

Chapter # 1

POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR ESR

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1.1 Introduction:

Pakistan has an estimated population of 145 million, two per cent of the world's population. The areas of 88 million hectares comprise four provinces (Punjab, Sindh, North West Frontier and Balochistan) and four territories (Islamabad Capital Territory, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Federally Administered Northern Areas and Federal Administered Tribal Areas) of the total land of 88 million hectares, 20 percent has potential for intensive agricultural use. Pakistan has an apparent dichotomy between its economic and social indicators. The former bring the country on a par with economically prosperous countries, the latter categorize it with lesser developed ones.

Education remains inequitably distributed among various income groups and regions in the country. Literacy and participation rates are below those in other South Asian countries with similar level of economic development. Access of education to children of relevant age group is still inadequate. Educational institutions lack physical facilities. The target of minimum essential requirement of competencies for quality education has not yet been achieved. Educational institutions face shortage of qualified and motivated teachers, especially female teachers. Due to financial constraints and want of managerial capacity education targets remained unaccomplished. Programs approved were not completed because of inadequate resource allocation. The slow implementation of programs / projects undermined the efficiency of the system in terms of qualitative improvement at all levels.

The government recognized that accumulation of human capital is of equal importance as the accumulation of physical capital for sustaining development and that in the absence of healthy and literate population it will be difficult for Pakistan to bring about real increase in productivity. There has now been a paradigm shift in the development strategy and policy in Pakistan. The Government is committed to ensure improved access to physical assets, education, vocational skills, training and other education services that enhance the human capital of the poor and enable them to generate income through asset utilization and gainful employment. The Ministry of Education, in last four years has taken a close stock of situation and developed an Education Sector Reforms aiming to bring improvement in all aspects of education.

Education Sector Reforms in Pakistan is in consonance with the Constitutional provision guaranteeing the fundamental right to education. All basic education targets for primary schooling, adult literacy and gender equality are within the framework of Dakar Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. Education Sector Reforms continues to be based on iterative planning, through consultation at sub national and national levels, ensuring inclusion of local governments and civil society organizations. Micro planning at the community level is well under way. Challenges in the planning of ESR include inter-district and inter-provincial disparity, and the need to reach disadvantaged groups who are discriminated on account of gender and socio-economic status.

1.2 Policy Framework:

1.2.1 School Access:

The Government of Pakistan has developed Education Sector Reforms (ESR), which has assigned a central place to school education. Provision of basic education is the main guiding principle for its implementation. Currently the national allocation to basic education is well over 50%. The net participation rate in 2000-2001 at primary level is 68% whilst the participation of female participation rate is 53%. However, out of 18.1 million populations of children at primary level age, 12.4 million children are enrolled and 5.7 million are out of school system. Education Sector Reforms emphasizes the education provision for all school age children and it proposes to achieve 76% net primary enrolment by 2005.

Parallel to primary education, provision of physical facilities for Middle Level Education (i.e. class VI, VII & VIII) has been planned to create school spaces for the children graduating from primary school system. ESR program targets the present gross enrolment of 38% at middle level education to improve to 80% by 2015.

1.2.2 School Improvement Program:

A major focus of Education Sector Reforms is to make primary schools more functional by providing missing facilities such as, electricity, drinking water, boundary walls and other basic amenities so that the children do not drop out on account of dysfunctional environment which is not conducive to learning. School up-gradation through conventional and non-conventional means is also a core area to narrow the gap between primary, middle and secondary provision for higher transition rates.

