
Analysis of the Role of State Actor in Primary Education of Pakistan with reference to the United Nation's Sponsored Initiatives (2000-2015)

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Pakistan is the only state in South Asia which earmarks 2% of its total GDP in the education division. This has ultimately made the education sector of Pakistan vulnerable due to which the country has failed to achieve the target of “(MDG’s) Millennium Development Goals” at the end of year 2015 under United Nations in which the country was supposed to allocate 4% of total GDP and to “universalize the Primary Education” in which every child should be able to attain it as it lays the foundation to make personalities and to attain higher education. The paper has also focused on the quality of “Primary education” of Pakistan with reference to the standards mentioned in Millennium Development Goals. Unfortunately, because of political and economic instability, the funds which should have been assigned blatantly for this sole purpose have been misused and dispensed at the hands of corrupt bureaucrats of Pakistan. The main objective of this thesis was exclusively to develop an analysis after an in-depth study of the factors which are responsible for bringing up the hurdles in achieving the MDG for universalization of “Primary Education” in Pakistan. A qualitative research methodology was adopted in which secondary data was gathered and studied comprehensively. The findings of the paper included the reasons for devastated conditions of the Primary schools and standard of Primary education in Pakistan due to absence of evaluation and accountability, more importantly due to misallocation of the funds and the inoculation of less GDP of 2% only. The policy formulation and implementation demand immediate deliberation from the government, to meet the Millennium Development Goal for Primary education.

Keywords: Millennium Development Goals, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), Pakistan, United Nations (UN)

Introduction

Problem of illiteracy and education lies at the heart of country of Pakistan's numerous challenges. It was found out that if Pakistan wants to appear as a country which is steady in progress, and to have moderate political abilities, then it must be able to provide the young guns of the country which are termed to serve the future generations both individual safety and a decent livelihood means which can only be attained by strengthening the foundation of knowledge in the country which is to provide Primary level of education to every child in the nation. Only through massive productivity in the quantitative gains in the Primary education can help Pakistan to generate the set of skills required to drive the economy of the country efficiently and to produce the critical well-informed mass of people who could have the visionary skill of leadership which this country needs badly. Non-state actors(NSA's) in milieu of International Relations are "the institutions which are not sovereign and are responsible for exercising certain economic, political and social reformations with the intentions of development at national or sub-national level". These includes internationally based inter-governmental organizations like United Nations, trading unions, private entities, or small scale informal civil societal based institutions etc.¹

This research study has focused on the evolving role of United Nations in Pakistan currently working in setting the reforms and meeting the needs of society in the form of bringing effectiveness for "Primary Education sector" of Pakistan and how it is influencing the part of state institutions as they are constantly failing in meeting the goals for a quality Primary education in the country. Moreover, this study has also analyzed the trend of performance and proper allocation of finances through a transparency system to improve the Primary education structure in Pakistan by both government of Pakistan after taking funds from the United Nations from 2000-2015.

Because of the constant sponsored initiatives by the United Nation's agencies for education like "UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Funds)" or "UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)", a constant pressure has been on the state if the set target goals for Primary education could ever be achieved or not. According to UNESCO, the under-developed countries should allocate 4% of the total GDP at least on education sector, however, the government

claimed to achieve various goals after taking the funds from the United Nation and from other Non-profit organizations but could not be able to increase funds in education sector ²

According to the 2015 report of World Bank, more than 50% of the total population of Pakistan is existing under the “poverty line” which is an alarming situation because Pakistan is having the growth rate of population of 1.96%; higher than any other state in South Asian region and almost 1.27% of the population of Pakistan is living on a \$1.25 per day which makes Rupee 125 and hence, has been categorized as a case of extreme poverty. Due to this very reason, more than 2.5 crore children in Pakistan cannot go to school. ³

