

## Introduction

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Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan makes education a basic right for children between the ages of 5-16 years. The focus of the federal and provincial governments, therefore has been to improve access of education to children in this age bracket, albeit with little success. The replacement of Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been adopted by Pakistan as its own Agenda for Development, which show the national government's commitment to the cause.

According to the Global Education Monitoring Report (2017-18) entitled "Accountability in Education: Meeting Our Commitments", the government's responsibility to provide universal quality education and transparent accountability of this process is highlighted. It is suggested that this transparency be extended to all stakeholders involved in the process, from policy-makers, implementing and monitoring departments to teachers and students. There is a need for increased visibility and reporting of discrepancies in budget allocation and utilization and for expected and actual outcomes to highlight the shortcomings. These will not only serve to increase public knowledge but also spur to action relevant public and private stakeholders to engage and collaborate for viable and sustainable solutions.

According to recent estimates, there are reported to be around 22.6 million out-of-school-children. In addition to this, it is seen that those attending schools are also not given the opportunity to fully benefit from the education they are supposedly being provided with. Salient issues that can be labeled as causes of this problem include poor infrastructure in schools, poor pedagogy and outmoded learning methods, striking gender gaps in attainment of education, deeply rooted inequality in access and quality of schooling and lax mechanisms of monitoring and accountability.

The chapter gives a concise breakdown of the federal and provincial education budgets and corresponding enrolment figures to gauge the amount of work still needed to increase enrolment and provide quality education in schools. Moreover, it highlights the progress of Pakistan

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towards achieving the SDGs and its relevant targets for Goal 4. Lastly, some recommendations are listed by SPARC which can aid the federal and provincial governments in formulating a concrete education policy for the future.

### Education Budget at a Glance

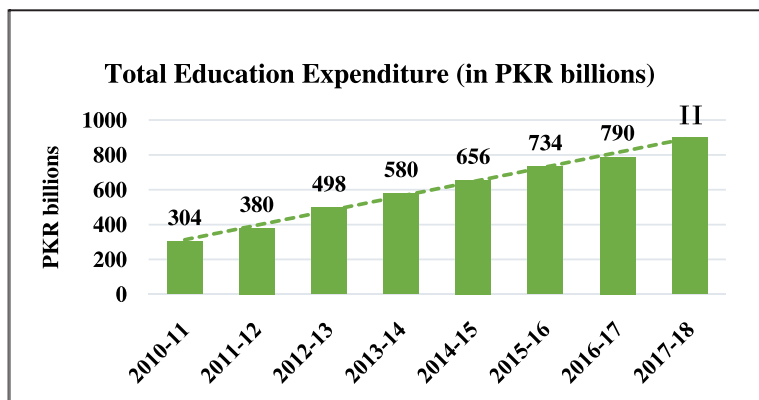
In 2017-18, a sum total PKR 902.7 billion was allocated for education by the federal and provincial governments, combined, which amounted to an increase of 16.3% over the previous year's allocated expenditure of PKR 776.1 billion. The revised estimate for the previous F.Y. (2016-17) amounted to PKR 622.1 billion, which was shown to be 19.8% less than the budgeted amount, indicating an underutilisation of resources. It is seen that this was mainly the result of massive underutilisation in Punjab and Sindh, which stood at 37.5% and 30.2%, respectively, while Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and the federal government utilised more than their respective budgeted allocations<sup>1</sup>.

As a percentage of GDP, the overall allocation in the C.F.Y. 2017-18 stands at 2.5% which is a modest increase from last year's 2.3%<sup>2</sup>. In view of this modest but consistent increase, the budget target of 2.5% of GDP, although not high by international standards which are set at 4% for developing countries, seems optimistic. Encouragement regarding prioritization of education in fiscal allocation can be drawn from the steady increase that the educational budgets have experienced in the last eight years, rising by about 66% overall.

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<sup>1</sup> Tahir, Pervez. "Education Spending in Pakistan". Tribune. August 26<sup>th</sup> 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1490941/education-spending-pakistan/>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



Courtesy: I-SAPS Budget Charts<sup>3</sup>

It should be noted, however that while the budget has witnessed a consistent increase throughout the years, it is the efficient utilization of the allocated budget which needs to be considered to determine how effective the increases have been in terms of outcomes and education indicators.

### Federal Spending on Education

The total outlay of the budget for the federal capital is estimated at PKR 4.75 trillion. The allocated development expenditure for the C.F.Y. will be PKR 1.001 trillion, which is 40% higher than the PKR 715 billion allocated last year. For FY 2017- 18, a total of PKR 132.521 billion has been allocated for education with a breakdown of PKR 90.516 billion for current expenditure on education and PKR 42.005 billion for development expenditure on education<sup>4</sup>.

Education Affairs and Services have been provided with a 7.5% increase from the budgeted estimates of 2016-17 and a 6.4% increase from the revised estimates of 2017-18. The bulk of expenditure in the budget has been allocated for Tertiary Education Affairs and Services

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Social and Policy Sciences I-SAPS. Public Financing of Education in Pakistan: Analysis of Federal, Provincial and District Budgets 2010-11 to 2016-17. 2016. [http://i-saps.org/upload/report\\_publications/docs/1496496299.pdf](http://i-saps.org/upload/report_publications/docs/1496496299.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Federal Budget in Brief 2017-18, Government of Pakistan, Finance Division, Islamabad, June 2017.

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which forms about 75.4% of the total allocation, where the bulk of the allocation goes to HEC. Under this head however, pre-primary & primary education and secondary education received about 9.6% and 11.9% respectively, a less than substantial amount given the magnitude of out-of-school-children (primary and secondary). Development budget for primary education is a mere PKR 11 million, while PKR 2 billion rupees has been allocated for secondary education<sup>5</sup>.

School and college education in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) lies in the domain of Capital Administration and Development Division (CADD) of the federal government. CADD's total budget for the C.F.Y. is PKR 24.77 billion; of this PKR 19.58 billion are for current expenditure and PKR 5.19 billion for development expenditure. Some of the on-going and upcoming projects include renovation and rehabilitation of physical infrastructure of 200 educational institutions under the Prime Minister's Education Sector Reforms Programme at a total cost of PKR 2.74 billion and the establishment of SMART schools at a total cost of PKR 631 million<sup>6</sup>.

