

Improving Primary Education through Government and NGO interventions, in Nushki District of Balochistan

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Abstract

Pakistan has owned the responsibility to educate the every citizen. The international set goals such as, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Education for All (EFA) including I/NGOs aim to ensure 100% enrollment in the country. However, aforementioned goals have not been achieved in Pakistan, Balochistan in particular. This study analyzed the role of Government and NGO/Azat Foundation improving the primary education in Nushki district of Balochistan. Moreover, parents' satisfaction with the either schooling system (Government and NGO) entailed with the education policy and the ground realities are inclusively explained. The required data and information were collected through questionnaire survey from 200 households where children were enrolled

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in Government and NGO schools. Additional information were gathered from households, group discussions, semi structured personal interviews and observation. The secondary data included books, journal articles and websites. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics. The findings of the study illustrated that government primary schools almost failed to provide quality education in Nushki district. On the other hand, NGO schools/Azad Foundation comparatively provided better education; and services. As a matter of fact, both the government and NGO schools could not ensure the standard of quality education, in the study area. The findings depicted that teachers' harsh behavior and lack of basic facilities significantly affected the enrollment rate. We recommend the Government of Balochistan and concerned I/NGOs to provide all the required facilities to schools. There is an urgent need to effectively monitor the schools and appoint qualified and trained teachers. Government and NGOs need to collaborate effectively not only to improve the enrollment and overcome the dropout but provide quality education in Nushki district of Balochistan.

Key words: Education policy, Government and NGO/Azat Foundation interventions, Nushki, Balochistan.

Introduction

Pakistan is among those countries which ratified the global legislations to achieve success and progress in education sector. In 2000, Pakistan ratified Dakar Framework of Action for Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (AEPAM, 2013). The constitutional Article 25a –the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years, in such manner as may be determined by law that the state to make responsible to its Government schools to ensure quality education at all level (GOP (2011). Nevertheless, both the Government and NGOs seemed to have been failed to achieve the aforementioned goals. Pakistan has a net enrollment ratio (NER) of 57% for children enrolled, whereas the target was 100% (http://sparcpk.org/sopc2014/Education_Chapter_2014.pdf). Government and NGO schools are the key intervening sources for providing primary education in developing countries. However, still many children from poor families do not equally benefit from Government and NGO schools (Bately and Rose (2010).

Despite different education policies, sector plans and the –Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014 followed by the government of Balochistan to increase literacy rate and bring the quality and brilliance in education, the crux of the study depicted that the government schools in Nushki district had a number of education related problems in terms of lowest enrolment rates, rapidly increasing dropout cases and lack of education quality at primary level. Quality in teaching and learning process and poor learning outcomes of government schools are the key concern in the district. According to the –Balochistan Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014 it is the responsibility of all the districts of the province to bear all the education related-costs including school

bags, stationary materials, transportation and school meals. Notwithstanding, free books and fee eradication by the government of Balochistan, poverty forced parents not to enroll or pull their children out of school due to the high costs of transportation, school uniform and stationary.

According to –Nushki District Education Sector Plan (NDESP) 2016-17 to 2020-21, which follows the Balochistan Education Sector Plan (BESP), the required target of Net Enrollment Rate (NER) of primary school is 100%. However, the study revealed that it was still far behind the target and gradually decreasing. 90% of parents were dissatisfied with the schooling system, owing to insufficient facilities and services provided in sampled government schools such as, insufficient classrooms, the facility of electricity, clean and fresh drinking water, toilets and washrooms, furniture and the facility of library.

1. Study area

Nushki district of Balochistan is selected for this study. There are approximately 152 Government and 7 NGO primary schools in Nushki (<http://nushkal.shaigle.com/>). The education sector in the district is surrounded by several challenges . This is why both the Government and NGOs are engaged to improve the primary education system. Azad Foundation (AF) Balochistan in particular and National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) appear to be the leading NGOs providing education either free of cost or charging an affordable fee. For provision of quality education to poor and marginalized community, Azad Foundation with the support of Action Aid Pakistan has established six (06) community schools in district Nushki. In addition, realizing the importance of education AF has established seven (07) campus community cluster schools for girls provided almost all facilities, in order to enhance education in the district

(<http://www.azatfoundation.org/program-components/education>). Thus, this study intended to analyze the role of government and NGOs improving the education system, in Nushki district of Balochistan.

