

Evaluation of Quality of Education in Secondary Schools of Sindh Province

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Abstract

The current study examines the program given for the quality of education in various Five year plans and its implementation at secondary school level in Sindh province. Secondary school education is the foundation upon which the economic, social and political development of a country depends. The overall methodology is based on survey research design. All the Heads of Government Secondary schools of Sindh province were taken as the population of the study and a sample of $n = 800$ respondents were drawn randomly. Data was tabulated and analyzed statistically using the percentage factor. The findings of the study show that, the importance of quality education has been realized since the birth of the country, but the actual situation is averagely well in some of the urban areas while it is gloomy especially in rural areas of the province. Recommendations include involvement of general public right from the grass root level to implementers in planning process while Local government should made responsible for the provision of actual data regarding availability, access, enrolments, outcome of the students, physical and teaching facilities, as well as present and required resources etc.

Keywords: Secondary school education, Quality of education, Evaluation.

Introduction

The key to economic development in the 21st century is improving education. Education is a mean of social change which affects all aspects of an individual as well as a society (GoP, 2010). The formal education is imparted through the institutions made by the society and are called as schools, colleges and universities etc.

School as a formal institution of education promotes skills, competency and knowledge. The skill in human resource is a fundamental part of development in an increasingly competitive, interconnected and globalized world. These skills help to develop living standards and improve the quality of life and supply vital prospects for all. The Elementary and Higher/tertiary education are the important levels of education, but the Secondary school education is the most crucial and vital stage because it provides a structure between Elementary and Higher education. Along with provision of Higher education it also supplies middle level manpower in the market for the development of economy. The quality of the Higher education depends upon the quality of the Secondary education.

Secondary education occupies a pivotal place and is the terminal stage for the bulk of students. The large number of educated manpower in Pakistan is available at this step. The economists consider this stage as the backbone of the economy while sociologist believes it as a useful weapon of social transformation (Ali, 1970). Better quality teachers and the institutions provide the quality education to its clients because knowledge, capable teachers, and ideal environment are the characteristics of quality education (Jacob, 1997). Quality of education has three tiers: (i) The classroom conception of quality consists of mastery in subject matter, skills and habits, (ii) The market-place conception of quality which lies in lifetime earnings of men and women with different grades of education and (iii) contribution of education to GNP (Beeby, 1966).

Education should be reviewed as a productive activity and as an investment in human resources for the development of a progressive and prosperous welfare state (GoP, 1959). Access to poor education is equivalent to no access to education. Quality of education is defined by five key dimensions; what learners bring, environment, content, process and outcome (Sarwar, 2005).

Since the creation of Pakistan it is realized that the quality of education is not up to the mark. The First Education Conference 1947 to to-date more than 13 Education policies, different Commission on Education, various conferences and many Five year plans have been framed to discuss and improve the condition of education in the country. Every Five year plan has kept quality as the major objective and suggested the ways for improvement.

