

Secrets of Past and Promises of Future: Analysis of Affordable Quality Education in Pakistan

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Abstract:

Sustainable Development allows every human being to get knowledge, skills, attitude, and values. The focus of this study was to analyze the different initiatives taken to achieve Sustainable Development Goal-4 in Pakistan. The major objective of this research was to identify and analyze the initiatives taken for ensuring quality education under the umbrella of SDGs. Mix method approach was used to gather information from stakeholders and educationists. The sample was taken from the Punjab province comprised 125 educationists, scholars, teachers, educational managers, and students who were selected by using a convenient sampling technique. A questionnaire was used as a tool to gather information from the respondents. Based on analysis of the study, it can be said that most of the stakeholders and educationists were of the view that the major reason for the failure of previous national education policies in Pakistan is the allocation of insufficient budget for education. The findings of FGD unveiled that financial support along with a valid policy and strict monitoring would be the best strategies to achieve the SDG-4 agenda in Pakistan.

Keywords: Promises of Future, Sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals, Quality Education

I. Introduction

Policies are considered to play a very significant role in the progress and development of a country. In Pakistan different documents were prepared by different experts and policymakers but few of them were very comprehensive and fulfilled the requirements of educational purposes however some policy documents were sketchy (Aftab et al., 2020). Almost in every policy document quality of education was

remained the core issue at all levels. Most of the educationists were of the view that the fall of educational plans and policies mainly depends upon the quality of resource persons (UNDESHI, 2020). It is a well-recognized fact that with the help of education we can bring possible and positive change in society. For this purpose, our educational institutions can play a very positive role to bring change in society but all this is impossible without having a quality education. The quality of education is falling day by day in Pakistan (Harris et al., 2019). Since birth of Pakistan the standard of education has remained a major concern of our policymakers, planners and educationists. Our policy documents provide only a long wish list to raise the standard of education in Pakistan. This has become a global issue now and almost every country is facing the challenge of measuring quality standards (Harris et al., 2019). Massive debate on different levels has suggested different quality indicators which serve as an instrument to gauge the modifications at the institutional level. Ministry Education and Professional Training with the help of supporting agencies try to measure the quality of educational institutions in Pakistan.

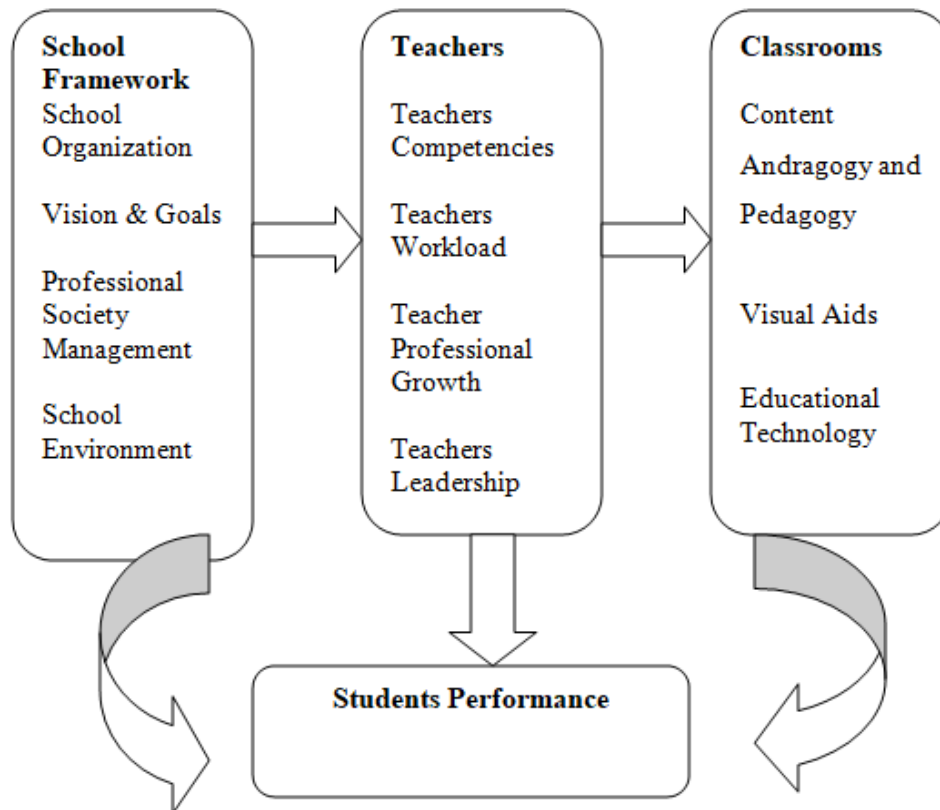
It can be said that there are three main steps to improve the quality of education. Input indicator contains the financial resources, human resources and physical resources while process indicator contains the overall activities of teaching and learning process e.g. teacher's qualification, teacher's experience, discipline, school environment, teachers' competencies, pedagogical and andragogical skills, classroom size and teachers behavior with the learners. The product indicator contains the results of students, what knowledge students have gained? What skills students have attained? What type of attitude students have attained from the teachers and students (Winthrop, Anderson, & Cruzalegui, 2015).

