

Achieving universal primary education



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In 1998, the then government of Pakistan, accorded full recognition to the fundamental responsibility of restructuring of education system of Pakistan, by announcing the National education policy on 27th March 1998. The National Education Policy 1998 was devised with a sight to transform the Pakistani nation into an integrated, cohesive entity that can stand up and compete against future challenges by setting one of the main objectives of achieving universal primary education by providing the maximum opportunities for free access to every child. In 2000, world leaders from 189 nations voted to implement the MDGs. Pakistan was also one of them. This declaration set eight goals to achieve the unanimous vote to instill the Millennium Declaration may suggest that the political will to accomplish these targets is promising. The achievement of universal primary education was second goal set after eradicating poverty. The target set under this goal was that by 2015 universally children will be able to complete full course of primary schooling. The indicators to achieve this target were completion/survival rate , net enrollment ratio and literacy rate of 15-24 years old men and women. However, critics of the MDGs are not sure about the likelihood of every nation attaining universal education by 2015. The critics of the MDGs suggest that greater focus should be placed on the overall progress rather than the final outcome as the evidence implies that the educational MDGs are not likely to be achieved in most countries.

By concentrating primarily on the rates of progress over time, (Sahn, 2003) claim the results will be more beneficial in providing encouragement to countries, as “ failure to achieve the goals is not synonymous with failure to achieve social progress”. So, greater attention should be placed on rates of

progress towards completing these goals rather than the final outcome. As failing to achieve these goals by 2015 does not indicate a lack of improvement in Pakistan, it is more appropriate for policy analysts to focus on rates of progress. Since Pakistan has signed Millennium development declaration, it is facing major problems like war on terror, political instability, and earthquakes 2004 and floods 2009-10 which hindered its progress towards these goals. There are so many other factors that are obstructing Pakistan in achieving its millennium development educational goals.

2. 2 Factors that affect the achievement of millennium development goals of primary education in Pakistan in light of previous researchers and critics.

As this paper intends to provide the reasons for critical lag and gap in achieving primary educational millennium developments goals in Pakistan and how these goals may be achieved, I chose to focus on factors which are common and have greater influence on educational progress and aspects that government and other educational authorities in Pakistan can have a direct influence over through policy change. For the purposes of this research, the model that signifies the determinants of educational progress are completion survival rate, female teachers as percentage of total primary teachers, population aged between 0-14 as percentage of total population , poverty rate and literacy rate gap. But other variables that are considered and have an impact are net enrolment ratio, rural population, pupil-teacher ratio, public expenditure, gender parity index, and non-formal education (deeni madrassas), low birth weight babies.

The debate that whether educational progress is more affected by personal back ground of students (that includes rural population, poverty rate, public expenditure , gender parity index) or school quality factors (that are pupil teacher ratio, trained teachers , female teachers and non formal education) has been ongoing since the Coleman Report (Coleman et al. 1966). Coleman et al. (1966) found that family background of students, that is their parent's socioeconomic status, parent's education and occupations are more indicative of student's educational progress than school-level factors. Since the publication of the Coleman Report, researchers have continued to examine and debate whether quality of education or home environment determines student's academic achievements. Especially in regard to how national economic development affects which factors are more important on a global scale, policy makers continue to look for which factors may best explain educational progress. In this research, I intend to observe whether economic or educational investment factors best explain progress towards the educational MDGs in Pakistan. In order to determine how Pakistan can use its resources most efficiently, I have used statistical data for different variables covered under socio economic status of students and educational quality and their effect to reduce literacy gap.

Though 70% of population in Pakistan is still living in rural areas. But growth in rural areas is moving towards down and literacy rate is improving so we can see that social background of people has high impact on educational progress. (DR . P. A. Shami, 2005) in their study on basic education in Pakistan raised issues like lack of access to quality education in rural areas and unequal distribution of educational resources in rural and urban areas.

These issues still prevail in society as a hindrance to achievement of MDGs for education. The Pakistan has The average literacy rate of Pakistan is 57 per cent with combination of 69 per cent for males and 45 per cent for females. The literacy rate in urban areas remains much higher than in rural parts of the country , 74 per cent and 48 per cent respectively The average provincial literacy rate follows as Punjab and Sindh 59 per cent, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (50 per cent) and Balochistan (45 per cent) (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2009-2010).

