

## **1947-2008 Evaluation of Elementary Education in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

*Elementary education plays a vital role in the education system of the country. Therefore many targets are set for the improvement of elementary education in the educational policies and five years plans from 1947 to date. In this research project the motive was to evaluate the targets and achievements of elementary education more productive and useful. The research project revolves around the historical method of research. Elementary education is discussed by year-to-year with respect of plans and educational policies. From the first-five year plan (1955-60) to eighth five-year plan (1993-1998) a great amount of money was reserved at public and private sector for elementary education. Major findings show that these plans and educational policies, unfortunately, were not fully implemented or strictly followed in the field of education. If these plans and policies were strictly followed we were on the road of progress and stood side by side with developed countries.*

### **1. Introduction**

There is a dire need or overhauling of the present educational system, which is very defective. Education is a corner stone of development. It has proved a significant positive impact on employment, earning, productivity, health and the reduction of population growth, in short, all major aspects of development. In Pakistan our policy makers have never recognized the importance of education and there has always been a lot of rhetoric but no concrete effort in the shape of public spending. Education is a basic human right and should be considered an end in itself rather than a mean to an end. No other society can call itself civilized and no community can be a nation if a large number of its citizens are illiterate. Education provides people with the tool to raise their standard of living and break through the barriers of class. It is the basic for intellectual development and the understanding of complex world.

Primary/Elementary education is foundation stone in the education system and educational structure of a country. Studies show that all the present developed countries of the west had achieved universal elementary/primary education before the advent of high rate of growth. Similarly, the great economic success stories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century countries such as Japan, Hong Kong Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan had all made considerable investment in education and achieved universal elementary/primary education. Education improves the productivity of labour and since labour is one of the factor of production that leads to an increase in output and national income. It is obvious that secondary and higher education provides skill that is vital for the functioning of economy. To achieve the targets of secondary/higher education, we must stress upon the need of elementary education.

It was believed that unskilled workers didn't need formal education and expenditure on primary/elementary education would cause money to be delivered from activities more conducive to economic growth. However from 1970s onward scholars and policy makers have come to appreciate the benefits of universal primary/elementary education. It is now recognized that primary/elementary education is vital for economic growth and poverty alleviation. If Pakistan wishes to join the ranks of the developed countries or to become another Asian Tiger, it will have to make a concerted effort to educate our people. Without high enrollment in primary education it is not possible to get high enrollment in secondary and higher education. This means spending at least the recommended four percent of our GNP on education and not compromising this expenditure whenever there is a resource crunch.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

Objectives of the study are the following:

1. To take an over view of the condition of elementary education in Pakistan from 1947 to 2008.
2. To evaluate targets and achievements set out for the elementary education in Pakistan.
3. To recommend some suggestions to improve the structure of elementary education.
4. Whether our nation is trained on the lines, which were set forth in the national Education commission report.
5. To help the educational planners to develop such policies which prove to be beneficial for the country.

## **3. Significance of the study**

In the present age elementary/primary education is considered as first stair for secondary and higher education. An important duty of elementary/primary education is to provide foundation for secondary or higher education. In Pakistan literacy rate is very low and to increase this rate basic education is very essential. Literacy rate at present, is estimated at 49 percent (male 61.3 and female 36.8 percent), which is not sufficient. So to increase literacy rate the Govt. Should give top priority to elementary/ primary education. Elementary/primary education not only enhance literacy rate but also play a vital role in rapid progress of the country. In Pakistan elementary/primary education has fallen in prey due to poverty. That's why a great number of schoolchildren don't complete this level of education. As elementary education plays a vital role in the educational system of the country, therefore it is of great importance to evaluate the targets and achievements of elementary/primary education in the light of plans and policies from the establishment of Pakistan to present day. This research is also important because it will evaluate the whole scenario of elementary/primary education in Pakistan.

