the employer of the child to negotiate a financial pact whereby the employer reduces the pay for the hours spent in the school and the Trust compensates the child to cover up for the loss in earning. The schools run for 3 hours, from 2-5pm, to adjust to peak working hours (Sarwar 2006).

ANCE (Association of Network for Community Empowerment), another NGO, was formed in 1996 to provide basic education to working children. ANCE has 4 centers in Lahore, working for children involved in domestic and external labor who work in trades ranging from shoemaking, automobile, glass making to brick kilns. The centers are located in areas where such trades are concentrated. These centers run as non-formal schools. After class 5 the children are encouraged to mainstream however it is largely a matter of the parent's will. The programme also caters to disabled children (Sarwar 2007).

The Idara-e-eTaleem-o-Agabi (ITA), an NGO registered in 2001, on the other hand has tried to improve student retention within government schools by taking over several public schools under the Adopt a School Programme, where the government allows the private sector or NGOs to help strengthen the capacity of government schools. The strength of the ITA model is that it is working directly with the government to improve government education delivery system. It is formally engaged with the public sector in the strict capacity of a ‘technical partner,’ (Sarwar 2006).

There are many other examples of NGOs involved in such innovative projects to improve access. However, the problem is that they have very small outreach and more importantly none of these programmes have been systematically evaluated for its impact on access and quality. They are noticeable because they demonstrate some obvious strengths and innovations, which are verifiable on visits to the organization. It is, however, difficult to recommend their replication without first undertaking systematic cost-benefit analysis of these programmes, impact on desired outcomes of increased access and quality, and their feasibility for large-scale replications. In general even the bigger NGOs involved in these programmes show weak capacity to sustain these projects for long and are heavily reliant on development aid for survival. Also, their scale remains very small in comparison with the magnitude of the problem.

Thus despite some positive developments, much needs to be done to ensure access to all. There needs to be a more focused effort in understanding the supply and demand factors affecting access to basic education. The Pakistan Education Census so far does not provide data about who the out of school children are or who are the youth and adults who do not have access to education opportunities. But, an NGO project aimed at mainstreaming high risk drop out children in government schools working in two districts (Kasur and Sheikhpura) of Punjab shows that punishment of children regardless of the reason is a strong factor in putting them at the risk of dropping out (ITA 2006). Another study in eight districts (two from each province, one with the highest HDI indicators and one with the lowest) shows that there are many reasons for not enrolling children in school. The survey highlights the following factors as identified by the parents that negatively affect their child’s access to education:

- Children were not interested in getting education (74%)
- Education was too expensive (73%)
- Long distance from home to school was a hindrance (70%)
- Children provided help at home (69%)
- Need to ensure earning for family (67%)
- Non-availability of school (66%)
- Lack of opportunities for future education and harsh behaviour of the teachers (64%)
- Teachers absenteeism and child sickness (61%)

Source: Shami and Hussain 2006.

The government thus needs to better understand and address the many hurdles to access. The current increase in access is primarily attributed to the expansion of the private sector

and state sponsored non-formal programmes implemented through NGOs or NGOs own independent programmes rather than the required expansion in the network of formal state schools. This emphasis on private schooling is indirectly overshadowing the need for improving state schools. This is a worrying trend as it is creating a bigger divide between the rich and the poor as the low-fee charging private schools that the poor can afford have no competition with the higher-fee charging private schools where the rich send their children. Also, the emphasis on increasing number of state sponsored non-formal schools without increasing the number of middle and secondary state schools to mainstream these children presents a major challenge to increasing access.

3.3: Quality

While the policy environment has been conducive to dialogue, and mainly the private but also the public sector has made some contribution to improving access, the challenges to improving quality remain largely unresolved despite much policy deliberation. Student achievement in state schools was poor prior to 2001 and it remains so in 2006 (Shami and Hussain 2006). A study testing learning achievement of grade 5 students studying in both public and private schools of Pakistan across 8 district, where 2 district were included from each of the four provinces, shows that of the 1902 students (1155 urban and 747 rural) tested the scores were very poor. The mean percentage score in Maths, Urdu, and Science were 46, 57, 49 per cent respectively. The private schools children did better but only marginally. The survey also showed inter-district variation where the students from Quetta and Ziarat, the districts from Balochistan, showed the lowest scores (Shami and Hussain 2006).