Different studies on quality of education reveal that some indicators are a variety of usage and purposes. In the educational setting planner, researchers, decision makers, and educationists use the indicator in different way (Feuer, Floden, Chudowsky, & Ahn, 2013). They have a different style of using the indicator during the process of teaching. They divide the indicators into three main areas: (a) school context (b) teachers (c) classroom (Scheerens, 2011). According to them, these three parameters are called the pillar to enhance quality. In the context of school, school leadership, vision, mission, and goal of the schools are included while in teacher indicator teachers' academic skills, teacher assignment, teachers' skills, and professional development of teacher is included. Similarly, in the third indicator that is classroom; the course content, pedagogy, technology, and classroom size is considered as a tool to measure the quality. Follow diagram shows the quality indicators related to learning:

As GDP or per capita income is considered the traditional indicators of economic growth to overcome the ultimate objective of human resource development but the concept of development has now been transformed. Education has a key role in human or socio-economic development. United Nations, since 1990, is ranking human development based on Human Development Indicators. These human development indicators include literacy rate, enrolment rate in the country. Pakistan, unfortunately, has not been able to increase its HDIs and in 2010 we were at 141st position out of 206 countries (Jednak & Kragulj, 2015).

Figure 1: Quality indicators and their relationship to learning

The United States, Faculty of Education, Department of Research and Innovation



Source: (US Statistical analysis report December 2000)

If we probe into history to find out the basic reasons due to which accelerated progress has taken place in the different countries of the world that have achieved the milestones and now, they are the leading powers of the world, we will find education as a common and vital catalyst. All the progress and development took place due to the focus on education. Growth in every department of the country depends upon education and the economic indicators cannot be increased without education (Galdeano-Gómez, Pérez-Mesa, & Godoy-Durán, 2016). A tremendous development and progress have been made in the world keeping in view the education and education reforms. The world found a new path towards the elimination of poverty and quality education. The expectations were high and every nation went heart-out to achieve the goals as maximum as possible. Through this heart-out effort, valuable and encouraging progress has been made as per the indicators shown in the UNESCO reports (Stiglitz & Greenwald, 2015).

Although lot of efforts had been made for the achievement of EFA goals yet realized against the expectations. Many countries like Pakistan could not achieve a respectable figure as per the commitment. There were many reasons for not achieving the required results and figures by the countries by Pakistan and the way they develop the strategies has been a concern for UNESCO. However, it was felt to continue the action

