

PILDAT

January 2008

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BACKGROUND PAPER

for the News Media



Education For All in Pakistan: Key Issues

PILDAT
Pakistan Institute of
Legislative Development
And Transparency

Supported by:



United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

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Foreword

Basic education remains the fundamental instrument of poverty alleviation and development in any given society. Pakistan lags behind its regional compatriots as well as global partners in basic education indicators. There are some serious issues facing the Primary Education and literacy in Pakistan such as inadequate access, poor quality, gender disparity and parallel systems of education to name a few predicaments. Sustained political will and continuity of the right policies is required to resolve these issues.

At this time when Pakistan is poised to elect political leadership for the next five years or so, it is considered appropriate to raise these and other issues facing **Education For All** efforts with the leadership of major political parties of Pakistan. It is in this context that Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development - PILD T, and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Islamabad Office, have joined hands to organise an All Parties Conference (APC) on **Education For All in Pakistan**. The objective of the APC is to brief the political leadership of the country on the state of Education For All, facilitate a dialogue and reach a broad consensus on national targets and the means to achieve them in these key sectors.

PILD T and UNESCO seek support and guidance of the news media in raising and highlighting issues faced by education sector in Pakistan, and in creating an environment which may inspire political parties to accord priority to education in this country. The media support is crucial to improve efficiency of education system in Pakistan, eliminate political interference in appointment and transfers of teachers, and ultimately raise quality of education in schools. The media can be a vanguard in the struggle to provide quality basic education for all children, boys and girls, men and women, young and adults, poor and rich equally. This Background Paper has been prepared to provide the key information on the issues facing the Basic Education and Literacy in Pakistan to Editors, Columnists, Analysts, Reporters, TV programmes Producers and Hosts.

Acknowledgement

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Disclaimer

PILD T and its team of researchers have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this paper but do not accept responsibility for any omission and error, as it is not deliberate. The views expressed in this paper are not necessarily those of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -UNESCO.

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January 2008

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Education For All in Pakistan: Key Issues

- ? The poor state of education in Pakistan, though directly relevant to the questions of poverty, unemployment, violence and lack of democracy, is almost totally absent from the political and electoral discourse.
- ? About half of adult population in Pakistan can not read and write.
- ? With reference to Human Development Index, Pakistan has been placed by UNDP at 136th position, lower than some of its regional neighbours like Sri Lanka (99), Maldives (100), India (128), and Myanmar (132), mainly due to its low literacy rate and low primary level enrolment.
- ? Illiterate population has increased from 22 million in 1961 to 48 million by 2005. It is feared that by 2015, illiterate population in Pakistan would have risen to over 52 million which is larger than the total population of several countries such as Sri Lanka, Spain, South Africa and Myanmar etc.
- ? The Primary Enrolment Rate of around 53 % is among the lowest in South Asia.
- ? Only 23% rural girls are lucky enough to be enrolled in primary schools in Balochistan as compared to almost twice that ratio (47%) in rural Punjab
- ? Only 17% rural women in Sindh can read and write, compared with 67% female literacy in rural Punjab
- ? About one third of the enrolled children drop out before completion of primary education. Out of 100 fortunate children enrolled in Grade 1, only 22 reach Grade 10, and only 13 are able to pass Secondary School examination.
- ? Pakistan is spending 2.4 % of its GDP on Education against the UNESCO-recommended norm of a minimum of 4% and against 3.8 % spent by India, 7.5 % by Maldives and 3.4 % by Nepal.
- ? More than 50% of the allocated non-recurrent education budget goes unspent each year because of the poor capacity of the system.
- ? Average remittance from a Pakistani worker abroad is US\$ 680 only, compared with US\$ 1385 by a Filipino and US\$ 1259 by an Indonesian worker mainly because of poor education of most of Pakistani workers.

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Background

Absence of Education from the Election Discourse

As Pakistani voters approach the general election scheduled for February 18, the discourse in the media is generally dominated by political and constitutional issues, prospects of holding free and fair election, chances of revival of democracy and whether the election will lead to stability or chaos. This is all quite natural during an election that is as intensely contested as is the case in Pakistan these days. What is not desirable is an almost total eclipse of a debate on some of the other most important long-term issues and challenges facing the nation and how various political parties intend to address them. It may however be acknowledged that most of the political parties contesting the coming election have addressed the subject of Education in their election manifestoes in detail though the level of specific ideas varies from party to party. The dismal state of education especially the primary education and its short, mid and long term impact on the quality of life of Pakistanis and its direct relationship to the poverty, unemployment, poor law and order, extremism, weak democratic institutions and poor rule of law is almost absent from election debates, discussions and talk shows. It is imperative that the nation spare at least a small part of its attention to this critical issue so that political parties can comprehend the problem in its full details and incorporate the vision to address this problem in their post-election strategy no matter what position they are in following the general election a party in power, an opposition in the parliament or a party struggling from outside the parliament.

