



Gender and Education in Pakistan

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Introduction

Mohammad Ali Jinnah believed: no state can rise to the “height of glory unless your women are side by side with you”. In order to do so, however, women and girls need to be educated and offered the same opportunities as men. Pakistan’s education affairs – particularly for girls and women – came under international scrutiny following the shooting of activist and schoolgirl Malala Yousufzai. On the international scale, Pakistan ranks 148 out of all 149 countries in gender parity assessed in a report from 2018; just above Yemen¹. A World Economic Forum (WEF) report stresses that one of the most important goals of our time is gender equality² – and education features as a large part of that.

The importance of educating girls cannot be understated. Yet in Pakistan, a boy has a 15 percent higher chance of attending primary school than a girl³. Low education attainment can affect girls’ life trajectories in a myriad of ways. In South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, much before they are physically or emotionally ready, girls are often married off early and undergo early pregnancies⁴. The World Bank (WB) estimates that \$15 - \$30 trillion is lost globally because adult women have not undergone 12 years of schooling (primary and secondary)⁵. The benefits of 12 years of girls’ education is also emphasised by the Malala Fund in numerous reports; educating women strengthens economies, stabilises communities, improves overall family health, and is good for the planet.

As signatories to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Dakar Framework for Action (Education for All), Pakistan is obliged by international law to fulfil its commitments and provide free, quality education to all; regardless of sex. By ratifying these treaties, Pakistan commits to “respecting, protecting, and fulfilling the right to education without discrimination”⁶. Furthermore, the constitution of Pakistan through Articles 25(A), 37(B), and 38(B), guarantees that the state shall

¹ World Economic Forum, *Insight Report: The Global Gender Gap Report*, WEF, (2018), p.8

² Malala Fund, *Foundations for a shared future: Why girls’ education is everybody’s business*, Malala Fund (2018), p.2

³ Bukhari, N., *Pakistan’s Education Crisis*, Alif Ailaan, (16th June 2018), <https://elections.alifailaan.pk/pakistans-education-crisis/>, [accessed 23rd July]

⁴ Wodon, Q., et al., *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.1

⁵ Ibid. p.5

⁶ UNESCO, *From access to empowerment: UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education 2019-2025*, UNESCO (2019), p.12

provide free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 5-16. Education policies as early as 1992 stressed the importance of women's education. However, despite all these laws and policies in place, Pakistan is performing very poorly in this sector. At the 2015 Oslo Summit on Education and Development, Pakistan was declared "among the world's worst performing countries". The UN Secretary General Report on progress towards the SDGs (2019) states it would be impossible for a global achievement of the 17 SDGs "without also achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls"⁷.

Alif Ailaan in 2014 reported that there are approximately 25 million out of school children (OOSC) in Pakistan, with girls making up over half of this number (55 percent). There are several reasons behind the low attendance of girls in schools, particularly beyond the secondary level. These are outlined below:

1. **Social Issues:** there are a host of interlinked problems that act as barriers to girls' education
 - a. Entrenched cultural mindsets of families, especially in rural areas, are major problems in promoting girls' education. There is little value attached to their attendance in school to obtain a formal education. Child marriage is a major hurdle as well as the lack of opportunities for girls and women post-education
 - b. Poor government policies, biased curricula, and lack of effective, targeted changes also feeds into this problem and maintains the status quo.
2. **Poverty and government spending:** the majority of the population that doesn't send girls to schools simply cannot afford to do so.
 - a. A report by Alif Ailaan noted that although government schools in Pakistan do not require fees, there are a lot of ancillary costs that parents have to bear in order to send their children to school. For example: spending on transport, school uniforms, and extracurriculars. It costs approximately PKR 31,000 to send one child to a public primary school and approximately PKR 51,000 for secondary⁸ – with larger families

⁷ United Nations Economic & Social Council, *Special Edition: progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Report of the Secretary General*, UN (2019), p.4

⁸ Alif Ailaan, *Not Free At All: Profiling the costs parents incur on education*, Alif Ailaan (2015), p.x

struggling to make ends meet, it would be impossible to afford a full education for all their children.

- b. Poorer families have no other option but to send their children to work and current child labour laws remain unenforced and are insufficient.
 - c. The lack of government funding to this sector is another roadblock to making education accessible for all. An Alif Ailaan report states there are clear indications that “allocations and spending on education is both inefficient and inadequate”⁹.
3. **Security and Sanitation/Infrastructure:** for parents, security for their daughters is an overriding concern and inadequate school infrastructure is a major deterrent, especially at higher levels.
- a. Schools in Pakistan have had to drastically increase their security in the aftermath of attacks on primary, secondary, and tertiary level institutions. Girls are particularly vulnerable to violence since most threats are directed towards institutions that educate girls and women.
 - b. Buildings, transport and the general atmosphere in school is often deemed not safe for the majority of children by their families.
 - c. Schools fail to keep in mind the unique problems that face female students when there aren't appropriate sanitation facilities. Particularly during menstruation, girls prefer to stay at home rather than attend a school, sometimes miles away, that does not have basic toilet facilities.
4. **Teaching and learning:** the education sector and teachers have been plagued with accusations of negligence and inefficiency.
- a. There is a worrying prevalence of ‘ghost schools’ in all provinces. These non-functioning institutions are often a front for corruption.
 - b. Often teachers who do show up are disinterested in their jobs and do not teach to the required standard. They also perpetuate gender-bias and contribute to creating an atmosphere of sexism in schools and classrooms.

⁹ Alif Ailaan, *Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017*, Alif Ailaan (2017), p.1

- c. Inadequate teaching and syllabi mean children who attend school are not learning to the level required.

Analysis of a plethora of reports and documents regarding education in Pakistan make it clear that the issues are multifaceted. Education plays a major role in developing a nation's economy and its society. The 5 hurdles stated above are particularly difficult for girls to overcome in order to obtain their right to a free and fair education. However, roadmaps and solutions provided by various organisations and government bodies on how to overcome these are not in short supply. Effective and immediate action needs to be taken by the federal and provincial governments to prevent an education crisis in Pakistan.

Social Issues

There are a host of interlinked issues that come together to prevent girls from accessing education at all levels across the country. Societal constraints are one of the biggest barriers to girls' education in Pakistan. Child marriage features most prominently under the umbrella of conservative social issues facing girls. Although the amendment to the legal age of marriage at 18 years was officially passed by the Senate in 2019, underage betrothals are very common; particularly within rural communities. Recently, the Senate Standing Committee on Law and Justice also voted to reject the bill setting the minimum age of marriage to 18 years¹⁰. This is worrying since lack of action at the policymaking level leads to inaction in enforcement and puts young girls at great risk of getting married before they are physically or mentally capable of doing so.

It is estimated that 50 percent of women in Pakistan are married by the age of 19 and approximately 72 percent of girls are forced into marriage in rural Sindh¹¹. Parents tend to place less value on education for their daughters because their future expectations are limited to getting married and raising their own children. These views arise because of traditional beliefs and religious interpretations, however they are fed and nurtured by society as a whole, ensuring girls' lives follow a single trajectory. Gender bias in textbooks, sexist teachers, the gender wage gap and the lack of opportunity for women in the workplace all contribute to fostering a hostile environment that is not conducive to gender parity.

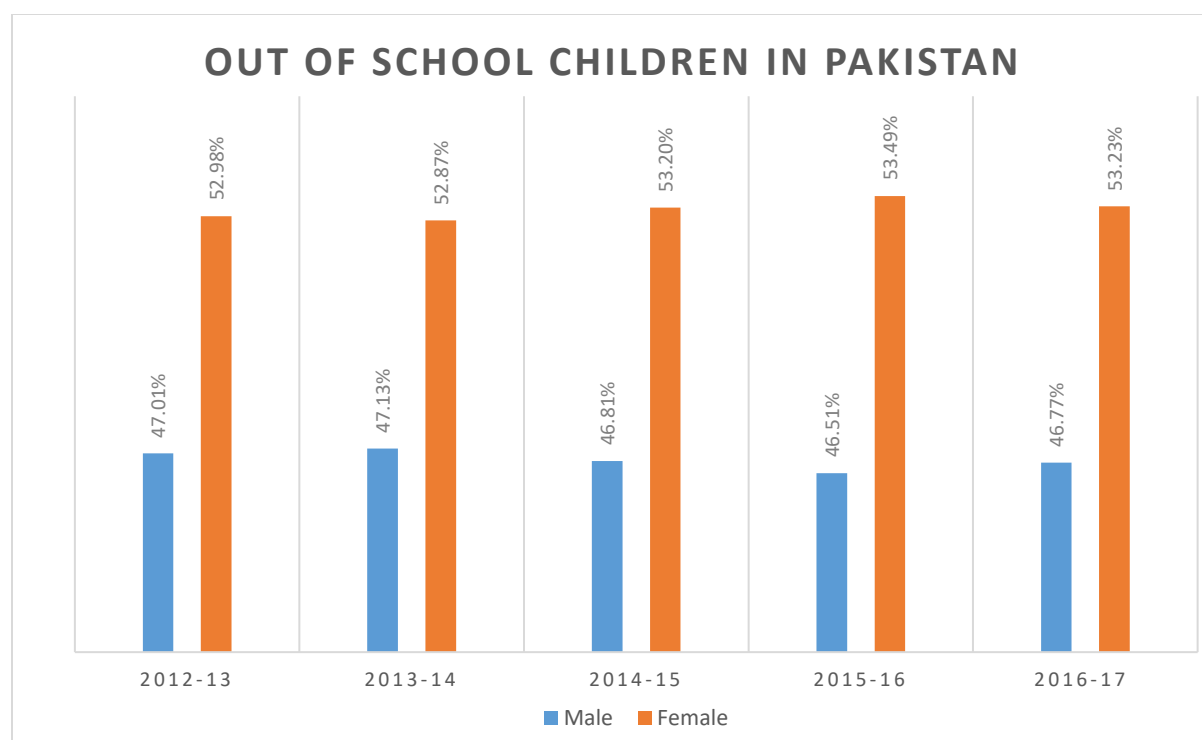
The Alif Ailaan Education Survey took a small sample (1536) of urban and rural Pakistanis across 3 provinces. The results showed that 94 percent of the respondents believed girls and boys should have equal access to education. Another survey by the Pew Research centre showed that 87 percent of Pakistanis believed that education for girls is as important as it is for boys. This begs the question why girls are being denied access to schools. Only 29 percent of respondents believed that politicians were committed to improving the state of education. Many Pakistanis are aware that the quality of education

¹⁰ Staff Report, *Senate body rejects bill to set minimum age for marriage at 18*, Pakistan Today (21st August 2019), www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/08/21/senate-body-rejects-bill-to-set-minimum-age-for-marriage-at-18/, [accessed 16th October 2019]

¹¹ Rabia, F., *Status of Girls Education in Pakistan after 69 years of Independence*, The Diplomatic Insight, (September 2016)

and access to schools is limited for a vast majority of their countrymen, however, most respondents believe that it is within the power of government to solve these problems.¹²

Figure 1: Number of Out of School Boys and Girls in Pakistan from 2012-17.



According to a report by Alif Ailaan, recent statistics state that there are 22.6 million children out of school - over half of which are girls¹³. Pakistan also comes second on a list of countries that have the highest number of out of school girls. Furthermore, approximately only one-third of 5 million births each year are registered. This only further exacerbates the problem because it means these unregistered children are not accounted for in provincial or federal policies¹⁴. This is cause for concern. There have been some improvements in increasing the number of children with access to education, however compared to other countries, the gains Pakistan has made fall well short. Between 1999 and 2012 (the period under the MDGs), over 20 percent more children attended primary school and on average, the

¹² Alif Ailaan, *The Alif Ailaan Education Survey 2013: Education as a political issue in the 2013 general elections*, Alif Ailaan (2013), p.vii

¹³ Javed, U. and Naveed, S., *Five Years of Education Reforms in the Punjab. Wins, losses and challenges for 2018-2023*, Alif Ailaan (2018), p.6

¹⁴ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.9

gender gap in enrolment has narrowed somewhat. Girls' enrolment as a proportion of total enrolments between 1999 to 2012 went from 39 percent to 44 percent¹⁵. Recent Pakistan Education Statistics also reveal that since 2012, the net enrolment rate has increased and the number of primary level children out of school has been reduced by 1.7 million. Yet the 2018 UNICEF report on Pakistan states: "As in all matters related to children in Pakistan, national averages continue to mask substantial variations by gender, region, socioeconomic status and other factors"¹⁶. There are still over 17.7 million post-primary level children out of school, with girls making up the majority of this number (51 percent)¹⁷. Even within Pakistan, there are large differences in the number of out of school children (OOSC) between provinces. This is related to the relative wealth of each province and the level of commitment to cultural norms.

An interesting case study of note is the access to education provided to Afghan refugees. Due to cultural conservatism that forces girls to be taught only by female teachers, Afghan refugee girls net enrolment rate was half that of boys in 2011. However, in Iran, refugee girls have access to higher levels of education as a result of more relaxed and positive attitudes towards girls' education.¹⁸

Child marriage and the disadvantages for women in the home

There is clear interdependence between child marriage and lack of education for girls. Girls from the lower strata of society suffer the most as their parents are either unable to, or simply do not wish to educate their daughters. They see marriage as a preferable alternative. It has been observed that even middle-income families seem to educate their girls in order to increase future marriage prospects. An example that illustrates this is that approximately 80 percent of medical students are women, but half of this number do not practice¹⁹. Many families also want to have educated wives and daughters but will forbid these women from working outside the home after marriage. Instead, they are relegated to homemaking and childbearing. 24 percent of women between the ages of 20-24 marry before turning 18 – the current legal age of marriage in Pakistan. This percentage rises to 40 percent of women who

¹⁵ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.4

¹⁶ UNICEF, *2018 Annual Report Pakistan*, UNICEF (2019), p.9

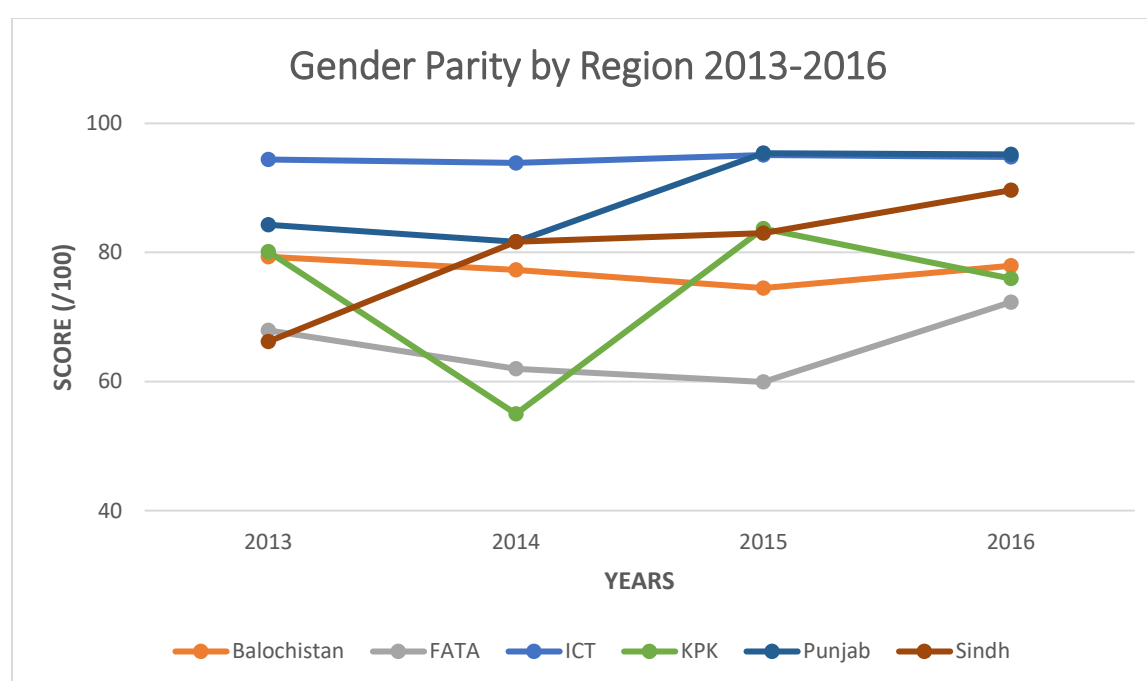
¹⁷ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, PUBLISHER (2015), p.9

¹⁸ UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report – Gender Report: Building bridges for gender equality*, UNESCO (2019) p.14

¹⁹ Awan, *Vision for women in science*, Alif Ailaan (11th July 2018), <https://elections.alifailaan.pk/vision-for-women-in-science/> [accessed 23rd July 2019]

have no education in rural areas and 50 percent amongst the poorest fifth of the population. Girls from poorer backgrounds also have a higher chance of marrying early²⁰. Once they are married, they are either forcibly expelled or withdrawn from schools²¹. The Malala Fund states that 12 years of schooling for girls would lead to a 64 percent drop in child marriages²². PLAN UK also obtained feedback from communities in Pakistan that suggests educated boys and educated girls are far more likely to be consulted on issues concerning their future – such as marriage. They were also more respected by their parents as a result of their education²³.

