

# **Roadmap to institutionalize gender in education in Sindh**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. INTRODUCTION
2. REVIEW OF PLANS AND REPORTS
  - 2.1 Sindh Education Sector Plan: 2014-18
    - 2.1.1 Gender Equity
    - 2.1.2 School Consolidation
    - 2.1.3 Governance
  - 2.2 IRC Reports
    - 2.2.1 Curriculum Reform
    - 2.2.2 Textbook Reform
      - 2.2.2.1 Comparison of 2015 and 2016 editions
3. CHALLENGES TO PLAN IMPLEMENTATION
  - 3.1 IRC Findings
    - 3.1.1 Coordination issues
    - 3.1.2 Commitment issues
    - 3.1.3 Gender Equity
      - 3.1.3.1 Gender sensitizing Curriculum and Textbooks
      - 3.1.3.2 Improving access for girls
      - 3.1.3.3 Enhancing share of female teachers
      - 3.1.3.4 Enhancing share of women in Education Department
  - 3.2 Gender Unit
4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
  - 4.1 Sindh Education Sector Plan: 2014-18
    - 4.1.1 School Consolidation
    - 4.1.2 Governance
    - 4.1.3 Curriculum and Textbook Reform
  - 4.2 Key Challenges to Plan Implementation
    - 4.2.1 Coordination and Commitment
    - 4.2.2 Curriculum and Textbook Review
    - 4.2.3 Gender unit
5. RECOMMENDATIONS
  - 5.1 Coordination and Commitment
  - 5.2 Governance
  - 5.3 Curriculum and Textbook Review

5.4 Girls Enrolment, recruitment of female teachers and female staff in Education  
Department agencies

5.5 Gender Budgeting

6. REFERENCES

7. PEERSONS INTERVIEWED

TABLES

Table 1: Summary Table of Development and Education Rankings

Table 2: Share of Females in Key Education Agencies

BOXES

Box 1: The Gender Debate

Box 2: Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-18: Gender-related Objectives and Actions

Box 3: Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-18: Gender-related Actions Required and  
Taken to date

Box 4: Bane of Election duty

Box 5: The Case of PITE

Box 6: District Education Plans

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education – apart from its essential intrinsic value – promotes vertical mobility, allowing families to move up the economic and even social ladder. This is equally important for women and girls. Given the traditional socio-cultural milieu prevalent in Pakistan, women have limited options for employment and teaching is one of the socially acceptable professions for them. Education of girls is also an instrument of social change and progress.

Plentiful evidence is available of many female teachers in rural areas hailing from modest backgrounds – daughters of farm labour, fisher folk, factory labour, etc., families. More than half of IRC school teachers fall in this category. The importance of girls' education can be gauged from the particular case of one widowed *educated* woman, who managed to secure employment and support her children's education, including that of her daughters. Issues that emerge as important in this respect are access, school facilities, and a sense of comfort and security with the school environment.

Equal to the importance of provision of and access to education, is the importance of the physical and intellectual environment and the didactic aspects of education. Children do not learn only from books, but also from play, competitive sports, debates and quizzes, drawing and painting, song and dance, etc., to develop a wholesome personality. This environment cannot be provided in one or two room one or two teacher schools scattered in distant locations; thus, the imperative of consolidated school campuses, where adequate human and financial resources can be concentrated.

While the above constitute the necessary conditions, the sufficiency condition is provided by the equally and critically important content of education: curriculum, textbooks and reading materials, and orientation of teachers and education officials. The significance of the content of education arises from the fact that it frames values and mind sets that defines attitudes and behavior and delineates relationships. One area where education is of crucial consequence is whether an individual views someone from another gender, income class, ethnicity, linguistic group, religion, sect, etc. , as equal and with respect.

This report is concerned primarily with the issue of gender equity, with particular reference to the Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-18. It also looks at some critical components of the SESP such as the School Consolidation Plan as physical consolidation of schools is necessary to

provide a framework within which education can be provided and a platform through which the government's policies can be implemented.

The relevant gender issues/terminologies and gender component of the Plan are presented in Boxes 1 and 2, respectively. The report is based on information gathered from a series of in-depth meetings with key officials of the Sindh Education Department, particularly those directly concerned with implementation of SESP, and with members of the District Education Group in Sukkur, Shaheed Benazirabad, Dadu and Tando Mohammed Khan. The report reviews the SESP and other relevant plans and reports, highlights the challenges facing the implementation of SESP, and proffers some recommendations.

### **Box 1**

#### **The Gender Debate**

The notion of gender refers to differences between males and females in attitudes, behaviour, roles, and responsibilities and is perceived as a product of the socialization process rather than of biology. Issues that are addressed as part of the gender debate relate to stereotyping, equality and equity, and productive and reproductive roles. Some of the authors who have weighed in on definitional aspects of the subject of gender are Nightingale (2006), Petrevu (2001), West & Zimmerman (1987), Young (2011) and ILO (1998).

Stereotyping is a set of pre-conceived ideas or concepts that are adopted for specific types of individuals or certain ways of doing things. It is a standardized picture held by members of a group and which represents an oversimplified opinion, prejudiced attitude or subjective imagination. These thoughts or beliefs may or may not reflect reality accurately.

Gender equality is the status in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by being male or female. It requires for both women and men to receive equal treatment and not be discriminated against on the basis of their gender.

However, females and males are not undifferentiated beings, and need to be accorded different treatment, where necessary, in order to obtain a fair process and outcome by recognizing different objective and subjective conditions under which people live and work in society. Gender equity is a set of actions, attitudes and assumptions that provide equal opportunities and accords decision making and resource allocation among females and males in a fair manner and to achieve a fair outcome.

Productive role refers to labour by women and men in return for payment in cash or kind and includes market production with an exchange value as well as subsistence/home production with actual use value and potential exchange value. Reproductive role signifies child-bearing as well as child-rearing responsibilities. The former is biological reproduction and the latter the care and maintenance of children and the family.

## **2. REVIEW OF PLANS AND REPORTS**

### **2.1 Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-18**

The Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-18, adopted in June 2014, represents the basic framework for the province's education sector development over the 5-year period. The plan represents a refreshingly honest appraisal of the state of education and presents some innovative and implementable approaches to resolving some of the structural issues confronting the sector. Any policy or plan requires a platform through which it can be implemented and mechanisms through which it can be enforced. SESP provides both. Notably, there appears to exist the necessary political commitment to implement the Plan.

