

## **Implementation Challenges in Perspective of Out of School Children: Analysis of Policies and Projects through Cultural Audit Approach**

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### Abstract

The objectives of this research were to find out implementation challenges of the educational projects and policies, analyze if these policies address the issue of out of school children, and explore the parental preferences for their children's future and concerns about the educational facilities. Cultural audit approach was adopted for identification and analysis of gaps in policies and their implementation mechanism for the enhancement of school enrolment. Ethnographic research model was used to collect field data from the government officials including policy implementers, and the parents living in the suburban areas of Islamabad. In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data. First eight Five-Year Plans and the last three educational policies were analyzed to find out the real issues at formulation and implementation levels. Almost 24 million children were out of school before completing primary level. The study concluded that a lot of resources were consumed while formulation of educational policies and plans. None of these Plans and Policies attained their desired goals. These policies were made without a proper knowledge of ground realities. There was always a gap between the policies makers and the implementers. Communication and coordination may be improved among the implementers so that the best results may be achieved.

**Keywords:** Out of school children, community project schools, illiteracy, cultural audit.

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**Introduction**

All over the world, education either in the schools or at the homes is compulsory for children at a certain age level. A number of United Nations wings are working for the betterment of the communities at large on equal measurement scale (UNESCO, 2008). Under the article 25-A, the rights of education as stated by Constitution of Pakistan assures the free education of children at the age from 5-16 years old. Article 37-B, elaborates that, "State shall be responsible for eradication of illiteracy and provision of free and compulsory education up to secondary level, within minimum possible time." (Pakistan's Constitution: 1973). The provision of formal education is the responsibility of state at both Federal and Provincial levels. Government of Pakistan declared that Education for All (EFA) is the top priority of every political government.

Pakistan is the signatory to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, Dakar Framework of Actions 'Education for All' in April 2000, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 which include free obligatory primary education to all children in Pakistan. Pakistan being a signatory of Global Educational Forums has developed different policies over the time, but when we talk about the achievements the question remains unanswered. Available educational policies at large and out of school children particularly internalized in present research study to find out issues/causes at grassroots levels, which create hindrance in achieving objectives. So far, eight national educational policies and twelve five-year development plans have been made to facilitate provincial and federal government to eradicate illiteracy but due to negligence at level of policy implementation in its true letter and spirit and over ambitious policies were creating hindrance to achieve the goal of 100% literacy in Pakistan. The culture of education is complicated in Pakistan due to division of polices at federal, provincial and regional level that are typically represented in educational institutes (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2003). Stated commitments for the promotion and growth of education and eradication of illiteracy from Pakistan were the serious concerns, but with the passage of time the students' dropout rate at primary level has been increasing.

According to the ground realities, overcrowded classrooms, unavailability of classrooms, untrained and less paid teachers, unavailability of textbooks, stationary for the students and blackboards in the classrooms were some of the major issues highlighted in different studies and reports. Scarcity of financial resources, lack of political will (Jatoi, 1995) and professional commitment of educational departments

(Ali, 2003) were some other reasons of low literacy in Pakistan at primary level.

Human Development Index (HDI) ranked Pakistan at 144<sup>th</sup> among the lowest from overall total 188 geographical boundaries and countries; and valued it as 0.538 in the human development category (UNDP, 2016). The OOSC data depicts the similar picture. Total number of school-going children between the age of 5 to 16 were around 51.1 million from which 25.5 million (making 55.8 percent) attended schools while the remaining 22.6 million (consists of 44.2 percent) were out of school. It was very much important to share the concern that in 2014-15 the number of out of school children was 24 million which then reduced to 22.6 million, so that statistically the data collected in 2015-16 provide a less appealing picture, which need a real time educational policy at emergency level.

Cultural Audit Approach (CAA) was applied to analyze last three national educational policies and first eight five-year plans for the study. Implementation issues, policy gapes, financial constraints and lack of basic facilities were some of the documented reasons of low literacy rate in Pakistan. CAA was administered to find out the issues and practices by the government policy implementation mechanism for the promotion of literacy among children. There were two major concerns during the research, one was the Government educational policies at federal, provincial level and their implementation and the second was the people's perception regarding government strategies and outcomes in the context of high enrollment in primary schools.

### **Review of Literature**

After the independence in 1947, education was treated as the most important tool for the country's development. The importance of education was also visible from different public and official speeches of the Founder of the Nation's Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He addressed the First National Educational Conference in November, 1947 wherein he said '*the future what we expect is purely depends upon the type of education which we will provide to our children and their socialization as the future citizens of the country*', (Ministry of Interior, 1947). Latter events and the policies showed a gloomy picture of the whole concept of 'Development through Education'. Without any remarkable results, all the educational policies so far failed to attain the objectives.

