
Promotion of Education in Punjab: Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's Efforts as Chief Minister, Punjab (1985-1990)

_____ Muhammad Arshad Ali*
===== Massarrat Abid**

Abstract

The paper deals with Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's Chief Ministership of the Punjab Province, which lasted from April 09, 1985 to August 06, 1990. The focus of the paper is on the steps taken by Nawaz Sharif's government for the promotion of education in the province.

Education was declared as a strategic area by his government, the Nawaz Government therefore gave special attention to the primary education in the rural areas by establishing and upgrading Primary, Middle, High, Model, Masjid (*Mosque*) Schools and Colleges. Meanwhile more than forty thousand teachers were appointed to promote education in the province. Due to these efforts literacy ratio was increased considerably. The speeches delivered by Mian Nawaz Sharif in the Punjab Assembly, funds allocation, programmes, plans, schemes, the Assembly proceedings and debates are the main sources utilized for this paper. Moreover relevant newspapers and books have also been utilized.

Mian Nawaz Sharif First Tenure in office 1985-88

General Election: February 1985

The General Elections for the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab, 1985, were held on February 28, 1985 on Non-Party basis and there were separate electorate for the Muslims and the non-Muslims.¹ The first sitting of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab, 1985 was held on March 12, 1985.²

Formation of the Government

Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was nominated as the Chief Minister (CM) of the Punjab on 09 April 1985.³ Ghulam Haider Wyne moved a resolution for the Vote of Confidence, which was carried unanimously.⁴ Nawaz Sharif remained CM till the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab was dissolved on May 30, 1988 and also performed as Caretaker Chief Minister appointed by the Governor of the Punjab under Article 105 (3) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of the Pakistan, 1973.⁵ He served as the Caretaker CM until again elected the Chief Minister of the Punjab after he got a certain majority on December 02, 1988. He remained the CM of the Punjab till the Provincial Assembly was dissolved by the Governor, General (Retd.) Tikka Khan on August 06, 1990.⁶

Inaugural speech

In his inaugural, speech after obtaining the vote of confidence on April 10, 1985, Nawaz Sharif as CM, Punjab declared education as a strategic thrust and announced that it will play an important role in his party's policy making.⁷ He mentioned that although funds had been allocated for education in the past but the government had not been able to achieve the set targets. There were some inaccuracies and mistakes which needed to be rectified, adding that the faults will be removed. The state resources were used by the previous governments but no increase in the literacy rate could be achieved. He said that the existing literacy rate in the Punjab and all over Pakistan was 24 percent which was very discouraging and hopeless.⁸

He affirmed that the government will try to improve the literacy rate specially in the rural areas by focusing more on the primary education and adult education, particularly for the women. He hoped that the Government will be able to improve literacy rate in Pakistan particularly in the Punjab by concentrating more on these targets.⁹

Allocation of funds for Education in the financial year 1985-86

The government of Nawaz Sharif allocated Rs. 4733.6 million in the financial year 1985-86 for the promotion of education in the Punjab. It was decided by the government to establish 1250 additional primary schools for the girls students and 1350 Masjid (*Mosque*) Schools. It was further decided that the government will upgrade 500 primary schools to middle level and 256 middle schools to high level schools. Mukhdom Altaf Ahmad, Minister for Finance announced that 60 percent to 64 percent girls schools will also be upgraded during the same financial year. He committed that additional 58 Model Schools in the rural areas will be opened and F.A. and F.Sc. classes will also be initiated in the selected high schools in the rural areas. The government will appoint 436 male teachers and 196 female teachers to promote education in the Punjab.¹⁰

On June 09, 1985, Nawaz Sharif, during the discussion on the budget 1985-86 stated that the population ratio in the Punjab had been 70 percent in the rural areas and 30 percent in the urban areas. The Government had decided to spend 72 percent resources in the rural areas and 28 percent in the urban areas, in order to upgrade education in the rural areas.¹¹

Promotion of Merit System

As a Chief Minister Punjab, Nawaz Sharif, tried to promote merit system in the educational sector and declared war against illiteracy.¹² On October 15, 1985, Rana Phool Muhammad Khan, MPA and a senior parliamentarian in the Punjab Assembly moved

a resolution regarding the reservation of 50 percent seats for the students of rural areas.¹³