Figure 2: Gender Parity by Region (2013-2016)²⁴



Furthermore, educated and working women suffer from less intimate partner violence and believe they have more decision-making abilities in the home²⁵. In Pakistan, 30 percent of women who had no education believed they had a say over how many children they could have whereas this number

²⁰ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, PUBLISHER (2015), pp.7-8

²¹ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.11

²² Malala Fund, *Girls' education*, <https://www.malala.org/girls-education> [accessed 23rd July 2019]

²³ Jackson, E., Wallace, T., Wernham, M., *Research on discriminatory social norms in relation to violence against women and girls from the perspective of girls, boys, women and men in Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan*, PLAN UK (2014), p.23

²⁴ Alif Ailaan

²⁵ Malala Fund, *Full Force: Why the world works better when girls go to school* (2018), p.11

rose to 52 percent and 63 percent with higher levels of education (primary and secondary, respectively)²⁶. Educated parents are also more likely to educate their children, therefore paving the way for future generations to access education.

Different regions across Pakistan suffer from various problems. Combined with a lack of funding and ineffective policy implementation, these regions have various ‘scores’ on gender parity. As Figure 2 displays, in recent years, most provinces have seen improvement in gender parity – except Khyber Pukhtunkhwa (KPK) which has registered a fall from its previous score. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have fared the worst and the Capital Territory has consistently remained at the top. The lower-performing regions unsurprisingly suffer from strict adherence to cultural conservatism and girls’ education and progress suffers as a result. Often, however, the lack of development in these provinces can be chalked up to a lack of appropriate funding and the general level of poverty in the region, thus linking social issues with spending and finance.

A heavy burden to bear

Data from around 90 countries shows that women across the globe spend 3 times more hours a day than men doing domestic chores and other ‘unpaid care’. Naturally, this severely limits the time they can spend going to school and reinforces gender-based socioeconomic disadvantages²⁷. An article appropriately titled ‘The double disadvantage for girls’²⁸ highlights the unique difficulties of being a girl in Pakistan²⁹. According to the article, two issues prevent girls from gaining access to education.

1. The lack of effort on the part of state institutions that are unable to provide access to quality, affordable, and equitable education to the majority of the population.
2. Gender stereotypes and prejudice that are rampant in society preventing access to the limited services currently available.

²⁶ EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2013/14, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all*, UNESCO (2014), p.18

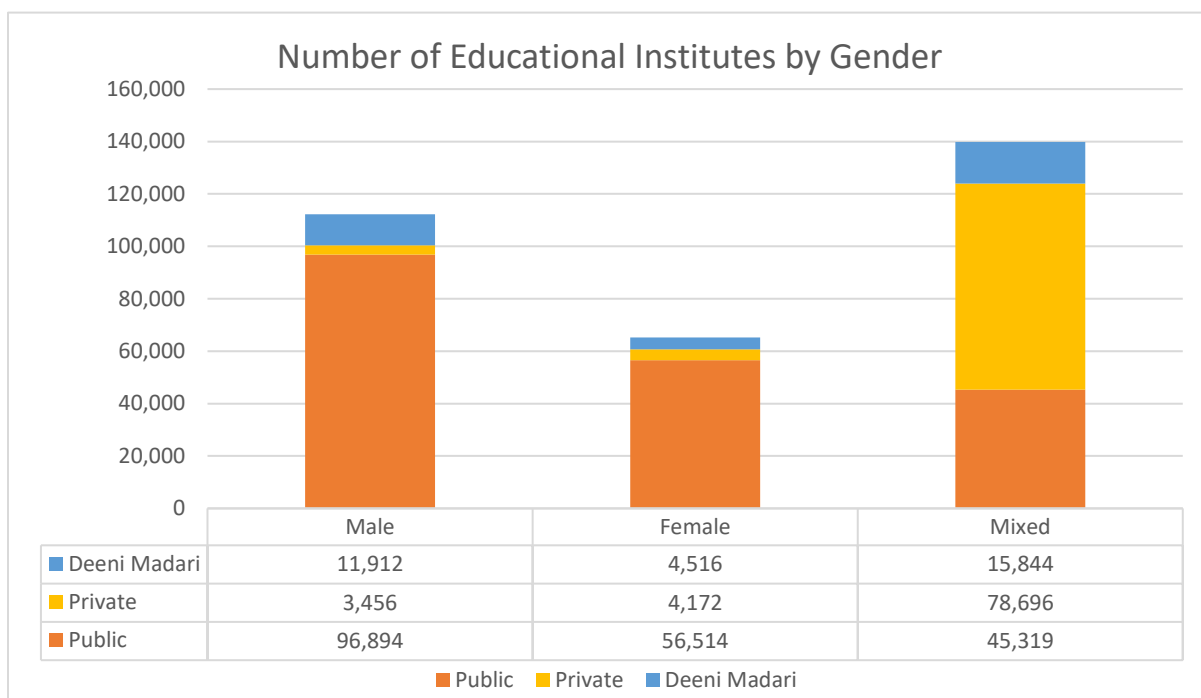
²⁷ United Nations Economic & Social Council, *Special Edition: progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Report of the Secretary General*, UN (2019), p.11

²⁸ Mustafa, Z., *The double disadvantage for girls*, Alif Ailaan (21st July 2018), <https://elections.alifailaan.pk/the-double-disadvantage-for-girls/>, [accessed 23rd July 2019]

²⁹ Awan, M.A., *Vision for women in science*, Alif Ailaan, (11th July 2018), <https://elections.alifailaan.pk/vision-for-women-in-science/> [accessed 23rd July 2019]

Government data attests that girls are disadvantaged in and out of school and this issue has been recognised as one that remains to be tackled³⁰. Considering the social attitudes towards women, parents who do not like their children studying in a mixed school setting would find it easier to send their children to separate schools. However, despite this knowledge, there are far fewer girls' schools at every level of education than boys' schools.

Figure 3: Number of Public, Private and Deeni Madari Schools by Gender³¹.



With a lack of middle or secondary schools in many areas, parents see no other option but to marry off their daughters at a young age³². The government needs to ensure a sufficient number of all-girls schools in order to encourage parents to educate their daughters. Furthermore, the lack of provision of any schools above the primary level means that girls have to travel longer to get to a school than boys. Alif Ailaan believes that any country building four times as many primary schools compared to middle and high schools, is “denying children the right to complete their education”³³. An Oxfam

³⁰ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, *National Education Policy Framework 2018*, (2018), p.8

³¹ Shah, D., Khatoon, S., Bhatti, M.A., Tatla, A., *Financing in Education Sector (Public and Private) 2017-2018*, AEPAM (2018), p.3

³² PAGE, *A Snapshot of the Status of Girls Education in Pakistan*, PAGE (2017)

³³ Alif Ailaan, *Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017*, Alif Ailaan (2017), p.49

document also claims that since the 1950s, government policy has been focused on providing primary education, without looking beyond this stage³⁴.

A variety of external and internal factors combine to prevent girls from attending school. Their contribution in the home and potential as wives and mothers is more valuable than their educated potential and working future. Parents feel the need to ensure “proper oversight” for their daughters, particularly when sending them to distant schools³⁵. Mobility constraints were cited as a key concern for women and girls interviewed for a PLAN UK research document³⁶ and studies have found that distance is one of the largest factors considered by parents on whether to send their daughters to school³⁷. Although boys are also affected by proximity to a school, studies have shown that this number affected is far less than that of girls. A 2013 study found that 13 percent of girls – compared to 5 percent of boys – had to drop out of school due to long distances and travel time³⁸. This is a problem that affects all provinces; particularly within the rural and semi-urban areas where there are far fewer schools available. In Punjab, as distance to an appropriate school increases, there is a large drop in the enrolment of girls. Their dropout rate is 3-4 times as great as that of boys³⁹. 12 percent of families in KPK, 13 percent in Sindh and 18 percent in Balochistan cite school distance as the main reason behind their refusal to send girls to school⁴⁰. For children who – despite the obstacles – *are* able to attend far away schools, their performance was monitored to be far lower than the performance of those children who needed less time to travel⁴¹.

In an effort to ‘safeguard’ girls while travelling to and from schools, the KPK government felt the best course of action was to distribute burqas among school-going girls. The government withdrew the notification after heavy criticism but, nevertheless, a local councillor from Mardan has proceeded

³⁴ Shaukat, A. *Delivering Girls’ Education in Pakistan*, Oxfam GB (2009), p.4

³⁵ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.11

³⁶ Jackson, E., Wallace, T., Wernham, M., *Research on discriminatory social norms in relation to violence against women and girls from the perspective of girls, boys, women and men in Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan*, PLAN UK (2014), p.24

³⁷ Shaukat, A. *Delivering Girls’ Education in Pakistan*, Oxfam GB (2009), p.8

³⁸ Alif Ailaan, *Factsheet – Why are children out of school?*, Alif Ailaan (2014)

³⁹ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, PUBLISHER (2015), pp.7-8

⁴⁰ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, *National Education Policy Framework 2018*, (2018), p.7

⁴¹ National Education Assessment System, *Fast Facts*, (2016)

to distribute burqas to a school in his area⁴². This is not a logical solution. Instead of seeking to address the problem by targeting, educating, and punishing those who harass girls, the government has sought to lay the problem at the feet of the victims. It is actions like these that show the lack of the government's understanding of the issues that girls face in respective regions across Pakistan. Unless this lack of understanding at the top tier is addressed, it will remain a challenge to implement meaningful change for girls' education nationally.

Efforts on the part of international agencies like UNICEF in 2018 saw the introduction of life skills training in Punjab and Sindh where young boys and girls were given the opportunity to learn about their rights. As expressed in their report, the "training equipped them to articulate new visions of the future and reduce the risk of child marriage"⁴³. These sessions targeted approximately 36,255 adolescents over the course of the program – which saw trained boys and girls acting as "peer educators" to further guide other adolescents. Almost half of the total number of children trained were girls. Trainings of this sort are vitally important in encouraging education and child school participation in communities across Pakistan. The set-up of "alternate learning pathways" also allowed those who were unable to attend school previously to do so as adults⁴⁴.

The Citizen's Foundation has collected data that demonstrates the importance of building trust and reaching out directly to the community. It found that in places where girls' education was not encouraged, attitudes changed once community outreach programmes were initiated by schools in the area⁴⁵.

The social benefits of 12 years of education

Globally, only 77 percent of girls complete lower secondary education whereas 89 percent are able to complete up to the primary level⁴⁶. The World Bank's report states that child marriage could be entirely wiped out once universal secondary education is achieved across the world. The report finds that each

⁴² Entertainment Desk, *Twitter slams govt's double standards after burqa distribution in K-P school*, The Express Tribune (5th October 2019), <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2072749/4-tweets-slams-govts-double-standards-burqa-distribution-k-p-school/>, [accessed 7th October 2019]

⁴³ UNICEF, *2018 Annual Report Pakistan*, UNICEF (2019), p.33

⁴⁴ Ibid. p.33

⁴⁵ Gordon, R. Marston, L., Rose, P. and Zubairi, A. *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective*, REAL Centre (2019), p.56

⁴⁶ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.7

additional year of secondary education lowers the risk of child marriage⁴⁷. Universal secondary level attainment is important because the results from universal primary education are not substantial enough to make lasting impact. In fact, the report also claims that by comparing an individual with primary education to an individual without any formal education at all, there is hardly any difference. Whereas with a complete secondary education, the gains are sufficient to make a difference in the lives of the individual, and to the social and economic fabric of the country⁴⁸.

For example, studies show that completing 12 years of education brings communities together; strengthening them and allowing them to recover faster after conflict. It is predicted that the risk of war would be cut by half if all children were educated to the secondary level. Furthermore, lack of education also fosters hostility in the home - leading to a higher rate of intimate partner violence⁴⁹.

Although recently the Punjab province has made efforts towards closing the gender gap in education, there is still a long way to go. The government identified areas where there were no middle or high schools and subsequently spent PKR 18 billion to upgrade 2000 primary and middle schools into higher level institutions. This was a relatively simple way to afford middle and secondary education access to girls who would otherwise not have it⁵⁰. In the National Education Policy Framework (2018), the government committed to increase secondary school access – particularly for the marginalised. It aimed to achieve this goal by building new schools, upgrading existing ones and crucially, providing appropriate transport to these schools from remote areas⁵¹. Yet it is pertinent to note that access to schools does not equate to adequate learning. The learning achievements at secondary school can only be as good as the quality of learning at the foundational level⁵². This is a problem discussed later in this report.

⁴⁷ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.4

⁴⁸ Ibid. p.3

⁴⁹ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.1

⁵⁰ Javed, U. and Naveed, S., *Five Years of Education Reforms in the Punjab. Wins, losses and challenges for 2018-2023*, Alif Ailaan (2018), p.17

⁵¹ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, *National Education Policy Framework 2018*, (2018), p.8

⁵² Malala Fund and Results for Development Institute, *Financing Upper Secondary Education: Unlocking 12 Years of Education for All*, Malala Fund (2015), p.4

Gender bias in policy documents

The Pakistan Economic Survey (PES) of 2017-18 states that by 2030, the government of Pakistan hopes to eliminate gender disparity by ensuring girls and boys complete free, quality primary and secondary schooling. It is hoped that the current baseline of female literacy and numeracy (49 percent) will rise to 69 percent by 2030. The projected figure for boys, however, is 90 percent - from the current baseline of 70 percent⁵³. An Oxfam report quotes analysts that argue government policy documents regarding universal literacy and education *preserve* the gender gap rather than seek to close it. Girls “educational backwardness” is assumed in every policy. “Gender disparity is inherently knit into the policies/plans by giving separate targets, years and percentages of meeting these targets for males and females”. It is further stated that the “provision of education, particularly for girls, is not approached as a right”⁵⁴. As recently as 2018, the education committee constituted by the Supreme Court comprised of 17 individuals from the government sector and educational institutions; not one was female. Additionally, only 3 women were part of a team of 24 writers and reviewers that assessed government policy⁵⁵. Women are being overlooked regarding issues that concern them - this will only fail to address the gender-specific problems from which Pakistan suffers.

The latest Economic Survey for Financial Years (FY) 2018-19 lists 4 priorities of the National Education Framework – all of which are general and not gender-specific⁵⁶. Even though the Framework itself does list under the first priority area (reducing the number of OOSC) that targeted intervention is needed to aid minorities and girls⁵⁷, it is not accorded the level of importance that is required to mitigate the education crisis. Moreover, it is not logical to categorise girls and women as we do minorities. By definition, a minority group makes up a very small percentage of the population whereas almost half of the total population of Pakistan⁵⁸ comprises of women. Policies must be formulated bearing this in mind.

⁵³ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Finance, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2017-2018*, (2018), p.153

⁵⁴ Shaukat, A. *Delivering Girls' Education in Pakistan*, Oxfam GB (2009), p.5

⁵⁵ Mustafa, Z., *The double disadvantage for girls*, Alif Ailaan, (21st July 2018), <https://elections.alifailaan.pk/the-double-disadvantage-for-girls/>, [accessed 23rd July 2019]

⁵⁶ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Finance, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19*, (2019), p.158

⁵⁷ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, *National Education Policy Framework 2018*, (2018), p.8

⁵⁸ Newsdesk, *Population Census 2017: Men outnumber women in Pakistan*, Samaa Digital (25th August 2017), www.samaa.tv/news/2017/08/population-census-2017-men-outnumber-women-pakistan/ [accessed 19th August 2019]

Gender bias in curricula and textbooks

The Incheon Declaration – of which Pakistan is a signatory – states that gender equality must be ensured through education systems that “act explicitly to eliminate gender bias and discrimination resulting from social and cultural attitudes and practices...”⁵⁹. Within the school system, there are additional hurdles girls face in obtaining quality education and pursuing their desired life trajectory. The learning and values that are inculcated at a young age by both genders plays a huge role in determining future outcomes of men and women. Teachers and the books from which children absorb knowledge are of crucial importance. At the earliest stage of education, textbooks have the power to mould knowledge and skills – building a strong foundation for gender stereotyping⁶⁰. Children’s self-perceptions are altered as are their future interests. In fact, between the ages of 3 and 7, a child will start to absorb and understand the concept of gender⁶¹.

A research article details the pervasive nature of gender stereotypes and inequalities and how they are “reproduced, formed, defined, strengthened and promoted by educational institutions through implicit and explicit means”⁶². Of 194 textbooks assessed from across Pakistan, there was a significant gender bias towards males found in at least 3 subjects. Only 7.7 percent of individuals mentioned in the textbooks were women and only 21.4 percent of illustrations were of female characters. This minimal representation of women is also crippled by gender stereotyping. Women are depicted as subservient characters - occupying traditional gender roles (e.g. as mothers and doing household chores) whereas women professionals are limited to being shown as teachers and doctors. The UNESCO Strategy for Gender Equality (2019) also reaffirms that the absence of women depicted as leaders in textbooks perpetuates gender bias⁶³.