Three aspects are noteworthy:

- one, it explicitly identifies the imperative of gender equity
- two, it identifies the physical fragmentation in the sector and outlines a plan for consolidation; and
- three, it addresses governance issues

In terms of analysis, it presents the inter-district differentials in terms of development and two gender-differentiated education indicators: literacy rate and in-school children, as summarized in Table 1. A perusal of the table shows the following:

- The top one-third of districts in terms of development include: Karachi, Hyderabad, Larkana, Shikarpur, Sukkur, Matiari, Ghotki, and Dadu. The bottom one-third of districts in this respect include (from the bottom): Tharparkar, Thatta, Badin, Umerkot, Tando Mohammed Khan, Jamshoro, Jacobabad, and Kashmore.
- Districts where literacy and children in school ranking is better than development ranking include: Naushero Feroz, Khairpur, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot and Tharparkar. Notably, none of the upper Sindh and Right Bank districts qualify in this respect.
- Districts where ranking in these respects are worse than development ranking include: Larkana, Matiari, Shikarpur, Ghotki, Shadadkot, Tando Allah Yar, Kashmore, Jacobabad,

and Tando Mohammed Khan. Of these, 5 districts are in upper Sindh and three around Hyderabad.

- Districts that rank among the one-third most developed, but report poor education indicators include: Larkana, Matiari, Shikarpur and Ghotki.
- Districts that report relatively higher literacy rates, but low children in school include: Larkana, Shahdadkot and Tando Allah Yar
- Karachi, Hyderabad and Dadu rank high in all respects. Tando Mohammed Khan represents the worst case scenario, ranking at the bottom in three out of four education indicators. Next is Thatta, with second last ranking in three out of four education indicators.
- The trends shown above indicate that rankings in terms of education indicators do not conform to that of development ranking, rankings in terms of in-school children also do not conform to that of literacy rates, and ranking in terms of gender indicators do not conform to any of the above.

Clearly, development *per se* cannot be expected to ensure high literacy rates or high enrolment rates. Like-wise, it can be surmised that high literacy or enrolment rates cannot be expected to ensure gender equity or sensitivity in the curriculum or treatment of female teachers and girl students. Each of these issues needs to be dealt with specific focus.

**Table 1**  
**Summary Table of Development and Education Rankings**

S. No.	District	Rankings [1= Best; 23 = Worst]				
		Development	Literacy		In-School Children	
			Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Karachi	1	1	1	1	1
2	Hyderabad	2	3	2	3	2
3	Larkana	3	9	7	11	12
4	Shikarpur	4	10	12	18	15
5	Sukkur	5	4	6	6	7
6	Matiari	6	14	9	10	10
7	Ghotki	7	8	22	14	18
8	Dadu	8	2	3	2	3
9	Shadadkot	9	17	13	20	17
10	Naushero Feroz	10	6	4	4	6
11	Khairpur	11	5	11	5	5
12	Shaheed Benazirabad	12	11	15	12	13
13	Sanghar	13	7	10	9	9
14	Tando Allah Yar	14	16	8	19	19
15	Mirpurkhas	15	13	5	8	11
16	Kashmore	16	20	21	15	21
17	Jacobabad	17	18	23	16	20
18	Jamshoro	18	19	14	17	14
19	Tando Mohammed Khan	19	23	17	23	23
20	Umerkot	20	15	18	7	4
21	Badin	21	21	19	21	16
22	Thatta	22	22	20	22	22
23	Tharparkar	23	12	16	13	8

Note: Dadu's relatively higher ranking in educational indicators is questionable, based on other related data sets and field information.

Source: Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-18, Tables 1.2 and 1.3

### **2.1.1 Gender equity**

The gender equity section of SESP (pp. 245-254) is fairly robust, with objectives specified as follows:

1. To ensure the implementation of national laws and policies which deal with gender inequalities and gender-based violence (including the development of an Anti-harassment Policy for the Education and Literacy Department)
2. To develop management capacity to promote gender equality and empower women
3. To ensure that the content, language and pictorial representation in textbooks is free of gender bias.
4. To mainstream gender as part of Teacher Education and Development.
5. To designate gender-based budgeting for the promotion of gender equality in education.
6. To strengthen linkages and coordination between line departments on gender issues.
7. To formulate an affirmative action policy for personnel management initially by setting a minimum quota for females at the administrative level.

### **2.1.2. District Education Plans**

District Education Plans (DEP) for Dadu, Khairpur, Shaheed Benazirabad, Shikarpur, Sukkur, Tando Allah Yar and Thatta have been reviewed. District Education Plans are important, given that the district is the unit where SESP is being implemented. However, they do not reflect either the detail or the richness of the SESP and follows a ‘fill n the blanks’ approach to cursorily profile the state of education in the respective districts. Some of them are ‘copy-pastes’ of each other. They variously cover Early Childhood Education, Primary & Elementary, Secondary & Higher Secondary, and Non-Formal Education & ALP and variously again cover the following:

- Nos. of schools by status (functional or closed)
- Nos. of classrooms
- Enrolment by gender
- Out-of-school children
- Nos. of teachers by gender
- Qualification of teachers
- State of school facilities
- Medium of teaching, and

- Standardized Achievement Test results

DEPs target the objectives of improved access, improved quality of education, and effective management. The DEPs for Shaheed Benazirabad, Shikarpur, Sukkur, and Tando Allahyar do state “removal of gender disparity through equal enrolment of girl students by social mobilization and establishing new girls’ primary schools. The DEP for Dadu states “Improve access to education ... with a special focus on girls”. The DEPs for Khairpur and Thatta do not mention gender at all. None of the DEPs address the wider issues relating to gender, as specified in the Gender Equity section of SESP (p. 247). The approach and content of the DEPs may be indicative of weak awareness of and commitment to the objectives of SESP at the district level.

### ***2.1.3 School Consolidation***

The Plan’s policy parameters are well defined and target oriented:

- A Campus School is defined as “a main school formed by merging adjoining, embedded or nearby schools”.
- “Campus Schools will work under one Principal (who) will be the administrator, instructional leader and manager of the merged schools.
- The Campus School will have one SEMIS Code. All merged schools will cease to have separate SEMIS codes.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff will report to the Principal of the Campus School.”
- Campus Principals will have DDO powers.
- Campus Principals will have the powers to surrender nonperforming teachers after due diligence (and) will also have the powers to hire ‘academic interns’ from the pre-screened pool.”

The above range of reforms of the structure and chain of command in the education system is momentous and, if fully implemented, holds the promise of restoring Sindh’s education standing to what it historically was and place the province’s education system in line with modern requirements. Specifically, it will provide the Government an effective and empowered platform to advance policy goals.

Consolidation is a necessary condition for any school level reform to be implemented. One room, one teacher schools scattered across the province, many in remote areas, are difficult to serve and monitor in terms of availability of physical facilities, teaching aids, quality of education, or behavioral issues – e.g., gender sensitivity, harassment, etc.

Consolidated school campuses can be ensured with proper classrooms, specialist subject teachers, library, science and computer laboratories, gymnasium and sports facilities, meal facilities, etc. After all, under-teen age children do not learn from books alone, but also from a range of extra-curricular facilities and an intellectual environment on the school campus. The environment is essential to cultivate a set of desired values, including promoting gender equality and respect for the other sex, combating stereotyping, etc.

That SESP has taken up the issue up front is commendable and implementation is underway, with over 1000 schools have been consolidated – 414 consolidated schools and 648 merged schools – by December 2012. Further progress to date is not available; however, it can be surmised that over 90% of the task remains to be completed. In particular, the process of empowerment of school Principals and transfer of school specific budgets have yet to commence.