1.2.3 Gender Inequalities:

Pakistan has made considerable progress in achieving more equitable distribution of opportunities between women and men for benefits of development. Pakistan's, gender development index (GDI) is ranked 131, exceeding the corresponding Human Development Index (HDI) rank of 138. For girls and women education level has been steadily rising. Female life expectancy at birth is 63.9 as compared to the male 61.8. Gender Empowerment Index ranking is likely to be improved considerably on account of equal opportunities for women to participate in political life. Though, Pakistan is moving for gender equality, ESR and Education For All (EFA) Action Plans propose to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus to ensure girls' full and equal access and achieving basic education of good quality. This is the centerpiece of the Education Sector Reforms. In Pakistan, all primary schools will be co-educational and all new primary schools are required to have ratio of 60 to 40 boys, and proportion of 70% women teachers to 30% men teachers. In all provinces, where the number of women teachers is inadequate, age and qualification requirements for them have been relaxed. Special monetary incentives (eg.) are being used to attract and retain female teachers in the rural and hard to reach areas. Gender stereo typing in the textbooks and curriculum has

been under review and efforts are under way to ensure a rights-based gender sensitive portrayal of girls/women, with respect to diversity of roles.

The Government of Pakistan has already identified focal persons for gender issues with a mandate to ensure a higher attention in public policy and develop strategies for girls participation in education provision at all levels through various incentives. The challenge before us is to remove all gender disparities in new enrolments, since it has been universally accepted that investment in girls' education is the best investment in education in particular and human development in general.

1.2.4 Governance and Capacity for Decentralization:

Operationalization of reforms in the Education Sector is underpinned by the broader context of decentralization and devolution. Education sector is being administered at the provincial level with an oversight and coordination at the federal level. However, as per the Devolution Plan 2001, responsibility of the delivery and the management of education have shifted to the district. On the one hand, decentralization has given increased autonomy over the provision of education at the district level, on the other hand there are major disparities in capacity in different districts across Pakistan. It is fully recognized that expertise in core areas such as, strategic planning, budgeting and personnel development, management, decision making, education leadership & managing change, information collection and analysis, monitoring and assessment is not evenly spread and is lacking in most districts. Lack of adequate capabilities to perform core functions for education delivery at the district level are a serious barrier to efficient implementation of Education Sector Reforms.

Education Sector Reforms also attach great importance to governance of education. The reforms reflect the importance of education governance as a consequence of several forces (i) meager resources for education seek amelioration in more transparent, accountable and efficient management (ii) moving the decision making process as close to the source of action as possible (iii) demand for increasing local participation in choosing and managing education by the communities and the students. In response to these forces, Government of Pakistan is developing responsive, participatory and accountable system of educational Governance and management through empowering the District Government and the school governance committees (PTAs/SMCs/PTSMCs) in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of school development plans. Necessary provisions are being made for developing appropriate capacity at local level along with the accompanying institutional rules and practices that enable the organization to function effectively. This is our current challenge and work is in progress.

1.2.5 Public Private Partnership:

Starting in the mid-1990s, a major shift has occurred in the Government of Pakistan's (GoP) approach to the country's education sector. The government has formally acknowledged that the public sector on its own lacks all the necessary resources and expertise to effectively address and rectify low education indicators. Moreover, public policy has been amended to mobilize the private sector and civil society organizations (CSOs) in the financing, management and delivery of education services in Pakistan. In essence, the GoP

seeks its role shifting from being a mere provider to a facilitator and financier of the education opportunities in Pakistan at all levels of the spectrum.

Among other initiatives, the GoP has undertaken policy reforms and provided incentives for Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) to flourish in the education sector. From initiating innovative programs to working in tandem with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that manage public schools through formal adoption, the government has stepped up its efforts to include various other stakeholders in the delivery of education. While the collaboration of these

different players in the education sector is not a new phenomenon in Pakistan's history, it is the first time that this interplay has been recognized, supported and given a mandate to succeed.

Education Sector Reforms have developed a conceptual framework for public private partnership which is based on the premise that it is a less radical alternative to sometimes controversial and less desirable wholesale privatization. The strategies in the current model under implementation are ; a more transparent and proactive manner of engaging the private sector for improving access and quality of education; enhanced managerial performance, entrepreneurial spirit, through capacity building; access to proven leading knowledge technologies; improved transparency through involvement of local community from design, implementation through to the operation; and support to local knowledge and employment generation at local levels.

