

A Document Analysis of PESP II: UK Aid Programme for Education in Pakistan

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Abstract

UK aid is the leading agency that contributes the most in the education sector of Pakistan. Its Department for International Development (DFID) is a bilateral aid agency that invests the taxpayer money of the people of the UK in social development causes across developing countries. Punjab Education Sector Programme (PESP) phase II is the largest aid support programme by UK aid anywhere in the world. The purpose of this research is to evaluate this programme in terms of its usefulness and influence it has made in the education system of Pakistan. A qualitative document analysis technique was used to critically review the documents and formal reports on an exclusively developed and validated framework. The findings and interventions are analyzed in the context of educational indicators in Pakistan. Distinct discussion points are raised and recommendations are given to further enhance the effectiveness of the aid programmes. The study is significant for all foreign aid agencies especially the UK aid, the education system of Pakistan, and aid-recipient institutions.

Keywords: PESP II, DfID, foreign aid, evaluation, document analysis, education system of Pakistan

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Introduction

By population, Punjab is the largest province of Pakistan. The recent population census of Pakistan in 2017 reported a total population of 207,774,520. The Punjab has 110,012,442 out of which males are 55,958,974, females 54,046,759 and 6,709 transgender. A clear majority of rural population 69,625,144 was seen over the urban distribution 40,387,298 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2018). To provide quality education to this big and diverse population, the finances are not appropriately allocated. Table 1 presents the budgetary figures allocated for the education sector by the Punjab province for a period of 2013-14 to 2018-19 (Government of Punjab, 2018; Institute of Social and Policy Sciences, 2017).

Table 1

Education Budget Allocation by Punjab Province (2013-14 to 2018-19)

Type	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2015-14	2014-13
Recurrent	339,860	291,840	233,176	242,343	221,039	200,110
Development	33,000	53,360	63,012	44,161	38,590	32,460
Total	372,860	345,200	296,189	286,505	259,629	232,570

Source: Budget books and Institute of Social and Policy Sciences

Although the figures in the table reflect an incremental trend in the budget allocations yet, these figures do not ensure quality access to all school-going age children in Punjab. Since Punjab is densely populated, the issues of education quality are also dense in Punjab. A few crucial issues faced by the education sector of Punjab are discussed here. Out of School Children (OOSC) is a long withstanding issue in Pakistan. According to Pakistan Education Statistics (2016-17) based on the data of the 1998 census, OOSC in Pakistan was 22.84 million with more girls than boys. Overall, 40% of this number belongs to Punjab with females exceeding the males. A total of 10,526,976 are OOSC in Punjab, of which 5,265,529 are male and 5,261,447 are female. In the primary level, the OOSC in Punjab is 1,905,295, in middle level 2,865,279, in high secondary level 2,348,792 and in higher secondary level 3,407,610.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is much better in Punjab in comparison to other provinces. It stands at 0.96 for primary as compared to the overall 0.87 and 0.96 for secondary as compared to an overall 0.81 GPI to gross enrolment rate. The survival rate to grade five in Punjab is on the lower side i.e. 73%. The pupil-teacher ratio in Punjab is 30, 21 and 23 for primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. The adult literacy rate (15 years and above) in Punjab is 58.8% with males at 68.1% and females at 49.8% (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in pre-primary level was 87.5% and that in the secondary level was 42.4% in Punjab. The percentage of female enrolment in pre-primary, primary, middle was 47 and in higher secondary, it was 48 (Pakistan Education Statistics, 2016-17).

The above mentioned educational facts do not illustrate a very optimistic picture of the education indicators of Punjab. To address such grave issues and to provide access to quality education to all, the financial resources are not sufficient. Therefore, international aid agencies offer assistance to the education sector of Pakistan. The Department for International Development (DFID) is a bilateral aid agency of UK aid that offers aid assistance in social development sectors. Lately, aid assistance is given in the form of budgetary support. Along with many other reform programmes, the World Bank had initiated a Punjab Education Sector Programme (PESP) to assist the education sector of Punjab. It was initiated in 2009 and its first phase was completed in 2012. The total committed cost of this project was US \$ 350 Million. It was a comprehensive World Bank project for which funding commitments were opened through the International Development Association (IDA). After its effective completion, phase II was launched by World Bank for which DFID won the bid through IDA.