Table 13: Student performance on selected subjects

Subjects	Public	Private	Mean
Maths	44	49	46
Science	48	52	49
Urdu	54	65	57

Source: Shami and Hussain 2006.

Other studies also note that students of government schools continue to perform worse than those from NGO schools (Khan et al 2003) and private schools (Alderman et al 2006) though often the others also perform only marginally better.

Apart from student achievement, in terms of inputs required for improving quality there has been little improvement. Rather than an integrated reform programme, ad hoc programmes often under banner of ‘public-private partnership’ are being pursued to address quality issues.

Physical infrastructure

The physical infrastructure of the state schools is very poor thus leaving the child to learn in very uncomfortable conditions especially in the areas with intense weather conditions. The National Education Census shows that 28 per cent of the 164,579 public educational institutions surveyed from primary to college level were without boundary walls, 41 percent

are without drinking water, 57 percent are without electricity, and 7 percent are without a building (GoP 2006c). Table 17 provides details of the inadequate infrastructure facilities and absence of textbooks at the government primary schools.

Table 14: Facilities within government primary schools

Total No. of Primary Schools	105,526
No. of schools without Electricity	64,954 (61%)
No. of schools without Gas	102,884 (97%)
No. of schools without Drinking water	36,125 (34%)
No. of schools without Telephone	100,778 (95%)
No. of schools without blackboard	10,411 (1)
No. of schools without text books	24,870 (23%)

Source: GoP 2006c

Availability of teaching staff and teacher training

One the biggest challenges for the government in improving quality is to ensure provision of required number of teachers within state schools and to improve pre- and in-service teacher training. There are insufficient numbers of teachers in state schools: during 2004-2005, the average teacher school ratio in primary schools in Punjab and NWFP was 3 and 2 in Sindh and Balochistan (Shami et al 2006). Given that many primary schools in the city areas have more than five teachers as they are popular postings and are used as political bribes, the average of 2 to 3 teachers per school means that some schools in the rural area end up being multi-grade one-teacher schools (Aly 2007). This means that in some government schools one teacher ends up teaching children from first to five grade and unlike the teachers in the non-formal schools does not even get any specialized training in multi-grade teaching. Exact data on the number of one-teacher schools is not available but the White Paper notes the existence of such schools as a big concern for quality education (Aly 2007).

There are also problems with recruitment: teachers recruited are often not on merit as teacher recruitment in Pakistan has traditionally been a highly political process because it is easy for politicians to oblige their voters by arranging teaching jobs for them. Teacher transfers are also highly politicized and are another way of political patronage. The problem is the same across the four provinces.

Not only are teachers in short supply they are also not properly trained. The government has over 227 teacher education and training institutes. In addition, about 300 Teacher Resource Centre have been established under the Education Sector Reform Programme post 2001 (Aly 2007). However, teacher-training institutes are known to be inefficient. The criterion for this assessment is the high student drop out rates among the government schools: given that all government school teachers can be appointed only after completing the government

teaching certificates, this low performance of students in government schools reflects poor quality of teacher training.

Many government accredited teacher-training institutes are actually distant learning institutions, with very low academic ranking. A study with government school teachers prior to 2000 showed that “majority of teachers in Sindh and NWFP sample and half in Punjab sample indicated that they did not learn much from the course and that they could either recall nothing or very little. Observations in their classrooms and interviews within students supported their claims” (IED-AKU, University of Bristol & Oslo College 1998). The White Paper confirms that the situation is no better today (Aly 2006).

Historically, teachers were recruited by the provincial government and deployed in schools throughout the province on the basis of need. Until the introduction of the new policy for contract teachers, regular teachers had to have the following minimum academic and professional qualifications:

- Primary teachers (BPS-7) - Matriculation and Primary Teaching Certification (PTC)
- Elementary school teachers (BPS-9) – Intermediate and CT
- Secondary school teachers (BPS-16) – Graduate and B.Ed (Bachelors in Education)

Due to resource constraints there has been a partial cap on hiring new teachers. During 2004-5, 8.2 per cent of the teaching posts in primary schools and 18.2 per cent at the secondary level were vacant (MoE 2006a). New appointments across the four provinces are now being made on contractual basis. Defended on basis of ensuring accountability and efficiency, in reality the policy has much to do with unwillingness of the state to carry the burden of pension payment.