The percentage increase in the federal education budget for the current fiscal year bodes well, yet the allocated amount strays far from the policy target of spending 4% of GDP on education, as had been promised by the government. A more pressing issue, however, lies in the timely release of these funds. It is found that one third of the schools do not actually receive development funds before the close of the fiscal year, whereas half of the schools which do receive funds do not receive them within the first two quarters<sup>7</sup>. This delayed disbursement results in performance lags as the budgeted amounts cannot be accounted for along with performance indicators.

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<sup>5</sup> Tahir, Pervez. "Education Spending by the Federal Government". Tribune. August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1484046/education-spending-federal-govt/>

<sup>6</sup> Tahir Pervez. "Education Spending in ICT". Tribune. August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1473317/education-spending-ict/>

<sup>7</sup> Zahid, Junaid. *Education and Social Safety Nets – A Factual Analysis*. A Review of Federal Budget 2017-18. Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). 2017



## Punjab Education Budget

The current fiscal year budget for 2017-18 of the Punjab Government has a total outlay of PKR 1,970.7 billion. The budget includes current expenditure of PKR 1,020.838 billion and development expenditure of PKR 635 billion.<sup>8</sup>

This includes an allocation of PKR 335.9 billion to the Education Sector, for both local and provincial governments, which is 17.5% of the total budget allocation. While the percentage allocation has gone down by 1% from last year there is an absolute increase of 10.29% from the allocated budget in 2016-17 which was PKR 312.8 billion. The Punjab Government has also established District Education Authority (DEAs) with an amount of PKR 230 billion, which is 66.6% of the education budget, to improve service delivery and have decision making at the local level.<sup>9</sup> It is hoped that local authorities will be more responsive to solving the problems of low enrolment rates and poor quality of education. However, the hopes pinned on DEAs need to be realistic given the poor record of utilization of funds. Last year's allocation of PKR 169 billion had only PKR 101.5 million utilized as per the revised estimates, which begs the question of how efficiently the C.F.Y. allocation of PKR 230 billion will be utilized.<sup>10</sup>

The provincial component of PKR 119.136 billion is split between Current and Development portions in the ratio of 37% and 63% respectively. The Development Budget is further sub-divided into two parts, i.e. Development Revenue and Development Capital, which share the budget in the ratio of 18% and 82% respectively.

In the 2016-17 budget, an allocation of PKR 64.56 billion was made under the current expenditure Education Affairs and Services Head, compared to the previous years' utilisation of PKR 53.77 billion. It can be deduced that the massive shortfall indicating under-utilization of the budget led to a substantially lower allocation of PKR 44.3

<sup>8</sup> White Paper Budget 2017-18, Government of the Punjab – Finance Department, June 2017.

<sup>9</sup> “Alif Ailaan's comment on Punjab Education Budget 2017-18”. The Nation. June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <https://nation.com.pk/07-Jun-2017/alif-ailan-analyses-punjab-education-budget-2017-18>

<sup>10</sup> Tahir, Pervez. “Spending on Education in Punjab”. Tribune. June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1436538/spending-education-punjab/>

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billion in the C.F.Y 2017-18. Except for the miscellaneous item “Education Affairs, Services Not Elsewhere Defined”, all items under “Education Affairs and Services” recorded serious under-spending. The worst offender was secondary education, which failed to utilise 20% of the budgeted amount, followed by higher education which recorded 17% under-utilisation.<sup>11</sup> This subsequently resulted in a 31% reduction in next year’s budget.

For the development expenditure in education the situation remained fairly similar. The difference in budget estimates and revised estimates amounted to approximately PKR 23 billion. In primary education the spent budget was only PKR 0.39 billion out of an allocated total of PKR 1.88 billion, resulting in an underutilization of almost 79%. In the case of secondary education, only PKR 22.7 billion was used out of a total of PKR 44.3 billion resulting in a shortfall of 49%. Only in tertiary education, the utilisation of PKR 17 billion was more than the budgeted allocation of PKR 13.2 billion.<sup>12</sup> It is hoped that the C.F.Y. allocation is better absorbed and utilized to provide the many missing services for primary and secondary education in the province.

## Sindh Education Budget

For the C.F.Y. i.e. 2017-18 Sindh unveiled an outlay of PKR 1.04 trillion marking a 19% increase from the previous year. Of this, education is to receive PKR 202.2 billion which makes up 19.4% of the total budget and the figure shows an increase of 24% from last year’s education budget of PKR 163.12 billion.<sup>13</sup> This increase, however still does not make education the largest head of expenditure in the budget.

In addition, it needs to be kept in mind that mere allocation is not an indication or a promise of actual spending. The revised development expenditure in 2016-17 was 30.2% less than the budgeted amount while the development expenditure for the next year is budgeted at

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Sindh Budget Speech 2017-18, Government of Sindh.

over 70.4% more than the revised estimate.<sup>14</sup> How the funds are to be managed and effectively and timely utilized remains to be seen. The revised current expenditure however was more realistically allocated as the difference only amounted to 1.6% while the budget estimates for next year were increased by a modest 12.7% over the revised estimates.

Given that Sindh has a high proportion of out-of-school-children, rampant illiteracy and poor indicators of good quality education, prioritization of primary education needs to be the order of the day. The current budget, however, allocates PKR 50.9 billion to primary education, which is 4% less than the revised budget and budget estimates of 2016-17. Its share in the total current budget (for education) is 28.5% which is a decline from last year's allocation of 34.9%. A similar situation can be seen on the development side. Out of the total education budget of PKR 24 billion, primary education only receives a share of 17.1 %<sup>15</sup>.

Government of Sindh has also been providing monetary support to the Sindh Education Foundation. For the next year it is intended that PKR 8.08 billion, an increase of 7% over last year's allocation will be provided while construction of Sindh Education Foundation Complex is also promised to start<sup>16</sup>.

### **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Budget**

During the C.F.Y. KP allocated a total of PKR 168.1 billion for education out of its total budget outlay of PKR 603 billion, giving education 27.6% of the total budget share. This shows a budget increase of 17% over last year's allocation of PKR 143.4 billion. While the absolute share has increased vis-à-vis last year's allocation it should be noted that the proportion of education in the C.F.Y. has declined in relative terms.