Certain issues were highlighted by different scholars, research institutes and INGOs that in Pakistan, a number of internal and external

factors influenced the policies that is why they ended without attaining any splendid result (Ahsan, 2003). According to the report in 2017, total literacy rate was 59% with 47% of females. Quality of education provided in government schools and behaviour of teachers were some of the important issues rather than the structural disparities among the distribution of monetary resources for construction and renovation of schools. According to Ozga & Lingard (2007), ideology is the most critical problem; importance of English over National language was an initiative to enhance the quality of education, but it increased the burden. Above all, government's seriousness was another question of inquiry; provision of resources, perks and privileges, teacher's on job training, 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment, 25-B were some of the structural issues which needed to be resolved if government wanted to pursue educational development in Pakistan. Keeping in view the above points, CAA was incorporated to analysis the existing policies and the public response towards the education.

The CAA was borrowed from business school of thought which deals with organizational culture, including cultural differences between policies, implementation strategies and their outcomes, widely addressed in the literature. Deal and Kennedy (2000) stated 'either weak or strong, culture influences throughout a policy; it affects everything; from benefits sharing to promotion and the implementation strategies.' In education, a chain of events like policy formation, implementation, missions and objectives influence the target population.

Researchers comprehend that culture audit is an important section of development but often overlooked (Peterson & Deal, 1998; Freiberg, 1998). Wagner and Madsen-Copas (2002) stated the value in determining the educational quality and suggested a five-step module that consists of observations, interviews, checklists, presentation and surveys. It examines the diverse nature of policies and implementation plans which reacted in the manifestation of values and behaviors in overall educational culture (NCCC, 2005). As financial audit discloses merits and weakness in fiscal measures to inform tactical plans for financial development, the culture audit emphasizes how any policy can include comprehensive strategies for improvements in educational policies. Within different paradigms, the culture audit requires different steps to measure the current state of policies. To assess the culture of effective educational policies the order is as 1) awareness, 2) diagnosis, 3) planning, 4) action, and 5) evaluation.

The CAA helped to identify problems and issues which created hindrance in achieving the goals; what natives think about educational

policies, why government was not able to provide educational services to the peoples. Research-based recommendations provided at the end of the article, which may be beneficial for policy makers and educationists.

The process of cultural audit approach in this article is as follows.

- a. In the *awareness* phase, the major concern was the identification and documentation of the policies, why such policies were failed to attain their goals. National educational policies have some been influenced by international agencies e.g. UNESCO, UNICEF etc. along with national legislation e.g. 25-A and 37-B under the constitution of Pakistan. In this first phase process, policy formulation, major stakeholders, and problem for the research were identified.
- b. In second phase *diagnosis*, the data were gathered from identified stakeholders e.g. Community members, NGO representatives, and government officials, more specifically, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional training, National Commission for Human Development, Basic Community Schools and National Education Foundation regarding policy gaps and issues during policy implementation.
- c. The third phase of the culture audit involves *planning* interventions. The problems of policy and projects' failure were identified after the second phase (thematic data analysis) and analyzed along with community perspective for a culturally appropriate policy of children enrollment. Data identified the issues at policy formation and implementation level and lack of follow-ups. There was no symbiotic relationship among policy and the implementation mechanism. A number of issues were identified which were discussed in detailed.
- d. After the identification of positive or negative aspects of educational policies/plans and projects, an *alternative* culturally appropriate policy was formulated after the participation of community and stakeholders, which highlights the up-gradation in previous models and some addition at minimal financial aid.
- e. The last phase of the model related to the *evaluation* of the alternative or modified policy/plan/program/framework that was administered in fourth phase to solve the OOSC issue to find out its effectiveness in goal achievements.

In second and third step, field data were collected from community, relevant government departments; and different NGOs/Trusts which were providing educational facilities to the peoples. Parents of the

children, schools' staff and local community members were interviewed. From the government side, the educational departments e.g. NCHR<sup>3</sup>, NEF<sup>4</sup>, BECS<sup>5</sup> were included. Educational Ministry and Planning Commission were listed, and their respective staff members were interviewed. From NGOs and trusts working in the selected area, owners and managers were interviewed respectively to get their point of view regarding educational challenges they faced in the context of policies, implementation mechanism, and coping mechanisms.

Along with CAA, Visibility model<sup>6</sup> was adopted to identify and document the number of school going children from the area. The model has five dimensions and known as 5DEs model, briefly defined below according to the objectives of the study. Identification of students, according to their age, is the prominent point of the model. The conceptualization of the model is as the following:

- a. Dimension 1: Includes one-year younger children than official age of primary school entry (i.e. 5/6 years old), which were not enrolled in pre-primary or primary schools
- b. Dimension 2: Includes primary school going age children (6 to 10 years) that were not in primary or secondary schools
- c. Dimension 3: Have those children who belongs to the lower-secondary school age (10 to 13) but they did not in primary or secondary school
- d. Dimension 4: Have only those children who were at risk of dropping out in primary school and in last dimension
- e. Dimension 5: include children who were at risk of dropping out in lower-secondary school.

