Gender Disparity in Education
in Sindh

Situation Analysis

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### Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEPAM</td>
<td>Academy of Education Planning and Development</td>
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<td>AJK</td>
<td>Azad Jammu Kashmir</td>
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<td>AKU-IED</td>
<td>Aga Khan University-Institute of Educational Development</td>
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<td>ASER</td>
<td>Annual Status of Education Report</td>
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<td>ATM</td>
<td>Automated Teller Machine</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on Elimination of All Types of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuous Professional Development</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>ESR</td>
<td>Education Sector Reforms</td>
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<td>FATA</td>
<td>Federally Administered Tribal Area</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GEM</td>
<td>Gender Equality Measures</td>
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<td>GNP</td>
<td>Gross National Product</td>
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<td>GPI</td>
<td>Gender Parity Index</td>
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<td>HEC</td>
<td>Higher Education Commission</td>
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<td>ICPD</td>
<td>International Conference on Population and Development</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Islamabad Capital Territory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Programme</td>
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<td>KPK</td>
<td>Khyber PakhtunKhwa</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>NAVTEC</td>
<td>National Vocational and Technical Education Commission</td>
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<td>NEMIS</td>
<td>National Education Management Information System</td>
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<td>NEP</td>
<td>National Education Policy</td>
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<td>NER</td>
<td>Net Enrollment Rate</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organization</td>
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<td>NIPS</td>
<td>National Institute of Population Studies</td>
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<td>NIU</td>
<td>National Implementation Unit</td>
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<td>NPA</td>
<td>National Plan of Action</td>
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<td>OOSC</td>
<td>Out of School Children</td>
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<td>PBM</td>
<td>Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal</td>
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<td>Pakistan Engineering Council</td>
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<td>PMDC</td>
<td>Pakistan Medical and Dental Council</td>
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<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
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<td>PSLM</td>
<td>Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement</td>
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<td>RSU</td>
<td>Research Support Unit</td>
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<td>RTE</td>
<td>Right to Education</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>SERP</td>
<td>Sindh Education Reform Programme</td>
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<td>SESP</td>
<td>Sindh Education Sector Plan</td>
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<td>SSA</td>
<td>SarvaShikshaAbhivan</td>
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<td>TED</td>
<td>Teacher Education and Development</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UPE</td>
<td>Universal Primary Education</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Program</td>
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</table>
1. Introduction

Female literacy is a critical factor that directly influences a number of development indicators including national fertility rates, infant mortality, family income and productivity. The World Bank recognises girls’ education as a single development intervention with the greatest individual and social returns (Brent, 2005). Girls’ education is not only important as a social indicator and an engine for economic development leading to a greater level of health, economy, security, liberty and participation in social and political activity, but can possibly yield higher rate of return than any other investment available in the developing world (World Bank, 2002). The state of the world’s children report by UNICEF (2003) report indicates that girls’ education leads to more equitable development, stronger families, better services, better child health and effective participation in governance. Pakistan’s constitution gives the right to all children between the age group of 5-16 years to get compulsory education. Article 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan also vows to provide free and compulsory education to all children of this age.

Against the backdrop of the status of education as a key economic indicator irrespective of gender, this paper initiates a discussion on the issue of gender disproportion in education in Pakistan in general and most particularly in Sindh, provides ideas for possible actions and policy changes by the government to minimize the concerned gap. The paper looks at the state of education in the light of the overall state of urban and rural literacy, male and female child enrollment and dropout rate in Pakistan. It explores district wise literacy levels, enrolment and dropout rates at the primary and the secondary levels from 2010 onwards. It also presents the education budgets over the years to show the extent to which the educational policies have been transformed into implementation. The paper identifies the main issues preventing access to quality education and the contextual reasons for the wide gender gap that prevails in the country. In view of the challenges that Pakistan faces to ensure ‘education for all’, the paper summarises a few of the main initiatives that have been taken by the government to improve the state of education.
The study also makes a cross analysis by observing the challenges faced by other countries with respect to gender discrimination and the measures taken by them to address the issues of gender disparity.

2. Contextualizing the Problem

The political paradigm shifts in Pakistan over a span of almost 69 yearshave impacted the educational policies of the country. After the first year of its independence, Pakistan signed the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights and endorsed to Article 26 (1) that affirmed that everyone had the right to education. Education would be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages and that elementary education would be compulsory.(United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). Pakistan made commitments to improve its policies by specifying its focus on illiteracy in 1973’s Constitution, Article 37-B which made a commitment that the state [of Pakistan] would reduce illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within a minimum possible period.(Constitution of Pakistan, 1973).

2.1 Low female literacy rate prevails in the country. Despite the efforts to promulgate access to free and compulsory education, the academic situation in the country presents a bleak picture. Pakistan is in a state of an education emergency and is still struggling with myriad problems, of which the predicament of the female child remains a grave concern. According to the United Nations’ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015), of the 188 million people in 2015, more than five times than in 1950, 57 per cent women were still illiterate, poor and had no access to basic health services. The female literacy rate therefore stands very low. The Pakistan Economic Survey 2014-15 states that the country’s overall female literacy rate has come down by one% from 48 percent in 2012-13 to 47 percent in 2013-14. The problem is compounded further when the number and percentiles of out of school children are analysed. The Pakistan Education Statistics (2013-2014) report says that 6.2 million children are still out of school, out of which 2.9 million reside in Punjab, 1.8 in Sindh, 0.54 million in Baluchistan and 0.4 million in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

2.2 Factors that lead to dropout rates Among Girls. The struggle for the right of education for women has been a part of the subcontinent since the nineteenth century when
Muslim reformers put in great effort to introduce female education. However progress was slow. By 1921 only four out of every 1,000 Muslim females were literate.¹

The Pakistan Standards of Living Measurement survey report 2014 looks at the causes of dropout rates in schools. The most common reason highlighted for dropout rates is that 56% boys and 33 percent girls are not willing to attend school. 21 percent of girls are not allowed by their parents. Nine percent of boys in Pakistan are not sent to school because they are needed at home compared to 12.1 percent girls, the highest number for this lies in KPK where 23 percent boys and 10 percent girls are not sent to school because it disrupts time for housework. These figures vary between provinces, as for example, a higher figure for girls is observed in Sindh where girls are required to look after their small siblings and work in the fields.

Among many other issues that create hurdles for girls to acquire education, socio-economic issues are the most significant. Preference is given to boys from the onset of birth. The act of not providing education to girls based on economic reasons largely arises from the social discrimination towards the female gender. According to a study conducted in two villages of Faisalabad, 91% of the respondents had a favorable attitude towards sending males to schools (Sandhu, Chaudhary, Akbar & Ahmad (2005). It has also been observed that the level of education of the family has an impact on the family’s decision to send girls to school, as implied by Sandhuet. al, (2005)

As stated by Jalal-ud-Din and Khan (2008) in their paper based on a study conducted in the Mardan district, gender disparity is prevalent in every aspect of a girl child’s life from provision of food, to access to health and admission to school. Hence the emergence of preference for boys, especially when low income is a major factor in decision-making. Girls are not sent to school as it is believed that any education she receives will not benefit the family because girls are not considered permanent members of the family. When the financial position of a family is weak, girls are required to stay at home rather than the boys (Jalal-ud-Din & Khan, 2008).
The overall cultural and social structure of the Pakistani society discourages women from obtaining education. It is a barrier that the women are still trying to overcome, as socially women are considered the weaker and subordinated sex.