According to the budget report PKR 27.5 billion is the provincial component while PKR 111 billion is allocated to be transferred to the

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<sup>14</sup> Tahir, Pervez. "Education Spending in Sindh". Tribune. June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1446383/education-spending-sindh/>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Sindh Budget Speech 2017-18, Government of Sindh.

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district level offices. Of the provincial component, the current revenue expenditure on education comprises of PKR 3.7 billion non-salary expenditure and PKR 0.76 billion salary expenditure making the percentage allocations 83% and 17% respectively. The development expenditure of PKR 20.294 billion constitutes the major proportion of the total provincial allocation for education making it an 81.4% share. A provision for PKR 11.993 billion has been made in Budget Estimates 2017-18 resulting in an increase of 26% in the Higher Education Budget.

34.5 % of the budget is allocated for Annual Development Program (ADP) with an outlay of PKR 208 billion increasing by 19% from last year. An allocation of PKR 14 billion has been made for a total of 77 projects in the Annual Development Program for education. Out of these, 60 projects are ongoing with an allocation of PKR 12.6 billion while 17 projects are new with an allocation of PKR 1.35 billion while PKR 6.29 billion are estimated from foreign project assistance, making a total of PKR 20.294 billion in development expenditure for education<sup>17</sup>.

While these measures sound promising it is noteworthy to look at the relative amounts allotted to primary and tertiary education. Given the government's priority for out-of-school-children the budgeted increase seems contradictory. There is an increase of 11% for primary education, while the increase for tertiary education is 94%<sup>18</sup>.

Despite being the top priority, during the previous year, the government only spent 54% of its allocated education budget. The government had allocated PKR 16.9 billion for elementary and secondary education from which only PKR 12.5 billion were released while only PKR 9 billion had been utilised. The government had allocated PKR 4.7 billion for higher education, of which PKR 3.4 billion were released while the government managed to spend only

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<sup>17</sup> KP White Paper 2017-18, Government of KP – Finance Department, June 2017.

<sup>18</sup> Tahir, Pervez. "Education Spending in KP". Tribune. June 24<sup>th</sup> 2017.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1443438/education-spending-k-p/>

PKR 1.9 billion i.e. 40.3% of the total allocated amount<sup>19</sup>. Massive under-utilization thus emerges as the main problem which requires redress if adequate strides towards education reform are to be made.

### Balochistan Education Budget

Budgetary allocation for education for Balochistan has shown a consistent increase in the allocated budget for the sector in recent years. The only anomaly was in the F.Y. 2016-17 which witnessed a decline of 3% from the previous F.Y. 2015-16. The education budget for the C.F.Y. 2017-18 has been earmarked at PKR 45.8 billion, which represents 16.5% of the total budget outlay of PKR 328.5 billion. This represents an increase of 7.76% in the current expenditure under the Education Affairs and Services functional head from last year's allocation of PKR 42.5 billion.

Despite being given priority in the budget speech, this is the lowest absolute budgetary allocation of the education sector across all provinces. In relative terms the province fares poorly by allocating the lowest percentage amount for education at 16.5% falling behind KP, Sindh and Punjab in that order. In addition it is seen that the revised budget of 2016-17 showed an under-utilisation of 6% of the budgeted amount<sup>20</sup>.

The share of primary education in total education spending has fallen from 37.6% in 2015-16 to 32.9% in the C.F.Y. budget. For the same period, the share of tertiary education has risen from 16.9% to 22.3%<sup>21</sup>. Given the high number of out-of-school-children in the province this is a clear example of misplaced priorities and myopic planning.

The allocated budget for education in the development budget was PKR 9.1 billion in the C.F.Y. which is an increase of 29.6% from the previous year's allocation of PKR 6.4 billion. Despite the increase it

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<sup>19</sup> Buneri, Aziz. KP Government's Dismal Performance in Budget 2016-17". May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/05/29/kp-governments-dismal-performance-in-budget-2016-17-utilisation/>

<sup>20</sup> Tahir, Pervez. "Education Spending in Baluchistan". Tribune. July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1450951/education-spending-balochistan/>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

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is seen that this proportion is slightly higher in other provinces. Within the development expenditure on education, the largest claimant again is the tertiary education sector with a share of 51.8%. In contrast, primary education gets 25%<sup>22</sup>. A separate allocation of PKR 2 billion has also been made for the Balochistan Education Endowment Fund.

The secondary education budget for C.F.Y. 2017-18 consists of 89.7% salaried budget and 10.3% non-salaried budget. The non-salaried budget, which constitutes of daily expenditures of schools and for operation and maintenance purposes was reduced this year from PKR 5.3 billion to PKR 3.1 billion, resulting in a 41% decline. Given the necessity of non-salaried budget for improvements in infrastructure, maintenance and learning materials in classrooms, the lack of such allotted in Balochistan is a cause for concern.

### **Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) and FATA Education Budgets**

In GB, a total budget allocation of PKR 54 billion, development expenditure on education increased from PKR 1 billion to PKR 1.53 billion, a jump of 53%. However, this amount is only 8.4% of the total development budget. Since a break-up of allocations and functions is unavailable, a clear idea about distribution of resources is not possible. New school buildings, upgradation and provision of missing facilities, however are said to be the main objects of the expenditure<sup>23</sup>.

For FATA, a current budget allocation for education in 2017-18 stands at PKR 12.8 billion which shows an increase of 9.4% over the previous budget. The numbers indicate that more than 50% of the total current budget is spent on education, most of it on elementary education. On the development side, the allocation of PKR 26.9 billion is recorded which is 20.6% higher than the previous year's budget<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Tahir, Pervez. "Education Spending in GB". Tribune. July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1462491/education-spending-g-b/>

<sup>24</sup> Tahir, Pervez. "Education Spending in FATA". Tribune. July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1456546/education-spending-fata/>

## Sustainable Development Goals

Pakistan is obligated under various national and international commitments to provide access to quality education to all its citizens. In addition to Article 25-A which guarantees free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5 and 16, Pakistan is also signatory to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 4 of which pertains to education.