Third model used was a part of 5DEs model, Visible, Semi-Visible and Invisible, a three-step model was administered to find out the reasons of excluded children, which was the missing part of the school going age children. The missing children were known as unseen children those who were at the verge of dropping out. Categorically, identification of children was as the following;

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<sup>3</sup> *National Commission of Human Rights*

<sup>4</sup> *National Education Foundation*

<sup>5</sup> *Basic Education Community Schools*

<sup>6</sup> *The visibility Model is the part of Out Of School Children (OOSC) model, which discussed 5Dimensions of Exclusions from main frame society.*

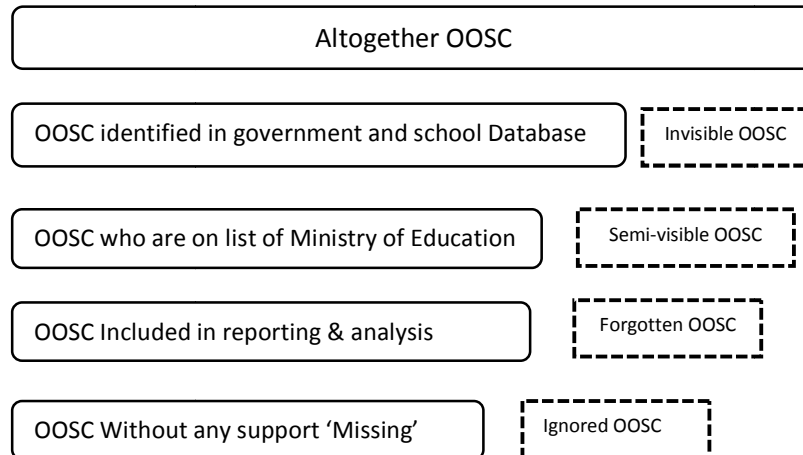


Figure 1: Three-Stage Analysis Mechanism of Out of School Children

Figure 1 depicts the analysis mechanism of three-stage analysis. The first two categories represent the OOSC in the country which were identified by the government departments through any census, reporting etc. Forgotten OOSC were those who excluded from the OOSC's list and the last one the 'Ignored OOSC' were those children who existed in the community but were not included in any multi-cluster survey or any census survey and forced out from any support for education.

### Research Methodology

This was an exploratory research, conducted in qualitative paradigm with the community and the other stakeholders as the subjects. Ethnographic research techniques were used to collect empirical data, which includes participant observation, key informant interviews, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion. Field data were collected from parents living in the suburban areas of Islamabad; government officials who were involved in policy formulation and implementation at national, provincial and regional levels. Three different interview guides were developed and administered for in-depth interviews e.g. the community, private educational institutes and the government departments.

### Context/Research Site

The research site of this study was Noor Pur and Muslim Colony of Bari Imam Locality. Union Council "Noor Pur Shahan" is among the old localities before the development of Islamabad. It is situated between

3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> avenue of Islamabad an altitude and longitude 33o 45' 0" North, 73o 7' 0" East geographically. Quaid-i-Azam University, Diplomatic Enclave and Prime Minister's house located in this area makes it a prime location. The UC is further divided into the different sets of residence i.e. Katchi Abadi, Noor-Pur and Ratahotar. The residential area of the Bari Imam Shrine is surrounded by Noor Pur, comprised of Katchi and Pakki Abadi. Katchi Abadi is known as Muslim Colony; both the residential areas were selected for present research. According to the voters' lists, the overall voting population of the UC is 14,317 individuals including 7914 males and 6403 female voters. The total population is not documented because in Katchi Abadi there are many families who do not have CNIC and few of them were out of the voter lists. That is why according to the people of the area, the population of area is approximately about 20,000-30,000 individuals.

### **Participants**

As stated earlier, respondents were selected from community, educational institutions and government departments purposively. Four categories of the parents were identified from the community with the help of 5DEs model which include the parents who were sending their children to schools, those who re-admitted their children, those who quit the schooling of their children and those parents who were not interested in their children's education. After identification of the households, government and private schools enlisted, from each locality 60 households were surveyed as per 5DEs model. Overall, principals of government and private schools (09), teachers (10), parents (68) (especially mothers) and community members (06) were interviewed making in all 98 interviewees. Policy perspectives from NCHD, NEF, BECS, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Planning Commission were also included to identify the policy formulation mechanism, functions of the departments and missing links of collaboration to eradicate the issue. Data consist of quality of education, perception of children and teachers as well as government point of view in the provision or up-gradation of available educational facilities as per increase in demography. In third segment official responses were documented regarding the formation of policies, involvement of departments, implementation mechanism and then evaluation of such policies regarding operational and beneficial level.



