
The Second Millennium Development Goal in Pakistan: Targets, Results and Challenges

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Abstract

Why has Pakistan failed in achieving the targets of the second Millennium Development Goal? Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—a landmark in the history of the United Nations (UN)—were adopted in the Millennium Summit in September 2000, by 189 member states and 23 International Organizations. The universal primary education, along with seven other important goals, was to be achieved through global partnership by 2015. Being a member of the UN, in order to improve lives of the poor people of the country, Pakistan also vowed its commitment in adopting and achieving the MDGs. At the outset of the new millennium, the plight of education especially at primary level in Pakistan was pitiable. It was one of those nations where a large number of children were out of school, and dropout rate was alarming. Thus, Pakistan pledged to achieve the targets of the second MDG—all children including boys and girls will be enrolled in schools, and completion of their primary education will be ensured by 2015. However, in spite of several positive signs, all three indicators show that because of both policy formulation and implementation, Pakistan failed in achieving the targets of the second MDG. Recent studies show that almost 25 million children between 5 and 16 year of age are out of school. According to the studies, fewer girls as compared to boys are going school. Analysis of the available archival data—assessment reports, review reports, analysis reports, research papers, newspaper articles and other documents—shows that medium of education, multiplicity of education system, gender discrimination, meager allocation of funds, lack of infrastructure, War on Terror, economic poverty, corruption, lack of timely available data and reporting, and teacher appointment, training and performance assessment, are

the challenging hurdles in the way of achieving the desired results of the second MDG.

Introduction

In September 2000, developed countries of north launched Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015)—consisting of eight goals, eighteen targets and forty eight indicators(OECD, 2000)—aimed at helping the developing countries of south to achieve certain targets of development. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were aimed at eradicating extreme poverty—economic, disease, shelter, hunger, and exclusion—from the globe, and promoting human rights—education, gender equality, health and security—to improve living standards of the people of planet(The United Nations, 2002). These MDGs were the product of two perspectives of ‘development’—the localist perspective of development, and the globalist perspective of development (Borowy, 2015). Pakistan is one of those 189 countries who signed the Millennium Declaration in September 2000 and pledged to comply in achieving the targets of the goals through global partnership by 2015. The second MDG—‘Achieve Universal Primary Education’—deals with education. It has one target—‘ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling’—and three indicators: a) ‘net enrolment ratio in primary education’; b) ‘proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary’; and c)‘literacy rate of 15-24 years-old, women and men’(The United Nations, 2008).Being a member of the UN, Pakistan also vowed its commitment in achieving the goal of primary education for all. At the outset of the new millennium, the plight of education especially at primary level in Pakistan was pitiable. It was investing only 1.82 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2000-01 and 2.21 per cent of its GDP in 2005-06(Pakistan Coalition for Education, 2015). It was one of those nations where out of school children were a matter of serious concern, and dropout rate was alarming (Ministry of Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education Academy of Educational Planning and Management Islamabad, Pakistan, 2014). Thus, it was need of the hour to take this target as a challenge in order to enroll all children including boys and girls in schools, and ensure the completion of their primary education by 2015. The reason to take this research study is that except few countries like Pakistan, the world has made remarkable progress in achieving the second MDG. The major objective of this research paper is to explore and examine progress in Pakistan in ensuring and implementing the slogan of universal primary education. Data collected from various sources regarding all three indicators, show that because of both policy formulation and implementation, Pakistan failed in achieving the targets of the

second MDG (Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, 2013). This study is meant to explore how certain challenges such as medium of education, multiplicity of education system, lack of infrastructure, gender discrimination, meager allocation of funds, War on Terror, economic poverty, corruption, lack of timely available data and reporting, and teacher appointment, training and performance assessment, have created hurdles in the way of achieving the desired results of the second MDG?

Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015)-An Overview

Perhaps, the MDGs are a landmark in the history of the United Nations (UN) since its inception in 1945. It is an important step, at the dawn of the new millennium, to deal with some of the problems at global level in three major areas of human development: a) environmental sustainability; b) economic development; and c) social inclusion). These were developed by the rich and developed countries of north in order to eradicate poverty in the poor and developing countries of south (Borowy, 2015). The purpose of launching the MDGs was, at one hand, to eradicate almost all forms of extreme poverty like economic, shelter, hunger, exclusion, disease, and gender discrimination, from the planet, and on the other hand, to promote human rights like education, health, gender equality, and security (The United Nations, 2002). The ultimate goal was to ensure better life to all on the globe. The MDGs are characterized as 'the central issue of development assistance in recent years' (Akiyama, 2005) or 'the world's biggest promise' (Hulme, 2009). Arguably, contestation between two perspectives of development—the localist view and the globalist view—played notable role in the evolution of the MDGs. The localist perspective is mainly concerned with the poverty in the specificities of the countries, while the globalist view is mainly concerned with the development in global context, especially with the policies of the developed countries towards developing countries. Thus, the MDGs were the product of these two contesting perspectives of 'development'—the localist perspective of development, and the globalist perspective of development (Borowy, 2015). Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the UN played remarkable part in the preparation of the MDGs. The process for the preparation of the MDGs was uneven, patchy and lengthy, and it lasted for almost ten year—started in 1996, and ended in 2005. At the Millennium Declaration of the UN in September 2000, 189 heads of state, and 23 International Organizations ratified that eight MDGs, with 18 targets and 48 indicators, would be achieved through global partnership (Borowy, 2015).

In September 2000, 189 heads of state ratified the Millennium Declaration. The declaration is an unprecedented global commitment and one of the most significant United Nations documents of recent time. It offers a common and integrated vision on how to tackle some of the major challenges facing the world. The declaration has resulted in eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

However, during the 2005 World Summit, the UN added three new targets and twelve indicators on the request of the world leaders. Thus, it raised the number of targets to twenty one and indicators to sixty (The United Nations, 2008).



Target and Indicators of the Second Millennium Development Goal

Seeking knowledge and getting education is a fundamental right of every individual. A better education system provides better human resource and ensures better future of a society in general and of individuals in particular. Nelson Mandela, former apartheid movement leader and South Africa's ex-president, sheds light on the importance of education and states, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." According to Article 26 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "everyone has the right to education (The United Nations, 1948)."

Leaders of the world believed that better human resource ensures better future of a society. They were well aware of the fact that without providing quality education, it was impossible to produce better human resource, and ultimately, better future of the people living on the globe. Thus, they decided to give priority to Early Childhood Education (ECE) by ensuring free, compulsory and quality education. Moreover, adult education was also given due importance. Target of second MDG emphasizes on achieving universal primary education: 'Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling'. It has three indicators: a) 'net enrolment ratio in primary education'; b) 'proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary'; and c) 'literacy rate of 15-24 years-old, women and men' (The United Nations, 2008). This goal was aimed achieving hundred per cent enrollment in primary schools, and hundred per cent completion of education from grades one to five by 2015, and 88 per cent literacy rate by 2015.

Plight of Education in Pakistan at the Outset of the New Millennium

From the following figures, it can be deduced that the plight of education especially that of primary in the developing world was not satisfactory. However, the situation was quite gloomy in case of Pakistan. In 2000, net primary enrollment in the developing countries of the world was 83 per cent, while out of school children were almost 100 million. Net primary enrollment of children in South Asia was 75 per cent in 1990, and 80 per cent in 2000 (The United Nations, 2015).

It is no denying the fact that a special place and due importance has been given to education—primary, secondary, and technical and professional—in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as is evident from the Article 25 (A): "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". Moreover, Article 37 (b) & (c) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan emphasizes on secondary, and technical and professional education, "The state shall remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimum possible period; make technical and professional education generally available and higher education equally accessible to all on the basis of merit (The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan)." In spite of it, plight of education at the dawn of the new millennium was quite pitiable and especially that of primary education was at alarming rate. Pakistan was investing only 1.79 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education in 2001-02, and 2.21 per cent of its GDP in 2005-06. Literacy rate in Pakistan in 2001-02 was 45 per cent in total, while among male it was 58 per cent, and among

female it was 32 per cent (Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS) for 2001/02, 2002).

In 2001-02, net primary enrollment in Pakistan was 42 per cent, while completion of primary education rate from grade 1 to 5 was 57 per cent (Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, 2013). Survival rate among male was 53 per cent, while it was 33 per cent among female (Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS) for 2001/02, 2002). Middle school enrollment was 47.5 per cent, and secondary school enrollment was 29.5 per cent. Adult population of 15 year and above was 84.4 million in total, while female were 40.5 million. Adult literacy rate among 15 year of age and above was 43 per cent in total, while 57 per cent among male and 29 per cent among female. Youth population between 15 and 24 year of age was 30 million in total, while female were 14.7 million. Literate among the youth between 15 and 24 year of age were 19.2 million in total, while 7.7 million were female. Youth literacy rate among 15 and 24 year of age was 62 per cent in total, while 73 per cent among male and 52 per cent among female. Indicator for Gender Parity Index (GPI) for the year 2001-02 show that GPI was .83 in case of ECE, .51 in case of adult literacy, and .72 in case of youth literacy (Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, 2013).