⁵⁹ GPE & UNGEI, Guidance for Developing Gender-Responsive Education Sector Plans, GPE & UNGEI (2017), p.xiii

⁶⁰ Masud, H., *Curriculum, Textbooks and Gender Stereotypes: The case of Pakistan*, Worlds of Education (28th September 2017), https://worldsofeducation.org/en/woe_homepage/woe_detail/15405/curriculum-textbooks-and-gender-stereotypes-the-case-of-pakistan, [accessed 23rd July 2019]

⁶¹ UNESCO, *From access to empowerment: UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education 2019-2025*, UNESDOC (2019), p.6

⁶² Masud, H., *Curriculum, Textbooks and Gender Stereotypes: The case of Pakistan*, Worlds of Education (28th September 2017), https://worldsofeducation.org/en/woe_homepage/woe_detail/15405/curriculum-textbooks-and-gender-stereotypes-the-case-of-pakistan, [accessed 23rd July 2019]

⁶³ UNESCO, *From access to empowerment: UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education 2019-2025*, UNESDOC (2019)

An education study sampled students who were asked to pick an icon from their textbooks and state their reasons for doing so. Only 4.1 percent of boys chose a woman whereas the girls who picked a female icon justified their decision by qualifying her as a “good wife or mother”.⁶⁴

Though the studies mentioned above are from 2004-2008, the EFA Global Monitoring Report in 2015 also highlighted the same problems faced by the Punjab textbook board. Women were not mentioned in 20 out of 22 lessons from an English textbook. When seldom mentioned, they were represented in a discriminatory way⁶⁵. Recently, it has been noted that Punjab has also strengthened and improved textbooks⁶⁶, and a curriculum for general knowledge has stated that “gender biasness must be excluded”⁶⁷. However, there is no clear instruction as to how this must be done.

Similar to how gender bias in government policy can potentially be explained by the lack of women consulted or involved in formulating that policy, reports have shown that diversity of authors for school curricula can also have a positive impact on the learning of children. A higher frequency and representation of female icons can be observed in textbooks authored by women⁶⁸. The government must include gender-sensitivity training for those responsible for writing textbooks and setting curricula. Furthermore, it is clear that the large majority of textbooks need to be revised and rewritten in order to remove these gender stereotypes. This is a move recommended in an Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report⁶⁹. It would also align with Pakistan’s commitment to the SDG’s on providing equitable, quality education to all⁷⁰. The UNGEI guidance for gender-responsive education plans recommend that a process should be developed to monitor curricula.

⁶⁴ Masud, H., *Curriculum, Textbooks and Gender Stereotypes: The case of Pakistan*, Worlds of Education (28th September 2017), https://worldsofeducation.org/en/woe_homepage/woe_detail/15405/curriculum-textbooks-and-gender-stereotypes-the-case-of-pakistan, [accessed 23rd July 2019]

⁶⁵ EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2013/14, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all*, UNESCO (2014), p.287

⁶⁶ Javed, U. and Naveed, S., *Five Years of Education Reforms in the Punjab. Wins, losses and challenges for 2018-2023*, Alif Ailaan (2018), p.33

⁶⁷ *Curriculum for General Knowledge Grades I-II*, Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (2017), p.46

⁶⁸ Masud, H., *Curriculum, Textbooks and Gender Stereotypes: The case of Pakistan*, Worlds of Education (28th September 2017), https://worldsofeducation.org/en/woe_homepage/woe_detail/15405/curriculum-textbooks-and-gender-stereotypes-the-case-of-pakistan, [accessed 23rd July 2019]

⁶⁹ EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2013/14, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all*, UNESCO (2014), p.9

⁷⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring Report, *Meeting Commitments: Are countries on track to achieve SDG 4?* UNESCO (2019), p.14

The definition of a gender-responsive plan or program is two-fold⁷¹:

1. A policy that considers gender norms, roles, and relations.
2. Subsequent measures are taken to actively reduce the harmful effects presented by the above norms, roles, and relations.

Pakistan is lacking in policies that are gender-responsive and must make a concerted effort to integrate gender-sensitivity into future education policies and programmes.

Gender bias and harassment in institutions

Currently, Pakistan's education institutions support and enable gender inequalities when instead they should be challenging them. This is done through allowing gender bias to be taught in curricula, and through placing gendered expectations on boys and girls⁷².

Often parents are reluctant to send their daughters into an environment where they fear harassment. The honour of a family rests on a girls' shoulders but this does not accord her any respect. Instead, she is often the target of harassment and bullying by peers and school staff. Most of this comes from pervasive toxic masculinity, a lack of policies that are structured towards an inclusive environment for all and from the same traditional misconceptions that are obstacles to girls being educated or working outside the home. Teachers must be trained to tackle gender-bias wherever they see it, whether in the classroom or in their textbooks. These educators are often guilty of projecting their own gendered beliefs onto their students and hold different expectations for boys and girls.⁷³ For example, a teacher may encourage boys to pursue STEM subjects and explore career options whilst deterring girls from future career aspirations in the same fields.

Teacher training has been listed as a priority in the 2018 report by a committee formed by the Pakistan Supreme Court on Education, yet specifically tackling gender bias in teaching methods is not

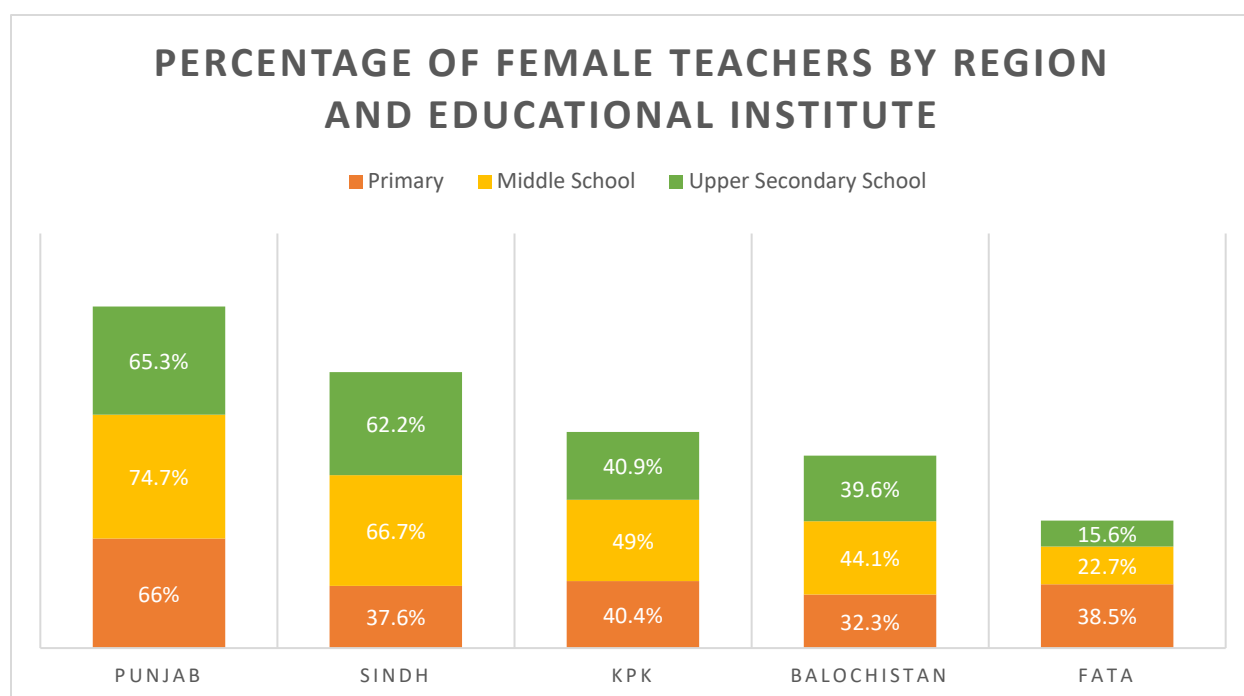
⁷¹ GPE & UNGEI, *Guidance for Developing Gender-Responsive Education Sector Plans*, GPE & UNGEI (2017), p.xiii

⁷² UNESCO, *From access to empowerment: UNESCO strategy for gender equality in and through education 2019-2025*, UNESDOC (2019), p.6

⁷³ Ibid. p.2

mentioned.⁷⁴ However, it is recognised that education can play a role in erasing prejudices and promoting gender equality.⁷⁵ Teacher training should also be carried out on a regular basis, adapting to new challenges and developments that are bound to arise⁷⁶. Training has also seen improvement in Punjab⁷⁷ but it is unclear whether this was gender responsive. As with curricula and textbooks, if these improvements do not target gender equality, the government will have wasted precious resources to superficially improve teaching quality without tangible results.

Figure 4: Percentage of Female Teachers by Region and Level of Education Institute⁷⁸



Parents in a conservative Pakistan also face difficulty in sending their daughters to school, particularly when the teachers are not blood-related males. This can be overcome by employing more female teachers in the most conservative areas. This not only helps with enrolment, but – using Punjab as an

⁷⁴ Pakistan Supreme Court Committee, *Education Reform Report 2018*, Supreme Court (2018), p.ii

⁷⁵ Ibid. p.3

⁷⁶ EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2013/14, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all*, UNESCO (2014), p.27

⁷⁷ Javed, U. and Naveed, S., *Five Years of Education Reforms in the Punjab. Wins, losses and challenges for 2018-2023*, Alif Ailaan (2018), p.33

⁷⁸ AEPAM, *Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-16*, (2016)

example – indicators show that girls’ standardized test scores are higher with a female teacher⁷⁹. Vision 2025 also includes provisions for increasing female teachers, among other things⁸⁰. As Figure 4 demonstrates, the provinces in which girls face the most discrimination in accessing education suffer from a serious lack of female teachers.

As a result of low education attainment for girls, it is natural that there is a deficiency of educated teachers who are able to perform their duties effectively in school. This can be rectified through a relocation program (addressed in the next section of this report) where female teachers from places like Punjab (who make up 65-74 percent of teachers across 3 levels of education) can be transferred to regions where there is great need for more female teachers - like in FATA (where only 15-38 percent of teachers are female). The major concern for women in Pakistan will be regarding the prevailing security situation affecting these areas, their ties to their families, and the language barrier that will not allow them to easily relocate.

Affirmative action and women in STEM

In the Prime Minister’s Youth Skill Development Programme, men and women are trained in over 100 demand-driven skills and trades. Only 25 percent of these training slots are reserved for women⁸¹. There were no programs in development in the document that are targeted towards women and girls in education. Moreover, there are also no specific technical and vocational programs to help increase the participation of women and girls⁸². Although there have been efforts to upgrade school buildings for both genders and attempts to increase education programs, gender-specific plans are the only way towards an equitable future. “Modernising education systems alone will not ensure that girls can flourish... if the reforms are gender-blind”⁸³. This is an important lesson Pakistan needs to learn in order to fulfil international agreements and meet policy aims.

Vision 2025 states that affirmative action should be present in all public spheres⁸⁴. Indeed, a HuffPost article argues that affirmative action is crucial for a diverse student body because it “erases stereotypes

⁷⁹ EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2013/14, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all*, UNESCO (2014), p.235

⁸⁰ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Planning Development and Reform, *Vision 2025*, (2014), p.34

⁸¹ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Finance, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2016-17*, (2017), pp.176-177

⁸² Government of Pakistan Ministry of Finance, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19*, (2019), p.161

⁸³ Malala Fund, *Full Force: Why the world works better when girls go to school*, (2018), p.21

⁸⁴ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Planning Development and Reform, *Vision 2025*, (2014), p.38

and prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society.”⁸⁵ To a certain extent, it is present in government policy, but falls short.

The Global Education Monitoring Report has also provided an example of an experiment from India. In West Bengal, village councils were randomly assigned women leaders. Over two election cycles, it could be observed that in villages with female leaders, the gender gap in “occupational and other aspirations closed by 25 percent in parents and 32 percent in adolescents” compared to male-lead villages. Moreover, in educational attainment aspirations, the gender gap was eliminated entirely⁸⁶.

Although this experiment cannot be applied to all circumstances across the globe, it does demonstrate the positive effects of seeing women in roles of leadership and the necessity of including women – perhaps through affirmative action – into areas where they may not otherwise be present.

Furthermore, by creating opportunities for women in the labour force and in skilled industries, enrolment of girls at the school level also increases. A ‘community-based intervention’ was carried out in rural India and was successful in encouraging girls to enter training courses and undertake vocational training⁸⁷. These girls were also provided with recruiting services that targeted them for business outsourcing. The results of this programme showed that women were 2.8 percent more likely to have enrolled in a vocational institute and young girls were 5 percent more likely to have enrolled at their local school. A REAL report believes that the intervention allowed girls and families to see the tangible economic benefits of their education and showed how important it is to engage the community⁸⁸.

In schools and colleges, girls are often discouraged from pursuing subjects that are ‘reserved’ for men. These tend to be science (and similar male-dominated) subjects. UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report has noted that globally, children are assigned different subjects in school based on their gender. For example, ‘just over a quarter’ of students are made up of women in engineering,

⁸⁵ Yang, J. *Affirmative Action Benefits Everyone – Including Asian Americans*, HuffPost (14th May 2018), www.huffpost.com/entry/opinion-young-asian-american-affirmative-action_n_5af5e145e4b0e57cd9f951c4 [accessed 23rd July 2019]

⁸⁶ UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report – Gender Report: Building bridges for gender equality*, UNESCO (2019), p.31

⁸⁷ Gordon, R. Marston, L., Rose, P. and Zubairi, A. *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective*, REAL Centre (2019), p.12

⁸⁸ Ibid. p.59

manufacturing and construction, and IT programmes⁸⁹. One of the areas in which affirmative action should be particularly encouraged is in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

A British Council interview found in Pakistan that 100 percent of girls who chose not to pursue these subjects did so out of belief in ‘traditional roles’ and ‘associated cultural expectations’⁹⁰. This is despite studies showing that girls often outperform boys in science subjects. In fact, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics noted that between 2005-2015, the average pass rate in science for girls was consistently and noticeably higher than boys, yet they still face discrimination in this discipline. This is in contrast to global data obtained by the World Bank that notes girls outperforming boys in reading but performing lower in mathematics and science.⁹¹

⁸⁹ UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report – Gender Report: Building bridges for gender equality*, UNESCO (2019), p.3

⁹⁰ Bukhari, N. *Pakistan's Education Crisis*, Alif Ailaan (16th June 2018), <https://elections.alifailaan.pk/pakistans-education-crisis/>, [accessed 23rd July 2019]

⁹¹ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.1

Poverty, Health, and Funding

With around 24 percent of the population living below the poverty line in Pakistan⁹², many parents are simply unable to send their children to school. The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2018 calculated that Pakistan has the highest intensity of child poverty in South Asia (53 percent)⁹³. According to Article 25A of the Constitution of Pakistan, the government is mandated to provide free education to all children between the ages of 5-16. Relatively new legislation in Punjab, Sindh and the Capital territory of Islamabad also stipulates that pre-primary education is free and accessible⁹⁴. In theory this is available for all children but there is ambiguity over what is included under the phrase “free education”.

An Alif Ailaan report discovered the actual cost of educating a child in both public and private schools, across all levels of education. The findings revealed that it costs a family approximately PKR 31,000 to send one child to a public primary school and approximately PKR 51,000 for secondary school. Featured in this price are additional but necessary costs of educating a child, which includes uniforms, textbooks, transportation, extracurriculars, tuitions, and so on⁹⁵. In fact, it was determined that transport-related expenditure amounted to 41 percent of a child’s schooling expense⁹⁶. The National per capita GDP is estimated at PKR 150,000 per year and education takes a big chunk out of household income; particularly if you have more than 1 child attending school⁹⁷. The burden of funding education rests on families who have to support two-thirds of the costs for schooling. The EFA Global Monitoring Report states that these high costs arise as a result of low government spending⁹⁸.

Recently in September 2019, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation pledged to donate \$200 million USD to the government of Pakistan’s *Ehsaas* program. The government has also allocated PKR 80

⁹² Government of Pakistan Ministry of Finance, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19*, (2019), p.243

⁹³ UNICEF, *2018 Annual Report Pakistan*, UNICEF (2019), p.8

⁹⁴ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.9

⁹⁵ The Researchers, *Not Free At All: Profiling the costs parents incur on education*, Alif Ailaan (2015), p.x

⁹⁶ Ibid. p.5

⁹⁷ The Researchers, *Not Free At All: Profiling the costs parents incur on education*, Alif Ailaan (2015), p.xi

⁹⁸ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), pp.7-8

billion for this initiative. The amount added could potentially increase to PKR 120 billion by 2021⁹⁹. Among other things that seek to alleviate poverty, the program has also committed to several education initiatives in order to overcome “financial barriers to accessing health and post-secondary education”¹⁰⁰. For example, the government would provide vouchers to poor students in areas where there are no provisions for government schools. These vouchers could be used to admit children to private institutions in that area instead. More than 50 percent of these and similar education vouchers will be provided to women and girls – which is a very positive step in ensuring equality in access to education. The program has further committed to increasing the National Education Foundation’s budget to ensure that voucher schemes are sufficiently funded. The government is also putting forward a free e-learning program to target those unable to attend school¹⁰¹.