### **Data Analysis**

After the fieldwork, the gathered data were analyzed. In-depth interviews were translated into different sub-themes to present all the respondents and the policies being studied. Different attributes were developed before going into the field from review of literature. Such themes were intermingled with the firsthand information collected through In-depth interviews, focus group discussions and case studies in the first phase of the analysis to make the research more comprehensive. After establishing new phenomenon, the attributes were further categorized under sub-themes were further categorized under major themes derived from the objectives of the study and the model used. All themes were further described according to the theoretical framework. After the documentation of data and the themes, the theoretical approach was developed with the help of conceptual model.

### **Results and Discussion**

Educational development is crucial for any country's development. In Pakistan, educational policies were not properly implemented causing vulnerability. This involves a variety of actions such as issuing directives, decision making, assigning duties, and hiring personnel, monitoring and evaluating activities. Implementation problems usually happen when there is a gap between the stated policy and the achievement of the benefits of the policy by the target community. According to Bhatti et al. (2010), "Education was the epicenter of all developments. Development of policies, poor communication system, weak administration, governance structure, leadership vacuum, unclear policy goals, poor policy evaluation, financial gaps and irregularities in the education sector in Pakistan has caused highly negative repercussions in all walks of life.

***Development of Policies:*** The task of every type of policy development goes to the Planning Commission (PC) in the country. The commission was also responsible for developing five-year plans since inception of Pakistan. A number of plans have been developed and implemented since the start of new century. For rapid development with collaboration of different INGOs and International organizations, world treaties the government of Pakistan announced three year 'Poverty Reduction Strategy' (2001-04) for the economic development of the country. The policy wing of PC was in close collaboration during five-year plans with Ministry of Education (MoE). The spokesperson from NCHD shared, "*There is lack of proper coordination among all the departments of*

*Government like in Capital NCHD, BCES and NEF while working to promote primary education and have their own wings for promotion of primary education, but none of them have any internal cooperation, that is why all three departments working in the same area but differently".*

Akbar (1995) said that precise, accurate and clear policy directives produced creativity and adaptability, which helped in the effective implementation. On the other hand, less precise directive did not leave room for the policy implementers to use their discretion and flexibility, which is normally needed for better policy implementation. Bukhari (1995) was of the opinion that it must be ensured that not just information, but also highly relevant and adequate, information is provided before the formation of policies. Regarding the policy formulation, Barber (2010) stated that policy formulation and re-formulation of policies are continuous processes, with implementation it is worthless. As per Tikly, L. (2011), the policy formation and implementation without each other are just concepts without essence. Keeping in view the Pakistani situation, it is not possible here because policy formation and implementation are observed separately. Ali (2011) discussed an effective infrastructure is must which enables provincial and district level information for policy implementation.

**Poor Communication System:** A number of departments, NGOs and Private owners provide education to the inhabitants of the Bari Imam. There is no proper coordination among them, it was also documented that (2 KM per school) policy by the government failed in the area. There was abundance of schools but lack of coordination and positive academic competition ruined all the efforts. According to Rashid (2004), 'Policy implementation is a dynamic process. Education policies in Pakistan were plagued by poor communication, less support from the stakeholders, less ownership of the policy by the stakeholders. Lack of commitment on the part of the implementers, no collaboration and cooperation, less accurate and consistent approach towards the completion of the policy goals were identified by different scholars.'

According to the Principal of a private school, 'We have five branches in the area, three in Muslim Colony and Two in Noor Pur, we are providing cheap education till matriculation. There is lot of schools which charges high fees from children but providing poor educational facilities, there is private school regulation authority but their efficacy is questionable in terms of quality of services by the private schools. This is the responsibility of the competent authority to make it possible that all of the schools and the curriculum will be discussed at one table. But due

to severe negligence of the government departments and their poor coordination among different wings, the riddle illiteracy remains unsolved.’

According to the official from BECS, ‘There is lack of communication among the different units working for educational development through non-formal education system (e.g. NCHD, BECS). We are working under the same ordinance but our jurisdiction is different. We no doubt have more community-based routs and provide more services to the population of Pakistan but there is no proper importance given to the program. We have accurate number of schools and they are interlinked all over the Pakistan through internet. We have better in-field resources but due to some official matters the recognition is still pending and now the program is at the verge of dissolution. If our workers get due recognition we can in-line all community schools of BECS, and feeder schools of NCHD and other private institution on one page to proper utilization of funds and more professional outputs. Due to lack of inter-departmental communication and work sharing among different departments, we are facing such issues.’