Goal 4 aims to ensure that all people have access to quality education and the opportunity for lifelong learning. The targets and indicators of the goal go beyond school enrolment and look at proficiency levels, the availability of trained teachers and adequate school facilities and disparities in educational outcomes.

Pakistan's eagerness to deliver on the 2030 targets has been touted as promising relative to the initiative or lack thereof, that was taken to perform on the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, which were largely considered a UN-driven initiative. The parliament has since adopted the SDGs as a national development agenda, and there is a convergence on these targets by the federal and all provincial governments. In addition, these commitments oblige the country to align their policies, sector plans, strategies, indicators & tracking, and budgetary allocations to achieve these goals by 2030. However, it needs to be ascertained that it is the lack of implementation and lax bureaucratic will that prevents millions of children in the country from attaining this basic right.

Pakistan's Vision 2025 also enlists education as a priority to achieve a future of development and prosperity, but there is a need for concrete road-mapping with specific objectives and measurable indicators to deliver fully on the vision. In order to successfully measure progress and ensure no one is left behind, the availability of quality, accessible, timely and reliable data is essential for which the SDG targets and indicators provide an effective framework. The following section attempts to determine the progress Pakistan has made in education in the previous year with respect to relevant measureable indicators, subject to the availability of data.

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### Goal 4: Quality Education for All

**Target 4.1: “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes”.**

This target incorporates three important aspects education ought to engender. It surpasses the notion of *access* of education to the marginalized and disenfranchised to include a focus on *equity* and *quality* both of which can be measured by effective learning outcomes.

### Access to Education

#### Enrolment Rates & Out of School Children

Stage	Gender	Gross Enrolment	Net Enrolment	AN ER	OOSC
Primary Classes: 1-5 Age Group: 5-9	Male	1 2,016,684	9,508,292	83%	1,979,595
	Female	9,533,898	7,594,692	71%	3,046,373
	Total	2 1,550,582	17,102,984	77%	5 ,025,968
Middle Classes: 6-8 Age Group: 10-12*	Male	3,896,433	3,463,496	53%	3,063,770
	Female	3,025,818	2,684,373	45%	3,337,074
	Total	6 ,922,251	6,147,869	49%	6 ,400,844
Secondary Classes: 9-12 Age Group: 13-16*	Male	3,299,054	3,062,258	35%	5,485,890
	Female	2,367,188	2,221,433	27%	5,725,240
	Total	5 ,666,242	5,283,691	32%	11,211,130
Primary to Secondary Classes: 1-12 Age Group: 5-16*	Male	1 9,212,171	16,034,046	60%	10,529,255
	Female	14,926,904	12,500,498	51%	12,108,687
	Total	3 4,139,075	28,534,544	56%	22,637,942

Out of the 22.6 million out of school children in the country, 49% of girls are out of school as compared to 40% of boys. While enrolment



rates have risen over the years, quality of education in public schools remains a question mark. Below is an overview of the gender disaggregated enrolment rates and the number of out of school children by grade.

**Note:**

- i . Public and Private Sector Data is included
- ii . Figures include Pre-Primary, Primary, Middle, High, Higher Secondary, Non-Formal Education and Deeni Madaris
- iii. Technical and Vocational Data is included in Secondary Education
- iv. UNESCO Reconstructed Cohort Model is used for calculation of Survival Rate to Grade-V

### **Equity and Quality**

With regards to equity in education it is seen that Pakistan fails its children on a number of accounts.

The provision of access and quality of education is vastly skewed depending on poverty, gender and geographical location. A small percentage of children attending elite private schools attain a quality of education that is competitive at international levels, while the vast majority of the population belonging to lower income households suffers, because of the poor learning mechanisms available in low-fee-paying private and public schools. The latter suffers from difficulties like outdated syllabi, curriculum and pedagogical techniques not conducive to effective learning. The poverty divide can also be extended along urban-rural lines which disproportionately favours the schools in urban dwellings in terms of learning indicators. This divide is then further exacerbated along gender lines as in the poorer households, girls are seen to suffer more. Similarly, learning outcomes are also seen to significantly differ for private and public schools with the former faring better than the latter. The following findings by ASER<sup>25</sup> reveal the extent to which inequity in educational outcomes manifest itself in the country.

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<sup>25</sup> SAFED & ITA. *ASER 2016: Annual Status of Education Report Pakistan*. August 2017.

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### ASER 2016 results highlight that:

- The poorest income quartile has the highest level of the children enrolled in government schools (77%) whereas the remaining 19% of the children are enrolled in private sector schools. On the other hand, the richest quartile has the highest number of children enrolled in private schools (53%) and the lowest percentage of children in government schools (47%)
- Poorest quartile has the lowest learning levels (19% Urdu/Sindhi/Pashto, 17% English, and 16% Math) and richest quartile has the highest learning levels (44% Urdu/Sindhi/Pashto, 43% English, and 39% Math).
- 14% of females from the poorest quartile can read a story in Urdu/Sindhi/Pashto as compared to 22% of males from the same income group.
- 11% of females from the poorest quartile can do two-digit division sums and 12% can read sentences in English, whereas 20% of their male counterparts can read sentences in English and 19% can do two-digit division sums.

While learning and improved quality of education lie at the very heart of the SDGs Agenda, it is thus seen that barring a handful of elite private schools, indicators of quality education remain wanting. Public schools and low cost private schools are seen to perform badly on learning outcome measures, while private schools continue to perform slightly better than government schools in terms of quality of learning.

Provincial variances are also seen from Alif Ailaan's District Education Rankings, that in terms of learning scores, AJK ranks the highest at 80.97 followed by Punjab at 66.57, while Sindh has the lowest at 42.16<sup>26</sup>.

### Deeni Madaris

The discussion on inequality and inequity in access to quality education in Pakistan, of necessity requires the mention of the

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<sup>26</sup> Alif Ailaan. "Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017". [http://rankings.alifailaan.pk/wp-includes/file/DER17\\_summary.pdf](http://rankings.alifailaan.pk/wp-includes/file/DER17_summary.pdf)

prevalent parallel system of education, that is of “*deeni madaris*” (seminaries). In order to meet the targets of the SDGs, it is important to regulate *madrassas* and streamline them into education frameworks and policies to advance favourable educational outcomes.