#### **2.1.4 Governance**

While development of consolidated school campuses is a first necessary condition, it is not sufficient to ensure efficient management. Thus, the importance of attending to governance issues. SESP addresses this issue, with a whole chapter (Chapter 4) devoted to it. The Chapter takes its cue from the National Education Policy 2009, which states:

*“Governance in the educational system is very weak. The Educational Policy, informed by the ideals of democratic governance, implying a partnership amongst the principal societal actors in the making and implementation of public policy, would try to effect a better allocation and management of public resources.” (NEP 2009, Section 1.3, p.4)*

Two comments are in order. One, the governance pronouncements of the National Education Policy 2009 are rich in rhetoric and lacking in substance. And two, the SESP Chapter on governance has reproduced the NEP 2009 governance account almost verbatim. For example, the

NEP 2009 identifies 9 areas of governance issues – none of which can be said to be of substance – and the SESP Chapter on Governance conducts its discussion accordingly.

All meaningful research on the comparative performance of the public and private sectors in education has highlighted the singular role of the School Principal (Owner-Principal in case of private schools) in delivering quality education. The Governance chapter in SESP misses this aspect completely.

A key feature of governance reform needs to be the empowerment of the School Principal/Head Teacher to appoint and transfer out teachers and other staff in the school – from the government pool as well from the market (in case of specialist subject teachers); as per rules. The authority of the Principal to conduct the affairs of the school is critical for delivery of quality education as well as for overseeing the imparting of any set of values among the teaching and non-teaching staff and students. Progressive gender-related values will need a focal person at the school level and the Principal will need to be that person.

The issue of teacher absenteeism and quality of teaching has not been dealt with at length in the SESP, but it has affected the low enrolment and high drop out of both girls and boys. The government is handling the first issue through a system of biometric identification of teacher's presence and issuing their salaries only if they are in the school. This has, however, resulted in some problems related to rationalizing of teachers.

Fortunately, the section on School Consolidation provides for hiring/transferring powers of the Principal:

*“Campus Principal will have the powers to surrender nonperforming teachers after due diligence. Campus Principal will also have the powers to hire ‘academic interns’ from the pre-screened pool.” (p. 228)*

## **2.2 IRC Reports**

Post-SESP, two comprehensive reports on girls' education in Sindh have been produced<sup>1</sup>, which holds the potential for efforts to develop a road map for gender mainstreaming of education in Sindh.

The first report details the background of female literacy, school enrolment, and drop-outs, viewing the problem in the national and international contexts. Quoting extensively from the Global Gender Gap Report 2014 (World Economic Forum), it highlights the gender gaps in Pakistan and in Sindh with respect to economic participation and opportunity, political empowerment, and education attainment. It further details wage inequality, literacy and enrolment rates in terms of shares and trends. With respect to Sindh, it focuses on socio-cultural and institutional issues impeding girls' education.

The second report adopts a case study approach and documents strategies and approaches to girls' education in 21 schools across nine districts in Sindh operated by:

Citizens Foundation

BRAC

Sindh Rural Support Organization

Indus Resource Centre

Aga Khan University-Institute for Educational Development

SZABIST

The common elements of success found in these cases include:

1. Provision of female teachers
2. Provision of transport to female teachers
3. Safe and secure physical environment, with water and toilet facilities
4. Capacity of the Head Teacher to lead from the front
5. Community and parental engagement
6. Location of schools closer to home

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<sup>1</sup> "Gender Disparity in Education in Sindh", IRC and Oxfam, 2015 and "Assessment of Practices to Promote Girl's Education", GoS, IRC and Oxfam, 2016

### ***2.2.1 Curriculum Reform***

Curriculums of 2006 and 2009 for English Language, Urdu, General Knowledge and Social Studies have been reviewed. The 2009 curriculum was found to be largely gender neutral with no gender bias. However, keeping in mind the societal mindset, it may be necessary to be more specific and develop student learning outcomes and textbook content material development and teaching guidelines that would provide concrete guidance to writers, reviewers and teachers.

### ***2.2.2 Textbook Reform***

Textbook content and illustrations are the two most significant factors that demonstrate gender disparity. They are gender socialization agents and play a key role in forming the young learners' view of female/male gender roles in society and children's picture books play a decisive part of the earliest learning experiences of a young learner. Pictures of characters in a story enable children to establish feelings, emotions, and reactions by observing the facial expressions and body postures. Some of the authors who have examined textbooks, in identifying gender gaps and development of stereotypes in the mind of the child include Blumberg (2008), Kobia (2009), Naraha (1998), and Toci and Aliu (2013).

The Indus Resource Centre carried out the "Gender Analysis of Textbooks" in 2015, which evaluated gender disparities in selection of topics for the textbooks and representation of gender roles via text content and illustrations. The review covered a sample of 29 language (English, Urdu and Sindhi) and social science books for grades I to VIII, published in 2015. The sample is sufficiently large to lend support to the conclusions.

The study highlighted gender insensitivity and bias in favour of males, depicted in textbook content in terms of stories, messages, characters, conversations, and illustrations. It was observed that there was a high frequency of male characters in the role of a protagonist as compared to female characters and women's role in historical events, science and technology, culture, literature and poetry, religion, and sports and athletics had been given minimal space.

The comprehensive study attempted to record representation of females and males in different roles in textbook development, content and illustrations and underlined high levels of female

under-representation among textbook illustrators, editors, and reviewers, as well as in the staffing of the Sindh Textbook Board.

It covered a total of 73 authors, comprising 34 males and 39 females. However, the number of females in the editor and reviewer category falls drastically, with 34 males and 7 females as editors and 149 males and 29 females as reviewers. Similarly 20 males and 2 females carry out illustration work and 24 males and one female carry out layout designing of the textbooks.

The findings of the study show reinforcement of the gender biased cultural setting in Pakistani society, where men are heads of the family and involved in productive work outside the home, while women are subservient and remain in the house for reproductive activities, such as cooking, washing, cleaning, taking care of children, etc.

The language and illustrations convey sub-textual messages to the young learners that the ultimate supreme power is the man because of his wisdom and physical strength, whereas the female is the obedient and subjected one. These messages are contextualized and legitimized in terms of prevalent cultural values.

Specifically,

- Of the 202 textbook lessons analyzed, 58% were male centered, 13% female centered and 20% gender neutral.
- Of the 404 professional roles analyzed, 70% were ascribed to males and 30% to females..
- Of the 123 illustrations analyzed, 81% show males in a variety of out-of-home professions and 19% show females in typical female professions: teacher, doctor, nurse, farm labour, etc.
- There is limited participation of females in productive roles and no participation of males in reproductive (child-rearing) roles. 'Outside the home' is the domain of males and females are limited to the house. Pictures almost always portray females within the four walls of the house, with their role being to manage household chores; implying that males have no such responsibilities.

