

A Comparative Study of Enhancing Girls' Primary Education in Government Girls Primary Schools and Community Model

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Abstract

According to Economic Survey of Pakistan (2008-2009), Pakistan is committed for achieving the millennium development goals. All the agencies related to the development of education are striving for enhancing primary education in Pakistan. Primary education is being discussed, as an important issue at global level. The United Nations program of Education For All (EFA) was promoted in response to the commitment made at Dakar World Summit. The educational initiative taken by the Government of Pakistan was to increase the enrollment in primary education, which was reinforced by a loan to the value of \$64.2 million approved by the Asian Development Bank for the Girls Primary Education Project. These funds were to be employed for construction of 873 Community Model Schools. The average cost of a typical Community Model School was an estimated 3,000,000 Pakistani rupees. A comparative research may help to assess the development pace of project, and explore the ways for adapting timely remedial measures. This research aims to compare the enrollment of students in Community Model Schools and Government Girls Primary School in Punjab. However, the accessible population was 350 schools (175 Community Model Schools and 175 Government Girls Primary Schools from 35 districts of Punjab. From each district, 10 Headmistresses, 20 teachers, 100 students, 100 parents, and 10 administrators were randomly selected. Student's data of enrollment was collected through the school records. Data was analyzed by using descriptive information by applying frequency and percentages to compare both types of schools. Results showed that enrolment of Community Model Schools was better as compared to Government Girls Primary Schools.

Keywords: Girls' Pre-marry education, Govt Girls Pre-marry schools, EFA (Education for All), CMS (Community Model School), Dakar Framework.

Introduction

Almost all the Asian countries have acknowledged the developing quality of education as one of their top national priorities. Although effective national education policy and planning and substantial training programs for educators and heads of schools have increased the access and enhanced the quality of school education. Dissatisfaction exists with the competence of education systems to attain national economic goals and social aspiration. To some extent access to school and expansion of education are now attaining attention as priority for prime quality schooling. In this regard, international agencies are helping our policy makers and their focus is on framing and execution of policies, actions and programs for the advancement of quality education. To convert the budding attentions into feasible policies are the most important challenge for educational planners.

Pakistan endorses UNO's conventions on EFA (Education For All) and has shown commitment for enhancement of basic education in the Dakar Framework to achieve EFA. The government has opted for Dakar Framework to develop responsive, participatory and accountable systems of educational governance and management. This commitment is very important as Literacy rate in Pakistan among girls could not go beyond 29% till 2008 and even now it is not at par with the male literacy rate, which is 51% (Government of Pakistan, PSLM, 2009).

An overview of education history shows that when Pakistan came into being in 1947 over all literacy rate was 10%. Pakistan started using the foreign aid to cope with the situation in 1960 by becoming the member of Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). There is a close link among the accomplishment of our literacy goals and foreign aid. In the very beginning, a researcher (Irfan, 1994) has found that an aid to higher education channelized towards the basic education another researcher Mehmood (1998) points to the fact that foreign agencies granted aid to Federal and Provincial governments for projects in the education technology and other sectors. The aid included interest free loans, grants, technical assistance and food aids etc. An educational researcher Shah (2005) traces the history of contribution of ADB and writes that financial guidance and assistance in education sector came into operation in Pakistan through ADB in 1968. To streamline any system certain tangible plan is always needed and the project of ADB to fund CMS is its illustration. The ADB launched this project with an amount of \$64.2 million. The loan facility was extended for the period stretched over 1990 – 1995 but unluckily the project could not be completed by 1998. The targets of this project were enhancement of the participation rate of girls, development of girls' education, training of female participants with reference to learning, increase in number of female teachers, provision of supporting environment for continuity in girls' education, staff training for primary education and establishment of Community Model Schools for girls throughout the country. Besides this, the Asian Development Bank also financed different educational projects in the Punjab,

which were under the Ministry of Education with the collaboration of Manpower and Industry Department (Government of Punjab, 2003). Hence, it is not only the public sector but also the private sector which contributes towards imparting primary education.

