

Education Financing in South Asia: Challenges and Way Forward

Education is a basic human right. Recent amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan (article 25a) now clearly states that the government is responsible for ensuring provision of 'free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years in such a manner as may be amended by law' (Pakistan Constitution Law Organization, 2010).

Besides Pakistan's international commitments like United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA), the progress to meet education related challenges is not at all substantial. Primary education envisioned in the MDGs is out of reach now because every child of primary age would need to have started the school in 2009 (Education Emergency 2011). Statistics show that the Pakistani government has been unable to ensure the constitutional rights of citizens; 44% of females were able to enrol in primary schools as compared to 56% of males. Of which, 50% of enrolled children dropped out of school without finishing primary education.

The situation is far more crucial in the rural areas of the country where only 33% of females are literate as compared to 63% males. The main reason for low literacy rate is mere allocation of budget (the national allocation is below three per cent of the GDP), which is mainly due to the lack of enabling environment in terms of political will and policy measures. Eventually all this leads to a poor quality of education.

This panel aims to discuss the structural and non structural issues of public education financing along with highlighting the best practices related to budget allocation and spending in South Asia.

References

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Panel Organiser: Ms Nazima Shaheen, Policy Officer-Education, ActionAid Pakistan

Email address: Nazima.Shaheen@actionaid.org