Again the official continued, *‘Transfer of upward information is another major problem which I think is the major issue among the poor implementation of policies and check-and-balance on them. There is no proper mechanism for extracting information from grass root level to find out issues and problems which create hindrance for goal achieving. Those who are working in field were not intact/in contact with the high ups that is why their hard work remained under the shadow of departments.’*

Weak administration: Various initiatives for policy implementation failed due to weak administrative machinery at the grassroots level. The agencies at this level did not own the policies (UNESCO & Government of Pakistan, 2003). The poor management capacity of the directorates of education at policy formulation levels and provision of operational facilities in schools at implementation level were some other factors responsible for this devastating issue. The spokesperson of NCHD, BECS, RDO, Ministry of Education and Professional Training shard the same views that ‘We have good and implementable educational policies and plans for the promotion of primary literacy and rid-of illiteracy. The issues broke-out at implementation level, since provincial/regional and federal educational departments have their own objectives and restrictions e.g. National Education Policies (2009, 2017).

After 18<sup>th</sup> amendment, education has become a provincial subject, but federal government has some advantages to develop National Educational Policies. But the issue of weak administration and lack of collaboration among federal and provincial departments is the major documented issue. According to the deputy director NCHD, 'There is no proper evaluation mechanisms by the ministry on running projects, top-down approach is always practiced.'

According to a respondent from BECS, policy makers often get a one-page summary as background for the formulation of new policy. This summary most of the time comes out of fabricated information and becomes the reason of un-attainable high aims of the policies. According to the Government of Pakistan (1979), for proper implementation of policies, effective implementation agencies were important. Various initiatives for policy implementation failed due to weak administrative machinery at the grassroots level. The agencies at this level did not own the policies (UNESCO & Government of Pakistan, 2003). The poor management capacity of the directorate of education at policy formulation levels and utilization of available operational facilities in school at implementation level were the main factors responsible for this devastating issue.

**Governance Structure:** The representatives of NCHD and BECS while talking about the political assassination of different departments reported that the issues of ineffective governance and corruption, particularly among politicians and civil servants, were the major obstacle to proper policy implementation in Pakistan. The same type of allegations was also imposed by the World Bank (1997, p. 12). One of the major reasons for the ineffectiveness of governance was lack of coordination and trust among political representatives and government officials, and also the lack of cooperation among different government departments (World Bank, 1999). In case of SAP, the lack of trust among finance and education departments has caused a shortage of finances for the project, which seriously affected the envisaged outcomes (World Bank, 2003, p. 16).

Lack of accountability mechanisms, corruption on both structural and implementation level, and excessive transfers along with change in any political government are some of the serious governance issues which directly affects the proper implantation of policies and accountability of respective officials (SPDC, 1997; The World Bank, 1997). According to the World Bank, Pakistan is one of those countries who are working

below average on governance indicators and corruption is one of them (Stern, 2001, p. 91).

An official from government departments stated, *'the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the constitution of Pakistan brought some major changes in the educational system of Pakistan. Since the education has become a provincial subject, Planning Commission has imposed a drastic cut to our educational budget. Community School teachers were working without salary from last four months (end of 2018 to first two months of 2019). Now we don't have funds for teachers' trainings, which was available before the amendment. (Even though) commission and ministry are desperate to eradicate illiteracy and to resolve the issue of out of school children, they are forcing us, but without proper budgets how can we provide them the desired results. We are facing so many internal issues as well, that is why the effectiveness of BECS under observations.'*

Every new government came up with new policies and plans, without considering the initiatives of previous governments. In Punjab Province the situation was better than the other provinces. The literacy department had their own networks for checking and re-checking the schools and teachers as well as attendance and children participation. In Federal Areas, Gilgit Baltistan had the highest education rate. This credit did not go to the Gilgit Baltistan Government, it was the community's participation and their educational institutions affiliated with Aga Khan Golden Jubilee Schools and other schools owned by Ismaili Community. The educational status was higher because NEF, BECS were working properly and the community also participating.

When we talk about the political will and participation of politicians including the Ministers from the Upper and Lower house, the education remains at number sixth or seventh in their priority list for resource allocation. Finances are very essential for any organization/department without which it is not possible to function properly. According to the official from NEF, *'Average increase in population is very high in Pakistan. Deficiency of resources is increasing day by day. The schools do not have proper buildings. We have overcrowded classrooms with less space available. We have been requesting for funds to construct new rooms but our requests are still pending. The finance and policy wings spend all their time in documentation. Whenever a new government takes charge, we re-submit the applications and a new documentation process starts. These documentation processes are so long, that often the government changes before it matures.'*

After the devolution of powers educational development is not under federal ministry. Lack of coordination among the provinces and the federal ministry of education has become a major issue. The plans for eradicate the illiteracy are not properly implemented. Observations indicated towards the issues that were related to the joint action of multiple actors, and are inherent problems. The lack of cooperation among different organs of government and their mutual disrespect create several 'clearance points' that hamper the overall implementation of policy.

