

Full Length Research Paper

Role of non-governmental organizations for the development of basic education in Punjab, Pakistan

Javed Iqbal

University Institute of Education and Research, University of Arid Agriculture, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.
E-mail: javed_iqbal1971@hotmail.com.

Accepted 2 November, 2009

The purpose of the study was to investigate the general working structure of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and to examine the services and facilities provided by NGOs for basic education in Punjab, Pakistan. The population comprised 112 NGOs working for the promotion of basic education in Punjab, 3980 teachers working in basic education schools run by NGOs, and all parents of the children studying in NGO schools. Different educational experts from different districts also constituted the population. We selected 25 NGOs working for the development of basic education in Punjab through cluster random sampling covering all areas of Punjab. 25 heads of the NGOs and 200 teachers working in basic education schools were taken as the sample of study through the simple random sampling technique. 50 parents of the children enrolled in NGO schools and 25 educational experts from different districts of Punjab were also selected as the sample of the study. Four questionnaires were developed, one each for head of NGO, teachers, parents of students and educational experts in the light of the objectives of the study for the collection of data. The data collected through questionnaires were statistical analyzed by chi-square technique, significant at $p < 0.05$ level.

Key words: Basic education, non-governmental organization, Government of Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of socialization, which brings change in the behavior of individuals and empowers them to learn to live with dignity and freedom. Through the process of education, human beings develop abilities, skills and attitudes that help them to modify their behavior according to the social, economic and political demands of their environment. Education is considered the most important way of human capital formation, which is prerequisite for sustaining the development of a nation (Government of Pakistan, 2004).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states: "Everyone has the right to Education". This fundamental right has been recognized in the Convention on the Rights of Child (1989) stressing, "The child has right to education and it is the duty of the state to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory." The National Education Policy (1998) further indicates, "The ideology of Pakistan lays down two important obligations on the government. Firstly, education will be accessible to all citizens. Secondly, it shall enable them to prepare enlightened and civilized individuals committed to the cause of Islam". These two obligations are in accordance with the teaching of Holy Quran that recognizes provision

of education as a right of the individual. Being a signatory of the universal declaration of "Education for All" during the Jometin World Conference on education held in 1990, Pakistan is bound to provide educational facilities to obtain universal primary education (Government of Pakistan, 1998).

Basic education embraces a large number of informal, formal and non-formal educational activities, which differ according to local conditions, from one country and region to the next. Basic education encompasses all activities that provide individuals with certain minimum level of education considered indispensable and possible for the society concerned at a given moment (Khalid, 1989).

That private sector is contributing in attaining universal primary education is a fact that has not yet been fully explored. There is no proper system of obtaining data of private sector participation. All statistics available and provided by the government are either of public sectors or comprise very minor portion of private sectors. Pursuant to the universal declaration of "Education for All", during Jometin World Conference on Education, held in 1990, Pakistan is actively preparing to assess its

Table 1. School building is sufficient to meet the needs.

	SA	A	UND	DA	SDA	Total	χ^2
Responses	0	22	15	106	57	200	268.30*
Percentage	0	11	7.5	53	28.5	100	

*Significant df, 4; χ^2 at 0.05 level, 9.488, SA--- Strongly agree, A--- Agree, UND--- Undecided, DA--- Disagree and SDA--- Strongly disagree.

performance on our commitment during the last 10 years. The outcome of this assessment would lead to the viable policies for further expansion and improvement of education in the 21st century. The entire assessment of our performance is generally based upon the data obtained through the provincial EMIS (Educational Management Information System) cells. These data do not adequately accommodate a vast number of students studying in primary school run and managed by the private sector. Currently, there is immense under-estimation of primary level enrollment, as the EMIS Cells do not cover statistics of enrollment of private sector. The extent of difference between actual enrollment at primary level (including enrollment) in all private schools and the data reported by the EMIS (belonging to pre-dominantly public school system) have not yet been empirically determined by any systematic study (Government of Pakistan, 1998).