Pakistan has deepened its commitment to partnerships with civil society organizations by placing an emphasis on working with a wider spectrum of civil society organizations including International and National Development NGOs through global partnerships to help deliver basic social services. Civil society organizations have become critical allies in designing innovative operations, implementing solution and monitoring results.

1.2.6 Diversification of General Education:

Government of Pakistan fully recognizes that the sustained social economic development is not possible by mere capital investment unless it is re-enforced with proper supply of adequate trained and scientific manpower. Unfortunately, there has been a greater increase in facilities for general education as compared to technical education over the years. The number of graduates with technical qualification looking for employment in the white collar sector as given is beyond the absorption capacity. As a result, there is a rampant unemployment among the un-educated youth. In such a scenario, Education Sector Reforms proposed a plan to broaden the base for technical and vocational education through Introduction of Technical Stream in the secondary school system. This policy provision will facilitate greater number of graduates as skilled workers, local entrepreneurs, tradesmen and technicians to meet the demands of higher levels of economic growth. Science Education at secondary level could not attract attention in terms of efforts and investment. With increased emphasis on quality of primary education and renewed efforts to check high drop out rate in basic education, secondary level education now needs to be developed for comparatively heavy influx of students. Education Sector Reforms proposed a reform in science education at the secondary level by constructing science laboratories, provision of science equipment

revision of Science Curricula and professional development of science and mathematic teachers

1.2.7 Quality Education:

The elementary school system in Pakistan has grown in size consistently, achieving an enrolment of nearly 12 million. This obviously poses a major challenge not only for efficient management but also for mobilizing resources needed to maintain an acceptable level of quality. It is recognized that quality improvement in education cannot be carried out on a turnkey or sporadic basis. The challenge of quality is embedded in all sub-sectors of sector reforms.

Quality improvement is a complex question, unlike improvement in infrastructure, appointment of teachers or even of equipping schools with better academic facilities. Learning from past efforts, it is realized that there is a multi-pronged approach to the challenge of quality. With this in view, the Education Sector Reforms has pursued a five-fold strategy consisting of (a) improvement in provision of infrastructure and human resources for primary education; (b) provision of improved curriculum and teaching-learning materials; (c) improving the quality of teaching-learning process through the introduction of learner-centered pedagogy; (d) attention to continuous professional development; and (e) increased focus on specification and measurement of learner achievement levels. The goal for quality education is designed to create compatibilities with growing global pressure for knowledge-based societies, an area which received little attention during 1990s. Education Sector Reforms aim to give a renewed call for promotion of quality education at all levels. In the Education Sector Reforms Action Plan 2001-2005, the strategies of quality improvement and assurance at all levels have been identified and they are: (a) Benchmarking competencies; (b) Continuous improvement of curricula; (c) Professional development of teachers, planners, managers and staff at all levels; (d) Establishment of National Educational Assessment System (NEAS); (e) Strengthening and upgradation of Teacher Training institutions; (f) Setting Academic Audit through linkage of grants / incentives with quality; (g) Increase of non-salary budget for provision of conducive educational environment and learning materials; (h) District based educational planning and implementation under the Devolution Plan and (i) Developing a National Strategy for Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) and its concurrent implementation at the macro and micro levels through innovative initiatives, mobilizing public, private sectors and international corporate and development partners,

1.2.8 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) is considered a significant input to compensate for early environmental deprivations at home, by providing a healthy stimulating growth and learning environment to the very young from conception to 5 years of age. The holistic and integrated concept of ECCE clearly represents this spirit. Currently the policy and implementation in Pakistan is more focused on Early Childhood Education (ECE) with the age group 3-5 years, which is more at the school level than being home-based or at the community level. While on one hand, it is expected to provide the necessary maturational and experiential readiness to the child for meeting the demands of the primary curricula, it also

positively affects the enrolment and retention of girls in primary schools by providing substitute care facility for younger siblings. Envisaged as a holistic input, fostering health, psychological and nutritional development, the policy emphasis is on making ECE play-based, with linkages between home and the school. Since 2002 ECE has been formally introduced in the formal government schools, supplementing the private sector, with clear intervention methodologies as an innovative component of ESR and as the first plank of EFA goals agreed in Dakar.