Punjab Education Sector Programme II (PESP II) is the biggest programme of UK aid for education. It is considered as DFID's largest bilateral programme. It is an extension of PESP I. Emergency in education in Punjab has seen some ambitious steps taken by the Government of Punjab. It was a six-year multipurpose programme spanning from 2013 to 2018. The programme is close to completion and presently in the implementing stage. With numerous reform initiatives combined in this programme, there arises a need to evaluate the influence of this programme on the above-stated education indicators of Punjab. This programme is a huge aid programme, evaluating it to investigate the influence it has made is worthy of research. This evaluation might help the education sector of Punjab, specifically, to examine the uplift in the education indicators through PESP II. Other reform programmes of other aid agencies might benefit from this study as it will provide a threshold in this domain. The outcomes of this research are significant in re-evaluating the aid phenomenon in Pakistan, reassessing the needs assessment, and analyzing the influence of this UK aid through DFID. This study could also assist the recipient institutions of any foreign aid in fully utilizing the aid capacity.

Aid evaluation studies are a consistent phenomenon in the literature (see Birchler, & Michaelowa, 2016; Burde, 2004; Riddell & Zarazua, 2016; Robertson, 2005; Steiner-Khamsi, 2012). DFID has a rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanism in all international funded programmes. Often DFID hires the services of a third party for external evaluation. The countries where DFID has its funded programmes for education also evaluate the UK aid to assess outcomes. For instance, the programme of results based aid in Rwandan education was evaluated by Upper Quartile and Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) Rwanda for each aid year (Upper Quartile, 2015). In the context of Pakistan, scarce research is done on evaluating the aid to education. Limited research such as Anwar and Awan (2010) and Anwar, Khan and Khan (2017) studied the

impact of foreign aid to education from the perspective of its effectiveness only, whereas relating the aid to education with democracy was studied by (Mahmood, Siddiqi, Iqbal & Tabassum, 2009). Therefore, it is high time to evaluate this long term reform programme in terms of its influence on the targeted education indicators in Pakistan. Hence, this study was undertaken with the following specific question.

Main Question

The main question of this study was to critically review the Punjab Education Sector Programme (PESP) phase II and analyze its influence on the education indicators of Pakistan.

Subsidiary questions

1. What were the objectives of the PESP II?
2. Interventions initiated to achieve those objectives are aligned and useful?
3. In what ways the objectives have been achieved?
4. How has PESP II influenced the education indicators of Pakistan?

Methodology

A qualitative approach was employed in this research and a document analysis method was used to analyze and review the formal reports and other selected documents. Bowen (2009) recommends qualitative document analysis in analytical studies. Document analysis aids the qualitative studies in developing a deep understanding and critique on the phenomenon (Wild, McMahon, Darlington, Liu, & Culley, 2010). A framework was designed and validated by a panel of experts, as suggested for document analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The panel experts included high profile university professors with above 20 years of teaching and research experience in the evaluation studies. Documents were selected, scrutinized, reviewed, analyzed, and findings were presented in such a way to answer the research questions.

The documents analysed during the document analysis of this Punjab education sector programme Phase-II are: Business case and summary, annual review 1, annual review 2, annual review 3, annual review 4, and logical framework, along with national education reports of Pakistan and Punjab province.

Procedure of Analysis

The document analysis was done after the framework was approved by the expert team. It was decided in the ethical considerations that only formal and published reports and documents will be utilized for document analysis purpose. Formal requests were made to the DFID office in the UK and in the foreign affairs office, UK embassy in Pakistan. Both the resources referred to the online resource of UK aid known as 'development tracker' which keeps a track record of all funds, interventions, and planned activities. As part of ethical considerations, the financial figures were taken as presented in the reports and documents in good faith because these payments are made through the governmental channel and a third party called as the fund manager is involved in it. The documents were reviewed against each subsidiary research question. The data thus analyzed is presented in the paper in the form of answers to the subsidiary questions for better understanding. To assess the influence of this programme, the findings and results of the interventions were compared with the education facts and figures of Punjab province. The influence has been discussed contextually in the discussion section of this paper.

Punjab Education Sector Programme II (PESP-II)

World Bank is principally looking after this long term reform programme. For PESP-II, UK aid (DFID) is the working agency. The total DFID funding for this programme was initially 350 Million pounds and was planned for 6 six years from 2013 to 2018. Later an extension was given in the programme and it will now span till March 2020. The total amount is now £ 420.5 million. To date (i.e. July 2019), the budget that has been spent is £ 315 million (Development Tracker, 2019).

Objectives of PESP II

The objectives have been conceptualized as an outcome, as nowadays all aid effectiveness is measured in terms of the outcomes. The main outcome of this programme is 'more children in school, staying longer and learning more.' To achieve the outcome, certain time-bound outputs are determined which helps in ultimately achieving the outcome.

The outputs of this programme are as follows.