2.3. Gender Discrimination and the international World. The world has endorsed literacy on equal bases for men and women for the individual and collective wellbeing. The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, 1994 to ICPD, 2014) took up gender parity as a prime area of concern. It says that it is essential to revisit education policies and curricula to ensure that textbook content has balanced gender representation. By eliminating gender disparity from educational materials that enforce inequality between men and women in the form of sex-stereotyping in primary and secondary education, changes in societal attitudes and improved girl enrolment could be anticipated. Likewise, there are other international forums where gender equality has been addressed. The Convention on Elimination of all types of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), the Copenhagen Declaration (1995), the Millennium Goals (2000) and the Sustainable Development Goals (2015) have worked over a period of time and established concrete action programmes to integrate gender equity in education to help in empowerment of women for social justice and socio-economic transformation.

Despite the concerted efforts of international commitments to promote female literacy and emancipation for women, the situation presents a grim scenario. Women are often deprived of having equal rights to live a life that is based on justice. An estimate made by UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2006) shows that, of the 781 million uneducated people in the world, only 36 percent are men and 64 percent are women.

Education and gender disparity has been seen in different perspectives, as in countries such as Papua New Guinea (PNG). Johnson (1993) reflects in his research how people of Papua New Guinea dismiss gender as a source of inequality. According to his findings, people in PNG take educational opportunities as the prime factor for gaining wealth and political empowerment. He says that rural women, because of their illiteracy, are considered to be a disadvantaged group and have fewer opportunities for education. In turn, they are unable to enjoy high incomes or positions in the political office. Economic prosperity is thus deeply conjoined with literacy skill development.
Another study by Filmer (2005) sheds light upon the regions of South Asia and North, Western and Central Africa. These have large female populations that have been deprived of education. Inequalities have been found in female enrollment and attainment, whereas male children have been given preference for primary and secondary education. The significant fact of this study is that, at one end, the study finds gender inequality in these countries and, on the other hand, large wealth gaps are found in the same regions. This demonstrates that, when a large proportion of the population has been deprived of acquiring knowledge and building their capacities in every aspect of life, it results in inequitable wealth distribution and economic instability.

There are countries where gender disparity is deep rooted, but over a period of time, this gap has been reduced due to better governance and improved government policies and amendments in law. Kenya is a significant example that has a history of gender disparity in its culture, from ancient times to the recent past. Kenya had deprived women of their basic right of inheritance before the 1972 Law of Succession became the part of their constitution. (Ackers, Migoli&Nzomo, 2001) Gender disparities in Kenya resulted in denial of access to education for girls, with roles confined to domestic work and early marriages. From 1943-1963, girl’s enrollment was only 25 percent of all children enrolled. According to a UNICEF study, girls’ enrollment has significantly increased as of 2012, although gender disparity still exists in various parts of Kenya.

Probing the factors involved at domestic level that hamper girls’ education and nurtures gender disparity, Rahji (2005) examines school enrollment and gender inequality of rural household children at primary level in South Western Nigeria. The findings of the study show that male enrollment is significantly higher than female enrollment. A gender gap of 12.56 percent in favour of male enrollment is recorded. The gender gap indicates how families perceive incentives they may get as a result of education. The inclination of families in favor of educating the male child rests on the economic prosperity that an educated male child can bring to the family. Another interesting factor that is derived from the study is the correlation between boys’ enrollment and their fathers’ literacy. Most enrolled male students support literate fathers who understand the significance of education for their boys, but the same understanding does not work for their female children. The study recommends incentives in the form of subsidized fee
structure, free tuition and improved public subsidies for the encouragement of higher female enrollment rate.

Analysing the invisible factors that hamper women empowerment, Kumar and Gupta (2008) attribute gender disparity in education to the result of “mental blocks” that limit the role of women to only traditional boundaries, domestic duties and family care. Even the girls who make their way to schools are bound to have limited choices to select from a vast variety of subjects and skills. Due to this typical mind set, girls are generally limited to subjects of social sciences, humanities, home sciences and languages, whereas mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, business studies are subjects that are considered to be beyond their acumen. Along with all the significant measures that have to be taken in order to bring girls back to school, it is important to work on removing the traditional mind sets and mental blocks.

Another factor that is quite persistent in many countries of the world is gender bias in textbooks (Blumberg, 2008). The study shows that textbooks cover up to 80 percent of the classroom time and contribute to dropping girls’ achievements, predominantly in developing countries. Textbooks usually have under-representation of females along with the stereotypes of male and female occupational and domestic roles. Several case studies from Romania, Syria, United States, China and India cite gender disparity. However, state level initiatives have been taken to reduce gender bias in textbooks in Latin America and Sweden. The study indicates a partial achievement in this regard as it is found to be quite expensive in altering the textbooks at a larger scale.

Ifegbesan (2010) investigates the traces of gender-stereotyping in beliefs and perceptions of 250 secondary teachers. The purpose is to see how gender-stereotyping is integrated in classroom practices. The results reveal that most teachers overtly or covertly endorse and practice gender-stereotypes and this is mainly because of lack of professional training for teachers. It has been suggested that curricula for pre and in-service teacher education must integrate a component of gender sensitivity in order to bring the required awareness and develop skills that improve attitudes in classrooms, along with classroom language and teacher-student interaction.

A country as deeply diverse as India faces gender disparity as its major challenge in education. According to Desai (2007), the Indian government has made female education its
priority by introducing a programme, ‘SarvaShikshaAbhivan’ (SSA) or ‘Education for All’. SSA places distinct emphasis on female education and has devised a programme in two categories: the first is to create ‘Pull Factors’ by increasing access and enrollment rate and retention of female students in schools, while the second programme is to create ‘Push Factors’ that foster in society the conditions conducive to guarantee girls’ education. Under this programme, several initiatives have been taken to alter the traditional strategy of only advocating people to send the female child to school. It has implemented various strategies such as providing free textbooks to female students and back-to-school bridging courses for older girls who are overage for acquiring initial literacy skills. The government has extended its repertoire of facilitating girls’ education by providing ‘Early childhood care centres’ inside the school or closely placed near the schools in order to free girls from the burden of ‘sibling care responsibilities’. Other programmes have also initiated recruitment of at least 50 per cent of female teaching staff, enhancing mothers’ role in committees and school related activities, providing free bicycles to female students for safely commuting between school and home in Haryana, and improved sports and cultural extracurricular activities within schools and communities. However, despite these steps, India still struggles to achieve the goal of education for all.

3. Pakistan’s Educational Dilemma

Education in Pakistan has never received much attention from successive governments, apart from developing policies and plans on paper. The education system in Pakistan has suffered from copious inadequacies, from a dismal allocation of financial resources required, to establishing a countrywide network of good schools, to the development of a cadre of teachers who are committed to their profession. The education sector has been symbolised by poor infrastructure, unmotivated and incompetent teaching workforce, disinterested student populace and disenchanted parents. In the vision of Pakistan’s pledge to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of universal primary education, its foremost challenge is gender imbalance, along with the resulting economic and societal constraints that preclude admittance of females to primary schools. The continuous low educational participation of girls has had an adverse impact on female empowerment and the quality of life. The slow and low national progress is a result of educational backwardness that has hampered Pakistan’s human resource development, both at the individual and national levels. Education leads to empowerment and strengthens the innate ability to gain knowledge. According to the Global Gender Gap Report, (2006), the overall
improvement in Pakistan’s literacy rate since its existence is 45 percent (56.5 percent male and 32.6 percent females, which is quite low compared with other countries in the region.

Sathar and Lloyd (1994) state that the educational priorities of Pakistan as a nation have an alarmingly abysmal record. The future looks no better. The study used the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (1991) to examine the factors that influences parents’ decisions for enrolling their children in schools. The findings indicate that a decision for their children’s basic education depends upon the parents’ education, especially the female parent and the income level of the father. Thus, if the mother is illiterate, it is unlikely that her daughter will be sent to school- a situation that continues the downward spiral. The study also refers to priority given to male child education because of financial constraints. It also found that the female child was deprived of basic primary education because of the non-availability of “single-sex schools”.