In the past, the government of Pakistan has taken various initiatives in education sector with special consideration to primary organizations that resulted in national literacy campaigns, the innovative mosque schools and the “*nai roshni*” schools. Similarly, at government level, liaison with the Asian Development Bank has resulted in the establishment of a network of girls schools. Since a substantial need was felt for a more effective school system in Pakistan, Community Model Schools were developed parallel to the Government Girls Primary Schools. It seems appropriate to mention that Government Girls Primary Schools are schools with two PTC teachers and less physical facilities run by the government funds in a stereotypical fashion. The Community Model Schools have the financial assistance from the government and the specific concern for the community. Community Model Schools are like other Government Girls Primary Schools but significantly different in respect of qualification of headmistresses, availability of physical facilities and community mobilization. The educational initiative taken by the Government of Pakistan to increase girls’ primary education was reinforced by a loan to the value of \$64.2 million approved by the Asian Development Bank for the Girls Primary Education Project. These funds were to be employed for construction of 873 Community Model Schools. These Community Schools meant to be a cooperation of national, state and local organizations working in the education sector. They promoted partnership among the schools and other community resources. A typical Community Model School in Pakistan includes a building encompassing well lit class-rooms provided with desks, chairs, fans, a playground equipped with recreational facilities in the form of slides, swings and seesaws. Further infrastructural support extended to the construction of a headmistress’s office, a staff room, a store, toilets and water facilities. Five female teachers and a headmistress, with higher qualifications, were to be recruited and trained for each school. Further a community committee was to be formed to manage the school and to convince local parents to send their daughters to attend school on a regular basis. The average cost of a typical Community Model School was an estimated 3,000,000 Pakistani Rupees. The land for the school was provided free of cost by the community in each Union Council which proves the contribution of the community towards educational empowerment in their locality. This method is used by the Pakistani government to reduce the cost of establishing rural schools by requiring communities to donate a plot of land for the school (Government of Punjab, Standard Manual, 2004).

Such projects that facilitate the spread of education in rural areas, demonstrate the willingness of the local community to take positive steps towards achieving the goal of universal primary education. Although government-run schools are also working but the impact achieved by the Community Model School is much greater. Given the evident commonality of factors among Government Girls

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Primary Schools and community model schools for the purpose of intellectual clarification, it becomes imperative to explore how the two types of schools differ in terms of performance.

These Community Model Schools were established in the last decade of the twentieth century. The second phase had the objectives to induct all the children of project areas into class I, bringing the dropout rate to zero percent, providing optimum facilities for monitoring and preparation and provision of educational materials. Girls Primary Education Project (GPEP) was stretched over the period 1990-95 but it could not be completed earlier than 1998. The targets were augmentation of participation rate of girls, development of girls' education, amplification of the number of female teachers, training of female teachers, provision of supporting environment for continuity in education and the establishment of Community Model Schools for girls in the whole country. The underlying principle of focusing on girls in the context of basic education reforms continues to be simply the higher development returns to national investment that accompanies the education of girls (Government of Punjab, 2003).

On the other side, in primary schools, as Farooq (1994) states, children of age 5 plus are admitted, the cycle completes within 5 years and the curriculum for primary classes remain practically the same throughout the country. Instructions are followed in the national language or the community language of the area respectively. Most of the primary schools, especially in rural areas, do not have proper physical facilities. Their focus remains on basic mathematical and literacy skills (3Rs), appreciation of traditions, values and socialization. Schooling has been made compulsory through appropriate legislation and it has been proposed that Mathematics and Science must be taught in English at this stage. The most neglected part in education is the girls' primary education which is being discussed in the following lines.