The latest Economic Survey indicated that the unemployment rate of 6.2% with almost 4 million people without jobs is mainly because the expense on education is only 2% of the total GDP of Pakistan which is very inadequate. The Education sector has been plagued by the corrupt leaders of the country due to their misuse of funds and resources which were supposed to be allocated in Education sector. According to “the Academy of Educational planning and management”; 52% of the students are not having access to the school rooms, 67% of the public schools are not having electricity, whereas 39% of the public schools are deprived of drinking-water facility whereas 41% of the public schools are without bathrooms. The ideal responsibilities of the government of Pakistan is to allocate funds taken from the United Nation’s agencies working for Primary education properly and without making any discrimination between male and female. Also, to provide an improved and quality filled infrastructure, because currently in more than half of the public schools, the teachers are unable to provide education appropriately because they are not paid fairly, due to unhygienic environment and a continuous deteriorating infrastructure. ⁴

The Constitution of Pakistan states that: “literacy means a person who knows how to read newspaper and can write a letter in any language”, but unfortunately, this constitution clause has never been realized by the state leaders. Moreover, countries like Pakistan where there is a culture of discriminating between male and females, also have added a lot in increasing rate of illiteracy, as according to “the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey” of 2015, 71% of the male population knows how to read and write, while more than half of the total female population of the country is illiterate. Numerous evidences have suggested that the countries where men and women get equivalent rights and prospects intends to possess stronger economic growth rate and are more prosperous. According to the Human Capital Theory; “there is a strong link between

education and economic growth of any country”, because education serves in creating employment opportunities, sustainability, and can contribute to eliminating income disparity. That is why, education should be the core-heart element in devising the economic growth strategies for the country and Primary education is the building block for attaining this growth.⁵

The year of 2015 is important as it is associated with the deadline of the Dakar declaration in the year of 2000 at World Education Forum, where Pakistan declared and pledged to meet Millennium Development Goal for Primary Education without considering discriminating between girls’ and boys’ factor. However, Pakistan is already lagging due to which it has become necessary to analyze the factors for failing to achieve the targets. The “Vision 2030 of the Planning Commission of Pakistan” created the strategies which the government of Pakistan has not able to achieve, such as to increase to expenditure on education from 2% to 6%. Similarly, to enhance the scientific and technical education and to surge the enrollment at the secondary level in schools to 30% by the end of 2015. This paper has focused on the main problems which were responsible for the failure of achieving these goals such as lack of proper planning and other economic and social restraints.⁶

Literature Review

Hussain (2015) in his article professes that it is obligatory according to “the Constitution of Pakistan 1973” to enable the primary education to all the children with the age bracket of 5-16 years old. Year of 2015 is important because it scripts the deadline of Dakar declaration or Education for all commitment conference which includes the country of Pakistan as well. Because of the very reason that Pakistan is lagging in meeting up the challenges for achieving the goals of EFA conference, there is a need for making analysis of the education system of Pakistan specifically primary education because the upcoming youth lays down the basis of foundation in educational sector and in becoming the exceptional brain for country. According to the author, education is known as the formal process for providing instructions related to building character and mental abilities in the people.⁷

Dorsi (2016) efficiently analyzes in his article, that the involvement of non-state actors has been increased drastically throughout the world in enabling the facilities of private education mainly as a solution for the failures of the government which are unable to invest appropriate amount of funds to the public sector educational institutes apart from the help being given by the intergovernmental organization like United Nation. Because of this factor,

many debates have started to rise that whether such intergovernmental organizations have taken control of the role of serving human rights more as compared to the state actors. There is no doubt, that attaining education is the foremost human right as stated by the International human rights law association which has stressed providing education to the children through dimensions of social equality and easy accessibility. The international association stressed in 2000 in Dakar Declaration that all the children should be able to attend Primary schools by the end of 2015 and all underdeveloped countries should invest at least 4% GDP in the education sector.⁸