A Teacher Management Study (TMS) jointly commissioned by the World Bank and the Department for International Development, UK, looking at teacher recruitment and management practices across 104 schools in six representative districts of the province of Punjab (Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Mianwali, Muzzafargarh and Rajanpur) notes that under the contract policy the academic requirements of the teachers have been raised from matric to graduate even at the primary level (World Bank & DfID 2005).

- Primary teachers - Graduate and PTC
- Elementary school teachers – Graduate and CT
- Secondary school teachers – Masters (M.A/MSc)

It shows that in Punjab, a total of 13,000 teachers were recruited on school-specific contracts during the fiscal year 2003-04. Under the policy governing contract recruitments, the duration of the contract period is five years. The contract states that the contract teachers will be evaluated on the basis of: (a) increase in enrollment; (b) decrease in drop-outs (c) student learning outcomes (d) punctuality and (e) discipline.

The study shows that contract teachers were more regular in attendance but the impact that the induction of contract teachers was expected to have on student performance was not

clearly discernable from the results of the tests administered by the research team: students of contract teachers fared roughly the same as children taught by regular teachers (World Bank & DfiD 2005). While students educated by contract teachers managed to do slightly better in Maths than those taught by regular teachers, in the Urdu test students of regular teachers fared relatively better. The same test when administered to the teachers found that contract teachers did comparatively better than regular teachers in the Maths test while there was no difference in performance of contract and regular teachers in the Urdu test. However, the differentials in the performance of regular and contract teachers start to narrow as the academic qualifications of regular teachers improve.

The study suggests a number of measures to improve the working of the contract system. The policy for contract teachers as presently structured has no in-built system for their promotion and salary increments on the basis of individual performance; salary revisions apply to the entire community of contract teachers. This acts as a disincentive and needs to be addressed. The teachers are only eligible for an annual salary increment of less than 6% (lower than the current rate of inflation). Moreover, the uniform/standard salary package does not provide adequate incentive to apply for posts in remote areas. The system also lacks flexibility in that no relaxations of academic qualifications/age limits can be made for recruiting local candidates in such areas (World Bank & DfiD 2005). Another problem noted was that the contract teachers already in service can only apply for a newly advertised position after they have resigned from their present posts. As a result, when teachers resign from a school during the academic year, they cannot be replaced until these posts are advertised again the next year resulting in such positions remaining vacant for long time periods.

Apart from this study, there is little research done on impact of contract teaching on student's educational outcome in any of the provinces in Pakistan so far. However, interviews with government teachers in 3 districts of Punjab (Kasur, Sheikupura and Rawalpindi) show that teachers are not in favour of the contract policy and prefer the security of permanent contract. This is particularly so as under the contract position the salary of Rs 4200 (70 US dollars) per month is same as that of a permanent position and less than what fulltime household help charges in bigger cities on top of getting boarding and lodging. As a consequence, the one-year contracts are failing to attract the best people or get the best out of those appointed.

As for teacher training facilities, there is no systematic reform plan in place for the existing teacher training institutions. The government is also increasingly contracting out teacher training of government school teachers to NGOs known to have expertise in innovative learning and child centered teaching methods often as part of donor funded projects. Similarly, many donor agencies are trying to train the government teachers. The Pakistan Teacher Education and Professional Development Program (PTEPDP) is one such programme aimed at teacher education. The Academy for Educational Development (AED) was awarded a three-year contract by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) under its *Strategic Technical Assistance for Results through Training* (START) Program to implement programs aimed at providing Pakistani educators with the knowledge, training, and infrastructure necessary to develop high quality education programs for girls and boys throughout Pakistan. The overall objective of PTEPDP is to increase the base of skilled,

high performing Pakistani school administrators and teachers in the teaching of mathematics, science and English as a second language, and to promote cultural understanding between the US and Pakistan. The selected government teachers are sent on a few months training programme to USA educational institutes. However, such efforts are not systematically linked to reform the government teacher training institutions. For sustainable impact government needs to reform its own Teacher Training Institutes.