Loyd, Mete and Grant (2009) evaluate factors such as primary school environment, household scenario, economic and demographic influences upon the dropout rates in primary and middle schools in rural Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The source is the panel data collected in 1997 and 2004. The study shows the correlation of dropout rate with the school environment and teachers’ availability and efficiency, along with the household circumstances including the influx of unplanned births. The dropout rates amongst girls by the end of primary level remain high, whereas improvement is seen in boys’ enrollment and retention.

Amongst the reasons outlined by Ismail (1996) for the declining quality of education, the differences in the number of school constructed and the number of teachers inducted, especially in the case of Sindh for girls and Punjab for boys remain in the forefront. The study considered data of annual enrollment and output costs by gender, for each province for the period, 1972-73 to 1990-91. The study also observes that the increase in gender disparity growth rates results in the decline of the quality of education in the case of female primary education in Sindh and male primary education in Punjab.

Daraz, Khan and Sheikh (2013) are of the view that women education has been one of the primary factors of transformation towards progress and development. The study examines the physical and infrastructural factors that become hindrances for women’s education and results in gender inequality.
Chauhdary and Rehman (2009) research the impact of gender discrimination in education on rural poverty in Pakistan. The research determines that gender disparity in education has a far reaching, highly adverse effect on rural destitution. The empirical findings of the study indicate that a balanced male-female proportion of earners and education of household members contributes to decrease in rural poverty. The inverse relationship between gender inequality in education and rural poverty suggests that education stipulates improved employment opportunities and helps in reducing poverty in developing countries such as Pakistan.

Jabeen, Chaudhary and Omar (2014) review the extent of gender stereotypes in the English and Urdu textbooks at primary level in Punjab textbook board. The study evaluates the presence of women representation in texts and their role depiction. The findings confirm the presence of unequal gender representation and perpetuation of stereotypes in the content of textbooks. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis show the edifice of gender stereotyping through confining men and women in distinct spheres of life, where women possess lower status in family, community and society with restricted mobility as compared to men. The language used in the textbooks is based on stereotypical mindsets.

In the light of the stated issue of gender disparity and unequal role distribution of males and females in society, the National Education Policy (2009) takes serious notice of the situation and focuses on the importance of gender parity. It proposes the reduction of the disparity gap by emphasising on equal facilities provided to girls and boys. The NEP (2009) commits to equal access to education through provision of basic facilities for girls and boys alike, underprivileged/marginalized groups and special children and adults. It also recommends the organisation of a national process for educational development that will reduce disparities across provinces and areas and support coordination and sharing of experiences.

The policy remains a useful overarching document through which gender parity could be attained. However, it is significant that, despite this policy, Pakistan is far below any targeted level of achievement for Universal Primary Education by the year 2015.
4. Educational Apathy in Pakistan: A Statistical Overview

The analysis of the state of education in Pakistan and issues pertaining to gender disparity is based on data that spans over the last 5 years, i.e. from 2010-2015 and targets public sector education.

4.1 Global gender gap and the place of Pakistan. The following table shows the position of Pakistan in terms of the gender gap. The statistics presented do not paint an encouraging picture.

Table 1

Pakistan’s Position in the Global Ranking 2006 to 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overall Rank</th>
<th>Overall Score</th>
<th>Economic Participation Rank</th>
<th>Economic Participation Score</th>
<th>Educational Attainment Rank</th>
<th>Educational Attainment Score</th>
<th>Health and Survival Rank</th>
<th>Health and Survival Score</th>
<th>Political Empowerment Rank</th>
<th>Political Empowerment Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>0.552</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>0.309</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>0.805</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>0.966</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>0.546</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>0.311</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>0.768</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>0.149</td>
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<td>2012</td>
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<td>0.548</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>0.558</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>0.778</td>
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<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>countries)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>0.555</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>0.372</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>0.751</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>0.950</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(out of 134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>countries)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 1, Pakistan’s global ranking in terms of its overall performance, economic participation, educational attainment, health survival and political empowerment, is not encouraging. In 2014, Pakistan has been placed at the last rank in the regional ranking and second last in the world ranking. For the overall position, Pakistan and its economic participation has secured the second last position (141) globally. Only Yemen has been ranked below Pakistan. Furthermore, for its educational attainment, Pakistan’s rank is 132 which signifies that Pakistan is one of the last ten countries in the world that have high gender gaps in their educational attainment. The health and political empowerment indicators are slightly better as Pakistan stands at 119 for health and 85 for political empowerment. The report also indicates that Pakistan falls in the group of lower-middle income group having a per capita income range of 1,036 to 4,085 US dollars.

Table 1 also shows the data of Pakistan’s position in global ranking for the past nine years. It apparently seems that Pakistan’s rankings in the past were better compared to that of 2014. Table 2 shows Pakistan’s position in terms of educational attainment and the countries that rank below her:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pakistan is only above 9 other countries with respect to achieving educational targets. This is despite the fact that Pakistan is a nuclear power and the 6th largest country in the world.

Table 3 shows the gender gap report from 2006-14. Pakistan’s score shows slight improvement in 2014 as compared to 2006. It represents an improvement of 1.6 percent in the Global Gender Gap Report-2014.

Table 3
*Change in Score, 2006-2014*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2006 score</th>
<th>2014 score</th>
<th>Absolute change in score (2006-2014)</th>
<th>Percentage change relative to 2006 score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>0.5434</td>
<td>0.5522</td>
<td>0.0088</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4 presents the global gender gap index from 2006-2014. The global gender gap index shows Pakistan’s rank in percentage over a period of 9 years. In these years, Pakistan has shown improvement from rank 19 to 15, which could be considered as a minor progress.

Table 4
*Global Gender Gap Index 2006-2014 for Pakistan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Global Gender Gap Report has identified three indicators upon which the gender situation of countries has been evaluated. They are; (i) Economic Participation and Opportunity, (ii) Political Empowerment and (iii) Education Attainment. They are distinct in nature, yet they are interdisciplinary and are integrated with one another. Following are the findings for each indicator:

Table 5 below presents the statistics of Pakistan’s economic participation and opportunity.

Table 5

*Pakistan’s Economic Participation and Opportunity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female-Male Ratio</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour force participation</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated earned income</td>
<td>1,342</td>
<td>7,367</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 5 shows that the female participation in the labour force is 25 percent, whereas male participation stands at 86 percent, bringing Pakistan to the 137th rank. The difference in the male/female earned income ratio is 0.18 percent bringing Pakistan to 136th global ranking. Table 6 presents female representation in political empowerment:

Table 6

*Pakistan’s Political Empowerment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female-Male Ratio</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislators, senior officials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and managers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and technical</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in parliament</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in ministerial positions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years with female head of the</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>state</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated in the table above, women’s role in the political activities indicates a huge gender gap, as out of 100, only three percent of women are legislators and senior officials, 22 percent are professional and technical workers, 21 percent are in the parliament, zero percent in ministerial positions. Having Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto as the prime minister for 5 years has put Pakistan at the 23rd rank.

Table 7 exhibits the wage equality ratio and rank.

Table 7
Pakistan’s Wage equality Ratio and Rank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Survey data</th>
<th>Female-Male Ratio</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


* 1= Not at all – significantly below those of men; 7=fully – equal to those of men

The table shows that women’s wage scale is significantly low as females get half of what males are paid in Pakistan. This puts Pakistan at the position of 111 in the global ranking.

Table 8 presents the literacy rate of Pakistan together with educational enrollment at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Table 8
Pakistan’s Educational Attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female-Male Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy rate</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment in Primary</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment in Secondary</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment in Tertiary</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


4.2 National Statistics on Educational Degradation. Pakistan has not been able to fulfill its commitment to MDG 2; Universal Primary Education (UPE) by the year 2015 and has not achieved the Universal Primary Education goal as specified in the Dakar Declaration (2000),
to which it is a signatory (UNICEF, 2013). According to a report by AlifAillan, titled '25 Million Broken Promises', there are 25.02 million boys and girls between ages 5 and 16 who are not in school.