Bas (2011) explains that it has become a challenge today to create a right balance of the accessibility, quality and sustainability between both the private and public sectors of educational institutions of Pakistan, mainly because of the absence of appropriate transparency system and a common citizen is unable to judge that why the government sector is not putting much effort in the Primary educational institutions of Pakistan rather getting huge funds from international bodies, and why private sector is playing the game of earning their own profits rather be more concerned about the welfare of the children. Moreover, Pakistan is 2nd highest country in world ranking for out of school children between ages of 5-16.⁹

Archer (2016) expounds that there are countries like Pakistan, where the governments have continuously failed to extend the education provision to the citizens effectively and adequately in the rural areas, because of which most of the elites in Pakistan associated with the non-profit organizations, or who have links with even inter-governmental organization like United Nations or people who likes to volunteer in good purposes have started to build up schools in such areas, especially for girls who are always seen as the deprived ones in such areas are creating pressure and challenge on the already implemented rules and regulation of the state of Pakistan for Primary education of Pakistan.¹⁰

Rosenbaum (2016) elaborates that the investment of funds on the female education is linked with the economic prosperity of the country and adds positively in improving the human resource development programs such as in nutrition care, child education and health reforms. But unfortunately, Pakistan is still facing the menace of early marriages and not giving equal status to the women which hinders their participation and their right to speak. Based on the research data, it was found out that Pakistan will be needing almost 60,000 schools for attaining primary education with the size of enrolment of more than 16 million students consists of both the male and female by the end of 2016. Due to this need, there is a demand to increase

in budget allocation in the sector of education, but in the South Asian region, Pakistan is the only state which allocates lowest funds into this sector as compared to “Bangladesh 2.4%, Bhutan 4.8%, India 3.1%, Iran 4.7%, Maldives 11.2%, Nepal 4.6%, Pakistan 2.0%, Sri Lanka 2.6%”. according to “the CIA World Fact Book” of 2016.¹¹

Shahid (2015) describes in his article that regardless of the 1973 Constitution Article 25A; which states that “the state is responsible for providing free and obligatory education to all children of age 5-16 years old under the determined formulation of law”, “the Annual State of Education Report” of 2015 portrayed a grim image of the educational institutions of Pakistan displaying deeper problems in this very particular sector. Higher education remained ineffective in instilling the appropriate level of quality education within the students due to which they are unable to contribute within the society mainly because of no marketable skills at all.¹²

Aftab (2015) addresses the issue that the government of Pakistan designed a “National Plan of Action”; to meet United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals specifically to accelerate working projects in meeting goal of Primary education for all in which government declared that it will increase the GDP percentage for Education sector from 2% to 4% by the end of 2018. This pace is very slow as compared to the set target given by the United Nations to increase GDP to 7% by the end of 2015. This also includes inappropriate decisions made by both military and democratic leaders of Pakistan, e.g. during President Musharraf’s era, when decision for making local governing body was made in 2001, the scheme for devolution of schools in order to create in new order initiated which foreign donors supported a lot for wasting the scarce resources of curriculums without improvement in services, and to create schools just for the sake of political motives as per declaration by Sindh Legislator of Shikarpur himself that establishing schools in this region should never have done at first place because they are too close to each other. But creation of Local governing system led to failure mainly because of corrupt leaders who were handling the units of Pakistan.¹³

United Nation’s Sponsored Initiative Programs for Primary Education of Pakistan from 2000-2015

According to “the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) convention for discrimination in education 1960”, “the convention held in 1966 on social and cultural rights”, and “the convention for the rights of the children to get Primary Education held in

1989”; these all have indicated that every child in this world is having a right to attain the knowledge and basic education which can groom the children’s personalities, their behavior, their awareness to knowledge and happenings in the world and ultimately which can create economic, social, political, and cultural productivity in the country.¹⁴

