

Analysis of Literacy Efforts in Less Developed District of Punjab in Pakistan (A Case Study of District Layyah)

Noor Abdullah
M.Phil. Scholar, AIOU
E-mail: Noorabdullah44@yahoo.com

Muhammad Ajmal
Associate Professor, Department of DNFCE, AIOU
E-mail: drajmal@aiou.edu.pk

and
Javaria Hussain
M.Phil. Scholar, AIOU
E-mail: javariahussain111@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to analyze the literacy efforts in less developed district of Punjab in Pakistan (A case study of district Layyah). The main objective of the study was analyzing the efforts done by Government NGOs and other Organizations to increase the literacy rate and recommend strategies to increase the literacy level in the less developed areas in Punjab (Pakistan). The research was descriptive in nature and based on survey. The population of this study consisted of 1001 teachers and 10 administrators of all the literacy centers of Government and private sector in District Layyah. The sample of the study were 500 teachers and 10 managers, supervisors, and administrators of literacy centers at district Layyah Punjab in Pakistan. The researcher adopted two research tools as per objectives of the study i.e. questionnaire and interview. The result shows that government started different project to increase the literacy rate. The study recommended that revise the curriculum and give teacher training in the field of literacy & Non-Formal Education.

Key Words: *Literacy efforts in Pakistan, Education*

Introduction

Literacy is considered the basis of development, peace and prosperity. It is a tool of the newest ideas and its practical implementation on ground. In fact, it helps a lot in fighting out poverty, disease and backwardness enabling nations to bring harmony and unity among themselves. Education is vital to Human Resource growth and is the pre-condition to use all natural and manmade resources economically and appropriately (UN Joint Declaration on education, dated 15 Feb 2008). Pakistan has shown 5.1 percent economic and financial development in the last six decades; especially, in education training, which is an indication of paradigm shift (Economic Survey 2017). As this research is centered on the activities for education

evaluation in District Layyah, Punjab (Pakistan) Globally, over 785 million adults are illiterate and many more can only recognize isolated words. The literacy rate in Pakistan is lowest among the South Asian countries. Female illiterate adults are more than the male adults (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2010).

According to National Educational Policy 2007, equal attention should be given to curriculum, methodology, evaluation and objectives to improve teaching learning process. Teacher training was also emphasized. Access, equity, quality, and management are major targets of the policy. Policy emphasized the access of education to all boys and girls all over Pakistan as well as equity in admission,

enrollment, transition and dropout rate. It also emphasized quality of education by improving teacher qualification, teaching learning process, student's performance and curriculum. Education plays a key role in the economic development of a country. Overall literacy rate in Pakistan is 57.7 % (i.e. 69.5 % for males, 45.2% for females). Literacy rate in urban areas is 73.2%, which is higher than rural areas (49.2%) (Census Report 2017).

From 2000 to 2004, in Pakistan, in the age group 55-64, the literacy rate was around 30%, whereas, in age group 45-54, the literacy rate was 40% and in the age group 25-34, the literacy rate was 50% and in age group 15-24, the literacy rate was 60%. This information demonstrates that with every age, education rate in Pakistan has expanded by around 10%. The literacy rate in various areas, in particular by sensual orientation. In the ancestral zones of education among ladies is 7.5%. What is more, English is quickly spreading in Pakistan, with 18 million Pakistanis (11% of total population), which has expert over the English dialect that makes it 9-positioned English talking country in the world and third biggest in Asia. Moreover, Pakistan produces around 445,000 graduates and 10,000 informatics graduates a year (National Education Policy, 2005). The official statistics (59% in 2017 as shown in the Census 2017) show that Layyah has made considerable progress in the education sector over last one decade in terms of enhancing the adult literacy and school enrollment. The literacy rate in district Layyah is still very low i.e. 36.7%.