Table 9 shows the net enrollment rates from years 1990-2015.

Table 9

*Progress Towards MDG Goal 2 at National Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Primary Enrollment Rate (5-9 Years)</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion/Survival Rate Grade 5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Rate (%) 10 years and above</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey 2011-12 and 2013-14

The net enrollment and retention stood high in the early 90s and there was a major drop by early 2000. The situation improved from 42 percent of enrollment in 2001 to 57 percent in 2014, along with the literacy rate from 45 percent in 2001 to 58 percent in 2014, but it still is far less than the MDG 2 target. Improvement in literacy rate, as low as 23 percent, over almost a quarter of a century has been achieved, a discouraging fact in every aspect. The stagnation in the literacy rate during the years 2010-11 to 2011-12 is also clear. A small increase of two percent in the year 2012-13 and another decrease in the 2013-14 indicates the inability or lack of seriousness to address deep rooted problems.

Table 10 shows the provincial state of affairs vis-a-vis net enrollment rates.

Table 10

*Progress Towards Goal 2 by 2013-14*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Punjab</th>
<th>Sindh</th>
<th>KPK</th>
<th>Baluchistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Primary Enrollment</td>
<td>Total: 57</td>
<td>Total: 64</td>
<td>Total: 48</td>
<td>Total: 54</td>
<td>Total: 39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Narrowing down the statistics to the provincial level, Table 10 shows that in 2014, the net primary enrollment rate was highest in Punjab with 64 percent, having 66 percent male participation and 63 percent female participation, and lowest in Baluchistan with 39 percent, having 46 percent male participation and 30 percent female participation. The situation in Sindh is not encouraging, with a net enrollment rate of 48 percent, having a share of 53 percent male participation and 43 percent female participation. The literacy rate is highest in Punjab with 61 percent and lowest in Baluchistan with only 43 percent.

Looking back at the past few years, it is evident that the girls’ enrollment rate has always been on the lower side. The data from the year 1999 to 2009 in Table 11 shows that girls’ enrollment rate in the year 1999-2000 is as low as 36 percent at the primary schools level, 39 percent at middle school level and 36 percent at secondary level. Though it has increased over a period of ten years to 44 percent in primary schools level, 42 percent in the middle schools level and 40 percent in the secondary schools level, but this increase is still far below any substantive growth.

Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary Schools (In thousands)</th>
<th>Middle Schools (In thousands)</th>
<th>Secondary Schools (In thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>(F) %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>19148</td>
<td>7044</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>17136</td>
<td>6893</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>17529</td>
<td>7167</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MDG 3 endorses gender equality in education and intends to eradicate gender inequality in primary and secondary education by 2005, and at all levels of education by 2015. Gender parity index (GPI) in Tables 12 and 13 shows small progress over the years, but the gap between male and female indicators persists, specifically in rural areas, where opportunities for the female child are very limited due to diverse reasons.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Education (Ages 5-9 Years)</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education (Age 14-15 Years)</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Literacy (Age 15 years and above)</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey 2013-14
Table 13

Progress Towards Goal 3 by 2013-14 at Provincial Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Punjab</th>
<th>Sindh</th>
<th>KPK</th>
<th>Baluchistan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Primary Enrollment Rate (5-9 Years)</strong></td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completion/Survival Rate 1 grade to 5</strong></td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Literacy Rate (%) 10 years and above</strong></td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It can be seen from Table 14 that the national literacy level is stagnant at 58 percent which then again is alarming as an indicator for national growth. The female literacy at national level was 46 percent in 2010-11 which has increased by only one percent in five years. The literacy rate in Sindh in 2010-11 was 59 percent that decreased to 56 percent by 2013-14. Girls’ literacy rate was 46 percent in 2010-11 and decreased to 43 percent. Urban Sindh has a better literacy rate as compared to rural (urban literacy rate 75 and rural literacy rate 42) in 2010-11 with an increase of three percent in 2013-14. The female rural literacy rate has also declined from an already low 22 percent in the year 2010-11 to 21 percent in the year 2013-14.

Table 14

Literacy Rate (10 years and above) – Pakistan and Provinces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Area</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pakistan</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural</strong></td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban</strong></td>
<td>81</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Punjab</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rural</strong></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15 shows the national and provincial Net Enrollment Rate (NER) at the primary level. The NER has only increased by one percent over a period of five years. In Sindh, the figures are poor as they show a decline by five percent. Girls’ NER also shows a decline of five percent from the year 2010-11 to 2013-14.

### Table 15

**National and Provincial NER at Primary Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Area</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pakistan</strong></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Punjab</strong></td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sindh</strong></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KPK</strong></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Baluchistan</strong></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The most recent figures of 2015 in Table 16 show the dropout rate at national level and in different provinces and regions of Pakistan. At the national level, the dropout rate among males is 32 percent, which is slightly lower as compared to female dropout rate of 34 percent. The lowest dropout rate is shown in Islamabad, which is only one percent and the highest is in FATA with 60 percent.
Table 16

*Overall Dropout Rate at Provincial Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province/Region</th>
<th>Overall Dropout in %</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPK</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baluchistan</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJK</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilgit-Baltistan</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATA</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan (Total)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AlifAilaan Pakistan District Education Rankings 2015

Table 17 illustrates that amongst the four provinces, the highest dropout rate exists in Baluchistan, with 50 percent and lowest in Punjab with 26 percent. Sindh takes the second place with respect to the dropout rate with 45 percent. The dropout rate in Sindh is almost equal amongst males and females, 45 and 46 percent respectively.

Table 17

*Overall Dropout Rate at Provincial Level*
Table 18 reflects that boys’ learning levels are better than that of girls, although the figures have improved over the period of time for both boys and girls.

Table 18

**Percentage Learning Levels for Urdu: Percent Who Can Read at Least Sentences, Ages 5 to 16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baluchistan</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPK</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ASER reports (2011-2014)

Table 19 reveals the proportion of out of school children (OOSC) in Pakistan and its four provinces from the year 2010 to 2013.

Table 19

**Trends in the proportion of OOSC by gender and province, 5 to 16 years, (%)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baluchistan</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PSLM 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13

The statistics show that there is a slight decline in the OOSC within the span of last three years, but it does not put Pakistan into a safe position for controlling the dropout rate of children.
and improve the enrollment rate. It is also noteworthy that the ratio of out of school girls is more than the boys in every province of Pakistan during the past four.

Table 20 show the situation of out of school children at four different levels of education and it demonstrates that over five million children are out of school at the primary level, which amounts to 22.5 percent of the total out of school children.

Table 20

National Estimates of OOSC by Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Age group (years)</th>
<th>Population (2014)</th>
<th>Enrollment (2012-13)</th>
<th>OOSC Number</th>
<th>OOSC Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>22,670,715</td>
<td>17,574,849</td>
<td>5,095,866</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>12,781,300</td>
<td>6,119,197</td>
<td>6,662,103</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>8,520,866</td>
<td>2,835,326</td>
<td>5,685,540</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-Sec</td>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>8,934,989</td>
<td>1,356,825</td>
<td>7,578,164</td>
<td>84.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-16 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>52,907,870</td>
<td>27,886,197</td>
<td>25,021,673</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NEMIS 2012-2013; NIPS population Projections for 2014

The percentage keeps mounting up in the middle, high school with highest in the higher secondary school. The total percentage of out of school children of age 5 to 16 is 47.3. Gender disparity can be seen in the figures depicted in Table 21, as 13.6 million girls are out of school, as compared to 11.3 million boys from age 5 to 16. It also shows that 53.4 percent of girls of age 5 to 16 are out of school which may also include a fair number of dropouts.