Pakistan is also among the other 164 countries, which has endorsed and promoted its stance for education especially Primary Education, first in the “Jomtien Declaration for Education for All in 1990”, and later in “the Dakar framework” in which more emphasis was given for quick action in Education for All. All these 164 countries agreed on the fact that education especially Primary Education should be the fundamental right for every child in the respective countries irrespective of gender, sex, caste, and age (Khan and Niazi n.d.). This Framework of Dakar is the collective assurance and commitment to achieve the goals that all the children especially girls, to help those children who are having difficult conditions and limited resources to meet their basic needs, and children who are unable to get the Primary Education free of cost and on basis of compulsion.¹⁵

However, after Dakar declaration, Pakistan took many initiative steps like provision of the textbooks, formulation of the legislation which ensures compulsory Primary and free education to the children and following “the Article 25A of the Constitution 1973”, which stamps the landmark of the 18th Amendment in giving the autonomy to the provinces for effective formulation and implementation of the education in the institutions. (Abbas, Nadeem and Majoka 2021) Unfortunately, Pakistan is still lagging in achieving the targets established in this declaration and only a momentum has been generated on small scale to initiate the steps in attaining the 100% literacy rate, but this momentum is just not enough especially when only 2% GDP is being incorporated in the educational sector. This is also a fact, that after this convention, the total number of the children has slightly increased to 6.7 million aged from 5-16 years but the target to meet the universal or Primary education for all as not been met the expected target. Millennium Summit was made in “the Dakar framework of action” in which “the Millennium Development goals (MDG’s)” were established. Figure 4.1 depicts the list of goals which were made in this framework:



Figure: 4.1

Source: Framework of UN's Millennium Development Goals (Babar 2010)

The Millennium Development Goals basically refers to the objectives which were set in “the Summit of the United Nations”, which was held in the year of 2000, and these objectives were to be achieved by the end of 2015. However, Pakistan has been considered as the meagre executor in implementation of these goals.¹⁶

One of the key features about the unawareness among the youth of Pakistan in knowing the MDGs is because of the ignorant attitude of the government, and rather the focus should always have been on the educational sector, all the useful funds have been implied on the infrastructure and on unproductive projects. There is no monitoring and evaluation system according to Shakeel Ahmad who is the Assistant Country Director of United Nations Development Project. In last 15 years, the country of Pakistan has been governed by both the Military and democratic government. (Ahmad, B.Jumani and Malik 2022) The role of the public policy formulation is very necessary, especially when it comes to meeting the social needs of the citizens of Pakistan. This is because of the weak policies implemented by the vulnerable successive governments which have focused more on their own interests rather serving the interest of public. Another crucial factor is the absence of the coherence and coordination between the different tiers of government levels and the owners who handles the international commitments and funds for the implementation of the better policies of education.¹⁷

The members of “the United Nation (UN)” also adopted “the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 70th conference of General Assembly in which the agenda 2030 was formulated. In this Vision 2030, the plan for the betterment of the people, planet and prosperity was established to

strengthen the peace in the universe at larger level. This vision basically offers the new opportunities for the mobilization of the stakeholders dealing in the educational sector, who will also review the policies and strategies specifically in the Primary educational institutions regardless of the ethnicity, class, gender, age, and caste. However, Pakistan could not able to accomplish “the Millennium Development Goal for Education for all.”

In the recent United Nation’s 71st session, which was held in September 2016, all the member countries presented their performance report on the MDGs of the last 15 years, and it was quite unfortunate for Pakistan that it did not even have one single report. According to the experts of research, it was found out, that because of the negligence, poor performance and continuous political interference in the educational sector, the citizens of Pakistan is facing the crucial problem of poverty and income disparity.¹⁸

The largest quota of the funds which were to be implemented under the provision of the National plan of Action body given by the United Nation’s organizational body of UNESCO, consisted of the Primary Education, and sadly, the least progress has been seen in this very own sector in the country of Pakistan. The distribution of the funds has been depicted in the Figure 4.2 below.