As I have taken population aged between (0-14) as percentage of total population as one of my variables and more than half of population in Pakistan lives in rural areas so it ultimately effects my determinant.

As past research indicates that the effects of educational investment factors or school quality factors which include total educational expenditures and number of trained teachers for the universal enrolment MDG, pupil-teacher ratio and repetition rate for the universal completion MDG, and pupil-teacher ratios and number of female instructors for the gender parity goal may vary depending on the economic status of a nation (Heyneman & Loxley, 1983).

The educational investment factors are most indicative of educational progress in the world's poorest countries, where as economic growth characteristics will best explain the progress of lower-middle income countries towards the educational MDGs. Economic growth may be viewed as more significant at the national level in lower-middle income nations because these countries are closer to being seen as legitimate economic partners by industrialized nations than low income nations. Alternatively, educational investment factors will likely be more significant in low income

nations because improvements in these in these countries are more immediately perceived at the individual level than changes in national economic growth.

(Gupta et al, 2002) found in his research that economic growth has been major determinant of educational progress. This is in line with my determinant of poverty rate. As economic growth of country directly links to the welfare of its citizens. The growth in economy can lead to educational growth if net enrollment rates do not rise at much faster rates than GNP per capita is recognized by Colclough & Al-Samarrai (2000) in his research. This finding suggests as more children reach the school going age, fewer public resources will be available to allocate to a nation's educational system. Thus economic growth is linked to greater funding on education as more resources are available to spend on education. This trend may occur for several reasons. First, as the economy of nation develops more spending is done on education, even though the total proportion of the GNP spent on education decreases (Coclough & Al-Samarrai, 2000) and secondly, increasing rates of economic growth signify a higher quality of living for a nation's citizens. As financial resources become more readily available at the individual level, the perceived costs of education may not be as great. Increasing employment rates may enhance citizens' opinions towards education because "prolonged unemployment can lead to disinterest in investing in further schooling" (World Bank; 2010). However (Mellinium developemnt goals, 2010) shows budgetary allocations are not sufficient enough to implement the desired projects to achieve universal primary education by 2015. Budget for education still remains at about 2% of GDP,

out of which major amount is spent on administrative issues like salaries, leaving very minimal amount to spend on new initiatives. (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2009-2010)

In South Asia, Pakistan falls in one of those countries who contribute lowest public expenditure on education, as a proportion of their GDP. According to figures, Pakistan allocated to the education sector 2.5% of the GDP in 2006-07, 2.47% in 2007-08, 2.1% in 2008-09 and 2% in 2009-10. This factor also directly affects the poverty rate. As if public expenditure is increased, there will be more cheaper education facilities thus making poor people accessible to basic education.

A study by Qureshi and Arif (2001) conducted on the Profile of Poverty in Pakistan demonstrates that poverty has been increasing drastically throughout the decade starting 1990s. More rural households were dragged to poverty and approximately a quarter of the urban households were also living below the poverty line by the end of 1998-99. They conclude by shedding light on the fact that acquisition of education is one of the most significant determinants of the incidence of poverty. It is imperative that education should be taken into account during policy formulation and implementation. A very important idea has been put forward in the article which states that education can have a positive impact of poverty alleviation strategies. The acquisition of an individual will have a positive effect on his or her earnings and productivity and furthermore also impact any individual that interacts with the educated. (Qureshi and Arif, 2001).

I have taken the literacy rate gap (target-actual) as my dependant variable for this study as it is inversly proportional to maximum achievement of primary education and studied the effect of other independent variables on education. Despite the general assumption that more funding in education leads to achieve higher degree of educational attainment and enrolment, previous researches on the impact of public spending on education for improving educational progress is same. Gallagher (1993) claims in his work that while educational expenditures positively affect enrolment rates, further attention is needed to assess the quality of how public expenditures are spent in education. The total public education expenditures may not be the most accurate determinant of observing how a government is financially supporting its educational system, but other research indicates that educational funding at the national level can vary significantly. Colclough & Al-Samarrai (2000) mentioned in his research that South Asian countries spend a higher proportion of their total GNP on education and subsequently have higher enrollment rates. As total educational expenditures vary significantly based on certain national characteristics, more research is needed to determine how influential a nation's total financial support for education is on enrolment rates. For instance, the school-aged population in Sub-Saharan Africa is proportionately larger than the school-aged population in South Asia (Colclough & Al-Samarrai, 2000) indicating that total education expenditures would need to be greater in these countries to allow for funding to be similarly allocated. Additionally, in terms of educational funding, the majority of finances are spent on teacher salaries and other administrative works (MDG Report, 2004 & MDG, Report 2010) , Dr PA Shami Development of education in Pakistan (2005). Though public expenditure on education is <https://assignbuster.com/achieving-universal-primary-education/>