Nawaz Sharif did not agree with the proposal. He argued that such allocation will create the impression that there were two different nations living in the rural area and the urban areas of Pakistan.¹⁴ He thought that such division would not be desirable. He found the proposal unsuitable and said that it would be wrong to reserve seats for rural areas in the urban educational institutions.¹⁵ He added that by fixing the reserved seats the policy of open merit for admission in the educational institutions will be affected and would only create discrimination in the society.¹⁶

Mian Nawaz Sharif as Minister for Education (along with Chief Ministership)

Nawaz Sharif held the portfolio of the Education Minister of the Punjab for few months along with the portfolio of the CM during the tenure of his first Chief Ministership. Answering the questions on the floor of the Assembly, he explained the point of view of his government regarding education sector in the Punjab.

Some MPA's including Raja Javed Ikhlas, Ijaz Ahmed Cheema, Mian Shahab-ud-Din Owaisi, Ashiq Hussain Bhatti, Chaudhri Muhammad Akram, and Chaudary Ghulam Ahmad, demanded the up-gradation of Middle Schools upto High Schools and establishment of Inter Colleges in their constituencies.¹⁷

Mian Nawaz Sharif informed the House that the government had fixed quota for every district for up-gradation of schools and colleges. Each District Council had been authorized to select the schools and colleges for up gradation, after passing resolution in its meeting as per quota granted to concern district.¹⁸

An issue was raised regarding the illegal and out of merit appointments of the teachers, which created disappointment among the candidates. Chaudary Ghulam Rasual Tarar, MPA, raised the issue in the House regarding the illegal and out of merit appointments of the Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) teachers, Certificate of Teaching (CT) teachers and untrained teachers.¹⁹

Nawaz Sharif clarified the situation by saying that all appointments of the PTC and CT teachers had been made on merit. He added that in the appointments of some untrained teachers, the government had tried to accommodate those persons who lived in the said villages or near the schools, as no trained or untrained teachers were ready to join there.²⁰

The untrained teachers of Masjid Maktib Schools Scheme protested as they had not received their salaries in time and as result their families also suffered with them. Rao Maratab Ali Khan, MPA, felt the importance of the issue and raised it in the House. He inquired about the delay of payment of salaries of untrained teachers of Masjid Maktib Schools Scheme.²¹

Nawaz Sharif explained that the appointment of untrained Masjid Maktib School teachers had created doubts because the Deputy District Education Officer (Dy. DEO) had reservations on the validity of the signatures of District Education Officer (DEO), the appointing authority. The signatures of appointing authority were being verified by the Forensic Laboratory, Crime Branch of Police Department. The matter of payment of their salaries will be resolved after receiving the verification report.²²

The students of the Islamic Studies at Government College, Faisalabad were suffering due to the shortage of teachers of Islamic Studies. Syed Tahir Ahmad Shah, MPA, highlighted the issue in the Assembly. He enquired about the reasons of shortage of teachers of Islamic Studies at Government College Faisalabad.²³

Nawaz Sharif clarified that six posts of Islamic Studies were sanctioned at the said college. Due to the transfer of one teacher to Lahore, one seat was laying vacant, which would be filled at the earliest. He further said that the government had been conscious that in the said college, a large numbers of the students studying the subject of the Islamic Studies, so for the purpose of promoting Islamic education, three more seats of Islamic Studies teachers had been sanctioned for the said college.²⁴

The teachers of different categories felt uncomfortable due to disparities in their salaries in relation to their qualifications. Chaudary Ghulam Rasual, MPA, raised the issue in the Assembly.

He inquired regarding discrepancies in the pay scale of the Senior Vernacular (SV) teachers, Elementary School Teachers (EST), PTC, CT. and Untrained teachers in terms of their qualifications.²⁵

Nawaz Sharif clarified that there was no discrimination in the pay scales of the SV, EST, PTC, CT and Untrained teachers, although having different qualifications. All teachers had been appointed in the same pay scale as per requirements of the post. The qualifications did not matter in that regard. The required minimum qualification of every post had been described. The appointments were made as per requirement of the basic scale of posts rather than the qualifications of the applicants.²⁶

The services of adhoc lecturers were not being regularized in Punjab and as result they were worried and uncertain regarding their jobs and could not properly concentrate on their duties. Rana Phool, MPA, raised the matter in the House. He raised queries regarding the regularization of the services of adhoc lecturers in Punjab.²⁷