Table 21

Distribution of OOSC by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Population (5-16 years)</th>
<th>Enrolled Children</th>
<th>Out of School Children</th>
<th>Out of School Children (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>27,319,127</td>
<td>15,949,829</td>
<td>11,369,298</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>25,588,743</td>
<td>11,936,368</td>
<td>13,652,375</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52,907,870</td>
<td>27,886,197</td>
<td>25,021,673</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AlifAilaan, 25 Million Broken Promises: The crisis of Pakistan’s out of school children
Figure 1 depicts the overall dropout rate of children in children. (PSLMS 2012-2013)

Figure 1: Out Of School Children In Retrospect Of Previous Schooling
Source: PSLMS 2012-2013

Figure 2 illustrates the reasons for not attending the schools. The data primarily consists of the views of the head of the family. The illustrated reasons also reflect a mindset of the communities for not sending their children and also shed light upon poor governance of the state.

Where is Fig. 2?
As is evident from the statistics presented above, the parents do not view girls as being earners and they are also unaware of the larger benefits of education in terms of a better quality of life. The main reason for out of school girls (33.6 percent) is that the parents do not want their female child to be educated and 38.2 percent boys show their disinterest in going to school. Twelve percent girls and 11.4 percent boys do not attend school because of the distance between their residence and school. Another significant fact is that three percent girls and 6.1 percent boys do not attend school because of illness or being handicapped. More than half of the girls of school going age are out of school. As shown in figure 3 the ratio of out of school boys is 10 percent less compared to girls. The majority of girls are compelled to help with either household errands or help the parents in agri-fields. One percent girls are forced to discontinue due to early child-marriages.

Figure 3 represents the ratio of out of school girls and boys.

The above figures thus present a grim reality as far as the education landscape of Pakistan is concerned. The socio-cultural factors together with state apathy make Pakistan stand considerably low in the world in terms of educational attainment and gender parity.

4.3 *Sindh specific education scenario.* The following statistics will give the education status of Sindh with particular reference to school enrollment, dropout rates and gender specific
issues. Table 22 shows the rural school enrollment rate between 2012 and 2014 and the ratios of out of school children.

Table 22

*Sindh Rural School Enrollment and Out of School Children, age 6-16 years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrollment Rate</th>
<th>Out of School Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Never Enrolled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 4 below shows Sindh rural schools’ enrollment and the corresponding out of school children from ages 6-16 years.

As shown in Figure 4, rural school enrollment rate, ranging from ages 6 to 16 in Sindh has decreased in government schools from 60.8 in 2012 to 60.0 in 2014. But seeingit in the context of private schools enrollment, the total percentage of school enrollment of age 6 to 16 is 73 percent in 2014, of which 60 percent is government school enrollment and 13 percent private school enrollment (Sindh ASER Provincial Report, 2014).
Table 23 presents the case of 12 districts of Sindh between 2012-2014 and presents the percentage of out of school children between this period.

Table 23

*Sindh Rural School Enrollment and Out of School Children 6-16 years*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badin</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadu</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghotki</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacobabad</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamshoro</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qambar-Shahdadkot</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khairpur</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larkana</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>83.1</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanghar</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ShaheedBenazirabad</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkur</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>89.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thatta</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The districts of Sindh that have been selected for review are Badin, Dadu, Ghotki, Jacobabad, Jamshoro, Qambar-Shahdadkot, Khairpur, Larkana, Sanghar, ShaheedBenazirabad, Sukkur and Thatta. The statistics show that the lowest enrollment rate in the year 2012 was in Sanghar, with 49.7 percent of the total children age 6 to 16, whereas the highest enrollment rate was in ShaheedBenazirabad with 71.6 percent. The highest out of school children rate was in Sanghar, with 40.4 children being out of schools and the lowest was in ShaheedBenazirabad with 23.9 percent. In 2013 the highest enrollment rate was in Larkana, where it was 78 percent along with the lowest dropout rate of 15.8 percent. The lowest enrollment rate in 2013 was in Ghotki with 48.8 percent and highest dropout rate in Thatta with 39.2 percent. Nevertheless, the highest enrollment rate in 2014 was in Sukkur, having 89.1 percent and the lowest dropout rate of 10.9 percent. The lowest enrollment rate in 2014 was recorded in Thatta where it was 43.1 percent.
along with the highest dropout rate of 56.9 percent. The districts where enrollment rate has shown improvement over the past three years are Jacobabad, Qamber-Shahdadkot, Khairpur, Larkana, Sanghar, ShaheedBenazirabad and Sukkur. In the rest of the districts, enrollment rates have been fluctuating. The only district that has seen a consistent decline in its enrollment rate and increase in dropout rate is Thatta.

The annual variations in several districts indicate that either the data may have been collected from unreliable sources, or the households get their children enrolled on a short term basis and then withdraw their admissions.

Table 24 shows the statistical data of 12 districts of Sindh of the past three years; 2012 to 2014 in terms of the ability to read sentences and stories in Urdu and Sindhi.

Table 24

District wise Learning Levels-Urdu/Sindhi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badin</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadu</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghotki</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacobabad</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamshoro</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kambar-Shahdadkot</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>74.4</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khairpur</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larkana</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanghar</td>
<td>71.7</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>65.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ShaheedBenazirabad</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkur</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thatta</td>
<td>52.8</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The highest learning levels shown in 2012 are of Ghotki, being 79.3 percent. The lowest literacy level in 2012 is 46.2 in ShaheedBenazirabad. Having witnessed the enrollment rate of ShaheedBenazirabad in 2012 as the highest (please refer to Table 23), it is surprising to note the district’s lowest learning levels among others. This implies that enrollment does not ensure an
improvement in literacy (or the child having attended school at all). It is discouraging to see that the learning level of Ghotki has declined in the years 2013 and 2014. The highest learning level in 2013 was 81.3 in Sanghar and the lowest learning level was 28.4 in Thatta. Sukkur’s learning level improved from 53 percent to 71.3 percent and became the highest for 2014. The continuous decline in learning levels has been evident in Jacobabad, Jamshoro, and Larkana. The very sharp decline in Jamshoro, from 68 and 64 percent in 2012 and 2013, to 12.6 in 2014 indicates a serious problem, either in data collection, authenticity of the data or teaching methodology.

Table 25 shows the overall district wise enrollment rate of 12 districts of Sindh between 2010-2014.