Results of the Second Millennium Development Goal

The second MDG, as it is clear from the facts and figures, made remarkable progress at the end of its fifteen year time span. Net enrollment in primary schools in the developing countries rose from 83 per cent to 91 per cent between 2000 and 2015. As a result, number of out of school children have fallen from 100 million in 2000 to 57 million in 2015. The best performance regarding the second MDG is of Sub-Saharan Africa where net enrollment in primary schools has been increased 20 per cent between 2000 and 2015. Moreover, literacy rate among youth aged from 15 to 24 has increased from 83 per cent to 91 per cent between 1991 and 2015. Gender discrimination or gender education gap has also been narrowed down. Overall, South Asia did not lag behind in making notable progress in achieving the targets of the second MDG. Net enrollment rate of primary schools in South Asia has increased from 80 per cent in 2000 to 95 per cent in 2015 (The United Nations, 2015).

However, the world couldn't achieve the target of 100 per cent primary school enrollment and completion of the primary course of those enrolled children by 2015. Still 57 million children (55 per cent girls and 45 per cent boys) are out of school. Of these, 33 million are in Sub-Sahara Africa. Some other developing countries like Pakistan have also failed in achieving the desired results of the second MDG which is crystal clear from the three indicators. In

Pakistan, according to the reports of 2013, net primary enrollment rate is 57 per cent which is far short of the required 100 per cent; completion or survival rate of primary school education is 58 per cent, out of which 60 per cent are boys and 40 per cent are girls. Overall literacy rate is 58 per cent which should have been 88 per cent by 2015, of these 70 per cent are male and 47 per cent are female (Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, 2014).

Recent studies show that almost 25 million children between 5 and 16 year of age are out of school in Pakistan. Rate of enrolled children is almost 60 per cent which is far from achieving the goal of the second MDG i.e. 100 per cent. Moreover, fewer girls as compared to boys are going schools (UNICEF, 2015). According to Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Pakistan is ranked second among the highest dropout rate of children from schools (Sadruddin, 2013). Almost fifty per cent of the total enrolled children complete their course of primary education. That is why Pakistan with 58 per cent of literacy rate is ranked 113th on Education Development Index (EDI) (Pakistan Coalition for Education, 2015).

Challenges to Providing Education and Achieving the Target of the Second MDG

From the abovementioned discussion, facts and figures, especially targets of the second MDG, it is crystal clear that Pakistan is far from achieving the desired results of education. All three indicators show that the country is off track in achieving 100 per cent enrollment of primary level, completion of the primary school course of those enrolled children, and youth literacy rate. Still 25 million children are out of school. Moreover, dropout rate is alarming. Last but not least, youth literacy rate is dismal. Thus, it is imperative here to explore and elaborate those factors which proved hurdles in achieving the target of the second MDG—education—in Pakistan.

Policy Formulation

First and foremost, Pakistan is one of those nations where education has never been a priority. That is why devising education policy has always been apolitical. Being a member of the UN, Pakistan has vowed to meet the targets of World Education Forum Summit (Education for All) held in April 2000 in Dakar, and the second MDG (Achieving Universal Primary Education), however, it couldn't formulate a practicable policy in order to achieve the targets. Although it achieving the target of the second MDG was a herculean task for a country like Pakistan, however, it was a need of the hour to devise a special and practicable policy in order to meet the challenges. Thus, lack of policy

formulation is considered one of the basic reasons for the failure of achieving the target of the second MDG(Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, 2014).

Meager Allocation of Budget

Allocation of suffice budgetary funds is certifiable litmus test for any organization managing direction division headway as needs be the present government has extended preparing spending arrangement impressively and is in like manner anxious to allot more trade out future. So far as education spending arrangement is stressed, in by and large terms, the budgetary assignments for guideline range has extended from Rs. 70 billion (US\$ 1.16 billion) in the money related year 1999-2000 to Rs. 216 billion (US\$ 3.6 billion) in 2006-07 demonstrating no under three overlay increase being used on preparing over starting 7 years of Dakar Education Fr All (EFA) Goals obligation. It is worth mentioning that the frailty of Pakistan to finish the targets under the second MDG may generally be elucidated by lack of proper funds. Open enthusiasm for preparing has been low in Pakistan by and large. Open use as a degree of GNP tumbled from 2.3 percent in 1990s to 1.6 percent in 2000. It extended up to 2.4 percent in 2007, however, tumbled to 2.0 percent in 2011. As a rate of GNP, Pakistan's assignment is among the slightest in the South Asian region. On the other hand, a lion's share of the budget allocated to the education is wasted in administrative and other related affairs rather than investing on the promotion of education. In such circumstances, it was impossible to achieve the daunting task of the second MDG(Hasnain, 2012).