Certain problems lie with the public school systems which do not go with the population and economic growth. The situation in Pakistan about primary education regarding girls has not been satisfactory especially in rural areas which lagged behind because of low participation and lack of commitment. The dearth of girls' schools in villages made things more difficult, because primary education was ignored and damaged due to loss of funding. Encouraging girls to remain in school until they complete primary education has increasingly become a priority of national and international communities. Targeting girls' education is a key strategy for increasing the competence and success of school system (Pandey, 2004). Hussain (2003) has made a research on the role of Community Schools that shows that the rural literacy has been enhanced by the quality education given by the community owned institutions. No system can work without the finances and the success of community schools owes a great deal to ADB.

It needs to be taken into account the dropout situation of Pakistani primary schools when the Community Model Schools (Funded by ADB) started their function. Ghafoor and Islam-ud-din (1990) have highlighted that low enrollment at primary level was a serious problem being faced by Pakistani schools. It was

visualized on the bases of researches that the key factor of low enrollment of children was that the parents particularly in the rural areas agreed to send their boys to schools but disliked sending their daughters to schools. The major cause of this trend was illiteracy and poverty of the parents. These factors had their own impact on enrolment of the students at the early stages of education.

Moreover, Ediger and Rao (2006) argue that students perform poorly in school because of a high absentee rate. Consistent attendance creates understanding and develops skill and attitudes of the students. They suggest that teacher and administrator must work with parents to assist the latter to have their offspring attend the school regularly. Parents need to be guided to see the effect of schooling on the student.

The purpose of this study is to maximize the utility of good experiences as Sharma (2005) has observed that education of human child is similar all over the world. It is a comparative study towards development. The performance of different types of schools is examined. The purpose is to share knowledge in education and assimilation of good points of performance of other schools in order to improve teaching and learning process.

It has been reported about Primary Education Project (PEP) (1999) that there has been an increase in primary school enrollment. It has been estimated that the participation rate for primary school (grade 1-5) is 77% and it has been calculated that female percentage is 62%. It is obvious that performance of a school is directly related to the enrollment of students in the school and consequently a higher dropout rate shows poor performance.

Girls' dropout rates are comparatively higher than those of boys in both the rural and urban areas. However, it does not take into account the socio-cultural issues, particularly those associated with women. In addition, it overlooks the fact that most of the children in elementary schools drop out of school because of family pressure to work at home or to find employment as cheap labor in farmlands during planting and harvesting seasons. Other contributing factors are the family's poverty, a lack of quality education in the schools, and the children's lack of interest in school.

According to the survey reports of 123 Community Model Schools in the districts of Faisalabad, Bhakkar and Khanewal in Punjab province, Quality Improvement Centers (QICs) also provide these statistics regarding the participation (admission rate) in the Nursery classes. The admission (participation) of girls has increased from 162.3 girls to 200.3 girls per school during this decade. This increase is in the prep class. It was 26.6 girls per school in 1997 which has increased to 52.9 girls in 2002. It is almost double; however, this increase is minor in higher classes (i.e, 0.3 girls only). In Government Girls Schools, the number of girl students during three years out of the last five years has increased on the average by 20.4% in each school. The participation rate is better in class one; however, it could not touch the digit of 100%.

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Now, it becomes imperative to know the ground realities regarding the Community Model Schools in terms of enrollment with respect to catchment areas.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to collect and utilize documentary data from the school record in order to see the difference of enrollment of the students of the government girls' primary schools and community model schools in Punjab. The study compares enrollment of students of community model schools and government girls' primary schools in Punjab.

Research Question

What is the difference between school enrollment rate of students of Community Model Schools and Government Girls Primary Schools?

Methodology

The study is quantitative in nature. The data was collected from the school record of Community Model School and Government Girls Primary School. A sample of 350 schools from Punjab province was randomly selected. The answers of the research question was obtained from the school record with the help of a questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of the following questions: 1- Name of the school, 2- Total number of the students, 3- Number of students in class I in 2001, 4- Number of students in class V in 2005.