Traditionally *madrassas* have been responsible for providing Islamic education and teachings, often free-of-cost, to a significant proportion of the impoverished and lower-middle income earning population. In the absence of proper educational facilities, *madrassas* serve as a financially viable and attractive option for parents, oftentimes including the provision of food and shelter for students, in addition to religious education.

It is seen however, that the content and methodology of teaching in *madrassas* can, at best, be explained as lacking on certain accounts. The students are not usually trained in subjects other than religious education, which leads them to being handicapped in terms of competing with their counterparts attending formal schooling systems in terms of equal economic opportunities later in life. In addition, there is excessive emphasis on rote learning and a complete absence of critical thinking and questioning (a practice also highly prevalent in most public schools). A more pressing issue is that some of these *madrassas* can also be regarded as breeding grounds for militancy of certain religious schools of thought which thus serve as a threat to the security of the society.

According to AEPAM, there are currently 32,272 Deeni Madaris operational in Pakistan.

The total enrolment in these Deeni Madaris is 2.26 million, of which the total male enrolment is 1.46 million (65%), whereas the female enrolment is 0.800 million (35%). Considering a significant proportion of the population opts for this alternative means of education, whether by choice or necessity, it is thus important to ensure that these institutions are operating under the administrative and financial control of the state, and offering equal opportunity of educational success (as defined in the SDGs criterion).

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Ongoing reform attempts by the government have included introduction of mainstream subjects like English and Mathematics in the madrassas, but in order to effect change at a greater and sustainable scale, there is a need to incorporate more technical and financial support for these institutions at the administrative level. Increasing the registration of madrassas, encouraging and facilitating mechanisms of accountability, building trust and providing effective forms of communication can go a long way in mainstreaming madrassas into the formal education system.

**Target 4.2 “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education”.**

Early Childhood Education (ECE) has the potential of laying the foundation for a child’s long-term development, in terms of health, building skills and forming a strong base for lifelong learning. Educational and neurological research indicates that the first five years of life, the foundation years, are crucial to the process of learning, ECE has the potential to yield long-term impact for developmental and educational outcomes. While the federal and provincial governments have paid lip service to this aspect of children’s development and laws/policy/framework and sector plans including the National Education Policy 2009 & 2017 assign considerable importance to ECE, concrete steps have not been taken, given that there are no separate pre-primary institutions in the public sector<sup>27</sup>.

Historically, pre-primary education has existed in schools with varying names like ‘*Katchi Class*’ or ‘un-admitted’ children etc. These categories of children were and are being allowed to come and sit in the school, but there are no standardized facilities for the provision of proper Early Childhood Education available to them. Problems facing the ECE sector of education include lack of comprehensive ECE policies or minimum standards for ECE, lack of

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<sup>27</sup>National Education Management Information System. Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM) Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Government of Pakistan. “Pakistan Education Statistics”. 2017.

ECE materials, facilities and resources at the school level including teachers, no proper system for supervising and monitoring ECE classes and budget deficiencies. Pre-service teacher training courses and regular in-service teacher training workshops do not cover learning needs of children of age 3 to 5. Primary school teachers are not trained in interactive methodologies of teaching to foster joyful learning among children at the pre-primary level<sup>28</sup>.

The total pre-primary enrolment rate is 8.745 million. Public sector has an enrolment of 4.532 million (52%), while the private sector has 4.212 million (48%) enrolment<sup>29</sup>.

A report by ASER reported the decline in ECE enrolment with the following findings<sup>30</sup>.

### **ASER also reports further declines in ECE enrolment**

- From 2014 when ECE enrolment was recorded at 39%, it declined to 37% in 2015 and in 2016 it is 36% in rural Pakistan.
- Overall, government schools have witnessed a reduction of 7.5% (63%) in enrolment for ECE, whereas private sector has 37% of total enrolment with a commensurate enhancement of 7.5% since 2015.
- ICT, GB, FATA and Sindh have recorded an increase in overall ECE enrolment from 15% (ICT) to 2% (Sindh), whilst Balochistan remains static at 22%.

It should be acknowledged however, that national and provincial commitments to ECE can be seen in Legal Provisions in Acts for Implementation of Article 25 (A): Sindh, Punjab, and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) have passed laws for implementation of

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Government of Pakistan. National Education Policy. 2017.

<sup>29</sup> National Education Management Information System. Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM)

Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Government of Pakistan. "Pakistan Education Statistics". 2017.

<sup>30</sup> SAFED & ITA. *ASER 2016: Annual Status of Education Report Pakistan*. August 2017.

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Article-25 (A). These Acts<sup>31</sup> contain provisions of pre-primary and Early Childhood Education and ensure provision of free pre-primary and ECE for children above the age of three years. Moreover, all the four provinces have developed long term education sector plans in collaboration with international donors all of which include provisions for promotion of ECE in the respective provinces<sup>32</sup>. Implementation of some of these initiatives in Punjab and Sindh can be seen in the establishment of Early Childhood Education (ECE) Rooms or Centres in certain selected schools<sup>33</sup>.

**Target 4.3 “By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university”.**

**&**

**Target 4.4 “By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship”.**

It is imperative for the youth of Pakistan to be able to access higher levels of education and technical and vocational training to provide them with learning opportunities which can be transformed into lucrative income generating avenues. Over the years Pakistan’s youth bulge has magnified to nearly 56-60% of the population. This cohort if equipped with education and relevant technical and vocational skills can be assets for the development of the society. Tertiary education, skills training and adult learning are critical in improving the human resource base of the country to effectively meet the present demands of trained manpower in infrastructure & energy sectors particularly with the advent of CPEC.

There are 5,470 higher secondary schools/ inter colleges in education system of Pakistan. The share of these institutions in overall

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<sup>31</sup> Article 9 of Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2012 (for ICT) passed by Senate and National Assembly; Article 9 of Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2013 passed by Sindh Assembly; and Article 10 of Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014.

<sup>32</sup> Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Government of Pakistan. National Education Policy, 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Government of Pakistan. Annual Progress Report (2013-14) on Implementation of National Plan of Action to Accelerate Education-Related MDGs (2013-16). 2015.

education system of the country is about 2%. The total enrolment at higher secondary schools/ inter colleges stage is 1.697 million of which total boys' enrolment at higher secondary schools/ inter colleges stage is 1.022 million (60%), whereas, the girls' enrolment is 0.674 million (40%).