Thus the study has the vital role in this regard. This study will help the concerned persons, higher authorities, policies makers and professional planners, to know about the historical condition of elementary education, according to documents of govt. It will happen in just a glance because selected information's about elementary/primary education are summed up in this research. I have chosen this problem for I was interested in it. As a student of education I find it most important to evaluate the targets and achievements of elementary education to improve it for future generation and inform them about it. This study will help to eliminate the prevailing shortcomings and planning mistakes to improve the standard of elementary/primary education in Pakistan. The study will help the educational planners, educational policy makers, educational authorities, rulers and the various agencies involved in education for further planning. This study will help to develop elementary/primary education on firm and solid foundation in Pakistan.

## **4. Literature Review**

### **4.1 Introduction of elementary Education**

Elementary education plays an important role in the development of any country. It is a stage where we prepare students to meet the future needs. Treat emphasis is given on the elementary education. It is there possibility of state to provide basic education to all its children. The govt. has made a policy to enroll all school age children in the schools.

According to the United Nation declaration of human rights, everyone has to get education. Education should be free and compulsory at least in the elementary and fundamental stage. Elementary Education is consists of classes from 1st to 5<sup>th</sup> and middle from 6th to 8th.

Shahid (2002) viewed that in Pakistan, greatest number of country's population attends the primary stage. This stage is the means by which universal literacy can be attained within a community (pp.1-2).

Classically elementary education as basic education was limited to be development of three basic skills, popularly known as three R's i.e. reading, writing and reckoning (Eisner 1979. p.2).

#### **4.2 Elementary Education in Pakistan**

Rashid (2004) has the view that elementary education in any system of education occupies the pivotal position. The individual is provided training of the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes. For providing training the needs, problems, facilities and the psychological principals are kept in view for selecting the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be imparted to the students. Primary education should be co-education otherwise according to the local needs. The tenure of elementary education may be fixed keeping in view the aforesaid: elementary education at the time of independence was of four years duration. In 1947 in the meeting of All Pakistan conference I was decided to make this duration from four to five years. Progressively elementary education would be of six years and ultimately of eight years. Practically elementary education is spread over a period of five years that starts at the age of five and ends at ten (p. 104).

#### **4.3 Productivity of Education policies and Five year plans**

Unluckily the planning made for education policies did not become the part of our five-year development plans. Periods of education policies and Five-year plan were quite different. Importance of education did not remain the same in different periods and governments. Importance of educational department varied as compared to other department. Rupees specified in budget did not motion to meet, demands and promises. After specification of money it was never fully paid, therefore the targets of educational policies and five-year plans were never achieved. The second reason was that according to financial rules when specified money was not used till 12 p.m. of 30th June was of no use. As a result of all of this speed of education progress always remains very slow. Therefore targets of education policies and plans were not fully achieved up till now (Irfan, 1995. p.91).

#### **4.4 Implementation of National education commission 1959**

Govt. accepted all the suggestions with the saying that he will try to follow these. For the implementation of suggestions, most of them were withdrawn due to public pretest. The commission suggested committees for the implementation but quite useless. There was a need for change in the structure of education. (Riaz, 1998, pp.326-327).

#### **4.5 Implementations National Education Policy 1970**

The circumstances in that period were not peaceful. In 1971, the country was divided into two, Pakistan and Bangladesh. During this, Government of Yahua Khan was dissolved. Like all the previous policies, financial crisis created serious obstacles in the implementation of this policy. In 1972, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to rule. He rejected this policy and issued a new one so in this way this policy was not implemented (Irfan, 1995, pp. 23-24).

#### **4.6 Implementations National Education policy 1972-80**

Most of the suggestions of this policy were political decision and were not based on research. Pak India war of 1971 created a serious financial crisis that was a serious obstacle in the implementation of this policy. In 1977 Zia-ul-Haq dissolved the government. Zia-ul-Haq issued another policy in 1978 and new teachers were recruited during the policy period. Professional subjects were tried to introduce. All the institutions were nationalized and equalization was promoted. Free elementary education for all did not match to the economy of the country. It is our bad luck that we simply announce the educational policy and did not plan to acquire desired results. It also happened with this policy; new schemes were introduced without feeling the economic crisis (Irfan, 1995, p.147).