Data Analysis Procedure

All the administered surveys which were received from respondents were examined and incomplete surveys were removed from analysis. The statistical techniques including mean, frequency, and percentage were used to describe the answer of the research question. The answer of the research question was discussed by the document analysis and through the observations of these schools. To compare the enrollment of the students, the data was taken from the school record. The data consisted of number of students in class 1 in 2001 and the number of students in class 5 in 2005. The data has been presented in the following tables.

Comparison of total number of students among Community Model Schools and Government Girls Primary Schools in Punjab in year 2005

Table 1

Comparison of Total Number of Students among Community Model Schools and Government Girls Primary Schools in Punjab in Year 2005

| Number of Students | Community Model Schools | | Government Girls Primary Schools | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| 1-25 | 8 | 4.6 | 11 | 6.3 |
| 26-50 | 19 | 10.9 | 15 | 8.6 |
| 51-75 | 13 | 7.4 | 34 | 19.4 |
| 76-100 | 14 | 8.00 | 20 | 11.4 |
| 100+ above | 121 | 69.1 | 95 | 54.3 |
| Total | 175 | 100% | 175 | 100% |
| Average | 89.04 | | 83.37 | |

Table 1 given above shows that 6.3% Government Girls Primary Schools have 1-25 students in 5th class as compared to 4.6% Community Model Schools, 10.9% Community Model Schools have 26-50 students as compared to 8.6% Government Girls Primary Schools. 19.4% Government Girls Primary Schools have 51-75 students as compared to 7.4% Community Model Schools whereas 11.4% Government Girls Primary Schools have 76-100 students as compared to 8% Community Model Schools. Most of the Community Model Schools (69.1%) have 100 and above students as compared to 54.3% Government Girls Primary Schools. It can be seen from the table (1) that the total number of students in Community Model Schools is more in the class intervals (26-50) and (100+above) than Government Girls Primary Schools.

Table 2

Comparison of Number of Students (Class 1) in 2001 among Community Model Schools and Government Girls Primary Schools in Punjab

| Students | Community Model Schools | | Government Girls Primary Schools | |
|----------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1-25 | 63 | 36.0 | 80 | 45.7 |
| 26-50 | 41 | 23.4 | 53 | 30.3 |
| 51-75 | 31 | 17.7 | 19 | 10.9 |
| 76-100 | 24 | 13.7 | 17 | 9.7 |
| >100 | 16 | 9.1 | 6 | 3.4 |
| Total | 175 | 100 | 175 | 100 |
| Average | 46 | | 36.44 | |

Table 2 compares the number of students in class I in 2001. It shows that 45.7% Government Girls Primary Schools have 1-25 numbers of students as compared to 36.01% Community Model Schools. 30.3% Government Girls Primary Schools have 25-50 numbers of students as compared to 23.4% Community Model Schools; while 17.7 % Community Model Schools have 51-75 numbers of students in class I as compared to 10.9% of Government Girls Primary

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Schools. Moreover 13.7% and 9.1% Community Model Schools have 76-100 and 100 and above students in class one as compared to 9.7% and 3.4 % of Government Girls Primary Schools.

Table 3
Comparison of Number of Students (Class 5) in 2005 among Community Model Schools and Government Girls Primary Schools in Punjab

| Number of Students | Community Model Schools | | Government Girls Primary Schools | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------------------------|------------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1-25 | 77 | 44.0 | 150 | 85.7 |
| 26-50 | 31 | 17.7 | 19 | 10.9 |
| 51-75 | 4 | 2.7 | 3 | 1.7 |
| 76-100 | 3 | 1.7 | 2 | 1.1 |
| >100 | 29 | 16.6 | 1 | 0.6 |
| Total | 175 | 100 | 175 | 100 |
| Average | 32.8 | | 17.95 | |

Table 3 compares the number of students in class 5 in 2005. It shows that 85.7 % Government Girls Primary Schools have 1-25 number of students as compared to 44% Community Model Schools. 17.7% of Community Model Schools have 25-50 numbers of students as compared to 10.9% Government Girls Primary Schools, while 1.7% Government Girls Primary Schools have 51-75 numbers of students in class 5th as compared to 2.7% of Community Model Schools. 1.7% Government Girls Primary Schools have 76-100 students in class 5th as compared to 1.7% of Community Model Schools.