2. Methods of data collection and analysis

This was a descriptive and explanatory type of study. After a reconnaissance survey, four schools were selected for this study (Table.1). The Reconnaissance Survey (RS) supported to acquire the secondary data and observe the schools' conditions. The required data and information were collected through household survey questionnaire. Four Focus Group Discussions (two with each type of school) were held. During the Focus Group Discussions and key informant interviews useful information was gathered from parents, community members, teachers, Government and NGO schools' principals (on the enrollment and dropout rate) and concerned matters. In addition, teachers' attendance, behavior and the available facilities in schools were keenly observed. Secondary data included published research articles, books, annual reports of Government and I/NGOs and websites. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics for instance, frequency distribution and percentages.

Name of Schools	Enrollment rate	Households sampled
Government schools		
Primary School Saydan Killi Mengal	97	30
Primary school Qazi Abad Noshki.	172	70
NGO schools		
Azat Foundation School Qazi Abad	472	80
Primary School Sardar Abdul Samad Dak Noshki	44	20
Total		200

Table 1 Government and NGO schools

3. Sample size and sample design

The required data and information were collected from 200 households

where the sampled schools' children lived. Categorically, 100 households were targeted from government and the other 100 from NGO beneficiary households (Table 1). It is notified that the pretested questionnaires have not been included in the sampled size.

4. Results

4.1 Socioeconomic condition of respondents

The study revealed that almost half (49%) of parents were educated who enrolled their in government schools. In this context, more than half of parents were educated that enrolled their children in NGO/Azat Foundation's schools. On the other hand, an overwhelming proportion of households' heads were illiterate (Table 2). The average age of household's head was 42 years. While, the average household size was consisted of 9% people entailed with 8 dependent persons. The findings showed that there was only one person earning, mostly (53%) engaged on daily wages; 22% of household heads had established small-scale-business and 25% were the government and private employers (Table 2). The findings showed that over-population, dependency and poverty seemed to have been the major challenges that parents could not effectively support their children in seeking quality education in the study area. Such barriers resulted low enrollment and accelerated the drop out incidents.

Table 2 Socioeconomic condition of respondents

Description	Government schools (N 100)	Azat Foundation/NGO schools (N 100)
	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Education status of parents		

Literate	49	59
Illiterate	51	41
Household heads age (average)		
Age (years)	42	39
Household size (persons)	09	07
Household head's main occupation		
Daily wages	53	34
Self-business	22	20
Government job	25	46
Number earners	1 (person)	1(person)
Dependent persons	8	5
Household annual income (average) Pakistani Rupees	108,000	

Field Survey 2016

4.2 Comparative analysis of Government and NGOs schools

In order to understand the differences between Government and NGO schools in district Noshki, Balochistan, the study revealed no significant differences in current enrollment and dropout rates at household level of children enrolled in government and NGO schools. For instance, every year, on average 3 children from each household were enrolled in Government and NGO schools. On the other hand, more or less the same situation accrued in the case of dropout incidents. The results showed that 8% boys and 7/8% girls happened to dropout in government and NGO schools. Mostly it happened due to different reasons, such as the NGO schools provide better facilities, but they charged fees, which the poor parents could not afford. Additionally, most of the parents were concerned of NGO schools' unsustainability. On the other hand, the

government schools are sustainable and free from any kind of fee charges, but the highest majority of parents were dissatisfied due to the scarcity of basic and essential facilities, teacher absenteeism, failure of the teaching and learning system and lack of security (Table 2). Teacher's student ratio in both schools was same. The results demonstrated that a small proportion (36%) of government teachers were trained and better qualified, for example, they were awarded with PTC, B.Ed. and M.Ed degrees, attended several trainings on how to teach and treat children. While the situation seemed poor with the NGO schools as 20% of teachers were trained. Both the types of schools had boundary wall. Compared to Government schools infrastructure, NGO provided sufficient class rooms, office, washroom facilities, sufficient furniture (desk, chairs, and cupboards), electricity and safe drinking water. The findings depicted that Government schools provided books to children (85%), free of cost while NGOs could not provide free books to all students but to only 61%. It means still all children cannot get free books from schools.

There were no any security guards or gatekeepers in government schools. This was one of the major felt needs as teachers and students expressed that they have not been in safe and sound environment. In this context NGOs had better measurements, as they had employed gatekeepers/peons. Schools have been established far flung from the major population. It has affected the enrollment rate as well as caused dropout of girls in particular. It happened as poor families could not manage to drop their children to schools.

It was observed during the field work that there was almost no special care, for instance, fresh and healthy food in school canteens, fresh drinking water and PT or games periods for physical exercise and fitness for pupils was found in government schools. The results showed that both

the Government (38%) and NGO (25%) schools children experienced corporal punishment for instance, teachers used sticks and slapped and hit children on their body.