Nonetheless, despite these measures, it can still be argued that the government is in violation of Article 25A as it provides fee-free access to education as opposed to overall free access. Families that are more likely to send their children to government schools have an average size of about 7 people per unit¹⁰². For households struggling to make ends meet or living below the poverty line, they will either choose to send their sons to school and forego the rights of their daughters to study, or not be able to afford an education for any of their children. The government will need to determine an accurate definition of “free” under Article 25A and be able to identify a plan and dedicate resources to bridge this economic gap¹⁰³. Although under the *Ehsaas* Programme the government has vowed to undertake an awareness campaign about the rights afforded to the poorest – including access to free education¹⁰⁴ – they fail to address the glaring issues faced by poorer families; that even fee-free education is a relative luxury that some simply cannot afford.

In fact, statistics that show 17 percent of girls are forced to leave school citing the high cost of education. Comparatively, this figure drops to 15 percent for boys.¹⁰⁵ Girls from poorer households

⁹⁹ Nisar, A. *Govt’s wise move to cutback poverty, look up education*, Pakistan & Gulf Economist (13th May 2019), www.pakistaneconomist.com/2019/05/13/govts-wise-move-to-cutback-poverty-look-up-education/

¹⁰⁰ Government of Pakistan, *Ehsaas Programme – Prime Minister’s Policy Statement*, (2019), www.pakistan.gov.pk/ehsaas-program.html, [accessed 30th September 2019]

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² The Researchers, *Not Free At All: Profiling the costs parents incur on education*, Alif Ailaan (2015), p.11

¹⁰³ Ibid. p.29

¹⁰⁴ Government of Pakistan, *Ehsaas Programme – Prime Minister’s Policy Statement*, (2019), www.pakistan.gov.pk/ehsaas-program.html, [accessed 30th September 2019]

¹⁰⁵ Alif Ailaan, *Factsheet – Why are children out of school?* Alif Ailaan (2014)

also have a higher chance of marrying early¹⁰⁶. This is clearly indicative of the vulnerabilities and disadvantages they face.

The Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014 defined “free” as: “the Government or a local authority shall not charge any fee or expense for providing education” but also qualified this by adding, “shall endeavour to remove financial barriers that may prevent a child from completing ten years’ education”¹⁰⁷.

The Pakistan Economic Survey of 2016-17 affirmed that girls will be provided stipends to attend school up to the Matric level¹⁰⁸. This is a successful program that has been continued over many years and is responsible for reducing the number of girls who drop out of school. The National Education Policy Framework also reiterates how all provinces are continuing the practice of providing girls stipends in order to ease their transition to secondary school¹⁰⁹. More programmes of this nature are needed in order to place less burden on families when choosing to educate their children.

Child Labour

Due to high levels of poverty and the unaffordability of schools, children of poor parents will often be put to work well before they should be and frequently in conditions dangerous to their physical and mental health. Girls, particularly, suffer harassment at the hands of employers and with lack of parental oversight and indentured service, offenders go unpunished. There are approximately 12.5 million children suffering under the yoke of child labour in Pakistan¹¹⁰. The current legal age of work is 14 years as prescribed under Article 11(3) of the constitution of Pakistan¹¹¹. Yet Article 25A stipulates mandatory schooling for all children between 5-16 years old. This disconnect between the two articles must be reviewed. Children with the opportunity to go to school are suffering as a result of choices made on their behalf by their parents or guardians and there can be no effective enforcement until the laws are amended appropriately.

¹⁰⁶ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, PUBLISHER (2015), pp.7-8

¹⁰⁷ The Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014, Article 2(e)

¹⁰⁸ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Finance, *Pakistan Economic Survey 2016-17*, (2017), p.176

¹⁰⁹ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, *National Education Policy Framework 2018*, (2018), p.8

¹¹⁰ Rodriguez, M., *Child Labor in Pakistan*, The Borgen Project (15th May 2017), <https://borgenproject.org/child-labor-in-pakistan/>, [accessed 21st October 2019]

¹¹¹ Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Article 11(3)

For example, the 1991 Employment of Children Act defines a ‘child’ as someone under 14 years and an adolescent as someone between the ages of 14 and 18. The Act goes on to stipulate that no child shall be permitted to work between 7pm and 8am; which practically permits children under 14 to work and prohibits them from doing so at any other time except during school hours¹¹². Passing this Act and the passing of The Bonded Labour Act 1992 (which abolished indentured servitude and the *peshgi* or debt bondage system), were steps in the right direction. However, the government reportedly failed to notify the general population of their newly bestowed rights¹¹³. Fortunately, the Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Children Act 2017 took previous laws a logical step further and in clear terms prohibits the employment of children entirely in Part II – 3(1)¹¹⁴.

Nonetheless, the laws currently in place are completely ignored as there is no effective enforcement and high levels of poverty mean that people often have no other options but to send their children to work.

The economic, health, and environmental benefits of 12 years of education:

From a purely economic perspective, educating girls is crucial for the development of any nation. Families and governments need to be made aware that their investment in girls’ education will only lead to substantial returns upon completing 12 years of schooling or more¹¹⁵. A Malala Fund report¹¹⁶ stated that educating girls:

Creates jobs and bolsters economies:

- a. A study by McKinsey calculated a potential \$12 trillion USD per year to be added to the world’s economy through educating girls up to the secondary level¹¹⁷. The World Bank declared there has been a huge loss in human capital wealth as a result of the lack of education of women. This loss is estimated to range between \$15-30 trillion USD globally¹¹⁸.

¹¹² Employment of Children Act 1991, *Part I – 2(i), 2(iii), & Part III - 4*

¹¹³ Silvers, J., *Child Labor in Pakistan*, The Atlantic (February 1996), www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1996/02/child-labor-in-pakistan/304660/, [accessed 13th November 2019]

¹¹⁴ Sindh Prohibition of Employment of Children Act 2017, *Part II – 3(1) & (2)*

¹¹⁵ Malala Fund, *Full Force: Why the world works better when girls go to school*, Malala Fund (2018), p.10

¹¹⁶ Malala Fund, *Safer, Healthier, Wealthier: How G20 investments in girls education improve our world*, Malala Fund (2017)

¹¹⁷ Malala Fund, *Full Force: Why the world works better when girls go to school*, Malala Fund (2018), p.10

¹¹⁸ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.5

A further study of 100 countries demonstrated that by increasing the number of girls who complete secondary school by 1 percent, economic growth increases by 0.3 percent. The IMF has also established a link between girls' education and economic diversification. In the long-term, jobs remain more secure and the wage gap also shrinks significantly with secondary education¹¹⁹. Women who have completed secondary and tertiary levels benefit from higher labour force participation and a higher standard of living¹²⁰. In Pakistan particularly, working women with high literacy skills earned 95 percent more than women with poor literacy skills. For those able to afford private schooling for their children, "better economic future" was cited as the biggest incentive for education with 50 percent of respondents interviewed supporting this¹²¹.

Leads to healthier populations:

- b. Each year of school completed by girls leads to a reduction in the rates of infant mortality. If women complete a full 12 years of education, 59 percent of early births and 49 percent of infant mortality (under the age of 5) would drop¹²². It is further estimated that early childbearing could see a significant drop (by 75 percent) and subsequently, population growth would decrease substantially. Child stunting rates could also be reduced by more than one third. Nationally, greater knowledge about women's health and their abilities to make health decisions based on this knowledge could also improve. Furthermore, their psychological wellbeing is likely to see improvement as well¹²³.

Helps the planet:

- c. The Brookings Institute has declared that secondary education for girls is the most cost-effective investment against climate change. Lack of education for girls leads to higher rates of fertility¹²⁴, increasing the burgeoning population and putting a strain on our finite natural resources.

¹¹⁹ Malala Fund, *Full Force: Why the world works better when girls go to school*, Malala Fund (2018), p.11

¹²⁰ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.4

¹²¹ The Researchers, *Not Free At All: Profiling the costs parents incur on education*, Alif Ailaan (2015), p.12

¹²² Malala Fund, *Beyond Basics: Making 12 Years of Girls' Education a Reality for Girls Globally*, Malala Fund (2016), p.8

¹²³ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.4

¹²⁴ Ibid. p.1

The strategic and economic problems of not educating girls

If girls aren't educated, a multitude of negative factors combine, leading to an increase in household poverty levels - e.g. lower earnings, more children etc. As explained by the World Bank, reduced earnings lead to a drop in human capital wealth - which is the "largest component of changing wealth of nations ahead of natural capital"¹²⁵. Lower educational attainment further reduces levels of human capital wealth per person.

The loss of 12 years of educating girls means that larger households struggle to make ends meet, with further losses in income as a result of unskilled work. Women's participation in all spheres of life is reduced, and even altruism suffers with less chances of women displaying altruistic behaviour¹²⁶.

Children of mothers under the age of 18 tend to perform poorly in school, suffer from stunted growth and malnourishment¹²⁷. The Pakistan government's Vision 2025 also determined that a lack of education leads to unhealthier lifestyles and more health challenges, particularly in rural communities¹²⁸. Furthermore, a higher population is not good for the environment – having one fewer child per family could save an "average of 58.6 tonnes of CO2-equivalent emissions per year", according to researchers at a university in Sweden.¹²⁹

A survey was carried out by Alif Ailaan prior to the 2013 general election that gathered voter's views on education in Pakistan. It found that the majority of respondents were more concerned about power cuts (64 percent) and unemployment (54 percent) whereas only 14 percent were concerned that politicians should focus on education¹³⁰. Although a small sample size of a population of over 200 million people, it is telling that the priorities for Pakistanis lie in being able to provide for their families and lead relatively normal lives. Without access to jobs and an irregular electricity supply, this becomes much harder.

¹²⁵ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.1

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.1

¹²⁸ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Planning Development and Reform, *Vision 2025*, (2014), p.36

¹²⁹ Mortimer, C., *Having children is one of the most destructive things you can do to the environment, say researchers*, The Independent (12th July 2017), www.independent.co.uk/environment/children-carbon-footprint-climate-change-damage-having-kids-research-a7837961.html, [accessed 22nd August 2019]

¹³⁰ Alif Ailaan, *The Alif Ailaan Education Survey 2013: Education as a political issue in the 2013 general elections*, Alif Ailaan (2013), p.vi

Although last year's Supreme Court Committee – mandated to implement Article 25A – declared an “education emergency”¹³¹, this emergency had already been declared in previous documents. The SC report insists that poorer parents must be incentivised to send their children to school¹³², however there is no mention of how daughters of poor parents are far less likely to go to school than their sons.

The overarching conclusion from a World Bank report clearly emphasises that universal primary education is not enough – true benefits can only be reaped after secondary levels are complete. Apple CEO, Tim Cook, states, “If civil society took the fundamental step of guaranteeing 12 years of education for every woman and girl, every community would benefit, every sector would thrive, and every economy would grow”¹³³.

Government spending

In a UNESCO document examining progress towards Sustainable Development Goal targets, there is a pertinent observation regarding the reversal of gender disparities in economically richer countries. In these countries, 107 girls for every 100 boys complete upper secondary education¹³⁴. Derived from this is the fact that more investments are needed in the education sector. The World Bank has emphasised that although initial private and public spending to provide universal 12 years of education could be “far from negligible”, the returns on this investment would be much greater¹³⁵. The Malala fund estimates that 12 years of universal free primary and secondary education would cost \$340 billion USD per year – or 5.2 percent GDP¹³⁶. The World Bank has further noted that in some areas, budget savings could even be achieved¹³⁷.

It is important to note that inequalities and privileges intersect. Therefore, gender inequalities interact with and exacerbate wealth inequalities. In poor, rural areas, 74 percent of girls – compared to 55 percent of boys – have never been to school. This large disparity, however, disappears in wealthy,

¹³¹ Supreme Court Committee, *Education Reform Report 2018*, Supreme Court (2018), p.ii

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Malala Fund, *Full Force: Why the world works better when girls go to school*, Malala Fund (2018), p.1

¹³⁴ UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring Report, *Meeting Commitments: Are countries on track to achieve SDG 4?* (2019), p.8

¹³⁵ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.6

¹³⁶ Malala Fund, *Beyond Basics: Making 12 Years of Girls' Education a Reality for Girls Globally*, (2016), p.3

¹³⁷ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.10

urban areas where both boys and girls are able to attend school with relative ease. Gaining access to school is only half the battle. Once in attendance, only 15 percent of poor, rural girls complete primary school compared to 40 percent of poor rural boys.¹³⁸

Although efforts were made to improve the large gender disparities in education, these efforts did little to improve access and completion of school for the poorest. A report on Pakistan published for the Oslo Summit 2015 notes that between 1990 and 2013, rural girls from rich households saw an increase in primary school completion rates from 59 percent to 93 percent. However, poor rural girls' completion only increased from 5 percent to 15 percent¹³⁹ showing just how clearly these disparities operate. This has been pointed out in the EFA global monitoring report, which shows all rich boys and girls were expected to complete primary by 2020, yet poor boys would only be able to reach this goal by 2050. Poor girls, however, are predicted to achieve universal primary completion by the end of this century¹⁴⁰.

After the devolution of education responsibilities to the provinces by the 18th Amendment, planning and budgeting for primary and secondary education is the provinces' prerogative. They in turn have two sources of revenue; transfers from the federal government; which accounts for approximately 90 percent of their resources. The remaining 10 percent is sourced directly from within the provinces themselves¹⁴¹. Unfortunately, it has become clear that current government spending on education is "inefficient and inadequate"¹⁴².

In the run up to the 2013 general election, the majority of respondents interviewed by Alif Ailaan for their education survey were aware that the government was spending too little on education, comparing Pakistan's spending with neighbouring India. These respondents were also aware that education has a direct impact on the future economy of the country¹⁴³.

¹³⁸ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.4

¹³⁹ Ibid, p.5

¹⁴⁰ EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/14, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all*, UNESCO (2014), p.94

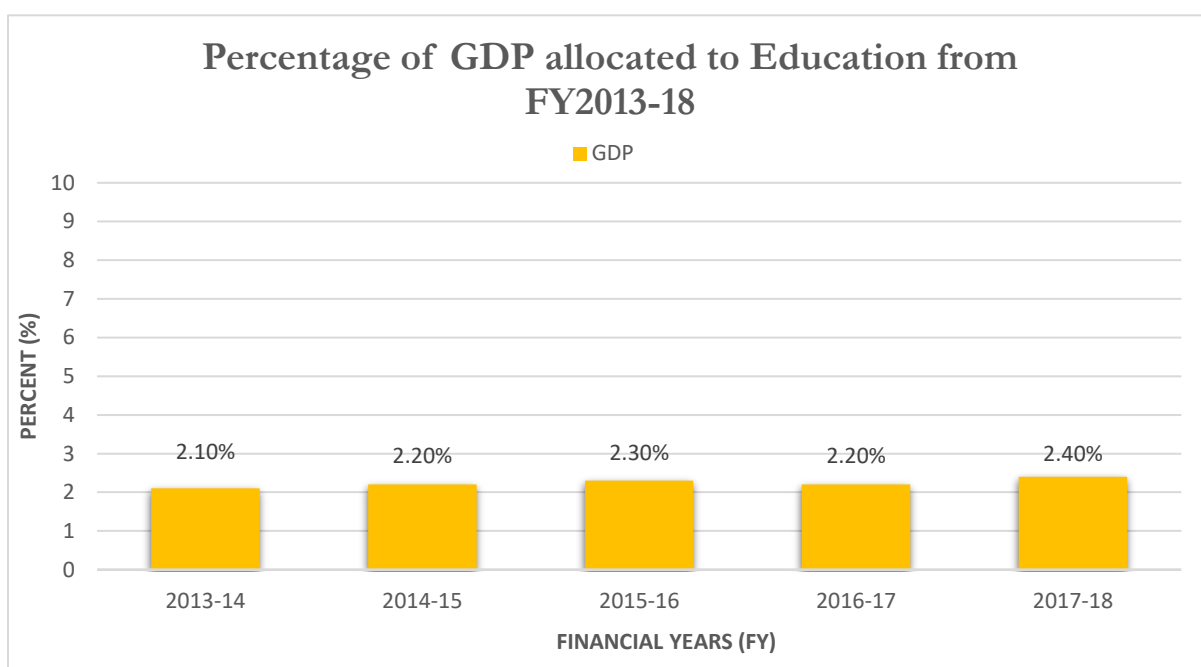
¹⁴¹ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.10

¹⁴² Alif Ailaan, *Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017*, Alif Ailaan (2017), p.1

¹⁴³ Alif Ailaan, *The Alif Ailaan Education Survey 2013: Education as a political issue in the 2013 general elections*, Alif Ailaan (2013), pp.vi-vii

Vision 2025, Pakistan Economic Survey 2016-17, the 12th 5-year plan, Supreme Court Committee on Education, the World Bank, and a host of other documents and institutions state that a minimum budget of 4 percent of GDP is necessary for the education sector in Pakistan. This aim was set 27 years ago in 1992 and has been repeated in several policy documents, yet to date, remains unimplemented¹⁴⁴. In fact, the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity (ICFGE) recommends a GDP allocation of 6 percent for countries falling in the low and lower-middle income bracket¹⁴⁵.