1. More children in school, staying longer and learning more.
2. Better managed, more accountable education system.
3. Better teacher performance and better teaching.
4. Better learning environment.
5. Improved access to schools, especially in priority districts.
6. Enhanced demand for education.

Who are the recipients of this UK aid PESP-II? How are the recipients selected?

Initially, PESP-II was started with a budget of £350.3 million with six major components that are given below in the table. This programme is related to the School Education Department (SED) and its affiliated departments such as Punjab Education Foundation (PEF), Punjab Examination Commission (PEC), Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU) and Quaid-e-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED). Besides, these government departments there were a few private sector and civil society organizations involved in this programme, such as Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and Ghazali Education Trust (GET). They can be termed as sublets or local recipients. Therefore, these were the major recipients of PESP II and they were selected based on the six key components of this programme.

Table 2

Major Components of PESP II

SR #	Components	Purpose
1	Sector Budget Support (SBS)	Provided funds to the government of Punjab to improve access and quality in government schools.
2	School infrastructure	Provided missing facilities and extra classrooms.
3	Capacity and Quality building of Punjab's low-cost private sector	Providing funds to Punjab Education Foundation (PEF).
4	Access to finance	Expanding low-cost private sector schools in underserved areas.
5	Civil Society Organizations Scholarship programme	Targeted support in 11 low performing districts. Higher education and girls' higher secondary education.

In order to achieve these above mentioned six components and monitoring and evaluation purpose, another component 'Technical Assistance' was established. Under technical assistance, it was further looking after these four areas.

1. Technical Assistance Management Office (TAMO) - to deliver the first six components.
2. Punjab School Reform Roadmap Programme - a special initiative taken by Chief Minister of Punjab to cater to school reforms.
3. Evaluation and research
4. Assessment

In the Project Appraisal Document (PAD) initially, there were 10 Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs). DFID is the funding agency for this programme. In November 2013, upon request of Government of Punjab, DFID Pakistan agreed to fund an additional 47 million pounds for five new disbursement linked indicators (DLIs). These DLIs are given in the table as under:

Table 3
Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs)

DLIs	Description
DLI 1	Field-based professional development: Strengthening field-based teaching advisory support for improved teacher performance.
DLI 2	Teacher recruitment: Improving teacher quality at entry level.
DLI 3	Teacher rationalization: Allocating teaching posts and teachers across schools based on school needs.
DLI 4	School non-salary budgets: Setting and executing school budgets in line with school resourcing needs.
DLI 5	Decentralized resource management: Decentralizing resource management powers to schools/school clusters.
DLI 6	Teacher performance incentives: Incentivizing teacher and student performance by strengthening the link between monetary rewards and student achievement.
DLI 7	Schools councils: Strengthening the capacity of and empowering communities to support, monitor, and promote school performance.
DLI 8	Provision and use of system and school performance information: Regularly feeding relevant and reliable information to various levels to improve evidence-based school performance management.
DLI 9	Private school vouchers: Strengthening programme design and expanding coverage of tuition-replacement vouchers to children from disadvantaged, urban households by increasing school choice to include private schools under a quality-assurance system.
DLI 10	Stipends for secondary school girls. Increasing incentives, efficiency, and delivery performance for promoting the transition to and retention of girls at the secondary level.
Additional DLI 1	Recruit 30,000 more teachers and 20,000 teachers to be moved to more crowded schools through the rationalisation process in FY 2014/15.
Additional DLI 2	More credible school-based exams and introduction of additional mid-year school-based exam for poor-performing children.
Additional DLI 3	Improve the examination and assessment system.
Additional DLI 4	Improve development expenditure on education.
Additional DLI 5	Support a Special Education component for inclusive schools.

In April 2015, the Punjab government requested for an additional fund release in sector budget support. To which the DFID agreed to fund additional £70 Million. The Punjab government has taken a key initiative - Chief Minister (CM) Punjab reform roadmap for education - for reporting mechanism. The services of special advisor to CM on the roadmap and secretary Sir Michael Barber were taken and through stock take the progress is monitored and discussed. CM roadmap is also a reform programme internally launched by the CM for SED.

Government of Punjab provided missing facilities in schools through the contractors IMC Worldwide. The contractor was selected through the OJEU process. IMC Worldwide identified three main priorities in missing facilities: shelter-less schools, overcrowded schools, and multi-grade teaching- one teacher teaches many courses in many classes. Technical Assistance Management Organization (TAMO) was established by Adam Smith International (ASI) partnering with McKinsey to address the seventh component of this programme i.e., technical assistance. It has started working since June 01, 2014.

Talking about the main recipient PEF, this department has been working on three fronts: Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS), Education Voucher Scheme (EVS), and New School Programme (NSP). DFID's funding has been assisting PEF to scale up the students in primary, middle and high schools under the above mentioned three programmes of PEF.