The combined vision of literacy and non-formal essential training is "Educated youth and prosperous Punjab." The objective of both is "To accomplish 100% literacy rate in Punjab". In order to accomplish its vision and objective, the government of Punjab has created particular methodologies with an aim to annihilate lack of education through non-formal methods for instructing individuals, particularly youth, grown-ups and out of school going children. The Government is determined to give children of most helpless age and ignored gatherings of society. It gives another opportunity to benefit from instructive learning and information dissemination. Literacy Department is working of different projects to reduce the illiteracy in Punjab including The Punjab Accelerated Functional Literacy & NFBF Project, Punjab Literacy Movement Project, Punjab Work Place Literacy Project, Community Learning Centers (CLCs) Project (Phase-II),

AaoParhain Project, Tribal Areas Literacy Project and Taleem Sab KayLiy.

Statement of the Problem

The problem under investigation was the analysis of literacy efforts in District Layyah. As District Layyah is less developed, keeping in loop the progress of the district; there is a need to assess the efforts by Government, NGOs and private sector institutions to increase the literacy level and to recommend strategies for the improvement of literacy graph.

Objectives of the Study

To analyze the effort done by Government, NGOs and other Organizations to increase the literacy level in less developed districts of Punjab Province in Pakistan.

To recommend strategies to increase the literacy level in the less developed areas in Punjab (Pakistan).

Research Questions

What efforts are being made by Govt. for increasing literacy rate in less developed regions of Punjab (Layyah)?

What efforts are being made by private sector educational institutions to improve the literacy rate in less developed areas of Punjab (Layyah)?

What are the recommendations of literacy teachers to uplift the literacy rate in less developed areas of Punjab (Layyah)?

Significance of the Study

This study provides the evidence about the literacy efforts in less developed district of Punjab i.e., Layyah. The analysis suggests enormous centrality from various edges about the planning and administration of Literacy programs at common level and regions arranged inside the national utmost reaches of Pakistan and particularly Layyah region. It can also be beneficial for the Punjab government and NGOs which are administering the literacy centers specifically at District Layyah and generally all over the country, as they will come to know how much their students are satisfied with their facilities, infrastructure, curriculum, number of literacy centers and mode of teaching etc., and what more they expect from them. The study will enable them to improve their literacy centers in term of facilities, infrastructure, and curriculum for better learning of students.

Review of Literature

Education is a fundamental and constitutional human right. It is mentioned vividly in the Constitution of Pakistan to give free and necessary education to all children between the ages of 5-16 years and improve grown-up literacy. Literacy being a key apparatus is the initial move towards advance society. Absence of education breeds a horrible cycle such as uneducated are poor, the poor are frail and the weak are unskilled (Shami and Hussain, 2005). Illiterates cannot be rational hence ;democratic practices are defeated in the society and they are vulnerable to be exploited easily. The wave of terrorism in various countries is the example of illiteracy and ignorance. Basic factor of terrorism and the turmoil in the region are illiteracy, poverty and injustice (The News, 2011 November 20). Education is both the world in itself and reflection of the world (Shami, 2009).

On the other hand, illiteracy is a bottleneck towards the development of Pakistan. For example, countries of the west have not progressed on the basis of their financial strength but it is all due to their literate people. Now science and technology has emerged as a force, the growth and development of Pakistan can only be achieved only if its people are literate. All the inventions and their further development remain futile until and unless people are literate enough for appropriate utility in life. As education needs to do with the ownership of abilities identified with the translation or utilization of written dialect and images (Schaffner, 2005). The UNESCO (2009) highlighted that many countries had paid significant attention towards youth and adult literacy. Less public funding and gender disparities were major causes low literacy rate. From 16 millions of world adult population, 16% adults were lacking basic literacy skills and about two- third were women from total adult population. If situation prevailed then over 700 million adults would lack literacy skills up to 2015.