Table 25

<p>| Overall District wise Enrollment (Sindh) 2010-2014 – Gender Disaggregated |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Badin</td>
<td>112517</td>
<td>73594</td>
<td>112368</td>
<td>73460</td>
<td>114908</td>
<td>73721</td>
<td>118158</td>
<td>69918</td>
<td>113672</td>
<td>62037</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadu</td>
<td>153956</td>
<td>92960</td>
<td>151772</td>
<td>99762</td>
<td>151178</td>
<td>104293</td>
<td>156166</td>
<td>105344</td>
<td>149347</td>
<td>102794</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghotki</td>
<td>156209</td>
<td>74395</td>
<td>146829</td>
<td>70072</td>
<td>129437</td>
<td>60969</td>
<td>126739</td>
<td>58188</td>
<td>130295</td>
<td>58562</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacobabad</td>
<td>88675</td>
<td>51993</td>
<td>99953</td>
<td>62855</td>
<td>102635</td>
<td>73022</td>
<td>99631</td>
<td>74765</td>
<td>95722</td>
<td>76587</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamshoro</td>
<td>50478</td>
<td>35949</td>
<td>48567</td>
<td>33007</td>
<td>49169</td>
<td>35607</td>
<td>51133</td>
<td>35510</td>
<td>49373</td>
<td>32796</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q/Shahdadkot</td>
<td>128851</td>
<td>75822</td>
<td>119756</td>
<td>76018</td>
<td>118278</td>
<td>83585</td>
<td>111247</td>
<td>81037</td>
<td>113052</td>
<td>73594</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khairpur</td>
<td>203127</td>
<td>125564</td>
<td>201408</td>
<td>130476</td>
<td>194476</td>
<td>126152</td>
<td>198465</td>
<td>130183</td>
<td>186400</td>
<td>120150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larkana</td>
<td>132464</td>
<td>94873</td>
<td>130928</td>
<td>94991</td>
<td>124378</td>
<td>86615</td>
<td>128841</td>
<td>91868</td>
<td>130025</td>
<td>91419</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanghar</td>
<td>168001</td>
<td>96671</td>
<td>165595</td>
<td>96743</td>
<td>146174</td>
<td>86023</td>
<td>149264</td>
<td>87045</td>
<td>148558</td>
<td>82434</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benazirabad</td>
<td>131264</td>
<td>74785</td>
<td>129459</td>
<td>77245</td>
<td>122956</td>
<td>72942</td>
<td>126702</td>
<td>76231</td>
<td>129216</td>
<td>76027</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkur</td>
<td>101338</td>
<td>66860</td>
<td>93458</td>
<td>63102</td>
<td>85487</td>
<td>58277</td>
<td>88607</td>
<td>59790</td>
<td>89365</td>
<td>58359</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thatta</td>
<td>105707</td>
<td>77635</td>
<td>95511</td>
<td>67152</td>
<td>94052</td>
<td>71568</td>
<td>97126</td>
<td>68763</td>
<td>46765</td>
<td>29521</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Gender disparity is evident from the data given in Table 25 where male child enrollment is higher than his female counterpart in all districts and in every year from 2009 to 2014. The districts where the female enrollment ratio has declined over the period of five years include Badin, Ghotki, Jamshoro, Qamber-Shahdadkot, Khairpur, Larkana, Sanghar, Sukkur and Thatta. In the rest of the districts, female enrollment rate has increased slightly (except Jacobabad) over this period.
The trend of out of school children shows more out of school girls as compared to boys. Gender inequality can be seen in Table 26, where, except for Jacobabad, Sukkur and Thatta, all other districts have more out of school girls than boys. In the data for 2014, Jacobabad, Khairpur, Larkana, ShaheedBenazirabad and Thatta have more out of school boys than girls.

Table 26

Overall District wise Out of School Children (Sindh) 2013-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badin</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dadu</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghotki</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacobabad</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamshoro</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qambar-Shahdadkot</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khairpur</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larkana</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanghar</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ShaheedBenazirabad</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkur</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thatta</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sindh ASER Report 2013 and 2014

Table 27 shows the dropout rate during or after the completion of the first year of education in all the provinces. The figures show that 521,921 children discontinue their schooling during or after their first year in school. Punjab has the lowest dropout rate by having 14.3 percent and Sindh has the highest dropout rate at 27.2 percent.

Table 27

Dropouts Between Class 1 and Class 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Enrollment in Class 1(2011)</th>
<th>Enrollment in Class 2 (2012)</th>
<th>Number of Dropouts from Class 1 to 2</th>
<th>Percentage of dropouts from Class 1 to 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baluchistan</td>
<td>171,142</td>
<td>131,956</td>
<td>39,186</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The statistics presented above exhibit an abysmally low state of education in Sindh. The fact that amongst the five provinces, Sindh has the highest percentage of drop outs is a matter of prime concern and apprehension. Unless speedy measures are taken to address the educational, cultural and socio-economic gaps, the situation is bound to move towards further degradation.

5. Issues Impeding Girl Education

Pakistan’s education system consists of 260,903 institutions, serving 41,018,384 learners with the support of 1,535,461 teachers, instructors and technical educators. There are 180,846 public education institutions and therefore, it becomes 69% of the total number of educational institutions operating in Pakistan (Hussain, 2015).

There are multiple constraints which the education system in Pakistan in general, and Sindh, in particular, encounters in improving the education system and fulfilling its commitments and goals. The issues are interdisciplinary and it is important to find the interconnectedness between them.

5.1 Absence of vision, planning and implementation. At the government level, the vision and planning for the future development of the country/province through education and the necessary political commitment is either non-existent or is in a disorganized state. Strategies are developed, often with the help of consultants, but implementation and appropriate resource allocation is hardly ever carried out.

5.2 Societal and cultural constraints. A careful look at the statistics presented above clearly show that education is not a priority in many rural/urban settlements as people are content with their family professions, businesses or the expertise/skills they have otherwise for their living. They take education as a deviation from the track on which they feel comfortable drifting and are unable to sense its significance to achieving a better quality of life.
The overall cultural and social structure of the Pakistani society discourages women to get education. The women are given traditional roles and society has expectations from them mostly at home. They are seen only with the roles to reproduce, child-care, house work, cooking and looking after the extended family. This structure is more enforced in the rural areas of Pakistan, where violence against women is commonly witnessed. People living in these areas fail to recognize that in the future, their female child will be an educated mother who can illuminate and enlighten society through educating her children. She may also be a support in the household as an earner.

5.3 Milieu and mindset. Rural people see themselves as the flag bearers of the traditional values, and view women and their rights in terms of traditions of their ancestors. These traditions have been developed over centuries and have now become ingrained, even in day to day language and discourse. Often, men in rural Sindh, when in a conversation about the value they give to their women folks, talk about [ہے جتناہمارےلیۓ عورت کا مقام سات قرآن ہے] (the respect of women for us is equal to seven Holy Qurans). Apparently it gives an impression of giving the highest level of respect to a woman, but it translates into women being kept hidden, not exposed to any experiences of the external world. Another example is, [عورت بالکُل کانچ کی طرح ہے] (a woman is as fragile and delicate as a piece of glass). Because she is fragile, it is most likely that going out of the house increases the possibility of encountering a dangerous situation, so she must be confined to the house. Traditionally, there is another category of women called [ہنڈولے والی بیبیاں] (women of the cradle/carousel). They are the ones who have been prevented from marrying. This is either because no male member of her own family was available for her, or the men want to keep their inheritance within the family. Therefore, the women are betrothed to the Holy Quran. Gender disparity is deep rooted in the traditional and cultural values of many communities, predominantly because of illiteracy. Lack of education Table 7 exhibits the wage equality ratio and rank.

5.4 Quality of education. Quality of education is a compromised factor at government schools mainly due to lack of governance and administration. In the absence of accountability of
those responsible at any level, education is considered a matter of least priority. Even those children who go to school hardly learn to read and write. Parents thus find very little benefit in sending their offspring to waste their time, which could be used more productively otherwise.

5.5 Education budget. One of the issues that Pakistan keeps grappling with is the low allocation of education budget. UNESCO (2010) reports that Pakistan has been consistently spending around one percent on education for the last 20 years, mainly because of low priority. Even today the education budget is merely 2.4 percent of the total GDP, which has 94 percent share of salaries of administration and teaching staff and six percent only for development expenditure. This is an excessively low budget for the upgradation and uplift of education.

5.6 Lack of basic facilities. Most government schools lack clean drinking water, toilets, furniture and teaching aids. Security is nonexistent. Both parents and girls, in particular, are unwilling to attend schools where such facilities are unavailable or not working. Bajwa (2011) contends that gender equality will remain elusive in Sindh and the reasons can be attributed to insecure school environment and inadequate sanitation that disproportionately affect girls’ self-esteem, their participation and school retention.

5.7 Absentee and incompetent teachers. Teachers’ absenteeism and their incompetence are major contributing factors in school retention. Ladd and Vigdor (as cited in Alao, 2015) stress that effective teachers have significant impact on students’ ability to learn. The issues connected with teachers’ incompetence are politicized appointments, degrees acquired through unfair means, unprofessional attitudes, lack of content and social-emotional knowledge, use of corporal punishment and absence of any professional training or ethics. In such circumstances, parents are loath to send their children to school as this will amount to a waste of time and energy.