Media Can Bring Education into the Election Discourse

Media can play a crucial role in bringing education especially the primary education back into the national debate. The fact of the matter is that long-term solution to our problems is not possible without spreading education and spreading it fast. This Media Brief is prepared to give an update to the Editors, Columnists, Talk-Show producers, Talk-Show Hosts, Reporters, Feature Writers and analysts on the latest state of Primary Education and Literacy in Pakistan. This brief should also serve as a backgrounder to the All Parties Conference (APC) planned by UNESCO and PILD T on February 5, 2008 at Islamabad to brief the political leadership on the latest state of education and to seek their strong expression of resolve to address the problem head-on in whatever capacity they may be now or

after the general election. The Media can play a very important role in highlighting the importance of education and urging the political parties to treat the subject with utmost seriousness

The State of Education and Literacy

The Government of Pakistan had declared its commitment to the achievement of 'Education For All' targets of Dakar Framework of Action (2001-2015), as well as the 'Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)'. The goals and targets committed by Pakistan include provision of free and compulsory quality primary education for all children, 50% improvement in literacy rate, reduction of gender inequalities in education, and enhancement of quality of primary education by the year 2015. This paper outlines the key issues relating to the objective of 'Education For All in Pakistan'.

Pakistan ranks 136th on the Human Development Index

Education is the main vehicle for socio-economic development. Pakistan is blessed with natural and human resources, but these resources can only be harnessed and exploited fully when citizens are educated and skilled. Education is a common interest of the whole Pakistani nation, and all democratic forces need to strive for the uplift of masses and achievement of prosperity, peace, and tolerance in the society. Unfortunately, about half of adult population in Pakistan can not read and write. With reference to Human Development Index, Pakistan has been placed by UNDP at 136th position, lower than some of its regional neighbours like Sri Lanka (99), Maldives (100), India (128), and Myanmar (132), mainly due to its low literacy rate and low primary level enrolment.

Pakistan at 120th Position on Education Development Index

In the area of education, Pakistan is lagging behind other countries of South Asia, even lower than Nepal, Bangladesh, and Maldives. Educational position of various South and West Asian countries in Human Development Index, as assessed by UNESCO in its 2008 EFMD Global Monitoring is given below in Table 1:



Table 1: Pakistan and Education Development Index (2008)

Country	EDI Ranking
Maldives	74
Iran	90
Myanmar	94
India	105
Bangladesh	107
Nepal	110
Pakistan	120

Source: EF Global Monitoring Report 2008, Annex Table No 1, page 203

Pakistan to have over 52 Million Illiterates by the Year 2015

Pakistan is sixth most populous country of the world. Its young population is increasing, and government needs to invest more on education and training. Due to rapid population growth and inability of the formal education system to bring all children into school, illiterate population has increased from 22 million in 1961 to 48 million by 2005. It is feared that by 2015, illiterate population in Pakistan may rise to 52 million.

Table 2: Net Enrolment Rate at the Primary Level (Age 5-9-excluding Katchi Class)

Area / Gender	Both Genders	Boys	Girls
Ill reas	53	56	48
Urban reas	65	66	64
Rural reas	47	53	42

Source: PSLM Survey (2005-06), Statistics Division, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Govt. of Pakistan

Low Primary Enrolment Ratio

Although Pakistan has recently increased its focus on educational development, yet its Net Primary Enrolment Rate is among the lowest in South Asia. The Table 3 gives a comparative picture.

Table 3: Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) in South and West Asian countries (2005)

Country	NER %
Iran	95
India	89
Bangladesh	94
Maldives	79
Nepal	79
Sri Lanka	97
Pakistan	68

Source: EF Global Monitoring Report 2008, Annex Table No 5, page 289

part form the data issued by the Ministry of Education and reported to international agencies, a recent survey (PSLM 2005-2006) conducted by the Statistics Division, Government of Pakistan, presents a more dismal state of affairs by reporting Net Enrolment rate of only 53% at primary level in the country. Table 2 offers details of actual field situation.