Social-Gender Discrimination and Cultural Factors

Pakistan was created in the name of Islam, and Islam states that acquiring education is a fundamental right of every man and woman. Contrary to this, in many areas of Pakistan, female are not considered to be sent to schools, colleges and universities for getting education. This is because of some social and cultural factors like feudalism and patriarchal society. In addition, many a parents are loath to send their daughters in co-education institutions. Pakistan is a state which, due to financial issues, cannot afford to build maximum institutions for female education separately. As a result, a large portion of population is deprived of the fundamental right to education. That is why GPI in Pakistan is very high as compared to other countries of South Asia. In addition, education is considered as a profitable business. Those who can't get good jobs of handsome salaries after getting education are considered as failed persons. This social barricade, along with others is also a challenging hurdle(Pakistan Coalition for Education, 2015).

To sum up, social-gender discrimination and cultural factors also proved hurdle in achieving the target of the second MDG.

Political Unrest and Conflict, Natural Disasters and War on Terror

History itself is evident that Pakistan has been experiencing political unrest and conflict since its inception in 1947. Its first constitution was formulated and implemented in 1956 after nine year of its creation. Unfortunately, it was abrogated in 1958 by the dictator, General Muhammad Ayub Khan. Second constitution was formulated under the leadership of the same dictator and was abrogated in 1969 by another dictator General Yahya Khan. First general elections in Pakistan were held in 1970 after 23 year of its creation. In a nutshell, four Martial Laws have been imposed in Pakistan in total. Even at the eve of the inauguration of the MDGs, Pakistan was under the rule of a dictator, General Pervaiz Musharaf. As a result, it has been under the dictators for almost 32 years. In such a state of political unrest and conflict, a country like Pakistan can't focus and invest on education properly and continuously. In addition, Pakistan has been entangled with the natural calamities like earth quake and floods. These natural calamities not only cause financial loss but also infrastructural and human loss as well. It also causes displacement of a large number of people after almost every couple of year. Floods of 1970s and 2010, and earth quake of 2008 have been the worst natural disasters in the history of Pakistan.

Along with, Pakistan has been fighting a War on Terror from the last 15 year. It has been experiencing the worst terrorist activities throughout the country. Many operations are being conducted against the terrorists. As a result, bulks of people have been internally displaced. On the one hand, people are being displaced internally, so, it is not possible to arrange educational facilities for the displaced persons. On the other hand, a lion's share of the budget is being invested on natural calamities, War on Terror, and internally displaced persons rather than on development in general and education in particular. Thus, political unrest and conflict, natural disasters, and War on Terror have caused in the failure of achieving the target of the second MDG (Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, 2008).

Medium of Instruction

Indivisibly associated with the issue of instructive projects is the subject of medium of course. An assortment of supposition is observed on what should be the medium of education in schools. More than 50 per cent of population in Pakistan speaks Punjabi language. Along with, Sindhi, Pashto, Balochi, and Kashmiri are other important languages of Pakistan. Urdu is national language of

Pakistan. However, wrong policies of the country have pushed the masses to get education in English language. There is a huge and hot debate on, 'what should be the medium of instruction in Pakistan?' Due to imposition of English as a medium of education, a large number of children either don't go to schools or many are dropped just because of English being the medium of instruction (Pakistan Coalition for Education, 2015). In this kind of situation, achieving the target of the second MDG is just like building a castle in the air.

Multiplicity of Education System

Pakistan is a country with multiplicity of education system i.e. three tiered education system. Public institutions, private institutions and Madressahs are working at the same time on parallel basis. Syllabus, system of examination and standards of education of all of them differ from one another. Multiplicity of education system has bewildered the parents to decide where to send their children because Madressah system is not providing formal education according to the needs of modern times; and on the other hand, private school education is very costly. As a result, many of them are barred from sending their children to schools. In a nutshell, multiplicity of education system gave a setback to the second MDG in Pakistan (Rashid, 2012).