The total enrolment at degree college stage i.e. in grades 13 and 14, is 0.937 million. Of this, the total boys' enrolment excluding Punjab at degree colleges' stage is 0.101 million (54%), whereas, the girls' enrolment is 0.086 million (46%).

The total enrolment in the universities, i.e., at post graduate stage, is 1.355 million. The total male enrolment in the universities is 0.753 million (56%), whereas, the female enrolment is 0.602 million (44%).

The total male enrolment in the technical and vocational institutions is 0.203 million (64%), whereas, the female enrolment is 0.111 million (36%).

These numbers show a significant proportion of Pakistan's youth unable to attain higher levels of education. It is further seen that public institutions lack standardization and regulation and thus are unable to provide a quality of education that can support and train youth for initiatives like entrepreneurship and relevant, modern and contemporary skills development. Similarly, the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector does not have the capacity to deliver training and professional skills for Pakistan's workforce in general and youth in particular. With issues of access, quality and equity in delivering higher education and vocational services, Pakistan is not able to fully tap into its potential youth dividend.

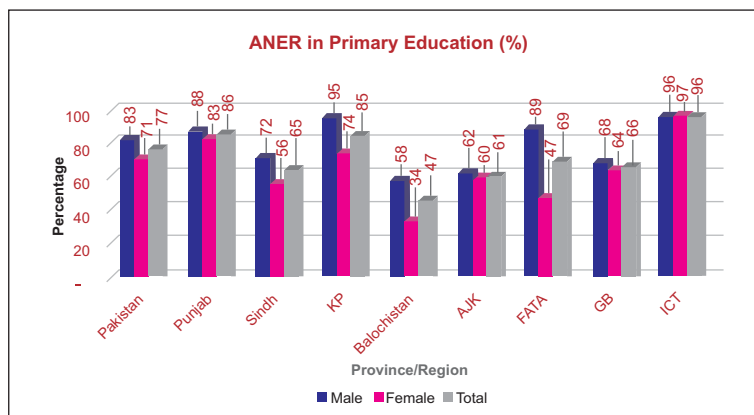
**Target 4.5 “By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations”**  
&

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**Target 4.6 “By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy”**

### Gender Disparity

Despite overall progress in enrolling more girls and boys in primary schools there still exists a wide gulf between boys and girls in literacy rates<sup>34</sup> in Pakistan. Historically, women in Pakistan are less likely to be educated as compared to men and the statistics reveal troubling trends which confirm this disparity. The gender gap in education persists as national and provincial enrolment of girls remains lower than that of boys. In Pakistan, of all the primary-aged (5-9 years) children, 77% are enrolled in primary school. However, wide variance is displayed across province and sex. The highest adjusted net primary enrolment rate is in ICT (96%). This is followed by Punjab (86%) and KP (85%).



Courtesy: AEPAM

This gender gap becomes more visible at the secondary or higher school level, where new enrolments include 1.25 million boys and 0.90 million girls over the past 2 years. This is largely due to the

<sup>34</sup> Literacy, here has a modest definition i.e. it includes an understanding, read and write a short, simple statement on everyday life and perform basic arithmetic operations.



inadequate infrastructural development, (such as the lack of toilets, availability of water and boundary walls) which leads to higher drop-out rates for girls. Other frequently cited reasons include unwillingness of parents, inaccessibility of secondary and higher schools for girls, poor quality of education and teacher absenteeism.

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2016-17, figures report that literacy rates in Pakistan stand at 70% for males and 48% for females. Rural areas display a dismal literacy rate of 36% for females and 63% for males while the situation in urban locales is slightly better as 68% females are literate vis-à-vis 81% males<sup>35</sup>. Regional disparities indicate that 98.8% of the women belonging to rural background and 29.3% belonging to the richest urban dwellers lack access to education, while in total 74% have an average of less than 6 years of education. The data reveals that poor, rural Pashtun women are the most disadvantaged in literacy<sup>36</sup>.

### Children with Disabilities

This target categorically enlists and emphasizes the inclusion of marginalized groups such as children with disabilities. Pakistan ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2011, Article 24 of which states, “*State parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realising this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, states parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels*”. All provinces also subscribe to this view and outline in their sectoral education plans the need to mainstream marginalized children and avoid their exclusion based on their perceived disabilities. In spite of this it is seen that there are an estimated 4% of children with disabilities enrolled in government and private schools in Pakistan, whereas the remaining 96% are out of school<sup>37</sup>. A whole host of reasons can be identified as causes of

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<sup>35</sup> Ministry of Finance. *Pakistan Economic Survey (2016-17) – Chapter on Education*.

<sup>36</sup> “UN Women Report Shows Worrying Degree of Gender Inequality in Pakistan”. Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1634815/1-un-women-report-shows-worrying-degree-gender-inequality-pakistan/>

<sup>37</sup> Manzoor, A., Hameed, A. and Nabeel, T. (2016), Voices of Out of School Children with Disabilities in Pakistan. *J Res Spec Education Needs*, 16: 1099–1103. doi:10.1111/1471-3802.12256. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1471-3802.12256/full>

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exclusion of these children from education namely, social and cultural views regarding disabilities, lack of skilled professionals and teachers, inadequate budgetary allocation, lack of accessibility and poor infrastructure to support and facilitate children requiring special attention.

Moreover, the condition of separate special education schools that do exist under the provincial governments are reported to be in poor conditions. Apart from the fact that these are few in number and most children from rural areas do not have access to them, there is reportedly high absenteeism both by teachers and district education officers in these schools. The human resource is very poor as there are hardly any teacher training programmes. A further disturbing aspect of this is that these institutions are still labelled as being for the “handicapped” or “mentally retarded” and there remain pressure groups which prefer to have the segregated education system, thus thwarting the very notion of inclusion<sup>38</sup>.

However, in recent years, certain initiatives have been taken by the provincial governments to improve facilities for differently abled children.