#### **4.7 Implementation National education policy 1978**

Shahid (2003) says that funds are not enough for the implementation of policies. Government accepted the certificates of "Deeni Madaris". Arabic teachers were appointed. Teaching of Holy Quran was made compulsory. Urdu was tried to adopt as medium instruction at elementary level (p. 490).

#### **4.8 Implementations National education Policy 1992**

1. Computer education was not introduced.
2. Targets of new elementary schools were not achieved.
3. The targets were set for 2002 but Nawaz Sharif Government was dissolved in 1998. Therefore required results were not achieved from this policy. (Rasool, 2007, p.48, unpublished thesis)

#### **4.9 Recommendations of national education policy 1998-2010**

1. Improving quality and access of elementary education.

2. Improvement of teachers' competencies and enhancement of relevance of programmes for teachers.
3. Introduction of KACHI class at elementary level.
4. Maximizing the role of family, community, schools, non-government organizations and the media in the provision of elementary education
5. Elimination of disparity and promoting equity.
6. Assessing high priority to the education of put of school children.
7. Adopting non-formal system as supplementary to formal system.
8. Diversification of financial resource base of elementary education.
9. A monitoring system should be developed to obtain timely and reliable information on enrolment, retention, completion, and achievement. Qualitative monitoring achievement will also be introduced.
10. Management and supervision should be improved through greater decentralization and accountability in service delivery (Rashid, 2004, p. 106).

#### **4.10 Major issues and challenges of elementary education are summarized as below**

1. More than 5.5 million primary school age (5-9) children are left-outs.
2. Approximately 45% children dropout of school at primary level.
3. Teachers' absenteeism is a common malady in schools, especially in the rural areas. Teacher lack commitment and motivation.
4. Instructional supervision is weak at elementary level.
5. About one fourth of primary school teachers are untrained. However, the present training infrastructure does not appear to improve the quality of instruction.
6. Learning materials are inadequate and of poor quality. Teaching methods are harsh and uncongenial.
7. Above all, character building, which is the basic fundamental objectives of education and training, is neglected creating serious problems both for the individual and the nation. (Rashid, 2004, p.106)

#### **5. Procedure of the study**

Research process was the following:

To evaluate the targets and achievements of the elementary education in Pakistan

1. Historical method of research was adopted.
2. Journal and research project reports related to evaluation of targets and achievements were studies.
3. Education policies from the dawn of freedom 1947 to 2008 were studies.
4. Five-year government plans were studies.
5. Reports and related literature was consulted to study the targets and achievements of the elementary education.

#### **6. Delimitations of the study**

1. The research is delimited only to the elementary education.
2. In this research discussion is undertaken with respect to plans and education policies of Pakistan.

#### **7. Findings**

1. Political unstable circumstances were the main reasons due to that plans and educational policies failed.
2. It is happened that five year plans and educational policies introduced without considering the economic crisis of the country as after war of 1965 and 1971, there were serious financial crisis in the country.
3. There is a need to change whole system to get maximum benefits.
4. Since independence educational policies and plans were made they were not fully implemented.
5. Govt. announced free education, which did not match the economy of the country.
6. Syllabus of elementary education did not fulfill the demands of Islam and modern world.
7. Time period of educational policies and plans was totally different.
8. Funds allocated in budget were not sufficient to meet the requirements of the plans.
9. After the allocation of expenditure it was not fully paid so that the five year plans and educational policies were not fully implemented.
10. It was promised to provide facilities in the education sector but it was merely a dream.
11. Political pressure on education sector his created a serious problem.
12. It has been observed that character building was not stressed in educational policies and five year plans.
13. Facilities (buildings, furniture, dispensary, equipments of sports and other teaching, learning material. Co-curriculum activities. A.V. aids etc.) for elementary education were not equally distributed in our country.