Every province has their educational departments supposed to develop their own policies, but so far there is no final provincial policy has been put forward. Education departments of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are following NEP 2009, and draft policy of 2017 whereas Sindh and Baluchistan have made some minor amendments in the existing policies. Absence of provincial educational policies is question mark on the performance of educational departments after the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment. Official from BECS stated, *'We have more than 20,000 operational community-based schools all over Pakistan. All of our schools are on-line, we had provincial then division and then district coordination centers but after 18<sup>th</sup> amendment government is planning to cut down our operational staff. We have only six-month extension. I am worried how government could vanish our 23 years' hard work and commitment? Third party evaluation in Punjab done by Literacy Department who reported that more than 80% of the operational schools were in Punjab. I am not aware about the status of online registration of schools by NCHD and NEF, if government may start any joint venture to compile all the functional schools on one website that would be beneficial for upcoming governments and educational department to check and evaluate the performance of every school in Pakistan.'*

There were some other chronic factors which have hindered smooth policy implementation in Pakistan. These were not only related to implementation but also to the policy makers and the overall environment where the policies were formulated and implemented. According to the principal of boy's primary school (Bari Imam);

*'I think with the passage of time, formulation of educational policy is not the priority of Government, I am serving here from last 10 years, the number of students increasing every year but we don't have sufficient rooms, shelters and other services for children. All classes up to 5<sup>th</sup> grade are overcrowded. The strength of student in every class is almost double than the capacity. We have been applying to education*

department for the funds to increase the capacity, but due to budgetary constraints our applications are still pending. I think there is lack of coordination among bureaucratic structure and the political government. Ministers often announce the grants but whenever we ask the department, they simply refuse to release the money. In this situation how we can work with peace of mind and how we can produce kids like Arifa Kareem.'

*Leadership Vacuum:* For successful implementation of policies, visionary leadership, strategic planning, strong will, trained teachers, community support, availability of resources and students/teacher motivation play the role of cementing forces (Channo, 2003, p. 14). For this purpose, Zaidi (2005) suggested empowerment of local stakeholders, planning strategically, resource mobilization, resource utilization, political will, monitoring and evaluation of the education system are essential steps for successful implementation.

The major causes for the failure of educational policies were less involvement of all the implementation stakeholders and the leadership vacuum. Lack of professional commitment, ownership and interest of stakeholders, and non-collaboration among all four provinces were also leading the policies towards failure. This cannot be achieved without the leadership. Whenever a motivated officer with a good reputation is appointed by the government in educational department the corrupt mafia distract him and keep him busy in official matters rather than taking care of field matters and look into the policy implementation. A respondent stated (request was made to not share the dept. and respondent's name);

'In our department a CSP officer transferred from DMG group, he was very strict and committed with his work. During his first year he proposed some plans to achieve the targets. He managed to control corruption in the field offices. After 21 months of his placement when most of the garbage was cleaned, grievance committee received an anonymous application against him that he was involved in some acts which were beyond his jurisdiction. Inquiry committee penalized him after four months' trial. All the corrupt officers who were removed during his tenure re-joined the department because no allegations were proved against them. This is how the thing works in some of the government departments. After spending one year he transferred back to his mother department.'

This is not the only story, this is the story of every department of the country, if someone wanted to work; those who thought government occupation as blessings without any effort distracted the vision and mission of the officer. Both professional and financial corruption is imbedded in every government department from top-to-bottom. The situation is very devastating in education sector. Government education department officials owned private schools, chain of private schools with good educational services, and government schools with lack of educational facilities are one of the major reasons for ever increasing private schooling culture for profit maximization and lack of interest in government educational facility centers.

**Unclear Policy Goals:** It was observed after review of literature that most policies and plans were inefficient in learning from past experiences (Ahsan, 2003). One of the main reasons for such a situation was the absence of reliable data for educational planning in Pakistan. It was very often that even official documents carry discrepancies. Ahsan has shown that great variations existed among many official and semi-official sources, including such basic educational statistics as the percentage of literacy. The government of Pakistan has acknowledged that there is a discrepancy in educational statistics and has provided assurances that it will be addressed (Jamil & Qureshi, 2002, p. 8). The lack of reliable data hamper policy makers' ability to devise clear policy goals with well-defined implementation plans and evaluation mechanisms.