and to approach the key issues properly in a more scientific way (Bursztyn & Drummond, 2014; Leiserowitz, Kates, & Parris, 2005). As EFA goals were not achieved by the deadline of 2015, there was a need to continue the action to complete the unfinished agenda to transform the world by 2030 through Sustainable development Goals. According to UNESCO SDG document “The World Education Forum 2015 in Incheon, the Republic of Korea, from 19 – 22 May 2015, hosted by the Republic of Korea, and was organized by UNESCO along with UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR organized more than 1,600 participants from 160 countries, including over 120 Ministers, heads and members of delegations, heads of agencies and officials of multilateral and bilateral organizations, and representatives of civil society, experts of the teaching profession, youth and the private sector, developed the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, which offers a new vision of education for the next fifteen years (Barrs, Allan, Martin, Beatty, & Malik, 2005). There are some proposed strategies that may be adopted by the countries which wish to draw contextualized plans and strategies. These strategies are designed by keeping in mind the realities (Atkinson, 2019).

According to article 26 on the declaration of human Rights (1948), Access to free and compulsory education of all human beings has been globally recognized as a fundamental right. This fundamental right has been guaranteed by the Government of Pakistan under article 25-A (18th Amendment) which states: “The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such manner as may be determined by law (Ullah, 2020). The above stated is not enough for the fulfillment of the fundamental right of education rather Government should do the required legislations and ensure the provision of the budgets in its true spirit by keeping the population in mind. Some major improvements are being offered in the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (Sartal, Bellas, Mejías, & García-Collado, 2020).

In the context of Pakistan, keeping in view the Education Sector Reforms and its impact on education standards, it is the utmost need of the country to develop some strong and reality-based strategies to save the future of the country. It is crystal clear that the EFA goals were not being achieved in Pakistan due to multiple reasons. There were two major reasons reported in this failure 1- commitment gap and 2- implementation gap. All the relevant departments and persons are responsible for the failure and need to re-assess the policies and implementation plans (Atkinson, 2019). Pakistan is facing a new challenge now and it has to cope up with the issues being faced in the pursuance of EFA goals to ensure the targets being set in SDGs. Recognizing the importance of the role of education as per the agenda of sustainable development goals, it should be considered at its top priority.

The objectives of the study comprises (a) to analyze the success of EFA targets set for 2015; (b) to identify the strategies being made by the Government to improve secondary education as per the requirement of MDGs; (c) to identify the problems and issues related to education as per the SDG-4 agenda; (d) to analyze the strategies for the achievement of SDG-4 agenda in Pakistan (e) and to highlight and recommend some steps be taken to achieve the SDG-4 agenda for the improvement of secondary education in Pakistan.

II. Research Design

The major purpose of the study was to prepare the strategies for achieving the SDG-4 agenda to improve secondary education in Pakistan by identifying the problems being faced by Pakistan in the implementation of EFA and MDGs goals since 2000. Therefore, qualitative and quantitative methods both were used for the analysis of data. The core focus of the study was to find the hot issue related to quality secondary education and the strategies which can give a direction for the improvement of these issues in the context of SDG-4 agenda implementation in Pakistan. To gather valid and comprehensive strategies a blend of open-ended and close-ended questionnaires was designed to conduct the research.

A. Population and Sampling

The population of the study was comprised of school heads, S.S, SSTs, A.E.Os, D.E.Os, and E.D.Os of Three Districts including Bahawalpur, Lodhran and Rahim Yar Khan and selected for the feedback regarding the issue. The population of the study was divided into the given below categories. From each category a sample was selected as per the following detailed:

- Education Officers of executive-level were selected.
- S.S and S.S.Ts were also selected from different secondary and higher secondary schools.
- Selected secondary school heads were also the respondent of the study

Convenient sampling technique was adopted for the assessment of the above-given sample. The sample was taken from the urban areas of three districts of Punjab. Three districts included in current study which were Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, and Lodhran.

B. Research Instrument

Stage -1

All main indicators of the SDG-4 agenda were identified and an extract of selected indicators regarding secondary education was designed as a questionnaire to find out the current scenario of the issue in Pakistan. This questionnaire was used to get a response from selected school heads, teachers and Education Officers comprising and focusing on main issues related to the strategy development in the context of all dimensions mentioned in the SDG-4 agenda.