14. Although women education was stressed but proper arrangements were not made for it.
15. Proper attention was not made seriously to raise literacy rate.

### **8. Conclusion**

From over all study of the research, it is concluded that the targets set for elementary education were timely and rationale to some extent. But it is unfortunate that most of the targets could not be properly achieved due to inappropriate allocation of funds, lack of funds, political instability and large number of education policies by different governments in different periods and lack of infrastructure. The outcome of this halfhearted implementing education policies and plans are inconsistent. In short it can be concluded that the planning for setting targets has been unrealistic, inconsistent and inappropriate. The country is on the development path. There is a need to keep target up and up so everybody can get benefit from it. I want to conclude my thesis with the words of commission on National Education 1959 which rightly observed and recorded that the 'prevailing attitudes of society would impede the change.' I observed it as worth quoting here:

'Education... can meet its responsibilities only if a revision of attitudes on the part of the professional educator is accompanied by a change in the view point of government and the Public... In education the prevailing attitude of the public and those responsible to Government was that it warranted low priority. Among those outside the educational system, there was little recognition of the fact that at independence, the nation was thrown into competition with the rest of the world and that its future status depended upon how well it met this competition with the skills of its own manpower... Although our leaders were now the architects of policy rather than the implementers of the policy of others, education, neither in fact nor in theory was given the importance that would enable it to meet the needs of a people who controlled their own destiny... Our curricula, teaching methods, administrative structure and system of examinations continued to reflect the old ways.'

### **9. Recommendations**

1. Declare education as the highest priority of government explain that unless the impediments of illiteracy and lack of education are removed, the road to democracy will remain fraught with the danger of exploitation of the masses by the select few, and that in the absence of political will in the ruling classes to do something tangible in this arena, it seems that it is up to the army to defend the country against illiteracy and lack of education, for there is no factor more important to the well-being of a nation than human resource and no negligence worse than ignoring its development.
2. Make it mandatory for government and army officers at all levels to do stints at various educational institutions in relation to their skills and national requirements.
3. Make it a mandatory requirement for various degree programmes that the candidates, after taking their exams, shall spend a specified period of time [for specified hour(s)] in teaching at assigned institutions. (These assignments should be given in a judicious and practical manner).
4. Ask for volunteers with specified qualifications to contribute their services in their areas of work or residence under organized bodies that can be formed for this purpose by the government.
5. Ask the public to contribute financially for this purpose. Modern marketing and fund raising techniques can be adopted for this task.
6. Many government school buildings can be converted into commercial schools of good level. The government can consider offering many of these schools to private sector organizations in the field of education on the condition that a specified percentage of bright students from the lower and middle classes will be granted admission and scholarships. Tax benefits/exemptions may also be made part of the deal to encourage entrepreneurship in this area.
7. Offer tax benefits/exemptions and other such incentives to private sector groups to invest in education in rural and less developed areas.
8. Make it mandatory for each industrial unit/agricultural estate of an area above a specified limit to provide for a school within the premises/area. Alternatively, the owner can be asked to share costs with the government for setting up such school. Another option is giving various financial/tax incentives.
9. Introduce standardization of curricula and licensing and certification of teachers to improve standards (as done in the USA).
10. Introduce high quality selection procedure for teachers and offer the candidates better incentives.
11. Use electronic media more extensively for educational purposes. A channel could be devoted to just education. In this regard.