A bi-monthly stock take is another initiative under this programme and CM roadmap. It shares and monitors the performance to assess progress. Result and Activity Framework (RAF) is another internal document that tracks the institutional strengthening and roadmap process. DFID through its technical assistance supports achieving both these targets. RAF has five result areas and targets are monitored through bi-monthly stock take process.

Certain goals were revised in 2016 and new targets were set for 2018 in the CM school reform roadmap. The new 2018 goals for a refreshed Roadmap from January 2015 are:

1. High-quality teaching and learning in the classroom, which supports: teachers training and support; and classroom-level monitoring to ensure quality lesson delivery and regular assessment of pupils.
2. Strong leadership and accountability to assist the government of Punjab to develop a better system of selection, training and accountability of district and sub-district level managers and teachers.
3. A conducive learning environment which provides remedial support to primary and lower secondary classes to improve learning levels and ensure no child falls behind.
4. Enhancing the learning environment through improved school infrastructure and reducing the incidences of multi-grade teaching.

What specific interventions are introduced by UK aid through the PESP-II?

In 2015, after the extension in the funds of this programme, the new budget was 420.5 million pounds. Given below are the details of the interventions introduced during this programme. Funds allocation against the seven components and interventions initiated against each component is as under:

Table 4
Breakdown of Funds and Interventions for PESP II

SR #	Components	Funds in £ Million
	Sector Budget Support	170.2
1	School infrastructure Intervention of Humqadam project, implemented by IMC Worldwide.	104
2	Support to PEF to build capacity and quality Intervention of Education Voucher Scheme (EVS), New school programmes, and Foundation assisted school programme.	68.6
3	Access to finance-improving the availability of access to finance for low-cost private schools (LCPS).	9
4	Civil Services Organizations (CSOs) Identifying and enrolling out-of-school children in eleven districts.	10.8
5	A scholarship programme-Intervention of PEEF scholarships for higher secondary girls from southern Punjab, other provinces, and for boys and girls at university level.	10.9
6	Scholarship programme for tertiary level students Intervention National Outreach Programme (NOP) by LUMS to enable the poorest to enter higher education.	18.2
7	Technical Assistance Intervention-TAMO a joint effort of Adam Smith International (ASI) and McKinsey in contract with DFID support Government of Punjab (GOPb) and all associated departments	39.7
8	Evaluation and Research	2.5

In the two selected districts of Punjab i.e. Rahimyar Khan and Muzaffargarh, BRAC and Ghazali Education Trust (GET) have set up 700 and 192 schools respectively with the help of PEF. This ensures the out of school children to be in schools. Through Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) DFID is working in Bahawalpur and Bahawalnagar district to identify and enroll out of school children.

In 2016, the Performance Management System (PMS) was institutionalized in all 36 districts of Punjab. Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) is another indicator that is added to share the performance in the District Review Committee (DRC). This LND test helps in achieving Student Learning Outcome (SLO) for students. It specializes in

enhancing the capabilities of students in English and Mathematics subjects and then these are evaluated to see the skills of students. A Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) was completed as a pilot in two districts: Hafizabad and Sheikupura. This pilot project involved the automation of information on transfers, postings, promotions, and disciplinary proceedings. The HRMIS provided a management tool to the Executive Districts Officers (EDO) of District Education Authorities to manage teachers. Through this initiative, the teacher attendance problem was catered. Monitoring and Evaluation Assistants (MEAs) visit the schools to monitoring the performances.

Latest review report of DFID informs that TAMO has supported Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (PCTB) for grade four and five textbooks which will be printed in 2018-19 academic year.

Discussion

The main question of the study was to critically review the Punjab Education Sector Programme (PESP) phase II and analyze its influence on the education indicators of Pakistan. The review through document analysis has been made in the above section. This segment will address the influence of PESP II on the education indicators of Pakistan. The pertinent intervention was related to PEF. This intervention has helped in the enrolment of students throughout the province. The schools have been funded by PEF and it was awarded the amount by DFID. The present enrolment that has been made through PEF is an attribute of this PESP II.