taken as variable in my regression model but it ultimately effects two of my variables completion rate and female teachers. As if there will more public expenditures on education it will provide more resources and facilities to education sectors thus making education more easily achievable ending up in students successfully completing their primary education. Similarly it can increase number of female teachers in education sector by giving them good pay incentives.

A nation with a higher school-aged population will likely have greater pupil-teacher ratios which in turn may lead to a lower quality education. Pupil-teacher ratio is a significant determinant for its potential effects on educational progress, specifically in terms of school completion rates, though researchers are in agreement about its significance. Dr PA Shami in his paper Access and Equity in Basic education also raised this issue that in Pakistan the very high pupil teacher ratio in most of schools especially rural areas has worse effects on its educational progress. As teachers cannot accommodate to give attention to a class of 40 to 50 students so it aversely affects the progress.

The amount of time a teacher can commit to each student is reduced by large class sizes, but the gender of the teacher may also affect how likely girls are to obtain an education. In many places like Baluchistan, Sindh and Pakhtunistan parental attitude towards girl's education is very conservative. This situation is more intense in rural areas which cover more than 70-80% of total population in Pakistan. In rural areas due to poor quality of life and less exposure and awareness and illiterate parents both socially and academically, long distant schools and lack of female teachers, children are

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not sent to schools and especially girls.(Dr P A Shami Access and equity in basic education 2005) & MDG Report 2010.

Consequently, girls may need for female teachers to be present in order to decide that obtaining an education is worthwhile. Additionally, as girls tend to receive less attention from instructors than boys, a lack of female instructors can reduce the amount of learning time for girls (Benavot & Gad, 2004), thus reducing the likelihood of girls attaining an education. In addition to affecting the gender parity ratio, the presence of women in the educational system may influence enrolment and completion rates. The higher participation of women in the workforce is often viewed as indicative of a nation becoming modern; more women in the educational system may lead to higher enrolment and completion rates. Female teachers in schools tend to have higher levels of certification than their male counterparts. Consequently, literacy rate gap will be lower in areas with a higher percentage of female teachers because the female teachers are more qualified, easy going and trustworthy to teach.

(DR . P. A. Shami, 2005)in their study point out insufficient and imbalanced educational infrastructure, high poverty rate, incompetent, untrained and non availability of teachers, illiteracy of parents and economically weak families give rise to low completion/survival rate of primary education , which ultimately negatively effect literacy rate gap. These factors are also seen in (Millennium developemnt goals, 2010). Completion survival rate is taken in my research as independent variables to assess its impact on literacy rate gap which ultimately targets achievement of Millennium-Development-Goals for primary education in Pakistan. (Millennium <https://assignbuster.com/achieving-universal-primary-education/>

development goals, 2010) raised issue of net enrollment ratio and completion/ survival rate that has also mentioned by (DR . P. A. Shami, 2005). Though net enrolment ratio has increased in primary education to 57% in 2009 from 42 % in 2002 but we are still lagging behind a lot to catch 100% by 2015. And the children who manage to complete their primary school that is to complete studies from grade 1 to grade 5 is only 54. 6% in 2009 which has been decreased from 57. 3% in 2002.

2. 3 Discussion of various projects and programmes running in Pakistan to achieve MDGs for primary education

According to Pakistan Millennium-Development-Goals Report (Millennium development goals, 2004) by the GoP (Government of Pakistan), a fair assessment of the status and trends relating to Goal 2 is difficult owing to a number of reasons. MDG Report 2005 highlighted that major discrepancies arise due to data collection by different methods, the use of different definitions of variables, and the time lag between data collection and publication. MDG Report 2004 states that discrepancies are sometimes significant, for example, between the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) and the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS). There is greater consistency, however, in the rates of change implied by these sources as indicated in (MDG Report 2005 & Pakistan World Fit for Children report , 1989). The programs and projects introduced to achieve the MDGs are run by different organizations and NGOs. The programs and projects running at provincial level are independent and have no interference from federal government. Therefore monitoring and evaluation

of these programs is difficult at federal level making the analysis of such interventions are more complicated for researchers and policy makers.