The policies and plans come up with a large number of objectives. Every policy has three to four-page objectives which were not possible to achieve simultaneously. Same was the case with five-year educational plans. Every educational plan was the part of Economic Development Plans, wherein a small portion of the budget was allocated for them. Most of the time a clear difference among policies, proposed plans and allocated budget is visible, which shows that the whole plans were developed by different authorities without collaboration. The official from BECS was of view;

*'We are following NEP 2009. The aims and objectives of this policy were the promotion of primary education, provision of universal compulsory education to all, developments in available facilities and establishment of new departments, but, there was no proper budget allocation for each segment, no proper documentation and the existing number of available facilities were write down hypothetically, because no cross checking or*



*third party evaluation has been done to strengthen the received information.'*

Analysis of the five-year plans shows certain overlapping objectives in each plan, which includes development of shelter schools, construction of rooms in schools, presence of primary school in 2 KM radius, definition of illiteracy and inclusion of OOSC children. No achievements of previous plans were incorporated in up-coming new plans. In 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> educational plan the numbers of existing schools were different, it may be the achievement but there was no reflection of such accomplishment. According to the official from NEF,

*'With the passage of time, along with the constitutional amendments and the switching of foundation under different ministries the missions and objectives were modified. The name of the foundation conceptualized as it was for the whole country but the major focused objectives of the foundation were to facilities federal school teachers and their families and to provide scholarships to children (students) of those parents who served in federal departments.'*

**Poor policy evaluation mechanisms:** According to the natives there is no proper (or even improper) educational policy evaluation mechanism existed in Pakistan. In the history of Pakistan, only once the National Education Policy of 1998-2010 was evaluated to find out the achievements and grass root issues by the competent authority for the up-gradation. The major objective of the evaluation was to amend and update the objectives of the policy under Dakar Framework and MGDs of 2004 and 2000 respectively. The responses from community members and officials of Planning Commission shared,

*Education has become a profitable business; number of degree awarding institutes are available. Children get more than 98% marks which were beyond imagination with very low esteem. Profiteering in the field of education destroyed its essence. It is due to lack of evaluation mechanism in the fields. The situation is very devastating here in this sector. In government and private schools there is no proper mechanism to check-and-balance. Same is the case with educational policies of Pakistan. We have the policies and plans but we do not have the spirit to implement them. Government departments need to work out programs to evaluate the policies and the implementation. That would be beneficial*

*for government to improve proposed objectives for better goal achievements.'*

The official from BECS, *'Policy making wings of the Ministry always ask for a one-page summary (they need only one page rather than detailed summary according to each segment) of the results and ground realities for analyzing the situation. Due to absence of centralized system and monitoring mechanism, departments provide previous information with some modification rather than making effort to find out current situation. A very vague picture is provided to the top-level police makers due to which the new policies do not address the real situation and fail to bring the required results.'*

Most of the time the officers asked for summaries on urgent bases without considering the real situation in office and the documented record. In the response the existing data were re-submitted rather than making an effort to collect the information from concerned areas. The data collection mostly was not possible because of less technical skilled staff and lack of computer based data. There were number of other departmental issues existed which must have to eradicated for effective utility of policies and workforce of departments.

### **Financial gaps and irregularities**

In its report, UNESCO (2005) has found that inadequate financial resources for education in Pakistan have hindered the policy implementation. According to Saleemi (2010) financial resource in any system plays the role of a life blood. No matter, how clearly and accurately the implementation orders were transmitted, if the resources both financial and material were not available, the implementation would fail. Therefore, according to World Bank Report (2000) resource availability must be ensured by the implementers and the policy makers before developing a policy. The resources included adequate number of staff, enough financial support, quality and trained staff etc. Without sufficient resources, required services will not reach the beneficiaries directly.

Finance was major problems since inception of Pakistan in every field of life. As stated earlier the education remains vulnerable in all of the governments. Pakistan is a developing nation; it has very uncertain political and military regimes. The average population growth is high, but the provision of basic facilities by the government is very low. There was always very huge difference in revenue generation and utilization that is why the debt from IMF and World Bank increases day by day (total 300 million USD). There were 24.3 % peoples living under the

poverty line (BOS, 2017-18) struggling for their survival. Same in the case at macro level, government does not have enough resources for provision facilities to the inhabitants, less job opportunities, less government-based services e.g. drinking water, electricity, transportation, medical, education caused by scarce resources, is common in cities as well.