Due to mismanagement and poor monitoring, literacy rate did not increase properly as in four provinces the NADRA (2007) identified that 2,007 Basic Education Community Centers (BECS), ghost literacy centers were introduced by National Education Foundation (NEF). The NIC cards of the administrative staff were fake. For monitoring of these (BECS) Rs.22 million were allocated and 130 non-governmental organizations were involved for monitoring of the literacy centers throughout the four provinces. The UNESCO(2015) describes literacy

the "capacity to distinguish, comprehend, decipher, make, communicate and figure, utilizing printed and composed materials related with varying settings. Proficiency includes a continuum of learning in empowering people to achieve their objectives, to build up their insight and potential, and to take part completely in their group and more extensive society".

The invention and evolution of both the internet and the technological devices that allow us to access the internet (and access each other through the internet) have revolutionized the way a person can research, learn, and spread new ideas. We now have the tools to claim that we are in an information age, but do we all possess the skills that allow us to be masters of our own destinies? In this regard, many current initiatives to improve global, regional and national literacy rates use computer, particularly mobile phones and SMS. For example, in India a project titled "Mobile Learning Games for English as Second Language Literacy" (2004-2012) aimed to enhance the literacy sub-skills of boys and girls in low-income rural areas (and in urban slums) via mobile game-based learning of English in non-formal, formal and informal education contexts.

As indicated by the most recent Pakistan's Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey 2015, 2016, the literacy rate of the nation is over 58 percent, with lower rates in rural areas for females. Utilizing cell phone as a learning apparatus by means of UNESCO undertaking can increase the education level nationwide. The learning content to Nokia's e-Taileem application depends on UNESCO's learning DVDs planned and tried in-group learning focuses all finished Pakistan. By empowering access to the top-notch educational material by means of reasonable cell phones, Nokia expands the scope of the UNESCO trainings to provincial regions, supporting kept learning after the group classes' participation reaches an end. It empowered individual's access to substance of fundamental literacy through an advanced cell phone application. It is an awesome open door for the post literate students, as utilizing this application on cell phone and in Urdu dialect, will keep them in place with perusing and composing abilities and making education aptitudes important to 21st century life demands.

With the usage of versatile learning segment, the program picked up the Government Sectors' help, with the Literacy Department of Punjab and the

Education Department of Ministry of Capital Administration Development as new partners to the undertaking for higher proficiency infiltration in Pakistan. To regulate this education venture in the framework, Govt. must scale up this venture to government sector, with the goal that a bigger number of clients can profit by the undertaking later on. Mobile learning can enhance and upgrade learning open doors for all. The new project was an extension of the past JICA strengthened mediation in the field of non-formal training. The JICA coordinated for non-formal instruction system improvement in Punjab since 2004 to 2015. Because of the JICA assistance, Punjab government created, steered and accelerated quality non-formal learning framework for out of school youngsters and grown-up literacy framework for uneducated adults. Educational modules, reading material, models, showing helps, learning materials, instructor's preparation program, and Non-Formal Education Management information System (NFEMIS) were created. It was ceaselessly used by the Punjab government. Thus, 2,877,541 people (2,040,615 grown-ups and 836,926 children) were education during 12 years in Punjab.

The new project was launched in October 2015. Its duration of 50 months. It will complete by November 2019. During this period, the non-formal and adult literacy education system would be further upgraded in Punjab. The primary level non-formal education system would be used in assisting Federal, Sindh, and Baluchistan governments. It aimed to

develop their non-formal and adult literacy system. It was designed keeping in mind their regional contexts, needs and system in place. The upcoming new project was anticipated to reach out to additional 2.7 million illiterate people of Pakistan. In this project, 1.8 million are illiterate adults and 0.9 million are out of school children. In 2017, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) and UNICEF agreed to develop a cooperative partnership for bringing down dropout level in Centers through non-formal education.