- Conversations and illustrations reinforce construction of social roles in the minds of children on the basis of gender. For example, the boy is asked to look after out of home affairs such as posting letters, buying items from the market, payment of utility bills, etc.; the girl is asked to assist the mother in the kitchen. Children playing with toys are gender differentiated: boys flying a kite and girls playing with a doll.
- Females are shown not to be taken seriously. A boy is shown to be particular in carrying out his father's instructions, but careless about his mother's instructions

### ***2.2.2.1 Comparison of 2015 and 2016 editions***

In 2016, IRC learned that the textbooks had been revised and proceeded to evaluate the revisions in language (Urdu, Sindhi, and English) and Social Science textbooks in terms of gender balance. Unfortunately, no evidence of change has been found and the same gender bias and stereotyping is repeated, as indicated below:

#### Urdu:

##### Grade I:

- One female author is added
- Pictures on pages 11 and 47 have been changed to show ones with women

Grade VI: two illustrations on pages 72 and 76 have been replaced:

1. The previous edition had a picture of a girl eating fish; the revised edition has a picture of fish swimming in water!
2. The previous edition had a picture showing boys and a girl playing cricket; the revised edition shows only boys playing cricket.

##### Grade II:

- Picture of ex-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto removed

### **3. CHALLENGES TO PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **3.1. IRC Survey Findings**

The IRC Survey based on interviews of district education officials and teachers in four districts – *Sukkur, Shaheed Benazirabad, Dadu and Tando Mohammed Khan* – has revealed two important social facets, which challenge widely held myths:

- (1) Almost universal commitment of male administrators and teachers to gender equity and the need to close the gender gap in enrolment. There is no resistance on the part of male teachers to working with female teachers. No administrator or educator mentioned parental reluctance to sending girls to school. Parental resistance to sending girls to mixed schools is also reported to be ‘exception rather than a rule’.
- (2) All female teachers reported that the case for their own education was supported by either both parents or by the father or mother, despite opposition of one or the other; opposition also came from mother-in-laws, uncles and brothers. However, successful completion of education and securing salaried employment has served to soften opposition to girls’ education and those (e.g., uncles) who were earlier in the opposition camp are now themselves sending their own daughters to schools. In all cases of married teachers, husbands support is critical.
- (3) Female teachers did indicate discomfort in working with male counterparts or male non-teaching staff on account of their gender insensitivity.

However, the Survey and corresponding analysis revealed serious issues of non-implementation, as tabulated in Boxes 2 and 3.

The Survey also identified two key challenges with respect to implementation of SESP: coordination and resistance to change:

##### ***3.1.1 Coordination issues***

Coordination issues exist at higher levels and permeate down to the district levels. At higher levels, there appears to be no specific locus of authority for *overall* Plan implementation<sup>2</sup>. SESP

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<sup>2</sup> RSU has been reported to be the coordination agency; however, their coordinating role does not appear to be visible.

has a number of components and different actors have been made explicitly responsible for each component. At the district level, not only are actors not fully aware of the larger scheme of things, but there is uncertainty about their own roles as well.

### **3.1.2 Commitment issues**

Commitment issues appear to prevail at some higher and some district levels. At the district level, the consolidation process is faced with covert friction and resistance. Every school, including the one room ones, can be expected to have developed some degree of vested interests around it, and they cannot be expected to view school mergers with favour. There also appears to exist a turf contest between officers at the Secondary level versus those at the Primary level; given that the consolidation process will shrink the domain of the latter. Some degree of resistance to change can, therefore, be expected. One interviewee volunteered the confident view that the process would stall – like all plans, previously – and the situation would return to *status quo ante*. There is also confusion between the Secondary and Primary education officers (DEOs and TEOs) as to their respective authorities with regard to consolidation and clustering.

Director Schools have been invested with the responsibility of school consolidation and mergers on the recommendation of District Education Officers. However, Directors and DEOs are too close to local interests to be able to overcome resistance. Under the circumstances, devolving decision making regarding consolidation at the Divisional and District level may need to be revisited and centralizing the implementation of the consolidation process considered, although with close monitoring. Appointment of a Focal Person – Special Secretary, reporting to the Secretary – at the provincial level for overseeing the transition process and to assist ‘new’ school entities may be in order.

Fortunately, the higher echelons of the Education Establishment are aware of many of the problems as well as the constraints in the way of their resolution. For example, the required departmental human resources and managerial capacity for managing consolidated schools, authority to “hire/transfer” teachers, one line budgets, etc. is severely limited. And it is politically imperative to work largely with existing staff; albeit, supported by market-recruited consultants where feasible. As such, moving carefully is considered more important and prudent than moving speedily.

### 3.1.3 Gender Equity

SESP 2014 has laid out an elaborate roster of actions towards gender equity and sensitization of the curriculum and textbooks. However, issues of gender equity can be prioritized on six fronts, four administrative and two academic.

- Gender sensitizing the curriculum, including for teachers
- Gender sensitizing textbooks
- Improving access for girls to schools
- Improving water and sanitation facilities in schools
- Enhancing the share of female teachers
- Enhancing the share of women in the Education Department

<b>Box 2</b> <b>Sindh Education Sector Plan: 2014-18</b> <i>Gender-related Objectives and Actions</i>	
Objectives	Actions
1. Ensure implementation of national laws and policies dealing with gender inequality/GBV (including development of Anti-Harassment Policy for E&LD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Establish Gender Unit</li> <li>* Develop Anti-Harassment Policy</li> <li>* Review gender discriminatory legislation and implementation</li> </ul>
2. Develop management capacity to promote gender equality and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Prepare District Plans reflecting gender equity related targets and measurable indicators</li> <li>* Establish Gender Focal Points at district level</li> <li>* Conduct capacity building of managers in targeted districts to sensitize them</li> </ul>
3. Ensure that the content, language and pictorial representation in textbooks is free of gender bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Prepare guidelines for identification of gender biases in curriculum</li> <li>* Revise curriculum documents, textbooks and teachers guides to remove gender biases</li> </ul>
4. Mainstream gender as part of TED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Include gender as a subject in teacher education programmes</li> </ul>
5. Allocate budget for promotion of gender equality in education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Introduce gender responsive budgeting</li> </ul>

6. Strengthen linkages and coordination between line departments on gender issues	* Strengthen cooperation and linkages on gender planning and action with key governmental agencies
7. Set minimum quotas for females at administrative levels	* Post (specified) percentage of women on executive posts within Education Department

**Box 3**  
**Sindh Education Sector Plan: 2014-18**  
*Gender-related actions required and taken to date*

Actions Required	Actions taken to date
* Establish Gender Unit	ToRs and SNE approved, Establishment Budget provided, Staff appointments and Operational Budget awaited
* Develop Anti-Harassment Policy	None specifically for the Education Department
* Review gender discriminatory legislation and implementation	None
* Prepare District Plans reflecting gender equity related targets and Measurable indicators	All ECE teachers are women; DEPs target 50% women in all ECE positions. No other gender related targets.
* Establish Gender Focal Points at district level	Not done
* Conduct capacity building and sensitization of managers in districts	Conducted by CSO; Facilitated by RSU
* Prepare guidelines for identification of gender biases in curriculum	Checklist prepared by CSO
* Revise curriculum documents, textbooks and teachers guides to remove gender biases	None
* Include gender as a subject in teacher education programmes	None
* Introduce gender responsive budgeting	None
* Strengthen cooperation and linkages on gender planning and action with key governmental agencies	No information
* Post (specified) percentage of women on executive posts within Education Department	Limited

There appears to be a disconnect and even a trust deficit between the provincial and district level officials. The bridge at the two levels are the tier of DOs and DEOs who may or may not buy into the changes being made at provincial level and the information flow both ways could be easily manipulated. There are also concerns about the implementation of the current DEPs as there is no clarity on availability of funds, timings of release and the budget holding authority at district level.