Table 5

Institutions and Enrolment in 2016-17 the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF)

Programs	Institutions	Enrolment		
		Male	Female	Total
Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS)	3,347	885,768	739,379	1,625,147
Education Voucher Scheme (EVS)	1,673	211,430	171,048	382,478
New School Programme (NSP)	2,060	90,521	79,027	169,548
Total	7,080	1,187,719	989,454	2,177,173

Source: Pakistan Education Statistics (2016-17)

A significant uplift in the enrolment is seen in table 5. It shows that the reform efforts and budgetary support of DFID are making gradual improvements. This is also supported in the literature that increased aid significantly contributes to the increased enrolments. Birchler and Michaelowa (2016) elaborated the role of increased donor aid in the successful increase in the enrolment of students over 15 years. Evaluating and assessing the impact of intangible developments like quality education, capacity building, and institutional strengthening are far from easy. Identifying sustainable improvement is

even more difficult as it is embedded in the social, political and economic contexts alongside other contributory factors (Riddell, & Zarazua, 2016). Other indicators such as an increase in providing the missing facilities including: boundary walls, drinking water, toilets and basic infrastructure in schools of Punjab has been increased over the last decade (Programme Monitoring and Implementation Unit, 2019). Chaudhry, Abdullah, and Khatoon (2017) found out in a study based in Punjab that absenteeism of students affects the quality of education and learning outcomes. EVS might help address this issue as it is catering to a huge number.

The quality indicators can be assessed through the learning outcomes of students. Abdullah and Bhatti (2018) studied the quality of academic performance of students in Pakistan and found rote-based education and assessment system, outdated curricula and old teaching methodologies as the main causes of failure. The provision of advanced and animated textbooks and curricular revisions by PESP II might help in enhancing the learning outcomes of the students. For that, Pakistan is going to take a promising step by participating in the coming Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) in the year 2019 (NEAS, 2018), followed by participation in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Research informs us that participation in such competitive large assessments measures the learning of students, hence reporting better on the quality of education. District education ranking reports of *Alif Ailaan* also suggest incremental improvements in the Punjab Province. The districts are ranked based on the scores that include: an overall education score, learning and retention score (Alif Ailaan, 2018).

Apart from these contextual and education indicators, a striking attribute of DFID is transparency. As it is a key finding of this research. DFID works with an international agency to manage funds. The stocktake is a document that is generated every fortnight. This stocktake document enlists the details of the previous stock, its usage, and the details of the spending. Stocktake also informs the high-ups about the next requisition demand. This stocktake document is filed on a fortnightly basis and is used in procurement, audit, annual review and other monitoring and evaluation purposes. Similarly, there are other supporting documents, the likes of, Result Assessment Framework (RAF) and Value for Money (VfM). RAF is a continuous evaluation document that UK aid has maintained throughout the aid programme. It gives continuous feedback. VfM is the evaluation of the output and input ratio and the impact of interventions on the target audience.

What is found in the document analysis about aid evaluation is that DFID conducts a third party evaluation of the programme and project every year. On top of that, there is a continuous evaluation of the aid. Every detail of the amount spent along with its particular head is placed on the online resource web portal of 'Devtracker.' DFID believes in transparency and all the facts and figures are made public on the website. On the part of DFID, the projects under each programme are started by seeking a proposal.

The bid and agreement, the contract and terms are all made public by DFID. This is how the external evaluation of UK aid remains the pivotal factor in its programmes. The qualitative targets that are yet to be achieved by Punjab are possible through continuous and persistent efforts of DFID and Punjab government. Birchler and Michaelowa (2016) reckoned that the effect of foreign aid can be obtained by utilizing it on educational facilities and training. This is how the answer to the main question of this research was achieved.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In a nutshell, it is concluded that the education system of Pakistan is, slowly but surely, getting better. The chase of sustainable development goals, target 4 is underway. Pakistan has improved its education system. The provision of quality education has become one of its priorities. UK aid has helped and assisted the education system of Pakistan. In Punjab, a long-term programme, PESP II, has been initiated that is the largest on education by UK aid in any country. It has many facets. Each facet deals with a different aspect. Government support is a must for any foreign aid agency to work smoothly. The Punjab government has provided support through each of its relevant departments of education. UK aid has been working smartly on the educational changes that it intends to bring. The reliance on the private sector should be channelized and more local partners shall be given aid in smaller projects or sub-projects. The change in the government in Punjab and at the national level shall halt the progress of PESP II, neither the reform programme.

UK aid, like all developed countries, should preach equity and equality in education. The dynamics and local demographics, especially of rural areas, should be closely understood before devising any strategy for them. The lessons learnt by UK aid should be shared at the governmental level so that they can be incorporated in the policy formation and planning is done to execute them better in the future. The self-sufficiency of the local-partners needs to be enhanced to make them independent. This can make the departments work smoothly and on course without the UK aid. For the first year, the UK aid should give aid to these partners and enable them to generate their resources to become self-sufficient and reliant. More focus should be given to achieving qualitative attributes such as education quality and student learning outcomes in the context of Pakistan. Achieving these targets can term this aid helpful.

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