At present, a large number of NGOs in Punjab are working in the field of social development, however, only a few of them are in the area of literacy and non-formal education and are also implementing functional literacy courses for women (Tayyab, 2004). Other programs in the area of skills training are the rural support program. These programs focus on social mobilization, capacity building, skills learning, micro credit, vocational training, and establishing linkages between communities and governmental departments. The Government's and NGOs' programs in the field of literacy and basic education have provided benefits to about 0.2 million people on average per year. However, these efforts do not seem to be making sufficient progress in eliminating illiteracy in the country. There are many reasons for their failure: lack of financial resources, unrealistic targets, the conservative attitude of the community, and overpopulation, as well as a lack of focused material suited to local needs. There has been no special curriculum available for non-formal basic education for adults and children, and so the curriculum of the formal schools was used for these programs. Adults were taught a syllabus that did not have any functional or occupational usefulness. The curriculum has more emphasis on knowledge and less on skills. This situation is now changing for basic literacy with the ongoing development of a syllabus with the assistance of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization producing an annual publication based on an annual survey and other data sources on a selected theme. The theme for this year is education

(Sajid, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

Samples

The population of study comprised 112 NGOs working for the promotion of basic education in Punjab, 3980 teachers working in basic education schools run by NGOs and all parents of the children studying in NGO schools. Different educational experts from different districts also constituted the population of the study. The researcher selected 25 NGOs working for the development of basic education in Punjab. Heads of 25 NGOs and 200 teachers working in basic education schools were taken as the sample of study. 50 parents of the children enrolled in NGO schools and 25 educational experts from different districts of Punjab were also selected as the sample of the study

Method

Cluster random sampling was used to select 250 NGOS working for the development of basic education. Simple random sampling technique was used to select heads of 25 NGOS and 200 teachers working in basic education schools. Four questionnaires were developed, one each for head of NGO, teachers, parents of students and educational experts in the light of the objectives of the study for the collection of data.

RESULTS

The collected data were tabulated and analyzed by Chi square. Table 1 indicates that the value of χ^2 was found to be significant at 0.05 level. Since the trend of responses was towards disagreement, the statement "School building is sufficient to meet the needs" is negatively accepted. This table contradicts that of Government of Pakistan (2004) which states that physical facilities, that is electricity, toilets, boundary wall and building, etc, may be provided in schools.

Table 2 indicates that the value of χ^2 was found to be significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the statement "Furniture for teacher is sufficient" is accepted. The finding of this table supports that of Government of Pakistan (2004) which states that availability of physical facilities at school level has significant impact on the performance of the students.

Table 3 indicates that the value of χ^2 was found to be non-significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the statement "Furniture for students is sufficient" is rejected. This table

Table 2. Furniture for teachers is sufficient.

	SA	A	UND	DA	SDA	Total	χ^2
Responses	62	75	33	18	12	200	75.65*
Percentage	31	37.5	16.5	9	6	100	

*Significant df, 4; χ^2 at 0.05 level, 9.488.

Table 3. Furniture for students is sufficient.

	SA	A	UND	DA	SDA	Total	χ^2
Responses	34	43	35	42	46	200	2.75*
Percentage	17	21.5	17.5	21	23	100	

*Non-significant df, 4; χ^2 at 0.05 level = 9.488.

Table 4. Electricity facilities are adequate.

	SA	A	UND	DA	SDA	Total	χ^2
Responses	61	48	14	51	26	200	37.45*
Percentage	30.5	24	7	25.5	13	100	

*Significant df, 4; χ^2 at 0.05 level, 9.488.

Table 5. Drinking water is available to all the students.

	SA	A	UND	DA	SDA	Total	χ^2
Responses	119	53	17	6	5	200	233*
Percentage	59.5	26.5	8.5	3	2.5	100	

*Significant df, 4; χ^2 at 0.05 level, 9.488.

contradicts Government of Pakistan (2004) that states that availability of physical facilities at school level has significant impact on the performance of the students. Table 4 indicates that the value of χ^2 was found to be significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the statement "Electricity facilities are adequate" is accepted.

Table 5 indicates that the value of χ^2 was found to be significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the statement "Drinking water is available to all the students" is accepted. The results of this table contradict Government of Pakistan (2004) which states that Availability of physical facilities at school level has significant impact on the performance of the students.

Table 6 indicates that the value of χ^2 was found to be significant (79.40) at 0.05 level. Since the trend of responses was towards disagreement, the statement "Playground is available for games" is negatively accepted. This table contradicts Government of Pakistan (2004) which states that availability of physical facilities at school level has significant impact on the performance of the students. Table 7 indicates that the value of χ^2 was found to be significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the statement

"Teaching materials are available" is accepted.