The Plan has devolved the process of school consolidation by authorizing “Directors School Education to notify merging and consolidation of schools ... on the recommendation of the respective District Education Officer<sup>3</sup>.” To date, more than 1000 schools have been consolidated. However, the administrative transfer of a set of schools under one management has not yet been accompanied by the transfer of financial management and merged schools continue to retain their status as ‘cost centers’. The process of ‘financial’ consolidation needs to be completed expeditiously, so that salaries and other expenditures of merged schools are met out of one consolidated budget. Other problems are:

- No information or orientation has been provided with regard to gender equity issues component of SESP.
- District officials are unaware of objectives and targets of SESP, the consolidation process. A team effort appears to be lacking.
- Some Consolidated School Head Masters do not yet have Drawing & Disbursement Officer (DDO) powers.
- Head Masters (HMs) are given additional charge of Taluka Education Officers (TEOs). There are cases where a Grade-19 HM holds additional charge of TEO, which is a Grade-17 position.
- There are also cases where an HM/TEO has to exercise DDO powers of schools where HMs have not yet received DDO powers or where the HM position is vacant.
- Clarity does not exist at the District level as to who is entitled to exercise supervisory powers, sign on examination result sheets, etc.
- SESP-related items are not reflected in the provincial Budget.
- “Hiring/Firing” powers for Campus School Principals have not yet been granted.

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<sup>3</sup> SESP 2014-18, p. 218

Admittedly, these are initial teething problems – an argument that is repeatedly offered as explanation for many of the issues and problems. However, two and a half years into the process, there lurks a danger that teething problems can snowball and consume the process itself.

### ***3.1.3.1 Gender sensitizing Curriculum and Textbooks***

The enactment of the Sindh School Education Standards and Curriculum Act 2014 has consolidated a number of existing and newly-created agencies under the Sindh Education Council. All the agencies function under the auspices of the Education and Literacy Department of the Government of Sindh with the objective of managing the content and quality of school education.

Some of the agencies are as follows:

- Curriculum Wing
- Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment and Research (DCAR)  
*(formerly Bureau of Curriculum)*
- Academic & Training Wing
- Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE)
- Sindh Teacher Education Development Authority (STEDA)
- Sindh Textbook Board (STB)
- Research Support Unit (RSU)
- Monitoring & Evaluation Wing

SESP acknowledges the importance of the curriculum, thus:

*“Curriculum provides a framework for the entire learning experience ... is understood and represented through textbooks”.*

However, out of the seven curriculum Policy Actions stipulated in SESP, there is no mention of gender issues in the entire section. However, Action 8 of Policy Actions for Textbooks does attend to gender issues, thus:

“Curriculum Wing of Ministry of Education and provincial textbook boards shall ensure elimination of all types of gender biases from textbooks. Also adequate representation of females shall be ensured in all curriculum and textbooks review committees.”

“Curriculum guides on what needs to be learned and how learning can be facilitated and assessed. However, in practice, since teachers rarely have access to the curriculum document, textbooks have become the de-facto curriculum in schools”

The Curriculum Wing, Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment and Research (DCAR), and Sindh Textbook Board (STB) are three agencies that lay out and produce the content of the teaching material for schools. All textbooks are prepared in line with the Curriculum and go through a process of internal and external reviews before being sent for printing. All material undergo a Quality Assurance check via the DCAR’s Quality Assurance Committee. Other than officials of the curriculum and textbook agencies, a team of subject experts, authors and reviewers are also involved in the process.

Despite the elaborate set up and process, there remain grave quality issues with textbooks<sup>4</sup>, including with respect to gender. Part of the problem lies in the very composition of these forums; part of it lies in the practice of designating the same individuals as authors, editors and reviewers for different textbooks. Resultantly, individuals A, B and C are author, editor and reviewer, respectively of one textbook and editor, reviewer and author, respectively of another textbook. Thus, situations arise where individual C reviews a book authored by A and individual A reviews another book authored by C! The ‘in-breeding’ has robbed the content-formation process of textbooks of objectivity.

There are mixed opinions with regard to gender bias in the curriculum text books, with some teachers and administrators offering the view that the revised curriculum and textbooks have

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Secretary Education, one textbook states that cancer is incurable, which he rejected as categorically false.

improved with regard to gender biases<sup>5</sup>. The general opinion, however, is that gender bias and stereotyping is still pervasive. Two points have been highlighted, in particular.

- There is resistance to change in the composition of the bodies (DCAR and STB) dealing with the curriculum and text books and extends to resistance to any suggestion that gender biases exists
- It is essential that the individuals forming the body of DCAR and the Textbook Board, as well as the authors, editors and reviewers, are ‘ideologically’ gender sensitive. It is considered unlikely that a one-time training/orientation course will alter the ingrained frame of mind of any individual.
- While removing gender bias and stereotyping in the curriculum and textbooks – including for teacher training – is necessary, continuous training and orientation of teachers in this regard is also essential, as male teachers carry ingrained gender biases<sup>6</sup> and female teachers are unaware of implicit biases in textbooks.

### ***3.1.3.2 Improving access for girls to schools***

The Plan lays out an explicit policy to enhance girls’ enrolment in schools. Girl students are provided an annual stipend of Rs. 2,500-3,500, based on regular class attendance. Based on the reality that many parents are not reluctant to have their daughters study with boys – most boys’ schools have girls in classes and some girls’ school have boys in classes<sup>7</sup> – the government has prudently formalized a ‘Mixed’ school category.

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<sup>5</sup> One defence DCAR and STBB offers for continuing gender related flaws in textbooks is that they are Test editions. However, the practice of issuing “Test Editions” merits a serious reconsideration for two reasons;

- One, a Test Editions implies that the product is not final and that there are likely to be errors. If these editions are made official textbooks for any period of time – usually, one school year at least – subjecting students to learning from such (half-baked) books cannot be acceptable.
- Two, issuance of Test Editions implies a lack of confidence in the entire gamut of officials and academics from curriculum setting to publication of the textbook.

<sup>6</sup> One male teacher is reported to refuse to talk to female teachers and avoid looking at girl students while teaching; such incorrigible teachers need to be removed from teaching positions and reassigned.