Teacher Appointment, Training and Performance Assessment

Teacher appointment, training and performance assessment has been one of the most negligible areas in Pakistan. There is no denying the fact that teacher appointment, training and performance assessment have always been a key to promote education in a society. However, indifferent attitude of the authorities towards training and performance assessment, and political interference in the appointment and transfer of teachers in Pakistan have created hurdles in imparting good and quality education to the children and youth in the country. It has been much of the time reported that the arrangements and exchanges of educators are delineated by mediation and a lot of political interference. Such practices just want to make disincentives, politicize the arrangement division and hamper the association transport. In such circumstance, a large number of teachers don't attend schools and perform their duties. They just withdraw their salaries. Moreover, many incapable teachers are appointed on political basis, who, resultantly fail in imparting quality education to the children. Even many of the teachers discourage and unduly punish children. As a result, children left schools without completing their courses (Pakistan Coalition for Education, 2015). Had teacher appointment, training, and performance assessment on merit, the results of the second MDG in Pakistan would have been different.

Lack of Proper Infrastructure

Pakistan has been spending merely below 2 or nearly 2 per cent of its GDP on education. Of which most of the money is spent on administrative and other related activities. It means only a meager amount is left to spend on students and infrastructure. That is why most of the schools in Pakistan have only a single room and are without boundary wall. Scores of school structures around the country are in climate beaten condition. On the other hand, unfortunately, conflict, natural disasters, terrorist activities and War on Terror have caused a huge loss to infrastructure including schools and other educational institutions. Several schools have been ravaged. It is not possible for a financially corrupt and economically feeble government to build new school in a short time. That is why scores of children are deprived of the fundamental right to education. So the government needs to significantly focus on a very basic level form of its spending on infrastructural change. It would be better if impressive resources are invested towards building new schools and other educational institutions. The new structures must be adequately open and there should be an alternate space for each class. Resources should be distributed on basic start to manufacture workplaces, for instance, restrain dividers, washrooms and give clean drinking water (Pakistan Coalition for Education, 2015).

Economic Poverty and Corruption

Giving proper quality education to the children, in Pakistan, has become a daunting task for the parents especially because of the economic poverty and corruption. High inflation rate and corrupt attitude of the policy makers, bureaucrats and executives also proved a challenging hurdle in the way of second Millennium Development Goal. Already meager funds are allocated to the education sector. Of which a huge amount is spent on administrative and other activities rather than on imparting education. Another huge share of the rest of the finance is sucked by the corrupt authorities. Without proper financial support from the government, poverty ridden parents can't afford to send their children to school. Contrary, they prefer to send their children to hotels, workshops or some other places of employment to earn money. It not only deprives children of their fundamental right to education but also contribute in child labour (Rashid, 2012).

Lack of Timely Availability of Data and Reporting

Timely availability of data and reporting helps in finding weakness and sunny sides of any policy and its results. Then, on the basis of available data and reporting, concerned authorities chalk out a new plan and revise its policies to

overcome drawbacks, ultimately, it helps in improving the situation. Unfortunately, Pakistan couldn't provide its data and reporting about the second Millennium Development Goal during the whole period from 2000 to 2015 in general and both in 2014 and 2015 in particular. So, this is also considered to be a hurdle in meeting the required targets of education by 2015 (The United Nations, 2015).

Conclusion

To conclude, Pakistan has clearly failed in achieving the targets of the second MDG. In spite of several positive signs, all three indicators show that because of both policy formulation and implementation, Pakistan failed in achieving the targets of the second MDG: a) net enrolment ratio in primary education is almost 70 per cent which should have been 100 per cent; b) proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach last grade of primary is also low and dismal, although it should have been 100 per cent; and c) literacy rate of 15-24 years-old, women and men should have been 88 per cent by 2015, but in Pakistan it is around 60 per cent only. Thus, Pakistan has lost a golden opportunity of achieving universal primary education along with other education related targets. Gender gap is still a matter of serious concern because women are not provided with equal opportunities of education to that of men in a feudal and patriarchal society of Pakistan. Recent studies show that almost 25 million children between 5 and 16 year of age are out of school. From the analysis of the available data—assessment reports, review reports, analysis reports, research papers, newspaper articles and other document, it can be deduced that policy formulation, policy implementation, meager allocation of budget, social-gender discrimination and cultural factors, political unrest and conflict, natural disasters and War on Terror, teacher appointment, training and performance assessment, lack of proper infrastructure, curriculum reform, medium of instruction, multiplicity of education system, economic poverty and corruption, and lack of timely availability of data and reporting are those challenging factors which have played notable role in creating hurdles in achieving the desired results of the second MDG.

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