Nawaz Sharif informed the House that there were 645 male and 510 female lecturers working on adhoc basis in Punjab. He further explained that the government had regularized such teachers in 1972 and 1976, after their four years satisfactory services at their credit and after getting the approval of the Public Service Commission, but, these newly appointed adhoc lecturers could not qualify the criteria of the Public Service Commission even after several attempts. However, the government had tried to settle the issue in such a manner that the problem would be resolved and the criteria of the Public Service Commission would not be compromised at the same time.²⁸

A misconception had been created that the standard of education was being affected due to dual charges of teachers such as teaching as well as the administrative responsibilities in the University of the Punjab. Begum Farhat Rafique Khawaja, MPA, raised the problem in the House. She asked that in University of the Punjab, Lahore many teachers were performing dual functions

such as teaching along with the administrative assignments and resultantly, the standard of education had gone down.²⁹

Nawaz Sharif explained that as per section 15(4) of the University of the Punjab Act, 1973, the Vice Chancellor was authorized to assign, temporarily or otherwise some additional duties to any officer. The said officer would perform his additional duties along with his own duties, however the standard of education would not be affected due to these dual charges.³⁰

The government facilitated disabled students to create interest in their studies and promote their habit to acquire education. Malik Muhammad Ashraf Bara, MPA, demanded a van for the school of disabled students to provide them with the facility of pick and drop as per request of their parents.³¹ Nawaz Sharif clarified that a bus was already operational in the said school and as per request of the parents a van has been supplied to the school to provide facility of pick and drop to the children.³²

Allocation of funds for Education in the financial year 1986-87

In the financial year 1986-87, Nawaz Sharif's government allocated Rs. 5820 million for the promotion of education sector. Mukhdom Altaf Ahmad, Minister for Finance declared that the government had decided to establish 319 High Schools, 483 Middle Schools, 1350 Masjid Schools and 1250 Primary Schools and upgrade 2800 buildings for the existing Primary Schools, which were without proper buildings.³³

In 1986, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's government had started several development schemes in the Punjab with Province's own resources, along with the support of the Federal Government. The Nationwide Literacy Programme 1986-90 was initiated by the Federal Government for reduce the extent of illiteracy in the country. Through said programme 2,000 jobs on full time and 150,000 on part-time basis were provided to the educated people in the country and a major part of these jobs were provided to people of the Punjab as it was populous province. A large numbers of the Literacy Centres were opened in

villages and towns of the country. It was implemented through Literacy and Mass Education Commission (LAMEC) by the Provincial Literacy Councils and Union Council Literacy Sub-Committees.³⁴

During this period, many non-formal education projects were started in the Punjab with the support of the Federal Government to improve the literacy ratio among these the prominent projects were Nai Roshini Schools, Mosque Schools, and Iqra Pilot Project. The Nai Roshni Schools scheme taken over the Nationwide Literacy Programme. These schools were opened in all the districts's existing school buildings in the afternoon with the approach of providing non-formal primary education, to reduce drop-out of school children and to offer employment chances to educated unemployed people.³⁵ Mosque schools were also an attempt to improve the literacy ratio. In the project area each school was provided a black board and a teacher. By the Iqra Pilot scheme an informal method of educating was adopted. A literate person could join the scheme to teach any number of illiterates in his or her own time for bring them to an acceptable level of literacy.

The government was intended to constitute District Development Committees for each district. Nawaz Sharif announced the policy regarding these committees. In the said committees, the government as well as opposition members would be given equal representation. These committees would perform the main role in the development of the concerned district.³⁶ He admitted that the standard of education had fallen due to shortage of teachers and missing facilities in the schools. The ratio of school going children was less than 50 percent and majority of these children had left the school before class IV. The government had decided to increase the ratio of school-going children up to 50 percent by 1990. This would be helpful in the development of the Province.³⁷

The government opened additional schools for the boys and the girls at every village, where the population had increased. The government established these Primary, Middle and the High

Schools on the recommendation of District Development Committees. Nawaz Sharif informed the House that the government had started higher secondary classes in 62 educational institutions of the Province. He informed the House that there were only 120 Inter Colleges in the Province. More than 50 percent of Higher Secondary Educational Institutions had been opened and upgraded in one year of this government. He demonstrated his motivation regarding promotion of the education sector and asked the members to make suggestions for improvements, so that the government followed their suggestions and the Province could be developed in this sector.³⁸