Figure 5: Percentage of GDP allocated to education in Pakistan over 5 years (FY13-18)¹⁴⁶



Targets for 4 percent were set again for 2018 yet – as Figure 5 demonstrates – Pakistan fell quite short of achieving that goal. For comparison, Turkey spends 4.37 percent of its GDP on education, Mexico spends 5.33 percent and India spends 3.84 percent¹⁴⁷. The National Education Policy Framework also recognises that Pakistan performs lower and spends less than countries with similar per capita income.

¹⁴⁴ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.9

¹⁴⁵ Malala Fund, *Full Force: Why the world works better when girls go to school*, Malala Fund (2018), p.27

¹⁴⁶ http://finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_19/Economic_Survey_2018_19.pdf

¹⁴⁷ Malala Fund, *Full Force: Why the world works better when girls go to school*, (2018), p.27

They list the examples of Ghana and Burundi which spend approximately 5-6.5 percent of their GDP on Education¹⁴⁸.

The Oslo Summit paper reports that the government of Pakistan will have to increase the money it spends on each child at each level of education to guarantee it completes goals set for 2030. Pre-primary expenditure requires an increase by 10 times, the primary level requires an increase by 6 times and the lower secondary requires an increase in expenditure by 4 times its current amount. Pakistan will also have to increase its GDP allocation as well as double its spending on basic education.¹⁴⁹

Moreover, the Supreme Court Committee on education recommended an annual increase of 25 percent in all current provincial budgets to reach targets in 4 years' time¹⁵⁰. Yet the latest fiscal budget for 2019-20 has seen an approximate decrease of 20.5 percent in the federal budget for education from the last fiscal year (2018-19). Higher Education has also received a reduced amount in the Public Sector Development Program (PDSP)¹⁵¹. According to Academia Magazine, the current government's development plans can be criticised as "not ambitious enough" considering budgetary allocations alone¹⁵². The article goes on to point out how in the most recent budget, the Punjab Education Endowment fund was slashed to PKR 300 million from PKR 1 billion last year and the Punjab Higher Education Commission also had its allocation slashed to PKR 100 million from PKR 500 million last year¹⁵³.

The Supreme Court Committee also stated that the budget required for each province by 2030 must increase as follows¹⁵⁴:

- Punjab – 25 percent of provincial budget on education
- Sindh – 24 percent

¹⁴⁸ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, *National Education Policy Framework 2018*, (2018), p.2

¹⁴⁹ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.9

¹⁵⁰ Supreme Court Committee, *Education Reform Report 2018*, Supreme Court (2018), p.iii

¹⁵¹ Amin, T., *Budget 2019-20: allocation for education, services reduced by 20.5 percent*, Business Recorder (12th June 2019), <https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/06/20190612485340/>, [accessed 23rd July 2019]

¹⁵² Sheikh, A. *Punjab Education Budget 2019-20: Up in Volume, But Down In Reality*, The Academia Magazine (18th June 2019), <https://academiamag.com/punjab-education-budget-2019-20-up-in-volume-but-down-in-reality/>, [accessed 23rd July 2019]

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Supreme Court Committee, *Education Reform Report 2018*, Supreme Court of Pakistan (2018) p.18

- Balochistan – 25 percent
- KPK – 32 percent

With our current levels of spending, it seems unlikely that these recommendations will be taken forward soon.

ASER's 2018 report points out the need for appropriate increase in funding by the government but also believes that spending cannot simply increase without sufficient data collection. By doing so, necessary learning improvements for boys and, especially, girls cannot be made. "More finance alone will not result in improvement in education standards. The task is not just to spend more, but to use data to spend on what improves learning, in a more targeted and equitable way."¹⁵⁵. The lack of relevant or methodical data collection across Pakistan makes this task very difficult and is an issue that remains to be tackled.

The National Institute of Public Policy in India carried out a gender-based budgetary analysis. The focus was on how much women benefitted from total government expenditure. This allowed them to formulate later budgets that accurately targeted areas and people that needed the most funding. It also led to a "gender perspective integrated in the National Economic Survey" and became part of India's Five-Year Plan¹⁵⁶. Pakistan must consider carrying out a similar assessment concerning the status of women in Pakistan and incorporate this into all budgetary planning to ensure no one is left behind.

Unspent Funds and Tax Reform

Despite relatively low levels of funding from the federal government, the provincial governments have committed to spending on education. The Punjab province dedicated almost 24 percent of its total budget on education, Sindh was able to commit 22 percent, and KPK and Baluchistan allocated 26 percent and 19 percent, respectively. Despite these commitments, large portions of provincial education budgets remain unspent. Spending can be categorised into two segments; recurrent expenditure and development expenditure. In percentage terms, 9-13 percent of Punjab's budget was not spent between 2010-11 and 2013-14, and almost 25 percent of Sindh's budget was unspent in 2013-14. In absolute monetary terms, this equates to \$210-270 million USD for Punjab and \$310

¹⁵⁵ ASER Pakistan, *Annual Status of Education Report 2018 - National*, ASER Pakistan Secretariat (2019), p.10

¹⁵⁶ Gordon, R. Marston, L., Rose, P. and Zubairi, A. *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective*, REAL Centre (2019), p.47

million USD for Sindh. This is a shocking amount that was not utilised and, as illustrated in the Oslo Summit paper, could have supported approximately 4.2 million primary school children across both provinces. Both KPK and Balochistan have shown positive spending trends but in development expenditure, there is again a large portion left unspent (in Sindh too, 60 percent of development budgets were unspent)¹⁵⁷.

The reason behind this lack of expenditure on crucial education projects lies in technical and capacity constraints. Provincial governments struggle to spend funds due to reduced capacity of government institutions and the accounting and spending procedures are further hurdles¹⁵⁸. However, there are signs of improvement. It has been observed that expenditure on primary and secondary schooling in Punjab and Sindh is “pro-poor”. However, provinces like Balochistan need improvements in spending their resources appropriately in order to benefit those most disadvantaged¹⁵⁹.

As part of the government’s *Ehsaas* Programme, all public schools will have a placard outside the school building stating details of their budget and the number of teachers employed. This will be a helpful tool to understand which districts are falling behind in funding and which districts are not spending their disclosed funds¹⁶⁰.

One of the only ways for Pakistan to achieve its goal of spending 4 percent of its GDP on education is to implement necessary tax reforms. At present, the tax-to-GDP ratio is only 9.9 percent which is insufficient to meet the needs of the government’s basic expenditure, let alone increase expenditure on its education sector. It was reported in July 2019 that the Federal Board of Revenue failed to meet its annual tax target by PKR 578 billion and tax collection rates fell for the first time in several years¹⁶¹. The IMF bailout conditions for the end of the fiscal year 2019-20 stipulate that the tax-to-GDP ratio

¹⁵⁷ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.12

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

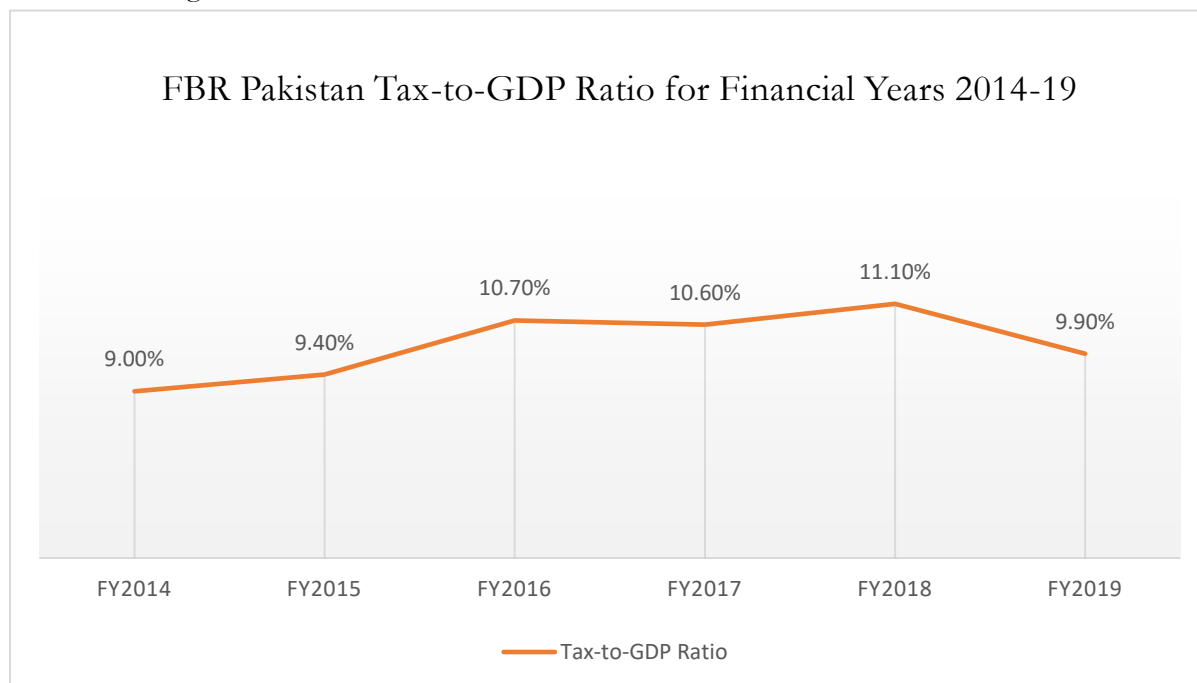
¹⁵⁹ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.13

¹⁶⁰ Government of Pakistan, *Ehsaas Programme – Prime Minister’s Policy Statement*, (2019), www.pakistan.gov.pk/ehsaas-program.html, [accessed 30th September 2019]

¹⁶¹ Rana, S. *Tax-to-GDP ratio sinks to lowest in five years at 9.9%*, The Express Tribune (2nd July 2019), [accessed 2nd September 2019], <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2004148/2-tax-gdp-ratio-sinks-lowest-five-years-9-9/>

must increase to 12.6 percent. Overall, Pakistan will need to raise this further to 15 percent to cover basic expenditures¹⁶².

Figure 6: FBR Pakistan Tax-to-GDP Ratio for Financial Years 2014-2019¹⁶³



The EFA Monitoring report also reinforces the need for increasing tax revenue. They argue that Pakistan could send all primary and secondary age children to school for free by simply increasing tax revenue to 14 percent and dedicating a fifth of this revenue to education services¹⁶⁴.

Various provinces stand to benefit from various taxes as appropriate to that region. An example provided is of Punjab and Sindh where agricultural and sales tax revenues will prove beneficial whereas KPK and Balochistan may receive far more benefits from taxing their vast natural resources¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Rana, S. *Tax-to-GDP ratio sinks to lowest in five years at 9.9%*, The Express Tribune (2nd July 2019), <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2004148/2-tax-gdp-ratio-sinks-lowest-five-years-9-9/> [accessed 2nd September 2019]

¹⁶³ Ibid

¹⁶⁴ EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/14, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all*, UNESCO (2014), p.9

¹⁶⁵ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, PUBLISHER (2015), p.11

Increasing tax collection will bolster the economy and allow for more spending across the country on essential public social services, like education. Expanding the tax base is also very important to increase the size of national budgets¹⁶⁶. It has been recommended that to encourage greater tax collection within provinces, a larger share of tax revenue should be allowed to remain in the province it has been collected from. This will incentivise provincial agencies to clamp down on tax evasion and improve tax collection. Nonetheless, other factors must be considered, namely the fact that poorer provinces such as Balochistan will not have the same opportunities and capacity to raise their tax revenue significantly compared to provinces like Punjab¹⁶⁷. However, for this to see any success, provincial education agencies need to be strengthened and communication between the federal and provincial governments must increase. At present, coordination between the respective governments is disjointed, particularly after the 18th Amendment. Malik et al. believe that a coordinating body at the federal level could achieve success and ensure 4 percent of GDP is adequately supplied to each province for their education services¹⁶⁸.

Foreign aid

Despite its universally recognised importance, foreign humanitarian aid to education stands at a minimal 3 percent. The European Commission has recognised this and increased education's share of the aid budget to 10 percent in 2019 from the previous share of 1 percent in 2015¹⁶⁹. The UNESCO report for monitoring progress towards SDGs notes that low-income countries have had their reduction in out of school children capped at 20 percent due to the halt in growth of aid after the financial crisis¹⁷⁰. Unfortunately, the report notes that since 2010 education has become less of a priority for donors and funding has remained stagnant¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁶ Malala Fund, *Beyond Basics: Making 12 Years of Girls' Education a Reality for Girls Globally*, (2016), p.10

¹⁶⁷ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.21

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. p.21

¹⁶⁹ European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, *Education in Emergencies (EiE)*, European Commission (22nd July 2019), https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/education-emergencies_en, [accessed 3rd August 2019]

¹⁷⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring Report, *Meeting Commitments: Are countries on track to achieve SDG 4?* (2019), p.3

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p.11

Aid for education tends to favour eliminating gender disparities. 55 percent of direct aid to education was “gender-targeted” but this varied by country. For example, Japan only focused 6 percent of its education interventions on girls, whereas Canada focused a much larger share of 92 percent¹⁷².

Countries in South Asia, like Pakistan, are the largest beneficiaries of Education aid – with a share of education overseas development assistance (ODA) of 56 percent in total in 2016. Even so, the government of Pakistan contributes a greater chunk to education funding, making up 80 percent of spending¹⁷³.

In 2016, the World Bank invested \$300 million USD to support the Punjab province increase the participation of girls in school, among other education-related goals. The intervention to provide stipends to girls to attend school was particularly successful and reduced the number of OOSC¹⁷⁴.

Technical problems faced by the provinces in spending their budget can be overcome through the aid of foreign agencies. The World Bank has recently allocated a Global Partnership for Education grant worth \$34 million USD for improving the quality of early childhood education, improving access, and equity. Crucially, the grant will also help provide technical assistance to the province in implementing necessary changes¹⁷⁵.

From 2015-2018, the EU Education in Emergencies (EiE) fund committed €290 million for education across 55 crisis-affected countries. Pakistan is one of the countries included in this education fund and benefitted from support to minorities in accessing education, particularly in remote areas. The aid intervention tackled a multitude of problems within the sector. For example, teacher trainings and mentoring were offered along with life skills training, awareness campaigns at the community level

¹⁷² Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Beyond commitments 2019: how countries implement SDG 4*, (2019), p.3

¹⁷³ Gordon, R. Marston, L., Rose, P. and Zubairi, A. *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective*, REAL Centre (2019), pp.30-31

¹⁷⁴ World Bank, *World Bank to Support Increased School Participation in Pakistan with the Focus on Poor*, World Bank (3rd June 2016), www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2016/06/03/increased-school-participation-focus-poor

¹⁷⁵ Global Partnership for Education, *Education in Pakistan*, World Bank Group (11th June 2019), [accessed 30th August 2019]

and the provision of learning materials. Crucially, half of these operations were focused on educating girls¹⁷⁶.

The Malala Fund has also invested approximately \$6 million USD in Pakistan for improving the status of girl's education¹⁷⁷. In another report, the Malala Fund suggests the possibility of sourcing funding from different avenues. They share the example of the International Finance Facility for Education which could potentially raise \$3-4 billion USD per year. Crucially, the report warns that it will be hard to meet the SDGs unless governments give strong commitment to education, plan carefully, and significantly increase their funding for this purpose¹⁷⁸.

An ongoing project by Austrian INGO, HOPE'87, Access for Out of School Children to Education and Safe Schools (AcCESS), aims to reduce the number of children out of school, or those most likely to drop out. Targeting 8 tribal districts in the KPK region, the goal is to ensure and provide equitable access to quality education in times of emergency or conflict. The AcCESS project does not fail to account for the difficulties faced by girls. Therefore, girls make up 50 percent of the children targeted. Furthermore, 2 out of 5 outcomes specifically work towards eliminating gender bias and barriers to girls' education, while also recognising that the positive impacts of educating women are multitudinous and far-reaching¹⁷⁹.