### Special Education Initiatives – Punjab

The Special Education Department in Punjab is working towards providing a conducive learning environment to the special children which fits in with the government’s commitment to SDG targets for inclusion. The objectives of this sector include: Enhancement of enrolment of special children in the Institutions / Centres of Special Education through improved facilities; Skilled development & rehabilitation of disabled students; Providing required facilities to special students such as computers, furniture & teaching aids etc.; Strengthening of public private partnership and Welfare betterment & well-being of children with disabilities. For the FY 2017-18, an

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<sup>38</sup> Shah, Rukhsana. “Law for Inclusive Education”. Dawn. February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015. [https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=02\\_11\\_2015\\_008\\_006](https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=02_11_2015_008_006)

allocation of PKR 1.06 billion has been made for 15 on-going and 37 new schemes<sup>39</sup>.

### **Special Education Initiatives – KP**

The Elementary and Secondary Education Department (ESED) has allocated PKR 300 million for F.Y. 2017-18 to carry out initiatives to increase the enrolment of children with disabilities, children from religious minorities and children from economically disadvantaged households. Budget allocation of PKR 6.35 million has been made for Social Welfare, Special Education which includes provisions for establishment of Schools for Deaf and Dumb Children at Charsadda and Upgradation/Construction of a Special Education Institute up to Secondary level in each Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa<sup>40</sup>.

### **Special Education Initiatives – Sindh**

Budgetary allocation of PKR 1.1 billion has been made for the C.F.Y. for the Special Education Department which has since 2011 been operating to improve the quality of education provided in Special Education schools/ centers through various initiatives. These have included the development of a provincial policy for Special Education & Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (2012-2022), Pilot School Project for 15 Special Education Institutes, acquiring more vehicles & transport facilities for children in Special schools, to make education more accessible<sup>41</sup>.

The Sindh Differently-Abled Persons (Employment, Rehabilitation and Welfare) Act, 2014 that was unanimously passed in the beginning of 2015 and later amended in 2017 is one of the many laws that has yet to be implemented by the Sindh government. With its implementation the Act can waive admission fees at

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<sup>39</sup> Punjab White Paper Budget 2017-18, Government of the Punjab – Finance Department, June 2017.

<sup>40</sup> KP White Paper 2017-18, Government of KP – Finance Department, June 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Sindh Budget Speech 2017-18, Government of Sindh.

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public educational institutions for people with disabilities as well as 75% of the tuition fee<sup>42</sup>.

### Special Education Initiatives – Balochistan

Special education comes under the umbrella of the Social Welfare, Special Education and Human Rights Department, Balochistan. Social Welfare, Special Education & Human Rights Department is trying to provide better free education and all sorts of facilities boarding lodging, books, uniforms, supporting devices i.e. wheel chairs, tricycles, crutches, white sticks and hearing aids with vocational skills to children with disabilities<sup>43</sup>.

The Government of Balochistan earmarked PKR 9.82 billion for Social Security & Social Welfare for fiscal year 2017-18 which includes PKR 2.5 million allocated to the setting up of a Special Education Complex in Zhob Division<sup>44</sup>.

The Balochistan Assembly passed the Balochistan Persons with Disabilities Act, No II of 2017 in June 2017, which among other things assures equity in the education for people with disabilities, includes quotas and 50% flexibility in fee in public and private institutions and provision of special institutions.

**Target 4.7 “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”.**

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<sup>42</sup> Kazi, Mudassir. “Law on People with Disabilities Awaits Implementation”. Tribune. October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1526812/law-people-disabilities-awaits-implementation/>

<sup>43</sup> Social Welfare, Special Education & Human Rights Department of Balochistan: [http://balochistan.gov.pk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=355&Itemid=481](http://balochistan.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=355&Itemid=481)

<sup>44</sup> Baluchistan Budget 2017-18, “Social Welfare” Government of Baluchistan – Finance Department, June 2017.

This target asserts that education has a value and purpose beyond the standard learning indicators of literacy and numeracy which involves building societies conducive to peaceful and sustainable development. This target thus incorporates a focus on fulfilment of human rights, peace and responsible citizenship, gender equality, sustainable development and health. It is often alleged that while government curriculums do make some attempts to incorporate ethical values into some subjects, the style is often didactic and the content is limited to few chapters in the Social Studies and Islamiyat books.

According to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2017, emphasis is laid on an inclusive curriculum including provisions for topics like health, civic education, religious, ethnic, and social harmony, peace, tolerance, human rights, moral values, civic sense, character building, democratic behavior and social responsibility among the students. This was previously lacking in the NEP 2009 which did not explicitly contain civic education objectives<sup>45</sup>.

Inclusion of these provisions is therefore a commendable step, however implementation of this curriculum needs strong will and commitment at the government and private levels. Civic education, a conception of human rights and a focus on maintaining the sanctity of the environment is the need of the hour to maintain a sustainable social order.

### **SDGs – Means of Implementation**

In addition to these seven targets, three Means of Implementation of achieving the targets and overall goal of education by 2030 are also highlighted in the SDGs Agenda;

**4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.**

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<sup>45</sup> Hussain, S. (2007). Why civic education is a must. Dawn. Available at: [http://ecommons.aku.edu/pakistan\\_jed\\_pdck/59](http://ecommons.aku.edu/pakistan_jed_pdck/59)

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This target addresses the need for adequate physical infrastructure, safe and inclusive environments which nurture a learning environment for all, irrespective of gender or physical/mental disabilities. The need for children, in particular girls, to feel safe is paramount in this context since, sexual violence and harassment remain a significant barrier for girls' education. Given, the skewed educational statistics of children with disabilities and girls in Pakistan, these measures should be taken up with urgency in order to create a level playing field for attainment of education.

**4.b By 2020 substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.**

Scholarship programs can play an important role in providing quality education to those who would otherwise be deprived of this privilege, such as those economically deprived or vulnerable in terms of gender or disability. International scholarships can play an important role particularly at the tertiary level of education and can help increase access to global knowledge, capacity building and enrichment in areas of technology and applied research, which can then be usefully adapted to local conditions to contribute to overall development.

**4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states.**

Given that teachers are fundamental to imparting good quality education, they need to be trained and empowered with modern pedagogical techniques which can in turn contribute to the child's overall development. Similarly, it is important to ensure that teachers are remunerated adequately, monitored effectively, qualified professionally and supported by effective, efficient and well-resourced systems of governance.