<sup>7</sup> The Government Boys Primary School at Waleji Miani, Dadu taluka has an all girls enrolment!

Significant improvement in levels of girls' enrolment has occurred. Yet, however, girls' share in enrolment remains lower relative to boys. Some of the reasons that need attention are as follows:

- The ratio of girls' primary to middle schools is 9:1. Clearly, there are not enough girls' middle or high schools, forcing girls to drop out of schools after Class 5.
- There are not enough girls' middle and high schools within reasonable distance<sup>8</sup>. However, girls are willing to attend school at a distance if transport is provided<sup>9</sup>.
- Girls' enrolment has been observed to have increased where there is a female teacher
- Girls' enrolment has been observed to have increased where there are basic physical facilities, particularly water, washrooms, and boundary wall.
- In urban areas, girl students face harassment on the streets, inducing some parents to withdraw their wards from schools.

It has been recommended, across the board, to:

- Provide transport to students to commute to and from (consolidated) schools
- Appoint more female teachers
- Publish details of school facilities separately for boys, girls and mixed schools

### ***3.1.3.3 Enhancing share of female teachers***

Sindh has over 50,000 primary school teachers, of which less than 25 per cent are women. The SESP is committed to enhancing the share of female teachers. To this end, female applicants for teaching positions are awarded 20 additional marks, which are added to their marks obtained in the NTS test. Resultantly, the share of women in the pool of teachers has increased. The government has also committed to recruit only females as teachers in all Early Childhood Education (ECE) classes.

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<sup>8</sup>There are no girls' high schools in a cluster of 8 towns in Khipro and Pithoro talukas of xx district; in Johi (district Dadu), there are 11 boys' high schools and one girls' high school.

<sup>9</sup> The xx school in Nawabshah, Shaheed Benazirabad district is an example, where (rural) girls attend school from a distance of 25-30 kilometers.

The Survey has revealed three facets with regard to female teachers.

- One, absenteeism among female teachers is alarmingly high. The reason is attributed to the lax recruitment policy of the past, which resulted in appointment of women as teachers who did not possess the commitment to teach. This issue is now being addressed, but will be resolved with time.
  
- Two, female teachers have no problem teaching in boy's schools (including secondary schools) or working with male teachers. Reservations in these respects exist only in pockets.
  
- There are some serious problems that female teachers face and on account of which their share in teachers employment is low.
  - o Graduate women are not readily available in rural areas for appointment as teachers
  - o Rural graduate women underperform relative to urban graduate women in NTS tests
  - o Urban graduate women secure appointment, but are reluctant to serve in rural areas
  - o Women teachers do not have transport to commute to (distant) school locations
  - o In urban areas, female teachers face harassment on the streets, inducing some to withdraw from schools.
  - o Primary school buildings do not have space for teachers to sit
  - o Absence of separate toilets affects female teachers

It has been recommended, across the board, to:

- Lower the threshold for rural schools and enlist Intermediate qualified teachers for rural schools and provide them with additional training.
- Provide separate staff room and washroom for women teachers
- Provide transport to women teachers

<b>Box 3</b>
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### **The bane of election duty**

An issue raised by female teachers is the responsibility to perform duties as election officers during elections. Transport and security are two pervasive points of concern. However, a larger subject is one of quality of teachers and commitment to teach. Given the established role of teachers as election officers, intending candidates for elections attempt to use their influence to place their recommended individuals as teachers to gain, ostensibly, an advantageous position during elections. The situation has reportedly led to compromising the process of teacher selection.

#### ***3.1.3.4 Enhancing share of women in the Education Department***

Women administrators in the Education Department are few because of the few women in the Provincial Civil Service. This situation affects the Education Department as well. An analysis of School Education & Literacy Department and its eight agencies shows that the share of female staff at senior level (Grade 17 and above) is less than 10%, seven out of nine heads are male and, in five cases, the number two position is also held by a male.

Two of the agencies that determine the content of teaching material are Directorate of Curriculum, assessment and Research (DCAR) and Sindh Textbook Board (STB). In the former, the posts of Director and Deputy Directors are held by males and two out of 10 Assistant Directors are females. In the latter, all executive positions are held by males and females are found only as Subject Specialists. Here too, the share of females is less than 20%.

The general absence of females is also visible at the district level and the few female education administrators at the district level (e.g., Taluka Education Officers) report serious logistical problems, i.e.,

- absence of proper office space and separate toilet in office buildings.
- absence of transport to enable them to visit schools for inspections.

Female administrators also complained of not being taken seriously and, in one occasion, of peons tending to ignore female staff; for example, deliberately delaying carrying out a requested

chore. It has been recommended, across the board, to enlist more women and their greater presence is likely to change the work culture as well.

### 3.1.3.5 Gender Unit

The establishment of the Gender Unit within the Education and Literacy Department is a major step forward towards implementing the Gender Equity agenda. The Terms of Reference (TOR) and Schedule of New Expenditure (SNE) have been approved and staff appointments are awaited.

However, the mere setting up of the Gender Unit cannot and does not imply that challenges facing gender-sensitizing of education have been taken care of. Rather, there is a need to be cognizant of the Unit’s limitations. The challenge to the Plan’s success, identified in the Plan itself, is resistance to change. A greater challenge, perhaps, may be creeping inertia at the top levels of policy hierarchy. Both may result in either a stalling or reversal of the process. Albeit, the Plan provides for a Regional Reform Oversight Committee to oversee and coordinate implementation of school consolidation process; but appears to be non-functional.

The Gender Unit is stipulated to be headed by a Deputy Secretary, who is a relatively junior officer in the civil service hierarchy and may be unable to initiate actions on her/his own and, thereby, provide leadership. Consideration may be accorded to appointment of an officer at the Special Secretary level, with specific responsibility for SESP implementation, and responsible to the Secretary. The Gender Unit may report to the said Special Secretary and the District Gender Focal Points may report to the Gender Unit.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Total Number in position</b>	<b>Females</b>	
		<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
<u>Education &amp; Literacy Department</u>			
- Secretary	2	0	0
- Special Secretary	2	1	50.0
- Additional Secretary	7	2	28.5

- Deputy Secretary	8	1	12.5
- Section Officers	10	1	10.0
- <b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17.2</b>
<b><u>Curriculum Wing</u></b>			
Chief Advisor	1	1	100.0
Deputy Advisor	0	0	0
Assistant Deputy Advisor	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b><u>Directorate of Curriculum, Assessment and Research (DCAR)</u></b> <i>(formerly Bureau of Curriculum)</i>			
Director	1	0	0
Additional Director	0	0	0
Deputy Director	6	0	0
Assistant Director	0	0	0
Others	10	2	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11.8</b>
<b><u>Academic &amp; Training Wing</u></b>			
- Additional Secretary	1	1	100.0
- Deputy Secretary	2	2	100.0
- Others	3	2	66.6
- <b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>83.3</b>
<b><u>Provincial Institute of Teacher Education (PITE)</u></b> <i>(Grade 16 and above)</i>			
- Director General	1	0	0
- Director	2	1	50.0
- Deputy Director	1	0	0
- Assistant Director	1	0	0
- Academic Staff	26	10	38.5
- <b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>35.5</b>
<b><u>Sindh Teacher Education Development Authority (STEDA)</u></b>			
- Executive Director	1	0	0
- Director	1	0	0
- Deputy Director	3	1	33.0
- Assistant Director	4	2	50.0
- Superintendent	1	0	0
- <b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>30.0</b>
<b><u>Sindh Textbook Board (STB)</u></b>			
- Chairman	1	0	0
- Director Technical	1	0	0
- DTP Manager	1	0	0
- Publications Officer	1	0	0
- Subject Specialists	5	1	20.0
- Assistant Subject Specialist	6	1	16.6
- Junior Subject Specialist	1	0	0