Table 3 Comparative analysis of Government and NGO schools

Government Schools	NGO Schools
1. Policy exist to improve enrollment and overcome dropout	1. Goals and target oriented approach
2. Government buildings	2. Community given land and participation ensured
3. Parents were satisfied of its sustainability only	3. Parents were satisfied because of its effectiveness
4. Books provided to students free of cost.	4. Annually, almost all books and basic stationary provided to students free of cost.
5. Permanent teachers	5. Teachers appointed temporarily, extension depends on performance.
6. Attractive salaries	Salaries limited subject to performance
7. Depend on government budget	Mostly donor driven approach. Photo sessions
8. Poor implementation of policy at grass root level	Effective implementation of objectives
9. Poor monitoring and evaluation system	Effective monitoring system
10. Due to political influence teachers were not punctual, many were not performing duty.	Teachers were found punctual due to check and balances.
11. More than 90% of parents were not satisfied with government schools due to poor services and facilities.	75% of parents were concerned about the sustainability of schools and the increasing monthly fee.
12. Enrollment 43%	60%
13. Dropout 8%	7%
14. Visit to schools: 70% of parents visited mostly once a year	80% of parents visited almost every month

Field survey, 2016

4.3 Parents' satisfaction with the services provided by the Government and NGOs schools

In the 21st century almost all government schools were in miserable conditions, in District Nushki. The findings of the study showed that an overwhelming majority of parents were not satisfied with the services provided by the government schools. For instance, insufficient rooms, lack of safe drinking water, toilet/washrooms, lack of furniture and library. Regarding the provision of aforementioned services and facilities NGO schools were better compared to government schools. The findings depicted that 80% of parents were satisfied with NGO schools. Since both the extreme weather (summer and winter) exist in District Nushki. There for electricity was an immediate need to make the education environment salubrious and convenient. The power-cut in Government schools affected the studies of children. On the other hand, NGO schools have managed substitute sources to ensure provision of electricity in schools. Overall, parents and children were more satisfied with the NGO schools (Table 3). However, they were concerned about the increasing monthly fee of NGO schools.

Table 4 Parents' satisfaction with the services provided by the Government and NGOs school

Description	Government Schools	NGOs Schools
	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Sufficient classroom		
Satisfied	12	80
Not satisfied	88	20
Total	100	100
Electricity facility		

Satisfied	05	57
Not satisfied	95	43
Total	100	100
Safe drinking water		
Satisfied	No drinking water facility was available	05
Not satisfied		95
Total	100	100
Toilets or washroom		
Satisfied	05	20
Not satisfied	95	80
Total	100	100
Furniture		
Satisfied	10	78
Not satisfied	90	22
Total	100	100
Library		
Satisfied	No library existed	18
Not satisfied		82
Total	100	100

Field survey, 2016

4.4 Discussions

The promotion of awareness campaigns regarding education is one of the main objectives of NDESP. The findings of the study showed that illiteracy, unawareness and poverty in particular hindered the enrollment and accelerated the dropout rates. Parents seemed to be unaware of the worth and the requirement of their children's education. They hardly visited schools. Similarly, Government schools rarely invited parents. The MDGs have not been achieved in Nushki district of Balochistan. The so-called policies, goals and objectives of the governments and organizations

in Balochistan seem as *an old wine in a new bottle*. Hence, there is an emerging need to focus the most disadvantaged and vulnerable families and children. After 18th amendment of Pakistan's constitution when education became the provincial subject, different plans were made to achieve progress in the quality of education. However, Nushki district, despite all the national and provincial commitments could not attain satisfactory progress in the field of education.

4.4.1 The NGO/Azat Foundation schools: Strengths and weaknesses

Comparatively, Azat Foundation/NGO appeared to provide better education in district Nushki, Balochistan. For example, the infrastructure of school that included the class rooms, office, washrooms, boundary wall. Moreover, NGO provided furniture, drinking water facility, and special care to students. NGO teachers seemed more cohesive and punctual compared to the Government schools. Such services and facilities attracted parents to enroll their children in Azat Foundation/NGO schools.

Above all, the Azat Foundation/NGO charged monthly fee (Rs 500 /- average 5 US \$ per child) to students. Such financial requirements of the NGO eventually made distant the destitute and poor families' children from better education and the environment. No doubt, the sustainability of schoolings system is based on finance. However, such burdens should not be conditional with the provision of education to deserving students. NGOs in most instances articulate to educate the poor and destitute children. The findings of this study are consistent with the many studies (Doftory, 2004; Iqbal, 2009). Students expressed that they walk almost one hour every day to schools. It has affected the enrollment rate and caused dropout. It happened as younger children could not walk to

schools; neither could their parents bear the transportations costs. In the same manner, parents were concerned regarding the sustainability of NGO schools. A few educated parents informed that *“there is any difference between NGO and private schools; because both schools charge fee.”* There is great need to bring the Government and NGO on the same page.