Methodology of the Study

This study has been done using survey research design and descriptive in nature. Literacy efforts of Government, NGOs and private educational institutions were analyzed through descriptive analysis technique. The population of this study consisted of 1001 teachers and 10 administrators of all the literacy centers working under the supervision of Government and private sector in District Layyah (Literacy centers in district Layyah Education Census 2016). The sample of the study were 500 teachers of literacy centers established at district Layyah Punjab and 10 managers, supervisors, and administrators of literacy centers established at district Layyah Punjab. The researcher adopted two research tools as per objectives of the study i.e. questionnaire for the teachers of the literacy centers at District Layyah and interview protocol was used to conduct interview from managers and administrators.

Results of the Study

Table 1

| Q. No | Item | Yes | No | Don't Know | Mean Score |
|-------|---|-----|-----|------------|------------|
| 1. | Separate literacy centers are available for boys and girls. | 115 | 339 | 46 | 1.55 |
| 2. | Literacy centers are established inside Govt. organization building. | 333 | 112 | 55 | 2.44 |
| 3. | Parents send their children to literacy center willingly | 221 | 190 | 89 | 2.06 |
| 4. | Students come to literacy center willingly | 341 | 97 | 62 | 2.48 |
| 5. | The timings of literacy centers are similar to conventional .literacy centers | 343 | 105 | 52 | 2.05 |
| 6. | The curriculum of literacy centers is same conventional literacy centers. | 45 | 435 | 20 | 1.22 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|------|
| 7. | Students admitted in literacy centers are usually not eligible for admission in conventional literacy centers | 316 | 123 | 61 | 2.38 |
| 8. | Monthly scholarship is given to the students | 127 | 325 | 48 | 1.60 |
| 9. | Required resources are available in the literacy centers | 210 | 204 | 86 | 1.77 |
| 10. | Sufficient funds are available for literacy centers. | 128 | 322 | 50 | 1.46 |
| 11. | Training is provided to teachers of literacy centers. | 111 | 333 | 56 | 1.55 |
| 12. | Literacy teachers are satisfied with the training provided | 122 | 321 | 57 | 1.60 |
| 13. | Free Books are provided. | 125 | 324 | 51 | 1.60 |
| 14. | Literacy centers use local language. | 306 | 134 | 60 | 2.34 |
| 15. | Teachers focus on improving reading skills. | 223 | 214 | 63 | 2.0 |
| 16. | Teachers focus on writing skills. | 253 | 190 | 57 | 2.12 |
| 17. | Teachers focus on numeracy skills. | 212 | 243 | 45 | 1.93 |
| 18. | Teachers pay attention to improve reading proficiency of students. | 337 | 112 | 51 | 2.45 |
| 19. | Teachers pay attention to improve writing proficiency of students. | 341 | 108 | 51 | 2.46 |
| 20. | Teachers pay attention to improve mathematical proficiency of students | 338 | 117 | 45 | 2.44 |
| 21. | Teachers give local examples while teaching | 118 | 335 | 47 | 1.56 |
| 22. | Assessment of students' performance is made daily. | 338 | 111 | 51 | 2.45 |
| 23. | Literacy centers have a strong communication system. | 201 | 176 | 123 | 2.05 |
| 24. | A healthy and positive competition exists between students. | 329 | 113 | 58 | 2.43 |
| 25. | Teachers focus on functional literacy. | 56 | 113 | 331 | 1.88 |
| 26. | Literacy teachers are trained regularly. | 111 | 333 | 56 | 1.55 |
| 27. | Literacy centers programs enable students to earn income | 123 | 312 | 65 | 1.62 |
| 28. | Literacy programs are helpful in reducing child labor | 114 | 329 | 57 | 1.57 |
| 29. | Literacy can be used to bring social change | 338 | 105 | 57 | 2.46 |