### SPARC’s Efforts

SPARC provides **Non-Formal Education (NFE)** including basic literacy and numeracy training to children visiting its Centers for Street Children (CSCs) and tries its utmost to mainstream them into regular schools. The NFE syllabus is based on credentials that may enable them to cope better with a formal education system. Generally, children are provided NFE for three months, followed by attempts to mainstream them into government schools; however, children can avail the NFE facility for as long as they like. Below is a record of SPARC’s street children who have been mainstreamed into public schools over the years.

SPARC's Centers for Street Children				
Children Mainstreamed				
	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total
Rawalpindi	264	182	225	671
Hyderabad	62	55	95	212
Peshawar	56	10	22	88
Multan	154	6	0	160

### Impact of SPARC’s CSCs

In an attempt to highlight the plight of street children and to determine the various causes leading up to their life on the streets, SPARC conducted a baseline assessment of street children targeting 100 households from four cities. The children and parents interviewed were engaged via SPARC’s Centers for Street Children in Rawalpindi, Multan, Peshawar and Hyderabad. The aim of this assessment was to determine the major issues tied to street children and to estimate various indicators to determine their access to education, along with their access to healthcare, their engagement in child labour (including hazardous work), incidence of violence and various psycho-social problems associated with communities and children surviving on the streets.

During an assessment of the reading and writing skills of children, it was discovered that 87% children could not read and 96% children

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could not write in even a single language before joining SPARC's Centers for Street Children. Illiteracy was also found to be a major issue for parents of street children as the collected data revealed that 92% of parents interviewed could not read or write in any language.

It was observed that children joining SPARC's Centers for Street Children saw a marked improvement in their reading skills within a few months after induction. Most children were able to develop average to good reading skills, whereas 15% children seemed to face learning difficulties.

## **Recommendations**

- The federal and provincial education budgetary allocations should be increased in absolute terms and in relative terms with respect to total allocation vis-à-vis other expenditures. The increase should be made in accordance with the educational needs of the children in those areas.
- Budgetary allocations for education must be consistently and substantially increased each year to meet the target of 4% of GDP as per government commitments. The government must also ensure that the education budget is released on time and not subjected to cuts or reappropriation. For this rigorous mechanisms must be in place or existing ones be made functional.
- Budgetary allocations for education should include a higher proportion of non-salaried rather than salaried expenditure and there should be increased focus on development budget, considering the unmet demand of schools in rural and outskirts of urban areas. Primary education should be allocated a higher proportion of the federal and provincial education budgets, considering the high proportion of out-of-school-children, compromised quality of education and its lack of access.
- Effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms need to be in place to protect against under-utilization of allocated budgets and to ensure optimum resource allocation and utilization. It is equally important to have clearly defined



responsibilities and clearly specified goals to effectively evaluate accountability.

- Federal and provincial governments must widely share information regarding education budgets, allocation, utilization, educational indicators and learning outcomes to encourage transparency and a participatory form of governance. These measures can increase accountability as the government opens up space of civil society organizations and general public to voice their concerns.
- Early childhood education must be integrated into the formal system of education and adequate funding must be allocated for these programs.
- The government must take effective steps to implement Article 25-A of the Constitution, which guarantees free and compulsory education for all children of ages 5-16 years, by allocating sufficient resources to improve infrastructure of existing facilities, building more facilities where lacking, improving the quality of education and assessment techniques.
- Policies to standardize the curriculum across public-private schools and regulation of low-cost private schools and *madrassas* can help bridge the prevalent divide in learning outcomes.
- Education sector plans developed by all the provinces should be strategically aligned and accordingly recalibrated with the SDGs goals and targets. Similarly, monitoring and evaluation of the outlined targets should be made comparable with international data and SDG indicators to better inform policies and practices.
- The education system must be equipped with proper infrastructure at all levels to reduce the increasing risk of dropping out of school and to maintain the overall education system. This needs to be addressed in a gender sensitive manner keeping in view the high rate of female school dropouts at secondary and higher school levels. Accordingly, steps should be taken to ensure that children with disabilities have easy access to public service buildings including schools and recreational facilities.

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- Resources must be spent not only on improving infrastructure development but also on ensuring that teaching quality and standards are improved through better teacher training and provision of learning/ teaching material.
- Education must also involve a focus on inclusivity, peace and tolerance, global citizenship, human rights and sustainable lifestyles and development.

## Conclusion

If there were two major challenges singled out for ramifications in Pakistan, health and education would stand at the top of the list. The education crisis in Pakistan is not only due to millions of out of school children but the rather lack of interest of children and parents in substituting education with child labour, early marriages (in the case of young girls), and other coping mechanisms where children are often considered as economic tools.

There are a number of reasons for the aforementioned dilemma. During SPARC's recent survey in District Haripur<sup>46</sup>, parents who had children engaged in child labour spoke of the lack of quality in public sector education which often renders most graduates jobless. Furthermore, corporal punishment and lack of facilities don't encourage both children or parents to opt for public sector education, whereas the alternative is too expensive for poor households to afford. The opportunity cost is to employ children in labour or to use young girls as a coping mechanism by resorting to practices such as bride price. In this case not only is there a need to target behavior change, the scope of which needs to be massive but there is also a need to focus on poverty alleviation and uplift the quality of public schools.

Currently, the curriculum of public schools is not only outdated but the examination process is so flawed that children acquiring 90% marks in school exams know nothing of the subject and resort to memorizing entire courses. This attitude is also encouraged by public

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<sup>46</sup> IBID

school teachers, which are often less qualified than their counterparts employed at expensive private sector institutions.

Regardless of governmental claims, the state of education in Pakistan needs an overhaul. This reform needs to also include a similar, if not uniform curriculum across the country to counter the vast disparities found in the education structure from one province to another, as well as across public and private sector educational institutions. There also is a need to offer better educational facilities for adults, particularly in helping them polish their language skills, be it English language, Urdu or regional languages.

Unless there is a major reform to uplift the state of education in Pakistan, exceeding the 2.5% budgetary allocation, the state of education shall continue to decline.