Allocation of funds for Education in the financial year 1987-88

For the financial year 1987-88, the government of the Nawaz Sharif allocated Rs. 5580 million for the promotion of education, which more than 2 percent of the total budget. Mukhdom Altaf Ahmad, Minister for Finance, compared this ratio with other countries. He stated that the ratio of the budget for the promotion of education sector was 5.8 percent in Japan, 4.1 percent in Korea, 3.2 percent in India, 7.5 percent in Iran and 5.8 percent in Malaysia.³⁹ He demanded that this ratio should be increased. He declared that 40,000 teachers were needed to meet the shortage of teachers in schools and colleges. The government had further decided to establish 1462 Masjid Schools, 2900 Primary Schools and 11 Colleges.⁴⁰

Concluding the budget discussion on July 02, 1987, Nawaz Sharif explained that the election of this government had been held on non-party basis and no proper manifesto had been presented by the parties. Every member had presented his own manifesto as per requirement of local level and got votes for membership. But, when the government of Muslim League was constituted, development projects had been initiated in the Province. Many a new schools and colleges were opened in the Province. The government spent more than 70 percent of the budget for the development of the rural areas and due to these

steps, the education sector in the said areas had improved. He further added that it was the duty of the media to play its active role to elaborate the policies and performance of the government. He wished the media to guide and educate people.⁴¹ He said that his Government was spent Rs. 35 million on the promotion of education and the amount was to be spent as per ratio of population. The 70 percent of this amount was to be utilized on the schools and colleges of the rural areas.⁴²

The Assembly passed 26 Acts before its dissolution in which only five Acts were related to Education, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (Amendment) Act, 1985, the Baha-ud-Din Zakariya University (Amendment) Act, 1985, the University of the Punjab (Amendment) Act, 1985, the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore (Amendment) Act, 1985 and the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (Amendment) Act, 1985. All these amendments were regarding the representation of the Members of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab in the Senate of the respective Universities.

Nawaz Sharif held the office of the Chief Minister till May 30, 1988, when due to political crisis, Zia-ul-Haq dissolved the National Assembly following which the Governor of the Punjab, Sajjad Hussain Qureshi, dissolved the Punjab Assembly on May 30, 1988.⁴³ However, Nawaz Sharif was appointed as Caretaker Chief Minister of the Province and remained CM until elected again as the Chief Minister for the second term on December 02, 1988.

Second Tenure 1988-90

General Election: November 1988

The General Elections of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab were held on November 19, 1988 on party basis as per direction of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.⁴⁴ An eight party alliance Islami Jamhuri Ittehad (IJI) was formed on October 05, 1988.⁴⁵ The Pakistan Muslim League, the National People's Party (NPP), the Nizma-e-Mustafa Group, the Jamiat-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), the Markazi Jamiat Ahle-e-Hadith, the Independent

Parliamentary Group, the Jamiat-e-Mushaikh Pakistan and the Hizb-e-Jehad were included in the alliance. The Jamat-i-Islami Pakistan (JIP) also joined this alliance on October 10, 1988.⁴⁶ Ghulam Mustfa Jatoi (NPP) and Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad (JIP) were elected as the President and the General Secretary of the IJI respectively on October 12, 1988.⁴⁷ The Pakistan Muslim League (Junajo Group) also joined the alliance on October 14, 1988.⁴⁸

Prof. Ghafoor Ahmad announced the Manifesto of the Party (IJI), in a press conference on November 05, 1988.⁴⁹ It provided the guarantee of education to every citizen. And was further mentioned that provision of acceptable economic opportunities on the basis of equality for all sections of society including traders, workers, peasants and students whose right were to be safeguarded. It said that the government will give primary attention to provides free education to workers children. It added that the education and training of women will be given top priority and special plans will also be made for the educational uplift of the women.⁵⁰

Formation of the Government

The first sitting of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab, 1988 was held on 30 November 1988.⁵¹ Manzoor Wattoo, the Speaker, presided over the first sitting.⁵² On December 02, 1988, Chaudary Parvez Elahi moved a resolution for the nomination of the Chief Minister of the Punjab which was seconded by Rana Phool.⁵³ The motion regarding the resolution was carried.⁵⁴ Mian Nawaz Sharif got 151 votes and was declared as the elected Chief Minister of the Punjab and assumed the charge of the office of the CM of the Punjab the same day.⁵⁵ The Opposition members boycotted the election of the CM and vacated the House as a protest.⁵⁶