Monitoring and Management

In terms of monitoring and evaluation, post 2001 the government developed two-pronged strategy: one, it devolved monitoring to the district government; two, it emphasized established of Schools Management Committees (SMCs) and also gave them opportunity to mobilize further state funds through building provision for Citizen Community Boards (CCBs) in the devolution plan. The CCBs can be formed for any community need including education and can mobilize development funds from the government.

In terms of improving the capacity of the district monitoring staff, however, little has changed in practice post 2000. Even in 2000, positions of District Education Officer (DEO) and Sub-Divisional Education Officers (SDEOs) were in place but they were over burdened and did not have the transport facilities or the funds to pay for public transport to visit schools (Ali 2000). The problems continue to be the same in the existing set up. A survey conducted with Education Managers across 14 districts of Pakistan showed that fifty per cent reported shortage of supporting staff and 44 percent reported shortage of teaching staff (Shami and Hussain 2005).

The DEOs have to deal with more than 500 schools of different categories situated in far-flung areas; it is not possible for the DEO to visit all the schools even once a year (Shami and Hussain 2005). Further, there is continued political interference. The DEO has to oblige the politicians as appointments, transfers, postings and even leave is granted on the basis of political affiliations. Most of the DEOs were of the view that there was no accountability of teachers, due to a number of internal and external pressures on the management. Action proposed against any teacher was hardly ever implemented, due to external pressure (Shami and Hussain 2005).

Also, the monitoring staff is not fully trained in supervisory activities. According to the teacher management study quoted above (World Bank & DfiD 2005), the majority of the head teachers reported that district government officials visited their schools multiple times during the academic year but they limited their activities mainly to examination of attendance and other registers. They were unable to give instructional support to teachers. The study suggests that this indicates that the provision of such guidance was perhaps beyond the capacity of some district officials and because they saw their role more as administrators than educationists.

As opposed to state monitoring mechanisms, better outcomes are being observed through involvement of SMCs. Data from survey of District Managers in 14 districts shows that 67 percent had SMC in schools in their area whereas 31 percent had Parent Teacher

Associations. Almost 40 percent also reported that these schools councils were leading to improvement in enhancing enrolment in schools, generating resources for schools from community, ensuring teacher attendance, and improving the physical facilities (Shami and Hussain 2005). However, the SMC are failing to mobilize state development funds through establishing CCBs as often-large projects are awarded to CCBs on basis of political connections.

Curriculum development

Pakistan has a centralized system of curriculum development. Under the *Federal Supervision of Curricula, Textbooks and Maintenance of Standards Education Act- 1976*, the process of curriculum development and approval of textbooks was centralized. In December 1976, the federal government nominated the Curriculum Wing of the Ministry of Education as the 'competent authority' for classes 1-XII and the University Grants Commission for beyond Class XII. Provincial Textbook Boards were established in each of the four provinces, which were given the responsibility for developing the textbooks. Prior to 1962, textbooks were prepared by a number of publishers in the country and the schools were empowered to adopt any of the multiple options.

While a curriculum normally focuses on four areas: aims and objectives, content, methodology and evaluation, the White Paper maintains that in Pakistan there is normally not much difference made between curriculum and text books (Aly 2007). The curriculum as reflected in the textbooks in Pakistan has suffered from multiple problems including irrelevance to the local context, obsolete content (Aly 2007), and strong ideological indoctrination. Even within non-formal programmes, the curriculum is not responsive to local community needs. Also, HIV/AIDS related issues remain a taboo subject and History and Social Studies textbooks at 9 and 10 grade suffer from major omission post 1973 to avoid documentation of controversial facts. One positive development though is that the textbooks have been made comparatively more gender sensitive.