Stage -2

Focusing on the different dimensions of the SDG-4 agenda and its implementation in Pakistan a list of strategies was designed which and identify the true picture for the best strategy for the purpose in the context of Pakistan. A blend of open-ended and close-ended questionnaires or questions was designed to ask the opinions on the specific issues and then the same themes were separated from there to interpret the vision for the future strategies.

C. Data Collection

The researcher developed a healthy and positive relationship with the respondents of the study with the help of local leaders and personal relations before starting data collection and a proper appointment-taking procedure was adopted to collect the information within the research ethics. The researcher personally visited the respondents and built a level of confidence to get the real picture and took the additional notes as well. A questionnaire was developed as a tool for the collection of data containing and covering all the indicators involved in the failure of all previous education plans. It was developed after having a comprehensive selection of key indicators which were found common in different studies related to the same topic. All the key issues and challenges were carried out in the questionnaire along with the best available strategies in the context of the SDG-4 agenda in current scenario of the country.

III. Data Analysis

After the entire process of collection of data, it was analyzed by using different statistical formulas like mean score, percentage and t-test. Issues and strategies were identified in the context of the SDG -4 agenda to improve secondary education in Pakistan.

Table 1: Factor wise analysis of affordable quality of education in Pakistan

Sr.	Factors	^a SA	^b A	^c DA	^d SDA
		%	%	%	%
1	Factors involve in failure of EFA goals achievement	31.9	34.3	25.3	8.6
2	Issues and challenges in achieving a target of equitable, and quality primary and secondary education by 2030	43.4	35.1	15.2	6.4
3	Issues and Challenges to face in achieving 2 nd target to ensure quality early childhood development in Pakistan	40.2	34.0	18.3	7.5
4	Strategies to achieve target of quality early childhood education (ECE)	19.3	41.5	24.5	14.7
5	Challenges to be faced in achieving the target of equal opportunities in vocational education and training.	43.1	37.2	16.0	3.6
6	Strategies for the achievement of the target of equal and improvement of quality of education.	15.7	45.1	24.2	15.0
7	Issues and challenges to be faced in achieving the target to eliminate the gender disparities in education and providing vocational education including people with disabilities is achievable by 2030 in Pakistan.	43.1	37.2	16.0	3.6
8	Issues and challenges to achieve the objectives of getting KSA in learners needed to promote sustainable development	15.7	45.1	24.2	15.0
9	Steps or strategies to acquire knowledge and skills in learners needed to promote sustainable development	23.5	41.8	21.3	13.4
Overall		30.7	39.0	20.6	9.8

^aStrongly Agree; ^bAgree; ^cDisagree; ^dStrongly Disagree

Table 1 describes the factor-wise opinion of EDEOs, DEOs, Dy.DEOs, Head of Institutes, Teacher educators, planners, and policymakers. Sustainable development goals are crucial all over the world. The whole world is striving to achieve 17 goals for the

improvement of quality of life. This table reveals the overall analysis of the SDG-4 that is analysis of affordable quality of education. Most of the $31.9\%+34.3\% = (62.2\%)$ participants were of the view that EFA goals have not been achieved in Pakistan till 2015 while $43.4\%+35.1\% = (78.5\%)$ participants have identified the issues and challenges in achieving a target of equitable and quality of primary and secondary education by 2030. $40.2\%+34.0\% = (74.2\%)$ participants were opined that there were a lot of issues that are being faced in achieving 2nd target to ensure the quality of early childhood development in Pakistan. Further data identifies that $19.3\%+41\% = (60.8\%)$ participants were agreed in factor strategies to achieve a target of quality of early childhood education. $43.1\%+37.2\% = (80.3\%)$ participants were agreed that challenges to be faced in achieving the target of equal opportunities for girls. $15.7\%+45.1\% = (60.8\%)$ participants opined that they have issues and challenges to be faced in achieving the target to eliminate the gender disparities in education and providing vocational education including people with disabilities is achievable by 2030 in Pakistan. $23.5\%+41.8\% = (65.3\%)$ participants were of the view that most of the steps in learners needed to promote sustainable development. Empirically, it can be concluded that in Pakistan SDG-4 needs more attention and proper monitoring and evaluation is required. The following line graphs depict the opinion of participants regarding agreement and disagreement.