Inaugural Speech

Nawaz Sharif, after assuming the charge of CM for second term, said in his inaugural speech that the government will work for the strength and growth of the Province and will try to

provide justice and equality to all. He added that the development of the nation depended on the improvement of education and committed himself to continue the policies of his previous tenure.⁵⁷ Nawaz Sharif got the Vote of Confidence on December 08, 1988 through a resolution moved by Sardar Nasrullah Khan Dreshak.⁵⁸ The resolution was carried with 147 votes.⁵⁹ Nawaz Sharif held the office till August 06, 1990.⁶⁰

While presenting the supplementary budget for 1987-88 on December 07, 1988, Nawaz Sharif declared that his government had allocated more than Rs. 150 million for education.⁶¹ He further announced that the government will provide more than Rs. 5587 million in the financial year 1988-89, for the promotion of education sector adding that the government will spend those funds on the appointment of 390 teachers and on the up gradation of Middle Schools to High Schools.⁶² The opposition walked out as the Chief Minister, Nawaz Sharif presented the supplementary budget in the Punjab Assembly.⁶³

Allocation of funds for Education in the financial year 1988-89

Nawaz's government allocated Rs. 6191 million in the financial year 1988-89, for promotion of education.⁶⁴ It was decided that government will establish 2900 Primary Schools and 1462 Masjid Schools and will provide missing facilities in 600 schools.⁶⁵

On March 13, 1989, Syed Zakir Hussain, MPA, objected that Manzoor Wattoo could not preside the sitting as a Speaker because a notice of the Vote of no Confidence had been moved by the Opposition members.⁶⁶ The Speaker did not agree with his point of view. Sardar Nasrullah, Minister for Law & Parliamentary Affairs, moved resolutions of the Vote of Confidence by suspending the rules on Nawaz Sharif as the CM, Punjab and Manzoor Wattoo as the Speaker, which were carried with 152 votes.⁶⁷

Addressing the House, Nawaz expressed gratitude to the Members of the Assembly on carrying the resolutions of the Vote

of Confidence. He argued that the people of the Punjab had given him mandate to serve for the development of the Province and their government will use all the available resources for the betterment of the people and the development of the Province.⁶⁸

Allocation of funds for Education in the financial year 1989-90

The government of Nawaz Sharif allocated Rs. 7069.7 million in the financial years 1989-90, for the promotion of education.⁶⁹ It was decided by the government to establish 1900 Primary Schools and provide missing facilities in 1400 schools and to upgrade 436 Primary Schools to Middle level, 435 Middle Schools to High Schools and 80 High Schools to College level. It was further decided that the government will establish a University for the women.⁷⁰

This Provincial Assembly passed 17 Acts before its dissolution. Only one act, the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore (Amendment) Act, 1990, was passed regarding education. It was amended to add a new clause, which allowed a Principal of the affiliated colleges to be selected as a member of the Syndicate of the University and authority was given to the Chancellor for the nomination.

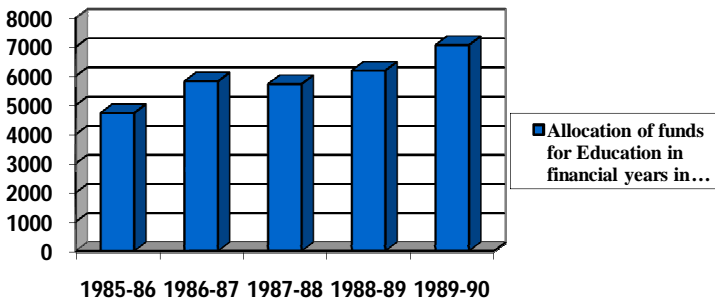
Five others Bills were also passed by this Assembly regarding education. These included the Punjab University (Amendment) Bill, 1989, the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (Amendment) Bill, 1989, the University of Engineering and Technology Lahore (Amendment) Bill, 1989, the Baha-ud-Din Zakariya University (Amendment) Bill, 1989 and the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (Amendment) Bill, 1989. Through these Bills, a time limit of 'seven days' was imposed on the Governor to act on the advice of the Cabinet or the Chief Minister. In case the Governor did not assent the advice within seven days, then it was to be considered as Law.