The National Education Policy 1998-2010 envisions a single curriculum for the entire country: currently, the schools offering O and A levels follow a different curriculum from the others. Currently, the national curriculum review process is at the final stages. A team of experts has been working on it since early 2006. The names of the team members have been kept confidential to avoid any pressure on them especially from the religious groups, which in the past have resisted secularization of the textbooks. A detailed curriculum has been developed and the provinces are now in the process of developing their respective textbooks to fit that curriculum. These books once developed will have to be approved by the federal authorities. It is expected that the new textbooks will enter the market starting from fall 2007. However, the capacity of the textbook boards to produce good books remains extremely weak so it is yet to be seen if the new books produced will remove the existing inaccuracies and ideological biases in the text. The government is keen to encourage local private publishers to enter this market but as yet has failed to put in place measures to build their capacity.

Examination and assessment system

Out of all the issues linked to quality, examination and assessment system has witnessed least attention in the ongoing reform policies. The poor quality of examinations has been

documented in at least thirty-five government reports between 1959 and 1993. One such report stated that rote learning is reinforced by the “pattern of question papers” which in turn “defeats the basic targets of education which are acquisition, understanding and application of knowledge”. These reports also highlight the erosion of the credibility of examination results due to “large scale and unhampered cheating” (Aga Khan University website). Within Pakistan good public and private universities are increasingly using their own entrance tests to supplement or replace results from the current examination boards, while Pakistani school qualifications enjoy very little international recognition or repute. The result has been the rapid growth of the Cambridge ‘O’ and ‘A’ level system run from the UK. Although these examinations are generally reliable, they are very expensive and are based on a foreign curriculum.

There is need to change the examination system so that the exams test the students analytical skills rather than rewarding them on the basis of rote learning. However, no significant effort has been made in this regard. Part of this neglect appears to be embedded in the impossibility of undertaking examination reforms and shifting assessment methods away from rote learning, without addressing the problems with teaching and text books. Recently work has started developing a comprehensive National Education Assessment System but so far this system has been tested on a very small scale for only grade 4 and 8 (Aly 2007). Also, the government is encouraging the private sector to come forward. Aga Khan University has been allowed to form AKU-Education Board in November 2002 through Ordinance CXIV of 2002. Primary and secondary schools are free to affiliate with it for examinations. USAID granted Rs. 270M (US \$4.5M) in August 2003 toward the initial operational cost of AKU-EB, which is two thirds of the total project cost of Rs. 438M (US \$7.3M). The University expects to become solely responsible for the AKU-EB’s financial affairs. However, within the public education system the reform is very slow.

Innovative programmes

Currently, much of the quality improvement work is being done through ‘adopt a school programme,’ also referred to as school improvement programme. This programme involves giving over management of the government schools to NGOs or private sector. A number of NGOs are involved in this programme and different models are emerging ranging from focus mainly on improving the infrastructure to changing the entire management system of the school. However, in many cases, the focus remains on infrastructure improvement rather than a systematic investment in teacher training thus having limited impact on quality of education provision. The programme is also feared to increase disparities within state schools as those which are adopted become very well-endowed while the ones left out (which are the majority) don’t receive any input. The programme therefore cannot be viewed as a primary means to improve quality in state schools.

Since 2002, the government has also launched a programme to reform the *madrasas* (religious seminaries). Supported by a US \$ 225 million grant, the programme requires the *madrasas* to introduce secular subjects in their curriculum (Bano 2006). Under this programme, English, Maths, Pakistan Studies/Social Studies and General Science are to be offered at the primary, middle and secondary level and English, Economics, Pakistan Studies and Computer Sciences at the intermediate level *madrasas*. The incentives include training for 28,000 *madrasa*

teachers plus financial incentives to the *madrasas'* management in the form salaries of the teachers appointed to teach the secular subjects and provision of textbooks, stationary, computers, and furniture. The programme has, however, had limited success in convincing *madrasas*, which are weary of government trying to exert control by providing these incentives. Out of total of 16,000 registered *madrasas*, less than 100 have joined the reform programme run by the federal government from the Ministry of Education since 2002. The failure to engage the *madrasas* in the reform is primarily to do with the lack of trust on the government, where the programme is viewed as United States attempt to control the *madrasas*. However, the programme also suffers from actually implementation problems: the three officials responsible for implementing the reform at the federal level have not been given enough time or the resources to monitor progress even among the few *madrasas* that have joined the programme. The result is that the impact of the reform programme really depends on the *madrasa* leader.