In 2005, UNESCO found that inadequate resource transformation is the main problem of policy implementation. Without any financial support no policies would be implemented. Likewise, the five-year plans stated that, every plan failed due to number of certain reasons and money was one of them. Money as well as skilled and competent staff is necessary for implementation and establishing any policy. According to an official from government educational department the consensus was on the budgetary issues, *'Budget remained the utmost and the central problem in policy implementation, effectiveness of departments, staff's commitments, and achievements etc. All the departments either federal or provincial are facing budgetary problems. Ministry asks us to produce result-based reports, but without investing in educational sector how we can provide them fact-based reports. Every year the government is imposing cuts on our budget and reallocating the resources to the cities, so how we produce better results and come in line with the cities.'*

Some of the official stated, *'School Buildings need major renovations which requires a lots of resources. It is not possible for an individual to invest a huge amount on school buildings. With the passage of time the number of students is increasing and the available resources becoming less efficient because of over burden. This burden reduces the actual productivity of educational institutes.'*

If we talk about the budgetary issues regarding the up-gradation of available facilities every aspect needs an extra care which includes existing schools, staff of schools, class rooms (buildings), mosque schools, adult literacy centers, recruitment and salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff, policies and implementation mechanisms. Better policies are needed to resolve the issue.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

During the fieldwork, a number of policy implementation hurdles were highlighted by the stakeholders. There was not a single mechanism for proper monitoring and utilization of funds on the projects. Following were some of the issues;

- **Commitments:** There was no proper joint mechanism to assemble International commitments with National Educational Policies, because that commitment needs specific interventions.
- **Governance:** After 18<sup>th</sup> amendment, education has gone to the provinces, so involvement of federal and provincial departments is mandatory for its proper functioning. The cold-war between civil servants and politicians becomes the obstacle because every new government comes up with their own agendas. Political transfers of key posts happen which effect the efforts towards policy implementation and other running programs and processes.
- **Infrastructure:** There was no proper documentation of government infrastructure in many parts of the country. No proper management can be observed except in Islamabad.
- **Budget:** The major and foremost issue is the allocation of funds. Without proper documentation of the existing facilities it was not possible to invest and allocate budget in different segments e.g. buildings, capacity buildings etc. Sufficient resources were not allocated for training programs for teaching and non-teaching staff.
- **Political will:** As stated in all previous plans and educational policies it was documented that due to lake of political will of the government no serious efforts were ever made to improve the situation. The sole responsible to provide all the facilities to implement any policy or plan lies upon the politicians and bureaucrats who keep the education very low at priority.
- **Corruption:** Corruption is the major and foremost reason of such stated irregularities.

Such issues may be resolved if the government could take initiatives at policy level.

1. First of all listing of departments e.g. a) who are involved in policy making b) who has the authority on curriculum development c) who has the information about educational status from all the areas of Pakistan d) who has monitoring and training facilities e) who involved in budgeting of the plans f) who has the authority to release funds e.g. Planning Commission etc. g) international stakeholders which provide financial and technical support to the said departments in policy formation.
1. A survey is recommended for the documentation of ground realities of the education in Pakistan and the workability of stated departments like the Multi-cluster survey.

2. A database of existing collected data must be developed. For this purpose, the database of BECS, NCHD, AEPAM, NEF and NEMIS can be used.
3. The database must be inter-connected throughout the country and supervised from Islamabad under four provincial domains along with one from AJK, one from FATA and one from Gilgit-Baltistan (FATA, GB and AJK could be administered from one desk (if possible)).
4. An open meeting may be scheduled for documentation of local narratives from all the provinces and areas which consist of teachers, parents, private school owners and other relevant stakeholders.
5. Minutes of Meeting may provide a real picture of policy formation at national level generally and equal participation at regional and provincial levels particularly and all bits joint into a National Education Policy for Pakistan.

Formulation of educational policies and plans for educational development is not an easy task for the government. It needs a lot of coordinated efforts and resources. Every government spends lot of resources on it. Long-term commitments by different departments, policy makers, over-burden ministries and the educational departments come up with solid policies and their implementation plans till the completion, but these policies and plans are not properly executed at grassroots level. After 18<sup>th</sup> amendment the education has become a provincial subject. There is always a communication gap between the center and the provinces. So far, no proper mechanism has been developed for policy implementation. For national educational policies and the provincial/regional plans utilization of funds becomes a major issue. In Vision 2030 nationalization of education has been planned, but no implementation strategy has been worked out. It was already there with previous national policies which come up to rectify illiteracy under Dakar Frame work of Action, MDG, and SDG in Pakistan. In Pakistan we have potential to overcome the issues related to out of school children. Intellectual minds with kind hearts are there that feel the pain of poverty, low socioeconomic status, poor quality of life, lack of job opportunities and illiteracy, but the utmost necessity is the accountability and a strong implementation mechanism.

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**Citation of this Article:**

Ambreen, M. & Hussain, M.A. (2020). Implementation Challenges in Perspective of Out of School Children: Analysis of Policies and Projects through Cultural Audit Approach. *Pakistan Journal of Distance and Online Learning*, 6(1). 143-166.