Whereas 16.6% Community Model Schools have above 100 students in class 5th as compared to 0.6% Government Girls Primary Schools in 2005. It can be viewed from the table below that the number of students are more in Government Girls Primary Schools for the class intervals (1-25), (26-50) and for class intervals (51- 75), (76-100) and above 100 students in Community Model Schools in class 5 are more.

Discussion and Conclusions

The conclusion of this study exhibits better performance of Community Model Schools than Government Girls Primary Schools in terms of number of students. From the study of the literature, it has been established that many factors may influence the school performance regarding above mentioned indicators of performance. Most of the findings are logical and are in accordance with the literature reviewed. One broad purpose of the study is to make generalization on the basis of descriptive data. However, the following discussion of some selected findings is based on the judgment by comparing different findings of various studies.

Community Model Schools have low dropout rate, better school administration and school performance, better maintenance of enrollment record,

academic performance record and availability of playground and computers than that of Government Girls Primary Schools in Punjab. The main reasons for high dropout rate are school environment, teachers' attitude and parents' lack of interest. As Corville-Smith's (1995) study shows that the main reason behind the drop-out is school environment (protocol, activities, and syllabus) and low attendance is due to the lack of attraction in these schools for the students. According to findings of the present study, Government Girls Primary Schools have less attraction for students because of their environment and consequently they have a higher dropout rate as compared to Community Model Schools. Epstein et al. (1997) states that when school design and implement activities that focus on attendance using involvement of parents and others in the community, it can make a difference. If the students' attendance is controlled, the dropout rate will decrease. This justified the present findings because the Community Model Schools have been established for the improvement of community and school partnership programmes which decreased drop out rate in Community Model Schools, whereas Government Girls Primary Schools fail to improve this relationship, therefore, dropout rate did not decrease here. Study by Epstein and Scheldon (2002) also supports findings of the present study. They observe that parental involvement in education is an important component in school's success and is co-related with increased attendance achievement. Epstein (1995) examined that relationship among school's success indicators, such as student's achievement and involvement of families and communities were very strong. The performance of school is directly linked with strengthening of school, family and community partnership.

Maryland (1999) reports that attendance not only affects the individual student but also the learning environment of the entire school. Finally in some locations, students' attendance is used as an indicator of how well a school is functioning. Kgaile and Morrison (2006) investigated school effectiveness in South Africa. Their study shows that internal school conditions affect school achievement and development. They also affect students' abilities and performance on entry to school and their socio-economic status together with output variables, such as students' performance in terms of public examination results, tests at different ages within school themselves.

It has been revealed by Goelman et al. (2006) that in the infant toddlers' rooms, the number of adults in the observed classrooms and the education level of observed staff members are direct indicators of quality education with reference to student-teacher ratio. In addition to this, there are indirect indicators such as parents, fees, adult-child ratio and use of the center for study purpose. The present research also shows that the better student-teacher ratio in Community Model Schools as compared to Government Girls Primary Schools helps to improve the quality of education and performance in these schools.

Another variable of the study is students' enrollment. The performance of both types of schools has been measured through the comparison of students' enrollment and it has been found that Community Model Schools have better

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students' enrollment. The enrollment rate in these schools for grade 1-5 increased due to better management, physical facilities and school environment.

In the light of the above discussion, it is clear that the enrollment rate of Community Model School is higher as compared to Government Girls Primary School. On the basis of the findings of the study reported here, it is recommended that the Government Girls Primary School should be funded. In other words, more funds should be provided to Government Girls Primary School for better enrollment rate in these schools.

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