5.8 Distant Commuting. A limited number of schools (primary, middle and secondary) are functional in rural areas and children normally go to school on foot. Parents dislike sending their daughters alone to schools as they may run the risk of abduction and other improprieties which are prevalent in society. In the absence of secure and cheap means of transport for girls, parents prefer restricting their girls to homes.
5.9 **Unavailability of female teachers.** Another key reason for girls’ low enrollment rates and high dropout is the unavailability of female teaching staff. It is a proven fact that women are better teachers, especially at primary levels. Malam (2005), in his study of the impact of gender of teacher on students’ attitudes toward mathematics, found that female students learned mathematics better when they were taught by female teachers. The lack of educated women in rural areas and the requirement of a bachelor’s degree prevent motivated young women to get into this profession. Parents prefer not to send their girls to schools where only male teachers are present.

5.10 **Poverty.** Culturally and due to other socioeconomic factors, rural communities have a bigger family network than their urban counterparts. Limited resources, especially in the rural context drive parents to make choices for their children. The parents prefer their male child to be educated as they think it benefits them in their future. UNESCO (2010) reports the same and reiterates that a male child’s education is regarded as a good investment compared to a girl child, because girls are expected early and leave the family. Girls’ education is therefore considered as a monetary loss. Thus, the female child’s role is perceived to be limited to be a helping hand for household errands, raising siblings and a caretaker. She may also be required to work in the fields along with her mother.

5.11 **Early marriages.** The rural-community system (*bradari*) forces early marriages where parents primarily take it as a mark of safeguarding their family’s respect to get their girls safely transferred to their husband’s family. Culturally, the girls’ fate is decided in childhood through a promise in marriage to any male belonging to the same family or a similar community. Another reason of early marriage is the scarcity of resources due to poverty. The family wants to layoff the burden of an extra mouth to feed by handing over the daughter to her in-laws. It is generally considered that education brings awareness and with awareness girls may start questioning their docile existence. It is, therefore, generally conjectured that denial of the right to education will keep the girls ignorant of their rights, hence subservient to the wishes of parents and in-laws.

5.12 **Failure to link education with livelihoods.** Lack of employment or entrepreneurship in Sindh prevents people from recognising that education is key to economic prosperity. Most people strive for low paid government jobs that are promised on the basis of
political affiliations and have little to do with merit. People will get salaries whether they work or not, and whether they have the necessary qualifications or not. The situation for girls is even worse. In their case, there is little skill development or further income earning opportunities and their education is not considered to be linked to market demands.

6. Budget Allocation for Education

As shown in the Table 28, the budget allocation over the period of 7 years has increased from 1.75 percent to 2.14 percent of the total GDP, a paltry increase of 0.39 per cent.

Table 28

*Education Budget*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>As percentage of GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>2.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PRSP Budgetary Expenditures, External Financial Policy Wing, Finance Division, Islamabad

The figures given in the Annual Budget Statement 2015-16 shows that the budget for the year 2014-15 had a share of 64,014 million, specifically for Education Affairs and Services. It increased slightly to Rs. 64,519 million in the revised budget 2014-15 and further increased to Rs.75,580 for the year 2015-16. According to the specific section mentioned in the Annual Budget Statement 2015-16 under the heading of Table 29, Education Affairs and Services, specific budget allocation is mentioned for Pre-Primary and Primary Education, Secondary Education, Tertiary Education, Social Welfare and Special Education, Subsidiary Services to Education and Administration. However, there is no evidence found for gender specific budgetary allocation.
Table 29

Annual Budget for Education for 2014-15 and 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Budget 2014-15</th>
<th>Revised 2014-15</th>
<th>Budget 2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education Affairs and Services</td>
<td>64,014</td>
<td>64,519</td>
<td>75,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pre-Primary and Primary Education</td>
<td>6,079</td>
<td>6,035</td>
<td>7,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Secondary Education</td>
<td>7,873</td>
<td>7,873</td>
<td>8,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Tertiary Education</td>
<td>47,693</td>
<td>47,745</td>
<td>56,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Social Welfare and Special Education</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Subsidiary Services to Education</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Administration</td>
<td>1,275</td>
<td>1,327</td>
<td>1,435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Education Affairs, Services</td>
<td>757</td>
<td>1,232</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Federal Budget 2015-16

7. The Sindh Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2014-2018

The 18th Amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan with the addition of Article 25-A, in 2013, has put the education sector as a development priority. Although the education sector has been functioning under the provinces, the 18th amendment gives further powers to them to develop their policies and curricula. The Sindh Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2014-2018 has been developed by the Education and Literacy Department, Government of Sindh to achieve the objective of increasing the provision of education and improving quality of education. As is clear from the analysis presented above, educational results for both boys and girls, and specifically for the latter have declined over recent years. The SESP (2014, p. 15) notes that in 16 out of 23 districts, more than 50 per cent girls are not going or have never gone to school. Sindh has to take rapid steps to reduce the dropout rate, increase enrolment and retain children, specifically girls, if it is not to become hopelessly mired in ignorance and even deeper poverty.

The SESP has identified six areas that need changes in the policies or new policies. All six are generic and if they are implemented, the overall malaise in the education sector can be overcome. However, they address the issue of gender disparity indirectly. The plan includes gender parity as seventh cross cutting area to be worked upon (SESP, 2014, pp. 16-17). The details of the areas highlighted for improvement are highlighted below.

SESP proposes that primary schools be expanded and given the status of primary/middle/elementary schools, all operating under the same roof. This will cut down the
distances students have to travel for higher classes. It is expected that this would strengthen the retention rate in the middle/elementary class levels. This would also complement the probability of increasing girls’ enrollment rate, along with the retention rate in the higher classes.

The second challenge is improving learning outcomes. Regular evaluations of learning outcomes have been recommended in order to inform policy-making and drive budgetary decisions. Teachers will also be provided with tools to conduct ongoing classroom-level assessments of learning in core subjects such as reading and mathematics.

Improving teaching quality is the third challenge. One of the main strategies proposed is fresh teacher recruitment on the basis of merit. Bachelor’s Degree in Education becomes a pre-requisite for entering as a teacher along with having a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme as a long term teacher accreditation.

The fourth challenge is strengthening governance and service delivery. To address the issue the, focus will be on increasing responsibility and resource availability at the district and sub-district levels. SMCs will also be revitalized and a professional team will be developed.

The fifth challenge is improving resource allocation and for this purpose, education sector financing will be revisited by proposing a series of improved measures.

The sixth challenge is adult literacy and non-formal basic education that will be tackled by re-designing literacy and non-formal basic education by reducing dependency upon formal classroom settings and devising an alternative plan by taking prospects of mass media and social media.

7.1 SESP: objectives and strategies for gender parity and education. The main goal of SESP for achieving gender parity in Sindh is to ensure gender equity in the provision of education in Sindh. There are seven main objectives that SESP aims to achieve in its five year vision for fulfilling its prime aim. These are commendable objectives and the suggestions made to achieve them are doable, provided the stakeholders themselves are committed to accomplish them.

The first objective is to guarantee the implementation of national laws and policies which deal with gender disparities and gender-based violence. The strategies in order to accomplish this
target propose to have (i) **regular gender audit at the provincial level** for informing and sometimes reinforcing policies and standards, (ii) rectifying cases relating to anti-harassment and (iii) reviewing gender discriminatory legislation and its implementation at all levels of education in the province.

The second objective is to develop management capacity to promote gender equality and empower women. The strategies for fulfilling this objective are (i) relevant planning for promoting gender equality at all levels in the system, (ii) **establishment of Gender Focal Points at district levels** and (iii) gender sensitization.

The third objective is to ensure that the content, language and pictorial representation in textbooks is free of gender bias. The approaches for fulfilling this objective include; (i) establishment of a Gender Unit, (ii) **review of the curriculum in relation to gender bias**, (iii) **ensure provision/use of gender sensitive textbooks and teacher guides by removing gender bias** and (iv) on-going capacity building of curriculum designers, textbook writers and teacher educators to promote gender equality.