Moreover, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has been working closely with the Balochistan provincial government in efforts to curb the large numbers of OOSC in the province. Through their interventions and planning, 53,000 children - who were out of school - were brought back into the system; 72 percent of this number were girls¹⁸⁰. After the successful execution of the first education

¹⁷⁶ European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, *Education in Emergencies (EiE)*, European Commission (22nd July 2019), https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/education-emergencies_en, [accessed 3rd August 2019]

¹⁷⁷ Malala Fund, *Programmes: Pakistan*, (2019), www.malala.org/programmes/pakistan, [accessed 16th September 2019]

¹⁷⁸ Malala Fund, *Beyond Basics: Making 12 Years of Girls' Education a Reality for Girls Globally*, (2016), p.12

¹⁷⁹ HOPE'87, *PRESS RELEASE: Launch of Access for Out of School Children to Education and Safe Schools in Pakistan (AcCESS) Project*, HOPE'87 (15th July 2019), www.hope87.at/news/press-release-launch-access-out-school-children-education-and-safe-schools-pakistan-access [accessed 22nd August 2019]

¹⁸⁰ GPE Secretariat, *Pakistan: Using technology to bring education to the most remote areas*, Global Partnership for Education World Bank Group, 4th April 2019, www.globalpartnership.org/blog/pakistan-using-technology-bring-education-most-remote-areas, [accessed 13th September 2019]

plan with the help of GPE, Balochistan was provided another grant earlier this year to develop an education plan for 2019-2023¹⁸¹.

Private schooling

With increasingly lowered spending by government institutions and the lack of good quality education, Pakistan has seen a sharp rise in privately-run school institutions. According to the Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) 2013-14, 60 percent of children who went to school were in government run schools while 39 percent attended private schools¹⁸². In fact, many educated parents, for whom money is not a constraint, prefer to give their children private schooling¹⁸³. This is mostly due to the quality of education in government schools; a topic explored later in this report.

There is a correlation between the rise of private schools and – what Alif Ailaan suggests is – “the state’s implicit withdrawal” from their education obligations and their “unaccountable inefficiency” in this sector¹⁸⁴.

The Supreme Court Committee on Education report in 2018 writes notes that 36 percent of school-going children attend private schools. However, the fees that most private school establishments charge has been flagged as a contentious issue by most parents. It was with this in mind that the Committee recommended a rationalisation of private school fees in order to curb excessive charges that – for many families who wished for good quality education – were unaffordable. The Committee also declared that private schools must develop Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes under which they should ensure that a minimum of 10 percent of the children they enrol are from poor backgrounds¹⁸⁵. The Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2014 also stipulated that private schools would be required to admit a certain number of ‘disadvantaged’ children to their program¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸¹ GPE Secretariat, *Pakistan: Using technology to bring education to the most remote areas*, Global Partnership for Education World Bank Group, 4th April 2019, www.globalpartnership.org/blog/pakistan-using-technology-bring-education-most-remote-areas, [accessed 13th September 2019]

¹⁸² The Researchers, *Not Free At All: Profiling the costs parents incur on education*, Alif Ailaan (2015), p.3

¹⁸³ Ibid. p.11

¹⁸⁴ The Researchers, *Not Free At All: Profiling the costs parents incur on education*, Alif Ailaan (2015), p.29

¹⁸⁵ Supreme Court Committee, *Education Reform Report 2018*, Supreme Court of Pakistan (2018), p.22

¹⁸⁶ The Punjab Free and Compulsory Education Act 2014, *Article 2(e)*

Under current laws, housing societies are required to reserve at least one plot for the development of a local community school. Unfortunately, most of this land is leased out to ‘elite’ private schools that do not service the community as intended. The Committee of Education constituted by the Supreme Court stated that these plots instead should be provided to government public schools at subsidised rates¹⁸⁷. Thus, families will no longer be disadvantaged if they cannot afford to send their children to an expensive private school or send them long distances to attend a fee-free public school.

It has been noted that though there is a general impression that private schools provide better quality education services than ordinary government schools, both are lagging in actual learning objectives. On average, many children are simply not learning at levels they should be, which leads to the conclusion that there is an inherent problem with the prevailing education system, rather than individual institutions¹⁸⁸. This is a worrying observation and will require a major overhaul by the government to address the glaring problems that lie ahead.

¹⁸⁷ Supreme Court Committee, *Education Reform Report 2018*, Supreme Court of Pakistan (2018), p.22

¹⁸⁸ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), p.8

Sanitation and Security

Sanitation issues:

Across the globe in 2016, approximately one-third of all primary schools lacked drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services. This is a crisis that particularly affects the education of millions of girls¹⁸⁹. It is also a huge challenge in schools across Pakistan.

The unique difficulties faced by girls during menstruation are compounded by the fact that schools often don't have adequate facilities to cater to their needs. Schools far away from home are more of a deterrent – not simply because of long distance and inadequate transport but also because there is less opportunity for girls to come home if they are unwell.

The UNICEF 2018 Annual Report for Pakistan noted that 9,192 children benefited from the inclusion of proper sanitation facilities in primary schools. These integrated, gender-responsive initiatives particularly favoured girls, comprising of over half the number (4,688)¹⁹⁰. More importantly, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) indicators were incorporated into provincial education information management systems. This was an important measure to ensure that WASH facilities are being provided at all levels and will continue to be monitored by the relevant authorities. There were also efforts to focus on menstrual hygiene management (MHM). These efforts focused on changing community mindsets and engaged directly with local “influencers” such as religious leaders. As a result, “MHM became a growing component of WASH initiatives, especially in schools – a major step towards overcoming challenges to adolescent girls in education, health and participation”¹⁹¹. UNICEF's attempts to target religious leaders eventually led the Council of Islamic Ideology to publish a positive stance on MHM¹⁹².

In Uganda, a project providing primary and secondary school girls a package of sanitary pads and teaching them how to use them led to reduced absenteeism during menstruation, greater confidence,

¹⁸⁹ United Nations Economic & Social Council, *Special Edition: progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. Report of the Secretary General*, UN (2019), p.13

¹⁹⁰ UNICEF, 2018 Annual Report Pakistan, UNICEF (2019), p.39

¹⁹¹ Ibid

¹⁹² UNICEF, 2018 Annual Report Pakistan, UNICEF (2019), p.45

and less distraction in class for girls during their period.¹⁹³ These initiatives show the necessity for appropriate management of girls sanitation and the difference effective policy and measures can make.

Security and infrastructure concerns:

Girls in conflict and crisis affected areas are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys, according to the EU Education in Emergencies operation¹⁹⁴.

After the attack on Malala Yousufzai and the tragic APS School shooting in Peshawar, parents across Pakistan have begun to fear for the safety of their children. Poorer families with no recourse for security that can sufficiently protect their children are further discouraged from sending them to school. Between 2009 and 2012, over 800 school attacks were recorded in Pakistan¹⁹⁵; these schools were mainly targeted because they offered education for girls or because they taught science to their students¹⁹⁶. No other country in this period was subject to as many terror incidents. Students, teachers and educational institutions have been subjected to threats and attacked, creating an atmosphere of fear and leading to loss of life¹⁹⁷. Schools without boundary walls are often cited as a reason for parents not sending their daughters to school and the lack of adequate or safe transport to school is yet another hurdle.

Infrastructure plays a large role in determining if girls continue their education. Concerns related to security – particularly for girls – are heightened with inadequate school buildings. Alif Ailaan in their district education rankings assert that the gender gap is “persistent and deeply enmeshed with the school infrastructure challenge”¹⁹⁸.

¹⁹³ Gordon, R. Marston, L., Rose, P. and Zubairi, A. *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective*, REAL Centre (2019), p.11

¹⁹⁴ European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, *Education in Emergencies (EiE)*, European Commission (22nd July 2019), https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/education-emergencies_en, [accessed 3rd August 2019]

¹⁹⁵ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), pp.7-8

¹⁹⁶ Malala Fund, *Programmes: Pakistan*, (2019), www.malala.org/programmes/pakistan, [accessed 16th September 2019]

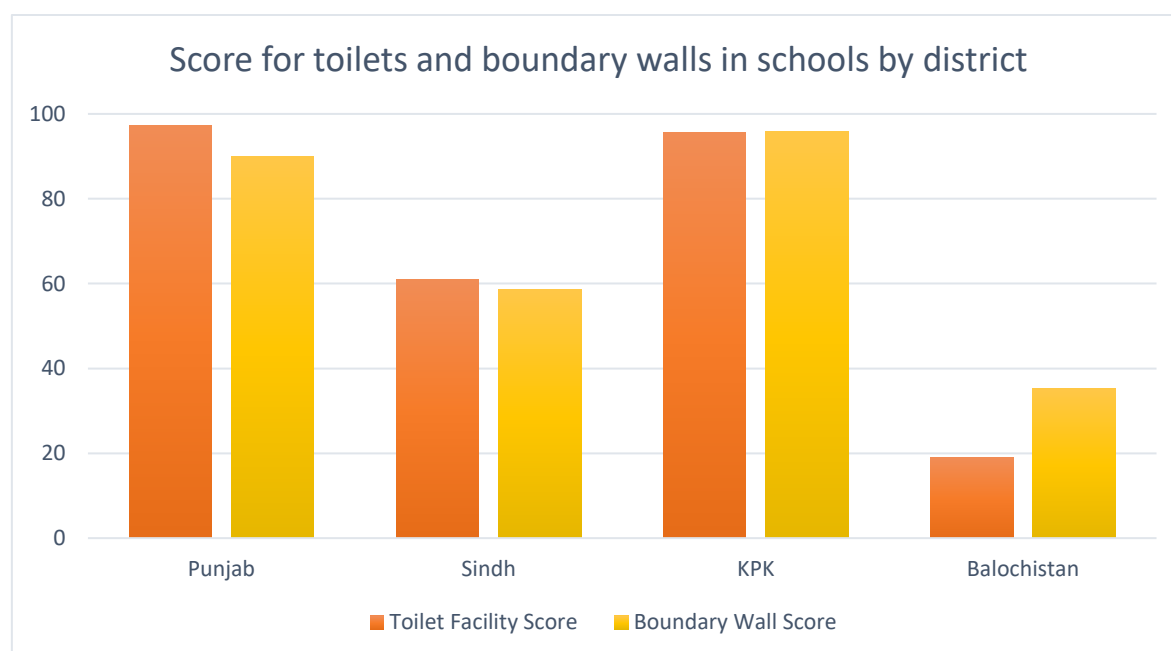
¹⁹⁷ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), pp.7-8

¹⁹⁸ Alif Ailaan, *Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017*, Alif Ailaan (2017), p.1

The provision of facilities available for use in school have a direct impact on whether parents will send their children to school. Infrastructure also impacts teachers and their ability to teach to the required standard or whether to continue teaching at all. Naturally, all these factors combine to determine whether a child is learning in class¹⁹⁹.

Vision 2025 emphasised the need for necessary school infrastructure like boundary walls and toilets²⁰⁰. However, the unfortunate reality is that most schools across Pakistan lack appropriate facilities to cater to their students. Alif Ailaan notes that public policy is determined by “patronage-based considerations” that lead to school infrastructure of low quality, longer distances, and inadequate facilities²⁰¹. Predictably, girls are the most disadvantaged in these situations.

Figure 7: Provincial score for school toilets and boundary walls²⁰²



Different provinces have different levels of development. This is mostly due to the amount of money received by these provinces in their education allocation budgets. For example, Punjab is top in terms

¹⁹⁹ Alif Ailaan, *Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017*, Alif Ailaan (2017), p.5

²⁰⁰ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Planning Development and Reform, *Vision 2025*, (2014), p.34

²⁰¹ The Researchers, *Not Free At All: Profiling the costs parents incur on education*, Alif Ailaan (2015), p.1

²⁰² Alif Ailaan, *Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017*, Alif Ailaan (2017)

of infrastructure availability whereas Balochistan is consistently at the bottom of the list – as shown in Figure 7. Resource allocation is highest to Punjab and lowest to Balochistan²⁰³.

However, infrastructure is not the only factor that can encourage or discourage girls to attend school. For example, even though KPK has a higher score on infrastructure (91.12), it has a far lower score on gender parity (79.31)²⁰⁴. This can be explained by the fact that KPK suffers from stricter adherence to ‘traditional’ cultural norms and values.

The Annual Status of Education Report for 2015 reported that only 60 percent of rural government schools had useable water (compared to 82 percent of private schools), 63 percent had a boundary wall (compared to 65 percent of private schools) and only 52 percent had a useable toilet – compared to 78 percent of private schools²⁰⁵.

Usually, school upgrades in Pakistan occur if the constituency they are situated in belongs to an influential landlord or politician²⁰⁶. However, in other areas, foreign organisations are helping with efforts to upgrade and build more schools. The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has been contributing to improve education in the Balochistan province – where 78 percent of schools lacked suitable buildings, trained teachers and adequate learning materials²⁰⁷. The organisation aided the provincial government in creating an education plan for 2013-2018. This proved to be a great success and both institutions have committed to create a new plan for 2019-2024. In order to construct more schools, surveys were conducted that identified abandoned buildings which could be repurposed into schools. This was an innovative way to save funds on building costs. Since 2015, 700 schools were completed, and more than 100 girls’ schools from primary to secondary were upgraded²⁰⁸.

Although these improvements to security and infrastructure are crucial to ensure children attend school, the fact remains that learning within schools falls well short of the required levels.

²⁰³ Alif Ailaan, *Are we investing enough in the education of our children?* Alif Ailaan (2014)

²⁰⁴ Ibid. p.3

²⁰⁵ Annual Status of Education Report, *Annual Status of Education Report 2015 – Report Card*, ASER (2015)

²⁰⁶ Shaikat, A. *Delivering Girls’ Education in Pakistan*, Oxfam GB (2009), p.14

²⁰⁷ GPE Secretariat, *Pakistan: Using technology to bring education to the most remote areas*, Global Partnership for Education World Bank Group (4th April 2019), www.globalpartnership.org/blog/pakistan-using-technology-bring-education-most-remote-areas, [accessed 13th September 2019]

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

Unfortunately, our data collection systems are also not equipped to monitor learning across schools, rather Alif Ailaan believes Pakistan has a “dysfunctional data regime” where school facilities and enrolment are given more priority than the actual learning taking place in classrooms.²⁰⁹

In security and sanitation, the government must play a bigger role. A blueprint for all schools should be developed which subsequent buildings should follow. This blueprint must include all the necessary infrastructure required for a functioning school. Funds released for construction should then take into account all aspects of the blueprint and be allocated accordingly. For example, no school should be built without an appropriate boundary wall and gender segregated toilets. These basic requirements must be implemented immediately and current schools that suffer from a lack of this infrastructure should be identified and upgraded to conform to the blueprint.

²⁰⁹ Alif Ailaan, Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017, Alif Ailaan (2017), p.1

Teaching and Learning

Ghost schools

The Public Accounts committee revealed that there are more than 2,350 ‘ghost schools’ in Pakistan that are causing annual losses of approximately PKR 225 million²¹⁰. As recently as 2018, the Supreme Court Education Committee put forward in clear terms that ghost schools have to be made functional²¹¹. Despite these schools being identified, no action has been taken by the relevant authorities and committees that were specifically established to produce reports or monitor progress have so far failed to fulfil their mandate²¹². The 2010 census revealed that Sindh was home to around 9000 institutions that were only ‘schools’ in name.

The government’s pledge to place placards outside public schools will be one small measure that can hold these institutions to account. By allowing local communities to have direct knowledge of active schools in their areas and how many teachers are supposed to be in attendance, there will likely be greater accountability.

Unfortunately, in some cases if the schools are functional, the teachers do not show up for their work. This naturally has a direct impact on learning in schools for girls and boys alike and doesn’t allow for parents to see the benefits of educating their children.

Teachers and training

Although it is very important to reduce the number of out of school children in Pakistan, it is equally as important to improve learning standards in Pakistan’s education institutions. One of the potential detrimental side effects – as pointed out in a Malala Fund report – of increasing the number of children in school without other necessary improvements, is of overcrowded classrooms with low quality education imparted. With this lowered standard and lack of valuable skills being taught at school, the country could be saddled with a burgeoning youth population that is at high risk of unemployment

²¹⁰ Abbasi, W. *No action against BECS officials running 2,350 ghost schools*, The News (26th April 2018), www.thenews.com.pk/print/309132-no-action-against-becs-officials-running-2-350-ghost-schools

²¹¹ Supreme Court Committee, *Education Reform Report 2018*, Supreme Court of Pakistan (2018), p.21

²¹² Abbasi, W. *No action against BECS officials running 2,350 ghost schools*, The News (26th April 2018), www.thenews.com.pk/print/309132-no-action-against-becs-officials-running-2-350-ghost-schools

upon graduation, since they lack the necessary skills for work²¹³. This is a problem that can only be tackled through improving the quality of education; through both teacher trainings and curriculum reform.