4.4.2 The Government schools: Strengths and weaknesses

Government schools provide free education at primary level, in Balochistan. In recent years, students have been benefited with books and other minor stationery, once a year. Optimistically, governments have employed trained teachers in order to ensure quality education both at provincial and district level. This is why Government schools seemed to be more sustainable in terms of educating children, provision of buildings/infrastructural facilities. The other side of the same coin showed a miserable picture of District Nushki. For instance, Government schools' buildings were in miserable condition, without boundary wall, lacking the basic required facilities namely, furniture, safe drinking water, gas/heating system, washroom, peon/sweeper and the security. The findings of research reflected many such studies (UNESCO, 2011; IOJPE, 2015). Children were made responsible to sweep and clean the entire schools. Surprisingly, only one set of course books were given to almost 2/3 children living in same household. Traditional and overburdened have showed harsh behavior to students. Such practices influenced the enrollment rate. Consequently, the highest majority (90%) of parents were not satisfied with the government schools. Additionally, the political influence has significantly affected the educational environment in the study area. It happened as influential teachers did not regularly attend

schools. It not only affected students but also overburdened other teachers. Hence, the findings of study reflected that poor monitoring and evaluation system and the missing facilities have become the major challenges to uplift the education system in Government schools in Balochistan, Nushki District in particular.

The findings of the study illustrated that the sampled NGO schools in the district proved to be the gap-filling initiatives where the government schools could not achieve their objectives. For instance, services provided to the children in NGO schools were considerably better than government schools. Aside from these facilities, the study also exemplified that monitoring system in NGO schools appeared to be better than government schools. Due to effective monitoring system, teachers were punctual performing their duties despite the meager salaries. Whereas, regardless the attractive salaries, charming pension in the future and lots of other amenities government teachers due to poorer check and balance system, were seemed irresponsible and clumsy. A number of government teachers were not well-educated and despite being licentiate with different trainings were unaware of pedagogic skills and approaches of teaching. In this context, parents were anxious regarding their children's future due to government teachers' harsh behavior and regular absenteeism. Such gigantic academic loopholes and shortcomings eventually affected the enrollment rate and caused a number of dropouts in government schools. Consequently, parents preferred to enroll their children in NGO schools.

4.4.3 Conclusion and recommendations

The study depicted that, being the main providers of education the government primary school appeared to be unsuccessful in delivering quality education. This failure owes to numerous institutional of

administration and so called systems of these schools. The results showed that the majority of parents were dissatisfied with the schooling system due to insufficient school services and limited facilities provided in government schools such as, inimical school environment, insufficient classrooms, lack of clean and fresh drinking water, deficient washrooms/toilets and electric facility including untrained teachers, weakest school management, unsuitable teaching pedagogy. In addition, poverty in households and school's expenditure, parents' illiteracy and lack of awareness, overpopulation and dependency are extra challenges which have augmented the dropout cases and affected the enrollment rate in government primary schools. While, the NGO schools comparatively were seemed to be better. Results showed that more than half of parents were satisfied with the NGO schooling system due to numerous factors such as, effective monitoring system, punctual and regular teachers, provision of basic facilities, sufficient furniture for students, clean drinking water, the facility of electricity, sufficient classrooms and washrooms/toilets. Apart from these facilities, NGO schools conducted regular parent teachers' meetings which significantly increased the enrolment rate and decreased the dropout cases... However, services provided by NGO schools were not of that standard of quality education because well-qualified teachers, effective pedagogy and modern equipment (multi-media, projector and sophisticated library) were missing in NGO schools. We have therefore dissertated that both the Government and NGO schools almost failed to provide quality education, in District Nushki of Balochistan.

We recommend the Government of Balochistan and concerned I/NGOs to provide all the required facilities to schools. There is an urgent need to effectively monitor the schools and appoint qualified and trained

teachers. To improve the education system in Balochistan, Nushki district in particular, Government of Balochistan and concerned organizations need to provide sufficient infrastructure and building to the schools including free books, uniform, scholarships and the transportation facility. Last but not least, Government and NGOs need to collaborate effectively not only to improve the enrollment and overcome the dropout but provide quality education in Balochistan, Nushki district particularly.

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