Table 8 indicates that the value of χ^2 was found to be significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the statement, "Books are provided to students free of cost" is accepted. This table supports Government of Pakistan (2004) that states that free compulsory primary education and books may be provided.

DISCUSSION

The NGOs play a pivotal role in the development of the nation by taking on the activities to help in improving the lives of people. The role played by NGOs in various fields of education cannot be minimized or denied. NGOs working in basic education in Punjab exist in all districts of the Punjab. The establishment of NGOs in education in Punjab had found rapid growth in the decade of 1990s, so the majority of NGOs had experience of working for a single decade. The organizational structure among all the NGOs is similar as required by the Punjab Social Welfare Department for registration purposes and is working for

Table 6. Playground is available for games.

	SA	A	UND	DA	SDA	Total	χ^2
Responses	36	14	34	88	28	200	79.40*
Percentage	18	7	17	44	14	100	

*Significant df, 4; χ^2 at 0.05 level, 9.488.

Table 7. Teaching materials are available.

	SA	A	UND	DA	SDA	Total	χ^2
Responses	51	54	28	43	24	200	18.15*
Percentage	25.5	27	14	21.5	12	100	

*Significant df, 4; χ^2 at 0.05 level, 9.488.

Table 8. Books are provided to students free of cost.

	SA	A	UND	DA	SDA	Total	χ^2
Responses	97	86	3	11	3	200	223.6*
Percentage	48.5	43	1.5	5.5	1.5	100	

*Significant df, 4; χ^2 at 0.05 level, 9.488.

the eradication of illiteracy and is trying to promote basic education, especially in female population. Elahi (1993) has a similar opinion and he further stated the only few NGOs were working in formal education system. The overall picture of NGOs in the world depicts that they provide free education in schools having adequate physical facilities. The study found that in many NGOs, education was being arranged free for masses. NGOs provided books free of cost. The facility of rooms, boundary walls and drinking water were available in majority of schools. Furniture and playground facility however was available in a very small number of schools run by NGOs. This finding supported Human Development Foundation (2002) which revealed that community provided building for school and other educational facilities and parents were charged nominal fee for a special fund.

It is concluded that: 1) Majority of the heads of NGOs, teachers, educational experts and parents of the children opined that building and furniture for teachers and students in NGOs schools were insufficient to meet the need. 2) Majority of the heads of NGOs, teachers, educational experts and parents of the children opined that electricity facilities, availability of drinking water and playground facility were inadequate in mostly NGOs school. 3) Majority of the heads of NGOs, teachers, educational experts and parents of the children opined that they arranged free education and provided books free of cost to the children; however, the facilities regarding teaching learning were inadequate.

In the light of the above findings, it can be recommended that the NGOs schools with inadequate school

buildings or facilities should be provided by community or government. The students of NGOs schools belonged to poor families, so incentives/financial support may be given to the students and their parents in order to increase the enrollment of NGOs schools. Simply providing free books and free education is not sufficient, proper facility of furniture for teachers and students should be provided in NGOs schools.

REFERENCES

- Elahi N (1993). Towards eradication of illiteracy from Pakistan. Ministry of Education. Islamabad, Pakistan pp. 25-28.
- Government of Pakistan (1998). National education policy (1998-2010). Ministry of Education Islamabad, Pakistan pp.18-135.
- Government of Pakistan (2004). National sample survey of private schools in Pakistan. Academy of Educational Planning and Management Ministry of Education Islamabad, Pakistan p. 5.
- Human Development Foundation (2002). Non-formal Education in Pakistan: the only Option for Pakistan's Poor. (http://www.yes-pakistan.com/education/non-formal_edu.asp last updated on 17.06.2002).
- Khalid H (1989). Planning basic education in Pakistan. Academy of Educational Planning and Management, Islamabad, Pakistan p. 59.
- Sajid K (2004). Role of NGOs in basic / primary education in Pakistan. http://www.sdpi.org/help/research_and_news_bulletin/nbjanf04/articles/In%20Retrospect.htm (searched on 14.12.2005).
- Tayyab A (2004). Non-formal Primary Education and Functional Literacy for Rural Women in Selected Barani Areas of Punjab. Asian Development Bank, Islamabad, Pakistan p. 2.