Key challenge

The main challenge in improving quality remains the weak planning and management capacity of the Ministry of Education at the federal level. The result is that despite much need, less than fifty percent of the funds allocated for development expenditure are utilised (Aly 2006). The problem occurs at two levels. Firstly, the allocation/release process is time intensive. The budget has to be approved by the Ministry of Education, then by Ministry of Finance, then by another accounts committee before reaching the relevant project. This process often takes up to two months. Often by the time this budget reaches the target project the annual budget year comes to the end and the funds expire.

Secondly, even when the funds reach the target project in time there are problems of implementation due to weak planning capacity at the local level. Often the concerned officials do not know the rules or don't have clear plans thus the money is left unspent. For improving quality it is therefore critical to strengthen the planning and implementation capacity of the federal ministry and to simplify the across-ministry and within-ministry coordination.

4: Conclusions

Post-Dakar, Pakistan has made progress towards EFA targets but at a measured pace. Interesting experiments are happening in collaboration with NGOs, donor and the private sector but the state education system remains paralyzed with more or less similar problems as witnessed in 2000. Therefore, even by the World Bank assessment, it appears unlikely that the whole country will achieve the Millennium Development Goals of full primary completion by 2015 (World Bank 2005). With sustained effort, however, it may be possible to eliminate gender disparities in primary enrolments by 2007 (World Bank 2005). To accelerate progress towards these targets, it is important that all the three main players in shaping the policy adjust some of their strategies.

The government on its part needs to increase the resource commitment and build capacity of the federal ministry to better coordinate various government agencies at the national and provincial levels, and to then approach the donors and the NGOs with clearly identified needs. This approach must replace the current scenario of engaging in a number of ad hoc

experiments, which often result in wasteful replication. The government also needs to regulate the quality within the private sector schools and must retain provision of free primary education as a primary responsibility of the state.

The donor agencies in turn need to sustain the increased development flows to Pakistan especially those earmarked for education. They also need to coordinate their role and work directly with the Ministry of Education and respond to the needs it identifies rather than developing a number of ad hoc programmes and implementing them through multiple partners. Also, they need to monitor that the government does not use the current push for public-private partnership in education as a means to shift responsibility of providing free primary education away from the state.

Finally, the civil society should sustain its current activities but must pay greater attention to strengthening the state system rather than creating a parallel structure. Also, it needs to develop strong advocacy campaigns on education; Pakistan still does not have a strong national coalition of education NGOs to address education advocacy issues. This is particularly important under the current atmosphere where NGOs are increasingly becoming service providers to the government for teacher training and other programmes. It is critical that the NGOs do not lose their independence and retain their primary role as monitors of the state education system.

In terms of the six EFA targets for 2015, the following measures need to be prioritized:

ECE: It is critical to develop a clear understanding of this concept within the federal and provincial level education managers and then to develop measures to transmit the understanding of this concept to the teachers level.

Access: In improving access it is critical to focus on under-performing regions and to increase emphasis on middle and secondary educational facilities as they impact retention at primary level.

Learning & life skills: It is important to re-conceptualize the role of technical and vocational education and to link it to primary and secondary education rather than leaving it to Ministry of Labour.

Adult literacy: It is important to develop more localized literacy programmes and to increase financial commitment to this goal.

Gender gap: It is important to learn from innovative NGO experiences, which have successfully brought girls to schools to ensure the same facilities in the government schools.

Quality: Within quality the most critical aspect is to strengthen the monitoring capacity of the district governments and to ensure better teacher training.

However, central to all these reforms is increased resource commitment to education. As the White Paper argues, the state needs to ensure a gradual rise in spending on education from current level of 2.1 of the GDP to 4 per cent of the GDP. The ultimate aim has to be to increase this resource allocation to 6 percent of the GDP by the end of the next five years

(Aly 2007). Given the poor absorption capacity within the Ministry of Education, it is important that the next five years financial commitment is made in advance rather than announcing it on yearly basis so that a plan can be developed to ensure better utilization of these funds. Without doubling its current financial commitment to education, Pakistan cannot address the numerous challenges to meeting EFA targets by 2015.

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