Teachers who are more well-trained and more experienced opt to teach in populous cities where they are paid better and have access to better facilities. This means rural children suffer since they are learning at drastically different rates to urban children. The problem could be tackled by offering various incentives to highly qualified teachers. The EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) states the examples of both Bangladesh and Gambia where these incentives have proved effective. The former saw success in teacher transfers through providing safe housing for women teachers and Gambia saw a 24 percent rise in teachers requesting positions to hardship schools in 2007. The latter was achieved by offering a 30-40 percent allowance on top of the base salary for positions in remote areas. In fact, the report also emphasises that the amount of salary received by teachers influences the quality of education being taught²¹⁴.

In Pakistan, some teachers are provided with allowances in larger cities, which incentivises more competent teachers to take up positions in urban cities to the detriment of education in rural areas. There are also several cases of political interference which can unfairly influence teacher placements and transfers. According to the National Education Framework, political meddling is one of the biggest causes behind the imbalance in teacher quality and experience²¹⁵. The Oslo Summit report believes the solution to this problem is to provide more incentives to teachers who are working in areas where the quality of teaching and education is poorer. However, this would require an increase in funding for these areas that are already underfunded²¹⁶.

An initiative from 2011 continuing today is the Teach for Pakistan programme that recruits graduates and professionals for a 2-year 'fellowship' to teach at a low-income school. The children in these

²¹³ Malala Fund & Results for Development Institute, *Financing Upper Secondary Education: Unlocking 12 Years of Education for All*, Malala Fund (2015), p.3

²¹⁴ EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, *Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2013/14, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all*, UNESCO (2014), p.29

²¹⁵ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, *National Education Policy Framework 2018*, (2018), p.11

²¹⁶ Malik, R., Rose, P., *Financing Education in Pakistan: Opportunities for Action. Country Case Study for the Oslo Summit on Education for Development*, (2015), pp.7-8

schools suffering from a teacher deficit benefit from the education provided to them from well-educated alumni. They believe that by recruiting young, talented individuals, they can create a “multiplier effect” on the education system in Pakistan. After the 2-year teaching period, these ‘teachers’ are better equipped to understand the unique problems faced by low-income schools and are better placed to advocate and initiate policy reform as well as curricula and textbook rewritings²¹⁷.

The Supreme Court Committee on education believes that a widescale societal change is needed where teachers are valued more than they are at present. This, the committee report argues, will only come about if teachers are better paid and better trained²¹⁸. However, DFID Pakistan also argues that to improve learning, teachers must be supported to teach more efficiently and effectively in their classrooms, and not simply subjected to “traditional teacher training outside the classroom”²¹⁹. They believe this can only be achieved through using a combination of interventions that can be adapted to the community in which they are being used²²⁰.

The Global Education Monitoring Report noted that in rural Pakistan, “recruiting local and female teachers had positive effects on girls’ learning, reducing gender disparity in academic achievement”²²¹. GPE has recognised the need for more female teachers and made efforts towards hiring more women to increase the number of girls in school. These teachers were also given proper teacher training in order to better equip them for teaching children in a competent and effective manner²²².

The Citizens Foundation (TCF) is one of the largest education-driven NGO’s in Pakistan with a network of over 1,567 schools across the country²²³. TCF has taken the commendable step of solely employing women as teachers and school principals (12,000 in total) since they recognise the need for more female representation to ensure all girls are able to attend their schools. In further efforts to

²¹⁷ Teach for Pakistan, *Our Approach*, (2017), www.iteachforpakistan.org/our-approach, [accessed 16th October 2019]

²¹⁸ Supreme Court Committee, *Education Reform Report 2018*, Supreme Court of Pakistan (2018), p.19

²¹⁹ ASER Pakistan, *Annual Status of Education Report 2018 - National*, ASER Pakistan Secretariat (2019), p.9

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report – Gender Report: Building bridges for gender equality*, UNESCO (2019), p.31

²²² GPE Secretariat, *Pakistan: Using technology to bring education to the most remote areas*, Global Partnership for Education World Bank Group, 4th April 2019, www.globalpartnership.org/blog/pakistan-using-technology-bring-education-most-remote-areas, [accessed 13th September 2019]

²²³ The Citizens Foundation, *Our Schools*, (February 2019), www.tcf.org.pk/our-schools/, [accessed 10th October 2019]

encourage girls' participation, they hire individuals from local communities that can act as positive influencers in convincing parents from that community to send their children to school – especially their daughters. Additionally, the organisation attempts to maintain a 50:50 ratio of girls and boys enrolled in their schools²²⁴. The results of these initiatives have been largely successful.

Many reports and studies have recommended that teachers undergo *improved* training courses; particularly in gender-sensitivity and gender-responsiveness. The Malala Fund believes these are vital to tackle the unique problems that girls face in schools²²⁵. Studies have shown that gender-sensitive classrooms have a positive impact on students. In Bihar, India, one such study found that across 30 co-educational government secondary schools, girls performed better academically – especially in Maths – due to gender-sensitive classroom dynamics²²⁶. This is especially important since it accurately demonstrates how in male-dominated subjects like maths and science, girls are being held back. Once these barriers are dismantled, it becomes clear that subjects cannot and should not be by segregated by gender; either explicitly or implicitly.

It is also important to increase accountability across the board. UNICEF provided technical and financial support to schools and included an improved data system. Balochistan also developed a performance and complaints system which led to greater transparency and accountability for 14,000 schools in the province. This method was so effective that 381 schools were reopened after 9,053 formerly absent teachers returned to work. They had either receiving warnings, had their salaries cut, or had their pay withheld entirely²²⁷.

The GPE also created a WhatsApp group specifically for teachers. This proved to be a low-cost way in which to share knowledge and resources between various instructors. Data collection over systems in this way allowed for more transparency and even functioned as a means to collect data on infrastructure and sanitation functionality. As stated in the report, “the system provides timely and

²²⁴ Wikipedia, *The Citizens Foundation*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Citizens_Foundation, [accessed 10th October 2019]

²²⁵ Malala Fund, *Full Force: Why the world works better when girls go to school* (2018), p.21

²²⁶ Gordon, R. Marston, L., Rose, P. and Zubairi, A. *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective*, REAL Centre (2019), p.58

²²⁷ UNICEF, 2018 Annual Report Pakistan, UNICEF (2019), p.25

accurate information at the school level which helps education officials make informed decisions based on real time data”²²⁸.

Furthermore, TCF is taking steps to ensure that children across Pakistan, regardless of gender or financial status, are able to access high levels of education. A government school takeover has been initiated by the NGO where, through a public-private partnership model, they are managing 310 public schools in poor conditions across 5 provinces. These schools suffered from a dearth of problems such as teacher absenteeism, lack of sufficient teaching staff, corporal punishment, and lack of appropriate furniture. Assessed learning outcomes painted a dismal picture, with results showing children failed to display basic learning expectations for their class level. TCF began to recruit and hire 1,727 teaching staff, provided teachers with training of 118,080 hours and refurbished over half the government schools under their management. As a result of these efforts, on average children’s enrolment increased from 47 students per school to 101 students²²⁹.

Teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa received training in gender-sensitivity in order to make their classrooms gender-sensitive. They were encouraged and empowered through their training to respond adequately to the learning needs of girls and boys, by using “gender-aware classroom processes and practices” which resulted in girls’ learning improvements. In India, by promoting discussions relating to gender and sexist social attitudes, it was found that students began to display more positive attitudes towards gender²³⁰. Educating and preparing the next generation is crucial since they will be responsible for either continuing to perpetuate or putting an end to harmful stereotypes.

In Pakistan, studies have shown that most teachers lack gender-sensitivity. They view boys as more “active and assertive” and girls as “passive and quiet”. These patriarchal attitudes affect girls’ learning and motivation and contribute to them staying out of school²³¹.

²²⁸ GPE Secretariat, *Pakistan: Using technology to bring education to the most remote areas*, Global Partnership for Education World Bank Group, 4th April 2019, www.globalpartnership.org/blog/pakistan-using-technology-bring-education-most-remote-areas, [accessed 13th September 2019]

²²⁹ The Citizens Foundation, *TCF Is Managing 310 Government Schools Across 11 Districts Of The Country*, TCF (December 2016), www.tcf.org.pk/government-schools-programme/, [accessed 10th October 2019]

²³⁰ Gordon, R. Marston, L., Rose, P. and Zubairi, A. *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective*, REAL Centre (2019), p.12

²³¹ Ibid. p.39

Corporal Punishment

Schools across Pakistan at all levels also suffer from a major problem of using corporal punishment. This archaic form of discipline is still widely practiced and is a particular deterrent for girls who wish to attend school. Teachers must be taught to leave behind these harmful methods that have consistently been proven to be ineffective in encouraging learning in schools and have in fact been linked to children's mental and behavioural problems²³². There are only 69 countries in the world that legally allow corporal punishment in schools and Pakistan is one of these. In fact, the United Nations has emphatically stated that "The Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights instruments recognize the right of the child to respect for the child's human dignity and physical integrity and equal protection under the law". The UN reiterates that all nation states are obliged to "move quickly to prohibit and eliminate all corporal punishment and all other cruel or degrading forms of punishment of children..."²³³ Additionally, a number of medical, psychological, and paediatric organisations and journals have issued various statements condemning the use of corporal punishment in schools. Children interviewed in Pakistan – and in other countries with similar systems of discipline – harboured feelings of hatred towards their teachers and felt it contributed to an atmosphere where they were not learning, concentrating, or performing well in school²³⁴.

UNICEF's report on Pakistan recognises that a multitude of factors combine for corporal punishment to be viewed as a norm. Weak institutions and ill-trained teachers mean that girls are not protected from violence and exploitation in the classroom. However, several policy changes in provinces like Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan have been developed to align with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child²³⁵. PLAN UK has also led a campaign (Learn without Fear) to put an end to corporal punishment in schools in Pakistan. The result was a reduction in the number of girls who dropped out of school²³⁶.

²³² Gershoff, E.T., *School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention*, Psychology, Health & Medicine, Vol.22, (9th January 2017)

²³³ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *General comment No. 8 (2006): The Right of the child to Protection from Corporal Punishment and Other Cruel or Degrading Forms of Punishment (Arts. 19; 28, Para. 2; and 37, inter alia)*, United Nations (2nd March 2007), p.3

²³⁴ Gershoff, E.T., *School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention*, Psychology, Health & Medicine, Vol.22, (9th January 2017)

²³⁵ UNICEF, *2018 Annual Report Pakistan*, UNICEF (2019), p.9

²³⁶ Jackson, E., Wallace, T., Wernham, M., *Research on discriminatory social norms in relation to violence against women and girls from the perspective of girls, boys, women and men in Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan*, PLAN UK (2014), p.18

However, a psychological journal noted that in countries where corporal punishment was successfully outlawed and children were encouraged to go to school, teachers began facing difficulties. This was because they had no instruction or knowledge of how to mete out other less violent and damaging forms of discipline. The conclusion, therefore, is that “interventions to reduce corporal punishment will only be effective if they provide teachers instruction in alternative, effective methods.”²³⁷

PLAN International recognised this and developed the ‘Building Skills for Life’ project which tackled teacher and community awareness. They informed teachers of the Teachers’ Code of Conduct and illustrated alternate methods of discipline that they could use instead of corporal punishment – eventually leading to a decline in abuse against all students²³⁸.

Human Rights Watch recommends several non-physical methods of discipline such as detentions, apologising, or making a child sit in a corner of the room for a short period and so on. Most of all, positive affirmations are described as preventative measures to lessen the chances of the child misbehaving in the classroom. However, even in applying these non-physical measures, it is important not to become exploitative and excessive²³⁹.

Low learning outcomes

Levels of learning across all schools and provinces in Pakistan are much lower than the required amount. In 2019, Pakistan for the first time will be participating in an international assessment on learning outcomes for children in Grade 4 and Grade 8. The results of this assessment can be used as a means to compare our progress with that of other countries similar to Pakistan.²⁴⁰ Unfortunately, as discussed in previous sections, low government funding and spending coupled with an inefficient system means that the education sector as a whole is “crippled”²⁴¹. The problem in Pakistan is that data collection is insufficient and the methods in which and frequency with which it is collected are erratic. The call for better data collection has been echoed throughout numerous documents over the years. The most recent ASER survey has also stressed the need for “more and better-quality data on

²³⁷ Gershoff, E.T., *School Corporal Punishment in Global Perspective: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Efforts at Intervention*, Psychology, Health & Medicine, Vol.22, (9th January 2017)

²³⁸ Gordon, R., Marston, L., Rose, P., and Zubairi, A., *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective*, REAL Centre (2019), p.57

²³⁹ Human Rights Watch, *Spare the Child: Corporal Punishment in Kenyan Schools*, HRW Vol.11 No.6(A) (September 1999), chapter VI

²⁴⁰ ASER Pakistan, *Annual Status of Education Report 2018 - National*, ASER Pakistan Secretariat (2019), p.9

²⁴¹ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, *National Education Policy Framework 2018*, (2018), p.2

how well children are learning”²⁴². Without reliable data, policies formulated at the highest levels will be ineffective in solving these problems.

The drive to enrol children in school often masks the underlying issues that they are likely to face once inside the classroom. For example, the difficulties girls face in choosing subjects that are typically reserved for boys (STEM etc.) are not accounted for and prevent them from pursuing better paid jobs in later spheres of life²⁴³. Furthermore, learning achievements for both boys and girls are so low that poorer parents do not see the benefits of sending their children to school, considering the lost opportunities to either earn for the family or work at home. For example, in Balochistan, one of the lowest funded provinces for education, a 2013 reading assessment found that only 38 percent of children in Grade-5 could read a sentence in English, and only 32 percent in Grade-3 could read an Urdu sentence²⁴⁴.

Nonetheless, for some families who value the concept of education, even with low education attainment, they would rather send their children to government schools than to no school at all²⁴⁵. The government must take steps to drastically improve the quality of learning in schools so all parents can eventually see the tangible benefits of educating their children.

The problem with the government’s single-minded focus on school enrolment rates and attendance without focus on learning has been dubbed a “learning crisis” in several reports that have observed this worrying trend²⁴⁶. As with many crucial services like health, the poorest suffer the most in obtaining quality education. It has been documented that a child in a “low-fee private school” performs better than an average child in “the top one-third of children” in government-run schools²⁴⁷. Nonetheless, even in the private sector, these levels of learning are not particularly high. All

²⁴² ASER Pakistan, *Annual Status of Education Report 2018 - National*, ASER Pakistan Secretariat (2019), p.9

²⁴³ Awan, M.A., *Vision for women in science*, Alif Ailaan, 11th July 2018, <https://elections.alifailaan.pk/vision-for-women-in-science/>, [accessed 2nd September 2019]

²⁴⁴ GPE Secretariat, *Pakistan: Using technology to bring education to the most remote areas*, Global Partnership for Education World Bank Group, 4th April 2019, www.globalpartnership.org/blog/pakistan-using-technology-bring-education-most-remote-areas, [accessed 13th September 2019]

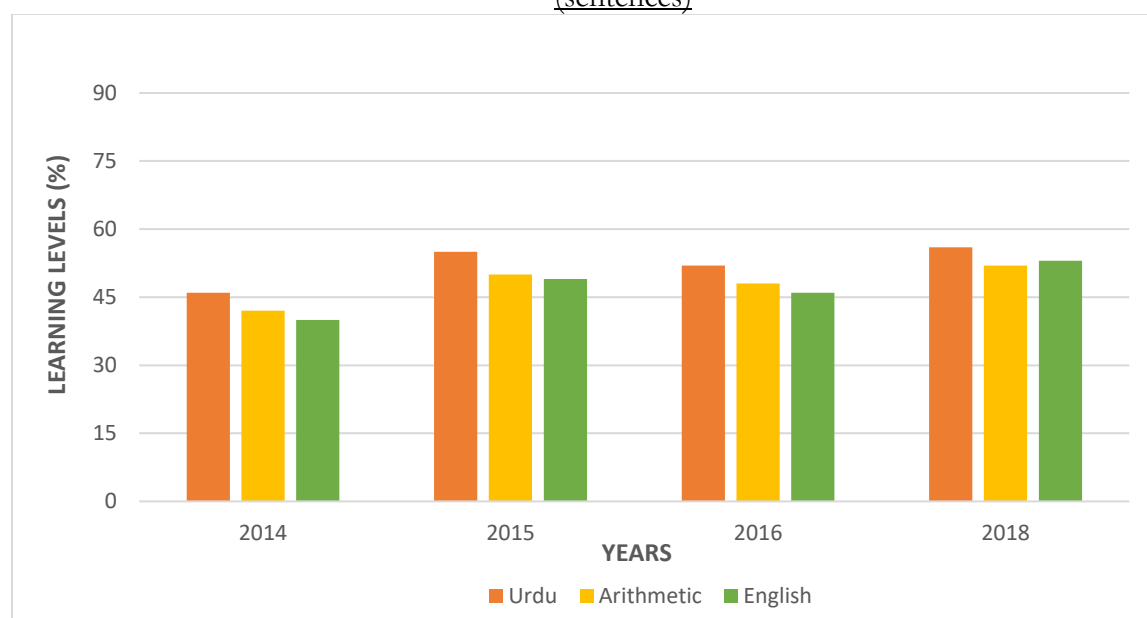
²⁴⁵ The Researchers, *Not Free At All: Profiling the costs parents incur on education*, Alif Ailaan (2015), p.11

²⁴⁶ Wodon, Q., et al. *Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls*, World Bank (2018), p.2

²⁴⁷ EFA Global Monitoring Report Team, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2013/14, Teaching and learning: Achieving quality for all*, UNESCO (2014), p.32

government and the majority of private schools suffer from the same learning problems²⁴⁸. ASER Pakistan has debunked some common myths surrounding the differences between private and public education. Although private education was, for a while, presented as a far better alternative to public education, the statistics obtained by ASER revealed a different reality. The learning level for children in private schools was only “marginally better” than that of government schools. Additionally, private school students’ families could afford to send them to private extra-school tuitions which gave them an extra boost in learning that underprivileged children could not afford. In fact, “teacher attendance, physical facilities, multi-grade classes” are some of the many things that some private schools struggled with more than public schools²⁴⁹.