Figure 2

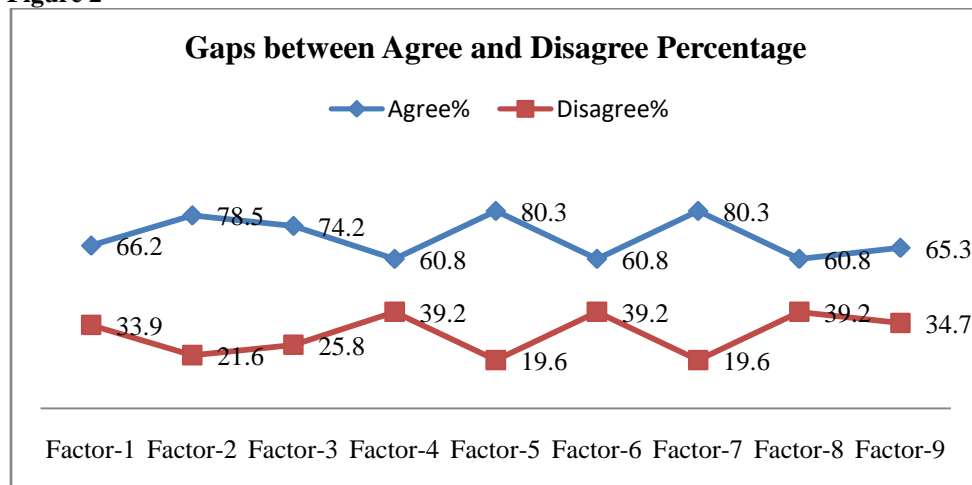


Figure 2 describes the overall opinion of all respondents related to all factors. In Factor 2 issues and challenges were measured in achieving target of equitable and quality primary and secondary education by 2030, Factor 3 related to issues and challenges to face in achieving 2nd target to ensure quality early childhood development in Pakistan, Factor 5 represented challenges to be faced in achieving the target of equal, opportunities for girls. Factor 7 indicated issues and challenges to be faced in achieving the target to eradicate gender discrimination in education and providing vocational education including people with disabilities are achievable by 2030 in Pakistan, there is significant gap among the opinion of all participants among factor 1 (factors involve in failure of EFA goals achievement), Factor 4 (Strategies to achieve target of quality early childhood education). Factor 6 related to strategies for the achievement of the target of equal opportunities for vocational education and quality of education and Factor 8 issues and

challenges to achieve the target to get KSA remained also insignificant as well as factor 9 (Steps or strategies to promote sustainable development) also presented the same results.

Table 2: Factor wise comparative analysis of affordable quality of education in Pakistan

^a F.No.	Factors	Male	Female	^b S.D	t-value	^c Sig.
		Mean	Mean			
1	Factors involve in failure of EFA goals achievement	2.97	2.56	0.869	0.13	0.113
2	Issues and challenges in achieving Target of equitable and quality primary and secondary education by 2030	2.89	2.66	0.788	-0.82	0.035
3	Issues and Challenges to face in achieving 2 nd target to ensure quality early childhood development in Pakistan	2.88	2.32	0.834	0.45	0.021
4	Strategies to achieve target of quality early childhood education (ECE)	2.43	2.76	0.987	-0.42	0.178
5	Challenges to be faced in achieving the target of equal opportunities in vocational education and training.	2.45	2.78	0.430	0.26	0.089
6	Strategies for the achievement of the target of equal and improvement of quality of education.	3.12	3.10	0.323	0.32	0.05
7	Issues and challenges to be faced in achieving the target to eliminate the gender disparities in education and providing vocational education including people with disabilities is achievable by 2030 in Pakistan.	2.98	2.79	0.768	0.79	0.001
8	Issues and challenges to achieve the objectives of getting KSA in learners needed to promote sustainable development	3.03	2.96	0.982	0.48	0.00
9	Steps or strategies to acquire knowledge and skills in learners needed to promote sustainable development	3.04	3.30	0.675	1.22	0.321
Overall		2.87	2.80	0.740	0.27	0.090