1.2.9 Resources:

Financial constraints have all along been a major issue in the development of education in Pakistan. Conversely, the argument that even the meager resources provided to education have not been adequately utilized, is also true. The vast coverage of the education sector, involving almost 200,000 educational institutions with about a million teachers and staff spread over vast geographical areas, involves complexity of problems which are unmatched by any other social sector.

Inadequacy of financial resources aggravated by poor implementation machinery and complex rules necessitates immediate and effective steps to salvage the twin problems of adequate resources and their management.

Most social development indicators for Pakistan compare poorly with those of other developing countries at similar levels of per capita income. A weak social profile is detrimental to growth as human development is essential for attracting investment and generating capacity for sustainable growth. Pakistan's long term sustainable growth and poverty reduction prospects are critically contingent on investment in human development. With this objective in view Government has shown a firm resolve to increase investment in human development.

The allocation for education in the public sector amounted to 2.11% of the GDP in 2002-03 (are we going to supplement this through latest figures on resources to education through all divisions?) If the private sector allocation for education is accounted for, the total national spending on education will reach 3% of GDP. Our national data is just beginning to capture this information. The ESR Action Plan 2001-05 has proposed to enhance allocation for education equaling 4% of the GDP.

For release of ESR funds in 2002-03 and 2003-04 the Federal Government is adopting the principle of fungibility of allocations to ensure that the provinces can implement their sector strategies according to their priority areas, which are already well aligned to ESR.

Budgetary allocations to education have remained below 2% of the GDP. The ESR targets will entail considerably enhanced resource commitments. Given the present growth rate of population, a 2.1% increase by 2006 will require enrolment of additional 6-7 million children at the primary level. Clearly, higher public spending will be required for improving educational attainments, failing which the needed access and quality improvements especially at the primary level will not materialize, the success of various reform measures will be limited, and the much needed recovery in secondary and higher education will be affected. The Government recognizes that detailed work is necessary to firm up education funding

requirements up to 2015. Tentative estimates, however, suggest an increase in public spending on education from 1.8% in 2001-02 to 3% of GDP by 2006-07. The Government proposes to absorb a substantial part of this increase in primary and secondary education while reversing the trend to boost investment in higher education. The provincial governments will need to rationalize budgetary allocation for education within the suggested increase by enhancing non-salary recurring expenditures for primary and secondary schools improvements; provision of missing facilities in existing schools; provision of quality service such as teachers' training; increasing resources for new infrastructure on need basis; girls incentive programs and demand side interventions such as free textbooks, uniforms, transport, scholarships, and in-kind payments to the families. It is recognized that to achieve ESR targets and EFA goals, domestic increase in resource allocation may not be adequate. The shortfall will require substantial increase in the quantity and quality of donor assistance.

1.2.10 Literacy:

Pakistan has one of the lowest literacy rate in the region currently estimated at about 51.6 % (2002). However, the wide inter and intra provincial disparities present a discriminating scenario. Literacy ranged from 57.8% among urban male population of Sindh to 1.75% among the rural female of Balochistan. In absolute terms the number of illiterates in ten plus age group is 51.8 million (2001).

It is generally recognized that a low participation rate of about 66% at the primary school level combined with high inefficiency rate estimated at 55% drop outs in the public sector, has contributed to a low national literacy rate. The literacy ratio has been negatively exacerbated due to the absence of meaningful and over ambitious literacy programme.

Education Sector Reforms emphasize improvement through the implementation of the national literacy guidelines/policy, create awareness about improving literacy, institutionalizing literacy efforts through more efficient and effective organizational structure at all tiers of governments, to ensure consistent implementation of national literacy curriculum and standards.