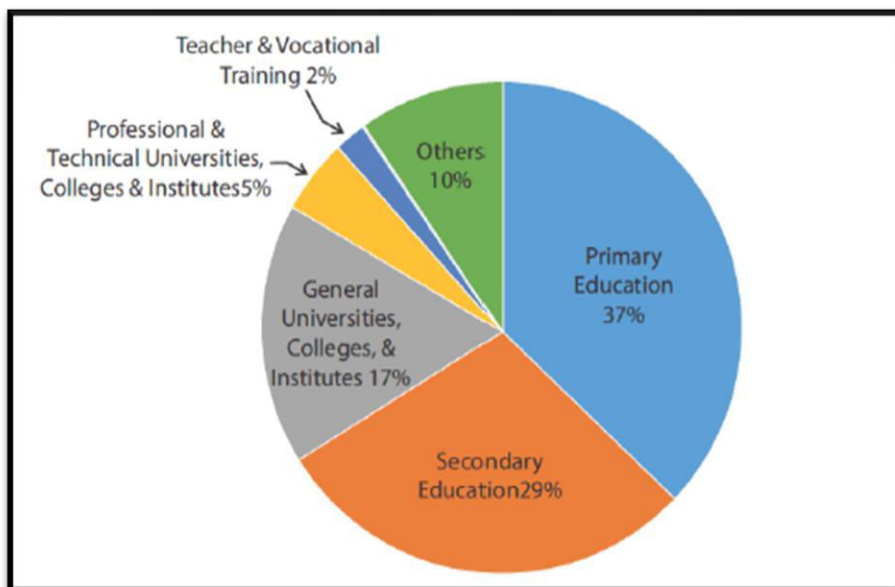


Figure: 4.2

Source: “The National Plan of Action” to fast-track MDG of primary education 2013-2016 ¹⁹

According to “the Pakistan and Social Living Standard Measurement Survey of 2013-2014”, the progress of educational sector of Pakistan is lagging way behind and not considered to be the progressive. More importantly, Pakistan has not achieved main three indicators of the education, which are: to improve the literacy rate especially in primary education, to increase the net enrollment rate overall in the educational sector, and to increase the enrollment rate in the schools.²⁰

Today, the literacy statistics of Pakistan is 57% which is quite low in comparison to the target to be achieved by the end of 2010 of 88%. It was also seen that the children who have been studying at grade level of 1-5, has been increased comparatively, but the retention rate is not satisfactory which is of 67%. Hence, the net enrollment rate in the primary schools of Pakistan is 58% which is very low as compared to the target of 100% for the Primary Education of Pakistan or Education for All, as stated in the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals.”²¹

Table: 4.1

Statistics depicting Pakistan has not met MDGs by the end of 2015

INDICATORS	MDG TARGET (%)	CURRENT STATUS IN PAKISTAN (%)
Literacy Rate	88	57
Completion/ survival rate: grade 1 to 5	100	67
Net primary enrolment ratio	100	58 OFF TRACK

Source: MDGs and quality primary education situation in Pakistan ²²

The statistical data of 2014-2015 of the Economic Survey of Pakistan showed that the country is lagging in achieving “the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals” because of the crucial reason of variation in the type of governmental system and shuffling between the military

government and democratic government, i.e., President Musharraf's era of 2001-2008, and then the country saw the era of democratic government later on.²³