^aFactor Number, ^bStandard Deviation; ^cSignificance

Table 2 describes the gender-wise mean score, standard deviation level, t-value, and significance level of each factor. In factor 1 data reveals that females were affecting more than the male similar results were observed in factors which were found significant while others factors remained insignificant.

III. Discussion

In the first question, factors involved in failure of EFA goals achievement were analyzed and a brief review was taken regarding the reasons or factors involved in the failure of EFA in Pakistan. The major objective was to assess the success level and reasons of failure in EFA. Most of the reasons that were indicated by the respondents express the core issues of Pakistan. Lack of commitment and implementation gap with lack of basic infrastructure and financial resources were found some main and core reasons which cause the failure of EFA goals achievement. Although few of the respondents expressed that although they have got the basic infrastructure yet they were

also agreed that EFA goals have not been achieved and the reasons were the same which can be minimized.

In the next phase, the MDGs were assessed and respondents were asked to identify where they observed Pakistan off-track in the context of MDGs. Data in the table reveals that MDG-1 Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger found off-track in Pakistan and has been evident quite frequently. It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents unpacked that Pakistan was found off-track in MDG-1 Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger and eventually found failed. MDG-2 Universal Primary Education found off-track in Pakistan and has been evident quite frequently and majority of the respondents unpacked that Pakistan was found off-track in MDG-2 Universal Primary Education and eventually found failed. Statistics in the table expose that MDG-3 off-track in Pakistan and has been evident quite frequently. It can be established that the majority of the respondents unpacked that Pakistan was found off-track in MDG-3 and eventually found failed. MDG-4 Reduce Child Mortality found off-track in Pakistan and has been evident quite frequently. It can be determined that the majority of the respondents unpacked the perception that Pakistan found off-track in MDG-4 Reduce Child Mortality and eventually found failed. MDG-5 Improve Maternal Health found off-track in Pakistan and has been evident quite frequently. Empirically, it can be resolute that the majority of the respondents expressed that Pakistan found off-track in MDG-5 as well as in Improve Maternal Health and eventually found failed. It can be determined that majority of the respondents also presented their viewpoint that Pakistan found off-track regarding MDG-7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and results of this study, it is determined that sustainable development goals are crucial all over the world. The whole world is striving to achieve 17 goals for the improvement of quality of life. Further, this study reveals that most of the participants were of the view that EFA goals have not been achieved in Pakistan till 2015, the issues and challenges in achieving a target of equitable and quality of primary and secondary education by 2030, issues that are being faced in achieving 2nd target to ensure quality of early childhood development in Pakistan and factor strategies to achieve a target of quality of early childhood education. Moreover, majority of the EDOs, DEOs, and Policymakers were agreed that challenges are faced in achieving the target of equal opportunities for girls, issues and challenges to be faced in achieving the target to eliminate the gender disparities in education and providing vocational education including people with disabilities is achievable by 2030 in Pakistan, steps in learners needed to promote sustainable development. Empirically, it can be concluded that in Pakistan SDG-4 needs more attention, proper monitoring, and evaluation.

Sustainable Development Goal 4 must implement in Pakistan in full swing. This study recommended that government should take measures to improve the quality of education. Government should properly start early childhood programs at the school level. For the illumination of gender disparity, it is necessary to start new projects related to gender disparity, by 2030. Most of the participants were of the view that most of the steps in learners need to promote sustainable development. Empirically, it can be concluded that in Pakistan SDG-4 needs more attention and proper monitoring and evaluation.

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