Table 1 indicates that facilities including *separate literacy centers for boys and girls* are present, literacy centers are available inside the Govt. owned buildings, parents are eagerly sending their children for education from literacy centers, students are willing to learn and come to literacy centers willingly, respondents believe that in their district/area, the timings of literacy centers are the same as that of conventional schools. Respondents believe that in their district literacy centers curriculum is different from conventional schools, pupils who are ineligible to get admission in conventional schools are admitted in the literacy centers, pupils are not given stipends on monthly basis by the literacy centers, sufficient required resources are available at the literacy centers, sufficient funds are not available to smoothly run the literacy centers, training resources are not available for literacy centers teachers. respondents responded that they are not provided quality training and they are not satisfied with it, books are not provided free of cost to students at literacy centers, local language is used while giving lectures at literacy centers, literacy teachers give sufficient attention to enhance the reading skills of students, literacy teachers give sufficient attention to increase the writing skills of students, literacy teachers are not giving sufficient considerations to enhance the numeracy skills of students, literacy centers train students in reading skills for improving their reading ability, literacy centers train pupils in writing skills for improving their writing skills, the literacy centers train students in mathematical skills such as calculation. Respondents believe that in their district literacy teachers quote local examples to their pupils for better explaining their lessons, student's assessment is done at literacy centers, different literacy centers communicate with each other and there is no communication gap among them, pupils at literacy centers have a healthy competition among themselves, majority of the teachers are unaware about functional literacy, the programmes offered and training provided by the literacy centers are not helpful in providing jobs to the students, literacy centers are not enough helpful in reduction of child labor, literacy can be used to bring a social change. Respondents are in the opinion that in their district/area, due to Govt. efforts, the literacy rate has increased manifold.

Discussion

Pakistan is the signatory state to MDGs and EFA goals. Nevertheless, the country would not be able to achieve these international promises due to lack of funding, financial mishandling and other restraints. Major factors that deter the enrolment rate of girls are poverty, illiteracy of parents, cultural constraints and parental worries about protection of their daughters. Society's emphasis on girl's modesty, protection and early marriages are the main barriers that their parents do not send them to schools. Enrolment of rural girls is 45% lower than that of urban girls; while for boys the difference is only 10%, which shows that gender gap is an important factor in the District. Pakistan spends 2.5% GDP on its education. Overall, around 89% education expenditures contain teachers' salaries and only 11% comprise of developmental works such as building of new schools, purchase of teaching aids, and scholarships for deserving students; which is not sufficient to lift the quality of education/literacy rate. Appropriate attention has not been paid to technical and vocational education in Pakistan so far. Presently, technical and vocational institutes do not meet the increasing requirement of population. The institutions are deprived of infrastructure, teachers and training aid. It is accepted by all hands that population of a state is the basic element of its national power. No doubt, it can only become an asset if it is skilled and dynamic. Unskilled population causes unemployment and depletion of national resources in the country and burden over the country resources. Therefore, technical education needs improvement with immediate effects.

On the other hand, the total spending of Pakistan on education as percentage to its GDP was estimated about 2.5% in the fiscal year 2016. It was the lowest in South East Asian region. As per 2017 national census, the literacy rate declined from 60 percent to 58 percent (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2016-2017 referred). The survey further revealed that Net Enrollment Rate (NER) of primary education at national and provincial levels during 2015-16 was 54% as compared to 57 percent in 2013-14 showing a marked decline of 3 % Poverty, poor law and order situation, natural disasters, financial restraints, lack of access to schools, poor quality and bad

governance have greatly contributed to less enrolment in District Layyah.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested to increase the literacy rate in District Layyah based on this study:

Curriculum/Syllabus of the literacy classes may be revised and make it as per need of culture, Society and learners in District Layyah. The notables-VIPs, Celebrities, and Donors (businessmen, factory owners, Govt servants, NGOs heads) may be involved in literacy campaign and donations may be collected by holding their regular meetings in District Layyah. It can be carried out by EDO literacy. Teacher training in the field of literacy & Non-Formal Education may be introduced and developed in District Layyah at tehsil levels/UC level. Stipend for literacy students & remuneration for teachers may be made appropriate in District Layyah. Local people may be involved to work in community to increase the literacy rate. Local language may allow for Teachers in literacy classes in District Layyah. For the purpose of competition in students' incentives of best performance in literacy skill may be given in District Layyah. Childlabor in the society may be discouraged by motivating parents to send their children in literacy centers in District Layyah. Impact on society and social change may be reflected in social media for the purpose of motivation of teachers & Students in the field of literacy & Non-Formal Education in District Layyah. There may be establish a coordination among Government & NGOs & other organization for collective efforts for literacy in District Layyah. Researches in the field of literacy and Non-Formal Education may be conducted to improve the infrastructure & practices of literacy in district Layyah. Such type of researches may be replicated in other district for generalizability of the study. Location of literacy centers may be approachable in District Layyah. Space to established literacy center may be hired from local community and Govt. Where it is available in District Layyah.

Conclusions

It is concluded that sufficient required resources are not available in literacy centers established by Govt. literacy centers in District Layyah. Literacy teachers' pay due attention for enhancing the reading, writing and speaking skills of pupils. Parents are willing to send their children to get education from literacy centers, literacy center teachers are very competent and experienced in providing quality education and

it is a healthy indication supporting the fact that Govt., literacy center teachers use local language and it is easily comprehensible by pupils, no proper training is being provided to the teachers for their professional development, Govt. has not provided required resources to the literacy centers. Lack of adequate funds, resources, furniture, and A.V. Aids are the big hurdles in improving literacy rate of district Layyah. On the other hand, NGOs and private sector institutions have not only established a large number of literacy centers at district Layyah for promotion of education but they have also provided the required resources such as basic infrastructure, course curriculum, teaching training, material and equipment and funds. Facilities provided by these literacy centers are inadequate from various aspects and the main areas such as qualified teachers, latest technology, teaching methodology, and environment need immediate attention and improvement. In addition to this, some basic things such as books, boards, markers, chairs, desks are not available as per requirement of the students. The other facilities, which need immediate attention of the Govt. and NGOs, are toilets, fans and clean drinking water.

References

- Economic Adviser's Wing, Finance Division, Government of Pakistan. 2014-15 Islamabad. Govt. of Pakistan, Economic Survey. Available at http://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_15/highlights.pdf retrieved on 6-6-2017.
- Government of Pakistan Statistics Division Pakistan Bureau of Statistics Islamabad (2016). 2014-15 Annual report of the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/>
- Ministry of Education, (2007). National Literacy Curriculum. Curriculum Wing, Islamabad, Section 2.2, 15.
- Pakistan Census Organization, (1998). Report of the Govt. of Pakistan, Census. Available at <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/15531>
- Pakistan Census Organization Govt, 2017. Report of the Govt. of Pakistan, Census. Available at <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/population-census>
- Policy and Planning Wing, Ministry of Education, Islamabad, (2005). 2003-04 annual report of the Govt. of Pakistan, Financing of Education by the Provincial and District Governments.
- Shami, P.A., & Hussain, Kh. S. (2005). Development of Education in Pakistan. Islamabad: AEPAM.

Shami, P.A. (2009). Situational Analysis of Literacy in Punjab with reference to Education For All. The Sindh University Journal of Education 43(2014), 14- 28

Schaffner, J. (2005). Measuring literacy in developing country household surveys: issues and evidence. Tufts University: The Fletcher School.

The National Database and registration Authority,(2007). Available at <http://www.lawvisionpk.com/topics-list-detail.php/national-database-and-registration-authority-amendment-ordinance-2007/40211/nadra-citizenship-and-registration-laws/0/lawList/>

UNESCO, (2006). Global Benchmarks for Adult Literacy, Global Campaign for Education/Action Aid International.

UNESCO, (2009). Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001778/177849e.pdf>

UNESCO. (2015). Revision of the Recommendation on the Development of Adult Education. Paris: UNESCO.