Regional Disparities in Education

above statistics indicate overall aggregated situation of the country. Educational picture in under developed areas and districts is bleaker. For example, only 23% rural girls are lucky enough to be enrolled in primary schools in Balochistan, as compared to almost twice that ratio (47%) in rural Punjab. Only 17% rural women in Sindh can read and write, compared with 67% female literacy in rural Punjab (PSLM 2005-06). Similarly, in 55 districts of the country, half of the school age children are not enrolled in primary schools, and 21 of these districts are in Balochistan alone. Similarly, Federally administered Tribal area (F T) presently has one of the lowest literacy rates at 17.42% in Pakistan. Literacy rate among male population in F T stands at 29.51 % (as compared to the national average of 50%) and the female literacy rate is a meagre 3 %, compared to a national average of 36%.

About One-third Children Dropout before Completing Primary Education

According to the National Education Census Report of the Ministry of Education (2006), about 31% children drop out before completion of primary education. Out of 100 fortunate children enrolled in Grade 1, only 22 reach Grade 10, and only 13 are able to pass Secondary School. There are certain factors responsible for this wastage and poor performance, which need to be addressed by the future governments, if Pakistan is serious to achieve Education For All goals.

Gender Disparities in Education

In the context of gender equality in primary education, Pakistan has one of the lowest female education parity indices in the world (Table 4). In 2005, female enrolment rate remained alarmingly low at 59 % as compared to a male enrolment rate of 77 %. Similarly girl's completion rate fared poor at 33 % in comparison with that of boys at 47 % for the same period. Number of female primary schools in



the country is less than half of the schools for boys. At present, there are only 4 primary schools for girls, against every 10 schools for boys.

Table 4: Gender Differences in Basic Education

Indicator	Female	Male	Total
Net Primary Enrolment Rate, 2005	59%	77%	68%
Net Primary Completion Rate, 2004	33%	47%	40%
Adult Literacy Rate (15-24 years), 2004	36%	64%	50%
Youth Literacy (15-24 years), 2004	50%	76%	65%

Source: Data Centre, UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2007 and *EF Global Monitoring Report 2008

Low Spending on Education

Ratio of budget indicates the level of importance given by a nation to the education. Historically, Pakistan has been spending less on education, as compared to other countries in the region. Pakistan is spending 2.4 % of its GDP on Education against the UNESCO-recommended norm of a minimum of 4% and against 3.8 % spent by India, 7.5 % by Maldives and 3.4 % by Nepal. Table 5 provides information on education budget as percentage of GDP.

Table 5: Education budget as % of GDP

Country	Education Budget
Iran	4.7%
India	3.8%
Bangladesh	2.4%
Maldives	7.5%
Nepal	3.4%
Pakistan	2.4%

Source: EF Global Monitoring Report 2008

Low Utilization of the Education Budget

A large proportion of the allocated education budget in Pakistan lapses each year before it can be utilized as the absorption capacity of the existing educational structure is inadequate. According to official documents, more than 50% of the allocated non-recurrent education budget lapses each year. However, the figure is put much higher by independent researchers. During the year 2006-07, nearly 67% percent of the education development budget

remained unexpended, and following a similar pattern, the first quarter of the financial year 2007-08 saw utilization of only 7.6% of the entire allocated education budget.

Education, Productivity and Earning Relationship

It is pertinent to note that annual average remittance from a Pakistani worker abroad is US\$ 680 only, compared with US\$ 1385 by a Filipino and US\$ 1259 by an Indonesian worker mainly because of poor education of a vast proportion of Pakistani labour force. (Source: N VTEC, Islamabad).

Equality of Educational Opportunities

At present, Pakistan is faced with a multitude of social conflicts emanating from parallel education systems, including public sector schools, private schools, and Madrassahs. These differences are defined largely by quality, curricula, medium of instruction, and sources of funding. Significant differences exist in the educational facilities provided by rural and urban government and private schools as well as between public and private schools on the whole. Lack of quality education delivery by the public sector has in part led to the mushrooming of the private sector. During the 10 years between 1990 and 2005, the private sector share in education grew from 14 to 33 percent (including religious educational institutions).