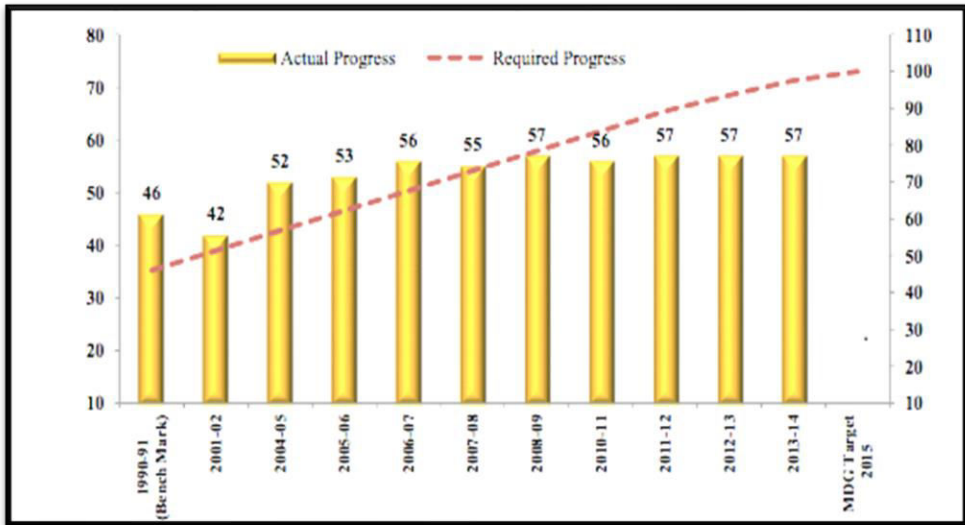


Figure: 4.3

Source: Targets and achievements in net Primary enrolment ratio²⁴

One cannot refute the reality that education is considered the main support in the progress of any country. It cultivates and initiates growth for the mental capability of the people, substantially, communally, physically and emotionally. Countries which exhibits an operative and efficient education system are known to be the leaders of the world, both culturally, and monetarily. Any country which formulates their upcoming generations conferring to their philosophical, educational and spiritual customs, however, Pakistan's education system did not preserve such norms. If any country focuses on the preparation of the upcoming generations suitably, according to their basic needs to prepare them committed and nationalistic, only then they would be able to play their part as a valuable and tenable asset, otherwise one may concoct enemies in one's country. Henceforth, it is education, which converts the populace of any country from an encumbrance to beneficial resources. Furthermore, erstwhile to decentralization, the strategy and development have been commenced by the dominant and provincial governments without considering the pulverized veracities and without any contribution of the community. Education is the bedrock for plummeting poverty in the country and it serves for augmenting the social development as well due to which the poor

quality of the education is said to be one of the major reasons that why developing countries do not grow and becomes poorer. The children of Pakistan should be able to earn and make their own living to contribute for promotion and welfare of their society. Hence, this calls for a sincere and dedicated efforts by the governmental leaders of the country. There seems to have no current suitable mechanism for monitoring and gathering of information for programs running at the federal level in the country mainly because of the large-scale interventions at the provincial level as they are independent and running their own projects and policies and not willing to work in collaboration with the federal government. This eventually makes the monitoring and evaluation work more complicated for the researchers. The interim target which was set to be accomplished by the end of 2015 for the educational sector was 80% which could not be achieved by the government of Pakistan especially the target of “free and compulsory education for all children” of Pakistan at primary level.

The main objective and aim of the devolution plan and the Millennium Development Goals devised under United Nation Organization is to permit the children of any society at the ground-level in forecasting, managing, resource-mobilization and operation, enactment, monitoring and assessment of Primary Education structure for improving its standard and to make every child literate in the country of Pakistan. The main challenging matters of education arrangements in Pakistan are: dearth of specialized trained teachers, increased drop-out rates particularly at primary level, outdated curriculum, lack of accountability, multiple educational system, lack of cooperation between the private and public educational institutions of Pakistan, political intervention, insufficient funds and allocation of GDP which is only 2%, corruption and unaccountability factor, poor inspection scheme, lack of exploration and research methodologies and absence of appropriate application of strategies etc. Pakistan’s calamitous state of derailing Primary education system and strategy formulation demands an abrupt consideration from the government of the country. Without replication the existing financial obligation and GDP percentage to education, Pakistan would not be able to meet the desired goals. The country is on the threshold of devastation and the only feature which can shape up and strengthened our society is the availability of “free and compulsory Primary Education in Pakistan.

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