- Teachers of high caliber can take classes for different subjects at various levels,
  - These lecturers can be telecast as well as recorded,
  - The lectures can be delivered by telecasting them or by playing recorded cassettes even in schools in far flung areas where quality education is usually not available,
  - Later on computers can also be used with sufficient data banks and with internet and e-mail facilities for more interactive education, and
  - If an appropriate system is designed, more students can be taught in one school using cassettes, discs, etc. with relatively less teachers.
12. In rural areas, provide each school with at least one army man to ensure that people face no resistance from the feudal in educating their children.
  13. Provide people with incentives to educate their children. This can be done in various ways. For instance
    - Even lower level government jobs as for clerks, peons, constables can be linked to a minimal level of education and entrance tests.
    - Various loans (e.g. agricultural loans) can be linked to whether an applicant has educated or is educating his children.
  14. Link agricultural loans/tax benefits to feudal landlords with a specified number of people they have helped in obtaining a required level of education.
  15. Similarly, link industrial loans to education.
  16. Similar linkages can be made in relation to adult education programmes
  17. Give more importance to language education and mathematics at the elementary, primary and secondary levels. The unfortunate fact is that usually even our postgraduates lack basic skills in these areas. Language and mathematics are the foundation on which acquisitions of other skills depends. Though much of the problem is due to poor teaching, yet curricula, texts, pedagogy and examination techniques also have a lot to do with the current situations.
  18. Various teams of experts should be involved in performing the above mentioned task of improvement and formation.
  19. Instruction in science, history and social studies should be incorporated in language teaching at the primary and secondary levels through activities and projects.
  20. Computer education should also be introduced gradually right from the elementary stage in education.
  21. At the proper stage, instruction in foreign languages (especially Arabic for closer cultural and economic ties with the Arab world, for better understanding of Islam in the educated classes) and social skills (for enhancing emotional Intelligence) should also be encouraged (Goldman, 1996). Both these areas have gained immense importance in the wake of globalization.
  22. More emphasis should be given to the development of educational institutions for some unconventional disciplines as fashion designing, art, music and literature. There is a lot of talent in the country in this field and a great, high return international market for the products and services of skillful people in this area.
  23. Similarly, a system of continual vocational training should also be introduced for workers in different fields.
  24. Instructing and informative documentaries and activities should also be designed for the education of students. Similarly, institutions as museums, internet clubs, libraries, etc. should also be developed. Contributions from the public can also be sought for this purpose.
  25. Various bodies of academic experts should also be formed to monitor, standardize and develop all the above-mentioned programmes (1-8).
  26. Corporal punishment being given to students in schools must be checked as it was causing massive dropouts, particularly in the rural areas.
  27. Introduce one medium of instruction. In the international environment of competition today, English as to be given preference if a choice is to be made (as too many languages undermine instruction in any one).
  28. Religious education should be incorporated in the mainstream education. For this purpose, the most important thing is introduction of Arabic as a second language at the appropriate stage. This may not be as difficult as it seems. Some work may be required in forming the curricula and pedagogy, but the demand will create its own supply, and it is expected that schools, institutions and parents will also be important contributing factors.
  29. An action plan should be made which include ways and means to restore the status and dignity of teachers so that qualified people could join the profession. At present only those people are joining the teaching profession who failed to get jobs anywhere else.

30. A mechanism should be framed for checking the absenteeism among teachers and discuss their positions issue.
31. Government should launch a massive programme at district level to provide the missing facilities in all schools. The lack of facilities in the existing schools constitutes a major factor in the massive dropout ratio in Pakistan. Almost 70.8 children dropped out at the primary level of Class-1 to VI, while a total of 82.4 per cent students' dropped out on completion of the elementary cycle (class-1 to IX). Only 17.6 per cent students actually went to Class-X.
32. Government should aim to increase the enrolment at elementary level gradually to attain cent percent literacy. The plan should focus on improving quality of elementary education by enhancing teachers' vision and knowledge, making interesting and relevant curricula and creating a positive teaching and learning environment and a reliable evaluation system.
33. The plan should also focus on developing effective projects with the help of private sector to attract the drop-outs back to schools, eliminate gender based disparities, promote quality, and improvise a monitoring system from success of system.
34. It would be required to enrich coordination of districts with regard to educational plans, provide institutional and financial support to districts and ensure that funds allocated did not lapse.
35. Public-private partnership indication sector should be encouraged. The teaching profession should be elevated to its past glory making it attractive are offering incentives to the teachers considering their vital role as nation builders (the Education commission Report, 2003).

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