The fourth objective is to mainstream gender as part of TED by 2015 and the strategy to achieve is to ensure that **gender is included in teacher education programmes** as one of the themes for teachers’ capacity building.

The fifth objective is to allocate budget for promotion of gender equality in education by 2015 and in order to fulfill this, intended strategy is to provide **sufficient budget allocation and implementation of all activities relating to gender equity**.

The sixth objective is to strengthen linkages and coordination between line departments on gender issues. In order to accomplish this objective the strategy would be to **strengthen cooperation and linkages of the Educational Department on gender planning and action with key governmental agencies, e.g. Ministry of Women Development, Female Parliamentarians, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, and Government of Sindh**.

The seventh objective is to set minimum quota for females at administrative level. The proposed strategies are; (i) **notify a task force**, (ii) **develop policy paper for female quota and (iii) notify quota for females**. (*Note: but not female teachers*).
8. Initiatives to Reduce Gender Gap

Several policy and field initiatives have been implemented over the past ten years, most of which have been funded by foreign donor agencies. It would not be incorrect to say that very little improvement has resulted, and policy and structural changes have not been internalised by the government system.

8.1- The National Education Policy (1998-2010). The National Educational Policy (1998-2010) focused on improved enrollment rates in government schools. It also emphasised upon increasing the education budget and reducing the gender imbalance, urban-rural divide, and improving the quality of education at all levels. It advocated curriculum reform and improvement in education facilities. It targeted the issue of out of school children and initiatives for non-formal education.

8.2- Education Sector Reforms (ESR: 2001-2006). The Education Sector Reforms (2001-2006) were formulated in view of the National Policy 1998-2010. The areas that were prioritized were provision of quality primary education, enhanced allocation of budget up to three percent of GDP, better public-private partnerships along with improved technical and higher education. All the pertinent stakeholders were on board in developing this policy paper.

8.3- The EFA National Plan of Action (2001-2015). This was formulated and validated by the first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP I 2003-2006). The objectives of the NPA were (i) to guarantee access to education for disadvantaged rural and urban populace, predominantly girls, (ii) encourage community involvement and ownership of basic education programmes and (iii) improve the significance and quality of basic education (Iqbal, 2010). Apart from the endorsement it received, it did not materialize into action due to the absence of local and international monetary support.

8.4- The National Education Policy (2009). The National Education Policy, 2009 was developed through mutual consensus among all the stakeholders. A series of negotiations took place by evaluating the deep rooted problems, contextual challenges, budgetary limitations, future goals and commitments for the education sector. The policy was prepared with the recommendations and participation of civil society, universities, federal and provincial government officials, education experts, Higher Education Commission (HEC), National Vocational and Technical Education Commission (NAVTEC), Institute of Educational...
Development- Aga Khan University (IED-AKU), Academy of Education Planning and Management (AEPAM), Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), government of all the federating units along with academia, teachers, students and parents. The NEP (2009) acknowledged the need for equity in educational opportunities and realised that the education system based on a divisive foundation may create division in society and can jeopardize the long run economic development and societal progression.

Amongst the aims and objectives the NEP (2009) adopted, two are mentioned here that are specifically focused upon gender parity:

- To equalize access to education through provision of basic facilities for girls and boys alike, under-privileged/marginalized groups and special children and adults
- To enable Pakistan to fulfill its commitments to achieve Dakar Framework of Action, Education for All goals and Millennium Development Goals relating to education

8.5 Right to Education (RTE) in Sindh Pakistan Article 25-A. Under the 18th Amendment, the Sindh Government took an initiative in 2010 and appended the Right to Education Article 25-A in the constitution of Pakistan in which it held itself responsible for providing free and compulsory education to all the children of Sindh aged 5 to 16 years.

8.6 Tawana Pakistan: school nutrition package for rural girls. Tawana Pakistan Project was developed and implemented by the National Implementation Unit (NIU) through Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) and The Aga Khan University (AKU) and its partner NGOs. The project aimed to improve nutritional status, increase school enrollment and reduce dropout rate of girls in the selected districts from each province across Pakistan. It was also aimed at reducing the gender gap and creating awareness amongst communities regarding nutrition and its importance. (Badruddin, Agha, Peermohamed, Rafique, Khan, & Pappas, 2008). It was a Rs. 3,600 million mega social safety net intervention, to compensate for the nutritional and educational deficit of 530,000 rural girls aged 5 to 12 years in 5,300 Government Girls Primary schools of 29 high poverty districts of Pakistan. The school nutrition package offered the provision of nutritionally balanced midday meal at the cost of Rs. 7.00, offering approximately 600 calories per meal, along with medicinal aid for deworming students’ stomachs and multi-micronutrient supplements for two years. The selected districts from Sindh were Badin, Tharparkar, Mirpurkhas and Thatta.
8.7 School girls’ stipend through easy paisa/ATM card scheme by Government of Sindh, Pakistan. In order to increase the enrollment rate, the Government of Sindh initiated a girls’ stipend scheme through Easy Paisa and ATM card to 4,25,000 girls of class sixth to class ten. In June, 2014, the Sindh Education Reform Programme (SERP) unit within the Government of Sindh signed an agreement with Easy Paisa for educational stipend disbursements, in order to improve girls’ access to school in rural areas. The main objective of this project is to address gender disparity in education attainment in Sindh. Selected students have the liberty of using specially designed ATM cards that can be operated in Easy paisa shops and all ATM machines installed across Pakistan. The World Bank and the European Commission are also offering support to this project through the International Development Association (IDA).

8.8 School feeding programme. The World Food Programme (WFP) and the Education and Literacy Department Government of Sindh initiated a school feeding programme for girls’ primary education in Sindh. Five districts namely Dadu, Badin, Thatta, Jamshoro and Tharparkar have been selected for the project for the distribution of edible oil for the promotion of primary education for girls in Sindh. Under this programme, 500 girls’ primary schools are covered, where a tin of imported vegetable oil weighing 3.7 kg is distributed to girls who complete 20 days attendance requirement. The teachers can also benefit with this provision by proving 22 days of attendance in the school. The initiative is to motivate female students and female teachers to attend the school.

9. Necessary steps to change the status quo

Numerous reports have been prepared to analyse the state of education and the issues that continue to persist at national, provincial and district levels with regard to education insufficiency and gender disparity. Policy documents and plans have been developed by international consultants and projects have been implemented. Yet, the problems remain much the same as before and any initiatives that are taken hardly seem to make a significant improvement.

Some of the main steps that need to be taken are:

- recognize education for all as the top most priority
ensure enrollment through community engagement, incentives and improved facilities including teacher attendance, ratio of teacher to students and number of female teachers
- conduct an objective evaluation of performance of teaching staff
- facilitate training and capacity building of teachers in their respective subjects
- train and sensitize teachers on gender issues and the correct attitude, including language they should adopt in and outside the classroom.
- remove internal structural barriers and systems of recruitments
- remove political interference in education sector
- increase the education budget, balance out the developmental and non-developmental allocation and prepare gender sensitive budgets.
- review and revise curricula to remove gender stereotypical material
- review the models implemented by civil society and adopt/upscale those that have worked to enhance enrollment and quality of education
- implement gender specific actions
- link education with economic prosperity both for girls and boys

The above are some basic steps that must be taken if the objectives of the SESP are to be met with any degree of success and if the increasing gender gap in education is to be reduced. Unless this is done, Pakistan’s population will continue to increase at a high rate and standards of education will remain at the lowest ebb. Further, given the present circumstances, Pakistan will keep enduring economic and social challenges. This consistent socio-economic derailment needs to be stopped at an emergency basis if Pakistan needs to compete in the international world market.
References