The Assembly passed these Bills and forwarded these to the Governor for his assent. The Governor did not give his assent and returned them with the observations that the Provincial Assembly

of the Punjab should reconsider the proposed amendments under the provisions of Article 116(2)(b) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. These bills were not moved again in the House for reconsideration and lapsed due to dissolution of the Punjab Assembly by the Governor, General (Retd) Tikka Khan on August 06, 1990.⁷¹

Analysis of Nawaz Sharif's efforts for the promotion of education

During the period under discussion, Nawaz Sharif government took several steps to promote education in the Punjab with Province's own resources, along with the support of the Federal Government funding. The provincial government allocated funds in all the said financial years for the promotion of education sector which played an important role to increase literacy ratio in the Province.

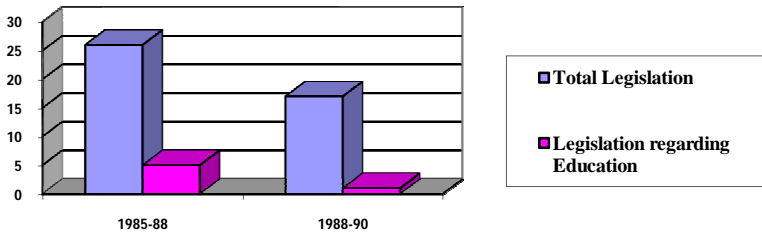


Source: Debates Punjab Assembly

During Nawaz Sharif's government established 10,200 Primary, 483 Middle, 319 High Schools, 58 Model Schools, 5624 Masjid Schools and 11 colleges were established in the Punjab. The F.A. and F.Sc. classes were also initiated in selected high schools in the rural areas, Furthermore, 936 Primary schools were upgraded as Middle schools and 691 Middle schools were upgraded as High schools. Funds were also allocated to establish a

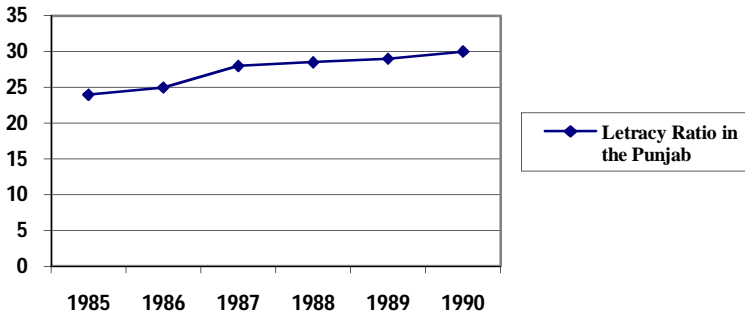
Women University. At the same time, 41022 teachers were appointed to promote education in the Punjab. These steps performed an imperative role for improved formal and non formal education and increased literacy ratio steadily.

Forty three Acts, 26 in first and 17 in second tenure, were passed by the Punjab Assembly during the Chief Ministership of Nawaz Sharif. Only six Acts, five in the first and one in the second term, were passed relating to the education sector. All these were amended Acts. Five Acts were amended for the representation of the Members of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab in the Senate of the respective Universities and one Act was amended for adding a new clause in the Act for selection of a member for the Syndicate of the University among the Principals of the affiliated colleges and authority was given to the Chancellor for the nomination of the said Principal.



Source: Debates Punjab Assembly

Nawaz Sharif's government tried hard and applied all resources to promote education in the Punjab. Due to these efforts the literacy ratio in the Punjab was increased from 24 percent to 32 percent.



Source: Debates Punjab Assembly

Conclusion

The governments of Nawaz Sharif initiated several steps to promote education including the opening of Primary, Middle, High schools as well as colleges. The government also upgraded schools by allocating more funds as well as by appointing more teachers for the promotion of education which played a significant role for improved formal and non formal education and the literacy ratio in the Punjab was progressively increased. However, in the said tenure, no significant legislation could be made for the promotion of education sector.

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- * Mr. Muhammad Arshad Ali, Ph.D. Scholar, Pakistan Study Centre, University of the Punjab, Lahore
 - ** Prof. Dr. Massarrat Abid, Director, Pakistan Study Centre, University of the Punjab, Lahore
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