Figure 8: Learning Levels in Class 5 for Urdu (story), Arithmetic (division), and English (sentences)²⁵⁰



Trends from the past few years using data collected by ASER show that there has been a gradual improvement in overall learning levels from 2014 to 2018. However, these are nominal improvements and fall well short of the learning levels that should be visible in the classroom. Data also shows that for the average child, there has been a decline in learning levels – with children in 2012 performing

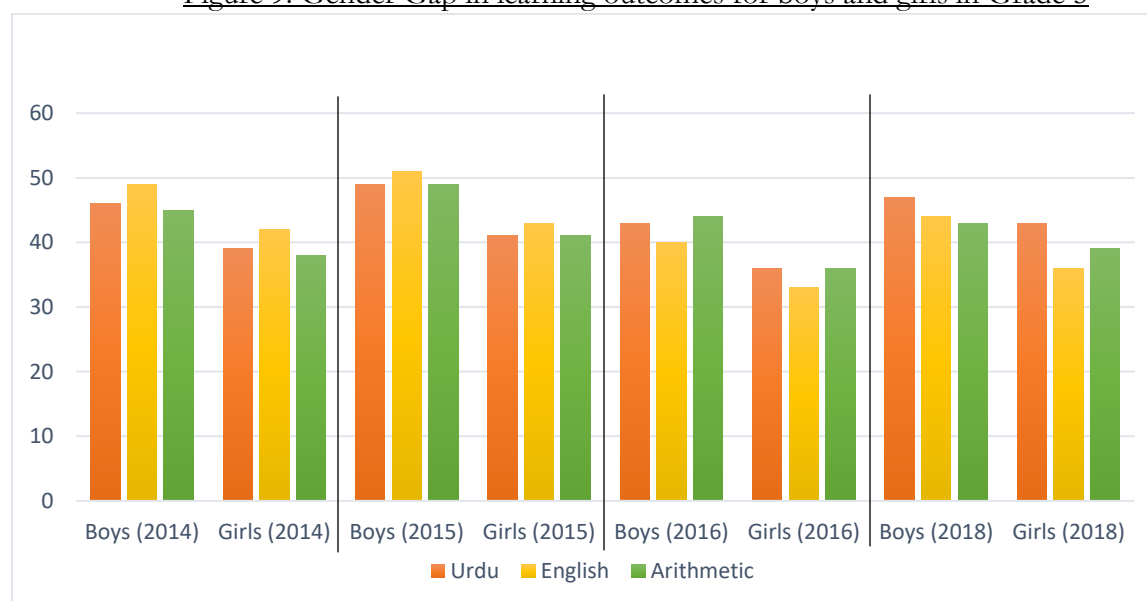
²⁴⁸ Javed, U. and Naveed, S., *Five Years of Education Reforms in the Punjab. Wins, losses and challenges for 2018-2023*, Alif Ailaan (2018), p.6

²⁴⁹ ASER Pakistan, *Annual Status of Education Report ASER-Pakistan 2015*, ASER Pakistan Secretariat (2015), p.16

²⁵⁰ ASER Pakistan, *Annual Status of Education Report 2018 - National*, ASER Pakistan Secretariat (2019), p.8

better than those in 2018²⁵¹. The most recent data from 2018 shows that half of Grade-5 age children do not reach Grade-2 learning levels²⁵². Importantly, it should be noted that there is an obvious gender gap even in learning levels between boys and girls, as Figure 9 demonstrates. Girls are found to perform consistently lower across the three main subject areas of Urdu, English, and Arithmetic.

Figure 9: Gender Gap in learning outcomes for boys and girls in Grade 5



Again, gender disparities intersect with wealth disparities, therefore both boys and girls that fall into the richest category perform far better in literacy and numeracy than boys and girls that fall in the poorest category. Within this latter category, girls' performance is lower than boys learning. To quote ASER Pakistan, "the learning levels of females are lower when compared to the learning levels of males across all income quartiles in both language and arithmetic competencies"²⁵³.

There have been some targeted solutions, such as the introduction of scripted lessons for class 3 children in Punjab. This intervention saw improvement in literacy and numeracy for those children. However, larger scale interventions are needed.

²⁵¹ ASER Pakistan, *Annual Status of Education Report 2018 - National*, ASER Pakistan Secretariat (2019), p.19

²⁵² Ibid. p.8

²⁵³ ASER Pakistan, *Annual Status of Education Report 2018 - National*, ASER Pakistan Secretariat (2019), p.22

There is a clear data deficit in Pakistan with regards to education. In order to progress in any way, it is of crucial importance to collect data and then formulate targeted policies that address the multiplicity of problems that different sectors of society face in accessing free, quality education. Data obtained needs to be made public so there is greater accountability and more awareness generated on the state of education. Public perception (over 50 percent of respondents in an Alif Ailaan survey²⁵⁴) is that the standard of education in Pakistan is good. This is sadly not the case.

²⁵⁴ Alif Ailaan, *The Alif Ailaan Education Survey 2013: Education as a political issue in the 2013 general elections*, (2013), p.vi

Conclusion

The education system in Pakistan suffers from many problems. However, girls are disproportionately affected by these problems. Societal constraints particularly feed into these issues and prevent girls from accessing important areas of society throughout their lives.

The National Education Policy Framework points out Pakistan’s “dual challenge” of increasing access to education whilst also fixing the lagging quality of education in schools across the country²⁵⁵. The Framework also notes that implementing necessary reforms in Pakistan has been held back by the “lack of continuity in implementation and weak political will”²⁵⁶.

The UNESCO strategy for gender equality puts forward two strategic objectives that can be adopted by nations wishing to bridge the gender inequality gap. Pakistan must fully commit to adopting these strategies and follow through with effective policy and management practices.

1. The first objective is: ‘to strengthen education systems to be gender-transformative and promote gender equality’
2. The second: ‘to empower girls and women through education for a better life and future’.

UNESCO has also sought to apply a gender mainstreaming methodology to all its programmes and interventions²⁵⁷. Gender mainstreaming can be defined as, “the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making”²⁵⁸. Pakistan must learn from these methods and seek to apply them to our education system and future policies as well.

²⁵⁵ Government of Pakistan Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training, *National Education Policy Framework 2018*, (2018), p.5

²⁵⁶ Ibid. p.6

²⁵⁷ UNESCO, *UNESCO Priority Gender Equality Plan 2014-2021*, UNESCO (2014), p.15

²⁵⁸ The Council of Europe, *What is gender mainstreaming?*, Council of Europe – Gender Equality (2nd March 2018), www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/what-is-gender-mainstreaming, [accessed 25th October 2019]

Furthermore, the government should note an important distinction between gender parity and gender equality, the latter of which is the more “ambitious goal”²⁵⁹. Parity – which simply ensures equal enrolment for girls and boys – should not be the end goal. Rather, true equality would end gender discrimination and provide equal opportunities socially and professionally to all youth regardless of gender.

There are multiple solutions that can be explored. Most important is data collection in the education sector which is crucial to progress. Without adequate data, necessary reforms and upgrades to the system will remain unaddressed.

- Data collection and data monitoring must be improved so that targeted interventions and policies can be formulated. With insufficient data, necessary improvements cannot be made in schools. For example, citizens across the country must be encouraged to register the births of their children so no person is undocumented. In tracking registered births, the government may also find it easier to clamp down on child marriage.
- Data on all government schools must be collected with information regarding school infrastructure. Similarly, data on learning levels in the classroom for each school must be monitored along with the number of female and male teachers.
- Based on data collected on infrastructure, a blueprint for all school buildings should be developed. The details for this blueprint can be decided in consultation with stakeholders but must contain the essentials: a boundary wall, functioning on-site gender-segregated toilets, and drinking water. Any further schools built or upgraded must contain these necessary elements before being permitted to open their doors to students. The blueprint should also account for distance to the nearest town to ensure that outlying villages are not deprived of sending their child to school due to long distances.
- Data on schools should be made public to increase transparency and accountability. Furthermore, as with the *Ehsaas* programme, data on funding and teachers must also be made public and allow people to become more aware of the services being offered.

²⁵⁹ Gordon, R., Marston, L., Rose, P., and Zubairi, A., *12 Years of Quality Education for All Girls: A Commonwealth Perspective*, REAL Centre (2019), p.6

- Regular checks and monitoring of functional schools should be carried out to see whether teachers and students are in attendance, the infrastructure matches the blueprint for schools, and whether the school is functional at all. Those who fail to comply with the regulations must be warned and ultimately fined (or punished as the law sees fit).

Social issues are the biggest barrier to girls' education because these are not so easily overcome. However, there are concrete solutions and viable methods which can be transformative once implemented effectively.

- The government needs to come up with a united stance against child marriage in Pakistan. It is unacceptable for reforms to the Child Marriage Restraint Act to go back and forth between Senate bodies, as they are now. The fixed age for marriage must be 18 years old and all cases of child marriage must be dealt with swiftly and effectively to ensure no suffering for the victims.
- In case there are longer distances to schools, the government must provide free and safe transportation to girls, so they are not likely to drop out for fear of their safety.
- The government should build more all-girls' schools to accommodate the vast number of out of school girls who cannot attend co-education institutions. More conservative areas, areas in which there are far fewer girls' schools, and areas where there are more out of school girls should be identified and schools built or upgraded there.
- The government should endeavour to build more secondary and tertiary institutions for girls, particularly as there is already a dearth of primary schools. Data indicates adolescent girls face the most difficulty in accessing further education.
- A coordinating body must be set up that brings together individuals from the grassroots (parents, community leaders etc.) and those in the education sector from each province. Providing a channel of communication will allow for easier understanding of the unique problems faced by parents and children in particular areas and ensure interventions are based on the needs of the community.
- This coordinating body can also gather necessary data and help the provincial and federal governments determine when and where to allocate appropriate funds. The data can then be collated and used as a comparative tool to see how different provinces fare against each other.

- Communities and parents must be engaged with more directly and must be informed of the multitude of advantages of educating and disadvantages of not educating girls. Evidence and examples by TCF have shown that through direct engagement, community perceptions can be altered.
- Various education policies that set different targets for girls and boys must be revisited. Efforts must be made to level the playing field as soon as possible so there is equal access to education and future goals for both genders are aligned.
- School curricula and textbooks need to be revised to remove gender stereotypes and prejudices. Women should make up at least half or more of the characters/examples mentioned in books and must not be solely portrayed in ‘traditional’ or ‘subservient’ roles. Rather, they must be shown occupying the same fields as men.
- To this end, committees making these decisions must include more women and textbook/curricula authors must undergo gender-sensitivity training. This balance of equal men and women must also be followed by further committees that are formed by the government to formulate policy relating to education.
- Public-private partnerships should be formed with NGOs currently in the process of raising awareness of the importance of girls’ education. These campaigns should also serve as ways in which the public can be made aware of the grants and stipends available from the government to help them afford to send their children to school.
- Local councils and villages should be encouraged to reserve designated seats for women as research shows women in leadership positions have positive effects on the perceptions of both men and women in those communities.

Teaching and learning in Pakistan needs to see drastic improvement if the country wishes to compete on an international stage. Both genders suffer as result of low learning, but girls suffer disproportionately more than boys. Targeted solutions can be implemented as long as there is political will and suitable enforcement.

- With Pakistan’s entry into an international learning outcomes monitor, it is hoped that more data will be available that paints an accurate picture of the learning levels of children in schools across Pakistan. Learning levels should be monitored not only across genders but across

wealth brackets and provinces to pinpoint where gaps are. Interventions and policy should then be formulated appropriately.

- More female teachers should be hired to encourage the enrolment of girls in school and more female headteachers should be recruited as well. Teacher capability must be reassessed based on their training and level of education.
- All teachers including school headteachers, regardless of their qualifications, should undergo gender-sensitivity training which will help lessen the chances of harmful gender stereotypes being perpetuated in the classroom. Teachers should be taught to use gender-aware classroom processes like in Sub-Saharan Africa where this practice showed positive results in reducing gender bias.
- Incentives should be provided to well-experienced and well-qualified teachers to take up positions in under-privileged and disadvantaged schools – even in remote areas.
- The government should take steps to increase overall teacher salary. According to some sources, teachers in Pakistan earn on average PKR 17,000 per month²⁶⁰. By raising the salary, the profession will likely become more competitive and therefore attract better qualified and motivated individuals.
- Corporal punishment should be abolished and other methods of punishment should be employed that do not cause physical or psychological harm to children. For example, detentions, suspensions, and peer mediation etc. Programmes that teach children about their rights should also be introduced in schools so there is greater awareness.
- The introduction of scripted lessons in areas struggling with literacy and numeracy should be encouraged. Punjab trialled these and saw a rise in literacy and numeracy numbers amongst school children
- The government must introduce more opportunities for women that involve vocational skill training. For example, in the Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Programme. The purpose of these trainings should be to better equip young people with the necessary skills for the "fourth industrial revolution"²⁶¹. Affirmative action policies should be adopted that encourage more women to apply to trainings and workshops.

²⁶⁰ *Teacher Salaries in Pakistan*, Indeed (6th October 2019), www.indeed.com.pk/salaries/teacher-Salaries, [accessed 23rd October 2019]

²⁶¹ Malala Fund, *Full Force: Why the world works better when girls go to school* (2018), p.22

- Opportunities for women in the labour market must also be explored. These should be advertised to families and young schoolgirls as incentives and options available to them upon completion of their education.

In a country with some of the highest rates of child poverty, boys and girls cannot go to school even if they wish because their parents cannot afford the associated ancillary costs. Here, as in other areas, the government can and should do better.

- To reiterate: the government of Pakistan must increase spending on education to at least 4 percent of GDP as soon as possible. Without this necessary increase in expenditure, it will be increasingly challenging to bring about meaningful change to this sector. The provinces must increase their spending on education as well – as recommended in the Supreme Court education committee report 2018.
- Increased tax collection is a requirement to fund these expenses. The EFA report recommends tax collection to be at a minimum of 14 percent with a fifth of this dedicated to education. With these funds, every out of school child in Pakistan can have their education covered.
- A larger share of the tax collected from the provinces can be allocated to programmes within those provinces. This lends more incentive to provincial taxation agencies who will see more of the money they collect reinvested in their areas and public services.
- The education sector's capacity and expertise in investing the funds effectively must be improved so that they do not remain unspent as they have previously. This is necessary to ensure that the budget increase is positive.
- As demonstrated through several studies and reports, fee-free education simply does not go far enough to allow poorer families to educate their children. The government must take steps to remove additional financial barriers to education for boys and girls. More stipends for travel, providing free textbooks and abolishing the need for school uniforms are some options that could be explored.
- The government must roll out more Child Support Programmes which provide monetary incentives to the poorest and enables them to send their children to school. Girls should be targeted so they are not left behind.

- Current child labour laws also need to be amended so they accurately reflect the government's stance. Pakistan cannot have Article 25A of its constitution stipulate free education for children 5-16 years old and yet also allow children to legally begin work from the age of 14.
- All private schools need to be encouraged to set up CSR programmes to ensure they take in a minimum number of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Policy makers, politicians and those involved in the education sector have access to a dearth of information and research at no cost to themselves²⁶². However, they have refused to take concrete action and displayed only apathy. Responsibility and action needs to be taken in the education sector to ensure that no child is left behind, that children are not harmed in or out of school, that girls are afforded the same opportunities as boys, and Pakistan is able to perform well socially and economically on an international platform.

²⁶² ASER, *Annual Status of Education Report ASER-Pakistan 2015*, ASER (2015), p.17

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