An education sector reforms (ESR) specific programme was provided Rs732 million which was spent on the provision of missing facilities in primary and middle schools, restoring and reestablishing of science education at secondary level and establishment of polytechnic institute at district level (Balochistan, Khanozi, Turbat & Gilgit). The national education foundation intends to establish community schools in the country at the places where primary school are not available within a reachable distance and skill based literacy centers. Rs 1 billion were expanded under Canadian Debt Swap Project for capacity building of teachers training institution and training of teachers. Child Friendly School model (CFS), which is a framework for all children to enroll in schools and learn effectively has been expanded in the country to over 2700 schools. (Pakistan Millenim development goals report, 2010) . In time of natural disasters like earthquakes and floods UNICEF provides help to organize mass back-to-school campaign, being to resume quality education activities, encouraged to rebuilt schools and infrastructure, aided to improve, speedup and adapt learning strategies for children who have missed schooling, female education and generating public support to raise awareness about importance of education. Further it provides help to schools, providing with safe water and sanitation. (Goal: Achieve universal Primary education).

Schools are also trying to decrease the dropout rate of students which is about 50% at the moment by engaging children in co-curriculum activities,

such as sports and other play activities to develop their interest in schools and increase the retention rate at school.

2. 4 Analysis of gaps and lags

The achievement of MDGs so far is not remarkable and the reasons other than one described above are also earthquakes in 2004, war on terror and recent massive destruction in floods 2010. Pakistan has currently net enrolment ratio less than 80%, which is unlikely to reach 95% by 2015. Net primary enrolment ratio was 52% in 2004-5 rose to 56% in 2006-7 and then 57% in 2008-9. There are significant variations in NER among the four provinces . The NER is highest in Punjab with a slight improvement in other provinces by 1%. Gender disparity in NER is reduced. Especially in Pakhtunkhwa it has improved by 4% in last few years. Trend towards private schooling is increasing in urban as well as rural areas, with primary enrolment increased from 18% to 20% in the later. There has been significant decline in completion/survival rate to grade during the last five years. The rate decreased from 72.1 to 54.7 to 52.3 to 54.6 in 2005-6 to 2006-7 to 2007-8 to 2008-9 respectively. But it has been improved drastically in 2010 reaching to 69.9%. One of the main reasons of escalating this rate may be shift in the number of students from public to private schools due to unavailability of teachers, better infrastructure and standard quality of tuition in public schools. Data of the public school does not show whether students have left school or gone to private schools. In the last ten years there is overall improvement in literacy rate with respect to individual sectors of male, female, urban and rural areas. Though there is increase of 3% points in urban areas and 1% point in rural areas. Literacy rate is higher

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in urban areas 74% compared to 48% in rural areas in 2008-9. The individual provincial literacy rates are as follows: Punjab & Sindh – 59%, Khyber- 50%, Baluchistan – 45%. The literacy rate 2008-9 is higher among men 69% compared to women 45% which is increased from 66% and 43% in 2006-7 respectively. (Millennium development goals, 2010 (Australian Aid Programme to Pakistan, 2010).

Social status between men and women, contraceptive use, fertility rates decline, the relationship between child and maternal mortality is a good established. The most powerful donors reduction of child mortality is the mother of a literacy, which in itself is an education system to ensure that his pioneering development of the book as a free universal access to education for the poor, including girls and boys. There should be emphasis on education among these women, social status and overall health of children and pregnant women, he made two basic features that make life meaningful and free possible. The social status of women through education, enjoyment and economic relationship between education and health opportunities is, therefore, is to achieve the Millennium-Development-Goals and to ensure that the basic premise of sustainable development. It is obvious that Pakistan lagged behind in this respect the pain behind.

In general, Pakistan faces multiple and interrelated problems, with a view to achieving the Millennium-Development-Goals call. Some of these issues relate directly to health care, while others refer to economic, social and cultural. Nevertheless, macro-political environment is also a source of problems. Pakistan history suspicious of democracy. The country was under an actual or de facto military regime, history and deprived the majority of

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people the fundamental freedoms. There is no sense of democracy, promotion of civic awareness, a strong sense of human rights and freedoms will be difficult if not impossible, to achieve the Millennium-Development-Goals in Pakistan.