- Computer Operators	3	0	0
- <b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10.5</b>
<b>Research Support Unit (RSU)</b>			
- Chief Program Manager	1	0	0
- Program Manager	4	0	0
- Program Officer	7	1	14.2
- Computer Programmer	1	0	0
- Web Designer	1	0	0
- District Coordinator	24	4	16.6
- <b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13.2</b>
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Wing</b>			
- Director-General	1	0	0
- Deputy Director	2	0	0
- Chief Monitoring Officer	14	1	7.1
- Monitoring Assistant	198	0	0
- <b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>9.6</b>
Source: School Education & Literacy Department, Government of Sindh			

#### **Box 4**

##### **Case of PITE**

There are 48 TTIs in the province: two in every district, one for males and another for females. This arrangement merits reassessment, given the acute shortage of quality faculty. Consolidation of TTIs is as important as consolidation of schools and for the same reason: the government's academic policies can only be effectively enforced if there is a defined platform.

PITE's mandate includes:

- Pre-service and in-service teacher training. Offers Associate Degree in Education (ADE)
- Supervise teacher training institutions (TTIs) with regard to academic functions

This is a high quality task and it is imperative that PITE is staffed by highly qualified and experienced academically reputed individuals.

Consideration may be given to:

- Consolidating all TTIs into one single institution – with three campuses, one each in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur – to be staffed and equipped with internationally qualified and competent faculty – and with hostel facilities for male and female teachers.
- Affiliation with a highly reputed foreign teacher training institution
- The unified TTI may hold special courses from time to time anywhere in the province.

## **4. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS**

### **4.1 Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-18**

The Sindh Education Sector Plan 2014-18, adopted in June 2014, represents the basic framework for the province's education sector development over the 5-year period. The plan represents a refreshingly honest appraisal of the state of education and presents some innovative and implementable approaches to resolving some of the structural issues confronting the sector.

Three aspects are noteworthy:

- one, three, it explicitly identifies the imperative of gender equity
- two, it identifies the physical fragmentation in the sector and outlines a plan for consolidation; and
- three, it addresses governance issues

The Plan's policy parameters are well defined and target oriented and the gender equity section is fairly robust, with specified objectives. This report is concerned with the issue of gender equity.

#### ***4.1.1 Curriculum and textbooks***

While consolidation and governance constitute the necessary conditions, the sufficiency condition is provided by the equally and critically important content of education: curriculum, textbooks and reading materials.

#### ***4.1.2 Gender sensitive school environment and teaching methods***

Nothing can work if schools do not provide a safe environment where girls and female teachers can work and study and where teachers and other staff are able to offer quality education that builds positive and healthy social relationships in young minds. The significance of the content of education arises from the fact that it frames values and mind sets that defines attitudes and behavior and delineates relationships.

#### ***4.1.3 School consolidation***

Equal to the importance of provision of and access to education, is the importance of the physical and intellectual environment and the didactic aspects of education. Children do not learn only from books, but also from play, competitive sports, debates and quizzes, drawing and painting,

song and dance, etc., to develop a wholesome personality. This environment cannot be provided in one or two room one or two teacher schools scattered in distant locations; thus, the imperative of consolidated school campuses, where adequate human and financial resources can be concentrated.

#### ***4.1.4 Governance***

While development of consolidated school campuses is a first necessary condition, it is not sufficient to ensure efficient management. A key feature of governance reform is empowerment of the School Principal/Head Teacher to appoint and transfer out teachers and other staff in the school. The authority of the Principal to conduct the affairs of the school is critical for delivery of quality education as well as for overseeing the imparting of any set of values among the teaching and non-teaching staff and students. Progressive gender-related values will need a focal person at the school level and the Principal will need to be that person. The Plan provides for the Principal's powers to surrender non-performing teachers and hiring 'academic interns'.

## **4.2 Key Challenges to Plan implementation**

There are three main challenges to the successful implementation of SESP with respect to gender equity: coordination and commitment, curriculum and textbook content, and raising girls' enrolment and recruitment of female teachers.

### ***4.2.1 Coordination and commitment***

Coordination issues exist at higher levels and permeate down to the district levels. At higher levels, there appears to be no specific locus of authority for overall Plan implementation. SESP has a number of components and different actors have been made explicitly responsible for each component. At the district level, not only are actors not fully aware of the larger scheme of things, but there is uncertainty about their own roles as well. The implementation of the process of empowerment of the Principal and transfer of budgets to schools has yet to proceed. There is considerable lack of evidence about the knowledge of the gender component and commitments of the SESP both among provincial and district level education officials.

The consolidation process is faced with covert friction and resistance at the district level. Every school, including the one room ones, can be expected to have developed some degree of vested interests around it, and the local officialdom cannot be expected to view school mergers with favour. Director Schools have been invested with the responsibility of school consolidation and mergers on the recommendation of District Education Officers. However, Directors and DEOs are too close to local interests to be able to overcome resistance.

#### ***4.2.2 Gender sensitive environment and teaching***

The issue of teacher absenteeism and quality of teaching has not been dealt with at length in the SESP, but it has affected the low enrolment and high drop out of both girls and boys. It affects the attendance of girls in particular because parents find it more excusable to keep girls at home if she is not learning anything useful. The government is handling the first issue through a system of biometric identification of teacher's presence and issuing their salaries only if they are in the school. This has, however, resulted in some problems related to rationalizing of teachers. Steps need to be taken to ensure that this system is not circumvented by resourceful and politically connected teachers. No steps are visible to improve the quality and gender sensitivity of teachers and their teaching pedagogies.

Admittedly, these are initial teething problems – an argument that is repeatedly offered as explanation for many of the issues and problems. However, two and a half years into the process, there lurks a danger that teething problems can snowball and consume the process itself. The challenge to the Plan's success, identified in the Plan itself, is resistance to change. A greater challenge, perhaps, may be creeping inertia at the top levels of policy hierarchy.

**Box 5**  
**District Education Plans**

District Education Plans are important, given that the district is the unit where SESP is being implemented. However, they do not reflect either the detail or the richness of the SESP and follows a 'fill n the blanks' approach to cursorily profile the state of education in the respective districts. Some of them are 'copy-pastes' of each other.