Pakistan's Commitments to Achieve Education for All

Pakistan has committed to achieve Education For All goals set in Dakar in April 2000, and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). During 2000-2007, Pakistan has taken a number of steps towards the achievement of these goals. These include preparation of a National Action Plan for EF (2001-2015), launching of Education Sector Reforms (ESR) and provision of additional funding to the provinces, abolition of school fees, provision of free textbooks, stipend for girl students, and slow but consistent enhancement of educational budget. International community and civil society organizations appreciate and acknowledge these



positive strategies and achievements of Pakistan. However, Pakistan has to go a long way. Keeping in view the gigantic size of problems of illiteracy and out of school children in Pakistan, all these efforts need to be augmented and sustained during the next regime also.

The Constitutional Commitment

Article 37 (b) of the Constitution of Pakistan states,

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

In the light of the commitment of the Government of Pakistan to the achievement of universal literacy and for the provision of free and compulsory primary education as prescribed in the Constitution of Pakistan, the country has introduced some twenty-two policies and action plans since 1947. After 60 years and at the stage of electing political leadership for the next 5 years, it is time to reflect on the progress made, lessons learnt and critically examine the setbacks which we might have suffered on the way and chart a way forward with a new vigour.

Where the Political Parties stand on “Education for All” Targets?

Political Parties in Pakistan have announced their Election 2008 Manifestoes. A comparative chart has been prepared which compares the EF Targets / MDGs committed to achieve by the government of Pakistan in 2000 with the proposed targets to be discussed at the All Parties Conference on 'Education for All in Pakistan' and the position of 6 major political parties of Pakistan on the same targets as given in their 2008 party manifestoes. The comparative chart is placed as **Annexure 1**.

Seeking Media Support

PILD T and UNESCO seek support and guidance of media in raising and highlighting issues faced by education sector in Pakistan, and in creating an environment which may

inspire political parties to accord priority to education in this country. The media support is crucial to improve efficiency of education system in Pakistan, eliminate political interference in appointment and transfers of teachers, and ultimately raise quality of education in schools. The media can be a vanguard in the struggle to provide quality basic education for all children, boys and girls, men and women, young and adults, poor and rich equally.



Annexure 1 Political Parties' Position on Targets to be achieved in the light of EFA and MDGs

Comparison of Election 2008 Manifestoes									
Parameter	Target as per EFA and MDGs	Explanation of the Target	ANP	MMA	MQM	PML (N)	PML (Q)	PPP	
Free Education	Legislation to declare free primary education a <i>right</i> , in accordance with Article 37 (b) of the Constitution of Pakistan		No reference to Legislation Commitment to provide Free Education up to primary level <i>Timeframe: Not specified</i>	No reference	Commitment to provide compulsory and free Education up to Matriculation or equivalent level. <i>Timeframe: Not specified</i>	No reference to Legislation Commitment to provide Free Education up to Higher Secondary level. <i>Timeframe: Not specified</i>	No reference	No reference	
Universal Primary Education	100% Net Primary Enrollment Ratio by 2015	Number of children aged 5-9 years attending primary level classes i.e., 1-5, divided by the total number of children aged 5-9 years, multiplied by 100.	No reference	No reference	No reference	100% school enrollment to be achieved at primary level. <i>Timeframe: by year 2012</i>		100% school enrollment of all children between the ages of 5-10 <i>Timeframe: by year 2015</i>	
Promote Gender Equality at Primary Level	75% Completion / Survival rate up to grade 5 88% Adult Literacy rate Achieve complete Gender Equality in primary education by 2015	Proportion of students who complete their studies from grade 1 to grade 5 Proportion of people aged 10+ years who Proportion of girls net enrollment at primary level in comparison with boys	No reference	No reference	No reference	No reference	No reference	No reference	
Budget Allocation for Education	Budget Allocation for Education a minimum of 4% percent of the GDP within 3 years		To allocate 6% of GDP on Education <i>Timeframe: Not Specified</i>	Education Budget to be significantly increased by similar importance as given to the Defense budget.	Increase present allocation from 2.2% to 5% of the GDP <i>Timeframe: by year 2013</i> Minimum 20% of Provincial and District Govt. revenue to be allocated to education	No reference	No reference	No reference	
Budget Allocation for Literacy	Allocation of 10% of the Education budget to Literacy programs		No reference	No reference	No reference	No reference	No reference	No reference	



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