None of the DEPs address the wider issues relating to gender, as specified in the Gender Equity section of SESP. The approach and content of the DEPs may be indicative of weak awareness of and commitment to the objectives of SESP at the district level.

At the district level, there appears to be no ownership of either the DEP formulation or their implementation.

### ***4.2.3 Curriculum and textbook reform***

A review of official curriculum reform reports also found over 90% satisfaction with the Curriculum content. However, all reports deal largely with modalities of text-book printing rather than content. Gender issues are not mentioned and no discussion is found therein relating to the wider issues relating to gender

The IRC carried out the “Gender Analysis of Textbooks” in 2015, which evaluated gender disparities in selection of topics for the textbooks and representation of gender roles via text content and illustrations.

The study highlighted gender insensitivity and bias in favour of males, depicted in textbook content in terms of stories, messages, characters, conversations, and illustrations. It was observed that there was a high frequency of male characters in the role of a protagonist as compared to female characters and women’s role in historical events, science and technology, culture, literature and poetry, religion, and sports and athletics had been given minimal space.

The findings of the study show reinforcement of the gender biased cultural setting in Pakistani society, where men are heads of the family and involved in productive work outside the home, while women are subservient and remain in the house for reproductive activities, such as cooking, washing, cleaning, taking care of children, etc. The language and illustrations convey sub-textual messages to the young learners that the ultimate supreme power is the man because of his wisdom and physical strength, whereas the female is the obedient and subjected one. These messages are contextualized and legitimized in terms of prevalent cultural values.

### ***4.2.2.4 Girls’ enrollment and recruitment of female teachers***

The Plan lays out an explicit policy to enhance girls’ enrolment in schools. Significant improvement in levels of girls’ enrolment has occurred. Yet, however, girls’ share in enrolment remains lower relative to boys. Some of the reasons that need attention are as follows:

- The ratio of girls’ primary to middle schools is 9:1. Clearly, there are not enough girls’ middle or high schools, forcing girls to drop out of schools after Class 5.
- There are not enough girls’ middle and high schools within reasonable distance. However, girls are willing to attend school at a distance if transport is provided.

- Girls' enrolment has been observed to have increased where there is a female teacher
- Girls' enrolment has been observed to have increased where there are basic physical facilities, particularly water, washrooms, and boundary walls.
- In urban areas, girl students face harassment on the streets, inducing some parents to withdraw their wards from schools.

The SESP is also committed to enhancing the share of female teachers. However, the Survey has revealed three facets with regard to female teachers.

- One, absenteeism among female teachers is alarmingly high. The reason is attributed to the lax recruitment policy of the past, which resulted in appointment of women as teachers who did not possess the commitment to teach. This issue is now being addressed, but will be resolved with time.
- Two, female teachers have no problem teaching in boys schools (including secondary schools) or working with male teachers. Reservations in these respects exist only in pockets.
- There are some serious problems that female teachers face and on account of which their share in teachers employment is low.
  - o Graduate women are not readily available in rural areas for appointment as teachers
  - o Rural graduate women underperform relative to urban graduate women in NTS tests
  - o Urban graduate women secure appointment, but are reluctant to serve in rural areas
  - o Women teachers do not have transport to commute to (distant) school locations
  - o In urban areas, female teachers face harassment on the streets, inducing some to withdraw from schools.
  - o Primary school buildings do not have space for teachers to sit
  - o Absence of separate toilets affects female teachers

#### ***4.2.4 Gender Unit***

The establishment of the Gender Unit within the Education and Literacy Department is a major step forward towards implementing the Gender Equity agenda. However, the mere setting up of the Unit cannot and does not imply that challenges facing gender-sensitization of education have been taken care of. Rather, there is a need to be cognizant of the Unit's limitations. The Gender Unit is stipulated to be headed by a Deputy Secretary, who is a relatively junior officer in the civil service hierarchy and may be unable to initiate actions on her/his own and, thereby, provide leadership.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Coordination and commitment:**

Given that coordination has emerged as an important challenge to the implementation of SESP, consideration may be accorded to:

- Appointment of an officer at the Special Secretary level, with specific responsibility for overall SESP implementation, including the school consolidation and gender equity components.
- The Gender Unit should report to the said Special Secretary
- District Gender Focal Points should report to the Gender Unit.
- The Gender Unit be charged with the responsibility of the gender section of the SESP and its progress monitored by the Secretary on a monthly basis
- A coordination mechanism needs to be built within the process of implementation of the SESP and its gender component; linking objectives and actions at provincial level to those at district level.

### **5.2 Governance:**

The provision for empowering (consolidated school) Principals to surrender non-performing teachers and hiring 'academic interns' may be implemented expeditiously. A layered process of dealing with chronically absent teachers or those who are unable/or unwilling to teach needs to be put into place to induct motivated staff into the teaching profession.

### **5.3 Curriculum and textbook reform:**

Given the apparent resistance to change, over-lapping responsibilities among authors, editors and reviewers, and over-defensive attitude of the curriculum directorate and textbook board officials, consideration may be accorded to revamping the entire set-up with individuals possessing sound academic credentials *and* with an enlightened, pluralistic and gender-sensitive view of the world.

Consideration may be given to permitting School Principals to prescribe textbooks other than the ones printed by STBB, subject to adherence to the official Curriculum.

#### **5.4 Girls' enrollment, recruitment of female teachers and female presence in Education administrative agencies**

With regard to increasing enrollment of girls in schools, it is recommended to:

- Consolidate schools to include primary, elementary, middle and high school sections at one location.
- Provide transport to students to commute to and from (consolidated) schools
- Appoint more female teachers
- Provide separate washrooms for girls, with water
- Provide boundary wall
- Publish details of school facilities separately for boys, girls and mixed schools

With regard to recruitment of female teachers, it is recommended to:

- Lower the threshold for rural schools and enlist Intermediate qualified teachers for rural schools and provide them with additional training.
- Provide transport to women teachers
- Provide separate staff room and washrooms for female teachers

#### **5.5 Gender budgeting:**

While policies can have lofty objectives and receive forceful verbal commitments, meaningful implementation can only be ensured through budgetary allocations and oversight. It is, therefore, recommended to introduce gender responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring provisions to every aspect of education policy, particularly those related to gender equity.

#### **PITE:**

Consideration may be given to:

- Consolidating all TTIs into one single institution – with three campuses, one each in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur – to be staffed and equipped with internationally qualified and competent faculty – and with hostel facilities for male and female teachers.
- Affiliation with a highly reputed foreign teacher training institution

The unified TTI may hold special courses from time to time anywhere in the province.

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**Persons interviewed**

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Ms Alia Shahid, Special Secretary

Ms Aziz Fatima Mangi, Additional Secretary, Academic & Training Wing

Mr Abdul Majeed Bhurt, Director General, STEDA

Mr Akram Khwaja, Director General, M&E

Mr Qamar Shahid, Director General, PITE

Mr Zakir Ali, Chairman, Sindh Textbook Board

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