The First plan stated that during the plan period priority will be given to the improvement of quality of education at all levels, primary, secondary, college, and university (P.17), efforts during the plan period will be concentrated to develop educational facilities; substantial improvement in the quality of primary, secondary, college and university level (GoP, 1955, P.51). The Second plan states that the quality and content of various types of education is of great importance. In case of lower levels, such as primary and fundamental education, the emphasis must be on the number and speed while ensuring certain minimum standards. In the higher levels and the more specialized educational fields, the greater emphasis must be on the quality (GoP, 1960). The third plan reveals that in the field of Higher education, existing colleges and universities will be strengthened for improving academic standards and quality instruction (P.52 & p.188). Improvement of quality of teachers and teaching remains a high priority objective. To raise the quality of education at all levels so that it may properly fulfill its nation-building task. Strategy: Quality education was made the keynote of the third plan and said that the vigorous effort would be made to improve the quality of education at all stages (GoP, 1965, p.185). The main features of the Fourth plan proposed programme which includes; broadening the base of education by making substantial expansion at the primary level, accelerating the development pace of technical education and improving the quality of education at all levels with emphasis on science subjects (p. 144), at Secondary and Higher education, there will be a shift of emphasis from quantitative expansion to qualitative improvement (P.143). Efforts would be made to improve the quality of teaching and provision for training of teachers at all levels (GoP, 1970, p. 149). In the Fifth Plan, a comprehensive approach would be adopted for the improvement of the quality of primary education. All major aspects of the primary school system which affects the quality of instruction, e.g., building, equipment, school curricula, educational aids and books, training of teachers, system of evaluation and examination, and procedures of guidance, supervision and administration would be assessed and improved (GoP, 1978, p. 307). The Sixth plan describes for qualitative improvements as; Physical facilities will be improved, Special attention will be laid on to the provision of laboratories, science apparatus, library books and qualified staff (GoP, 1983). The report of the working group of Seventh plan stated that the quality of government schools both in urban and rural areas is very poor (P.4). Improve the quality of education at all levels (p.245) along with the improvement of all secondary schools into the institutions of quality education through the provision of better, qualified teachers and physical facilities (p.248) and establishment of a model school in each district for the talented students (GoP, 1988, p. 248). Quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of technical and vocational education to equip the youth with demand-oriented skills (p. 300), physical infrastructures, curricula (by making the courses demand-oriented), textbooks, teacher training programmes and examination system at all levels of education (p. 300). Emphasis will be on improving quality of all secondary schools, revision of Science and mathematics curricula (p. 301) and at the primary level

improvement in quality of teachers through better pre-service and in-service training (GoP, 1993, p. 308). The Eighth plan reveals about the Qualitative and quantitative strengthening of indigenous Urdu-medium institutions to balance them with English medium best institutions (P, 05). To do so the education funds should be increased from 2.3% of GNP to 4%, as per recommend by the UNESCO (GoP, 1998, p-10).

The evaluation of the previous plans indicates that over-emphasis on the achievement of physical targets such as enrolment and expenditure often leads to neglect of the important aspect of the quality. The fact that the quality of education is deteriorating can hardly be challenged by anyone. The teaching profession is very much suffered, as it could not attract the best talent because of the poor pay scale, limited promotion and insecurity of service, particularly in private institutions (GoP, 1970, p.148). The quality of government schools, both in urban and rural areas is very poor (GoP, 1988, p.4).

Almost all the Five year plans have stated about the quality of education as education is not up to the mark; quality will be improved at all the level by providing better facilities and improvement in teaching standards etc. Hitherto, the improvement in terms of teacher training programs has been minimal (Rizvi, 2000). Our education system in spite of commissions and committees and a lot of wasteful experimentation is still not according to the development and need of the country. Large numbers of graduates are flowing out of our universities while there is shortage of true competent personnel to carry out the various functions associated with economic development. There is little coordination between the society and institutions that produce educated and trained person and those which need them for carrying out purposes. (Khan, A. H. 1997)

Many developed and developing countries are now rejecting our degrees and employing their own standards to judge the IQ of Pakistani students. It is a general feeling that the syllabus prescribed by the Government for the students in government educational institutions is not only outdated but also spoil the creativity and development of child's brain (Ikram, 2004). Education has failed to produce the kind of social dynamism and growth that it should. In the first place, it has not been effective in uplifting society ethically, philosophically or technologically. However, it has created a class of persons with formal educational accomplishment who are unemployed or underemployed (Raza, 2001, p.247). From the critical side, the area of education has not been given significant attention, due to which educational standards are going down day-to-day. According to Zaman, the low standard of education has become a familiar issue discussed between parents, employ and the general public. In this blaming all the students, teachers and the system of education are involved in turn or all together (Rizvi,N.1996).

Statement of the problem

Many research studies had been carried in the field of education to find the quality of education in Pakistan, still many issues need to be explored more as Sindh province is the first province, which enacted the free and compulsory free universal education, but today it is at the back of remaining provinces. The perceived lack might be associated with insufficient control measures of quality learning and need more in examination, Sub-standard Curriculum and textbooks, examination system, poor quality of teaching staff, inadequate facilities and non-commitment of parents.

Objectives of the Study

- To evaluate the quality of education at Secondary school level in terms of:
 - Curriculum and Textbooks
 - Examination system

- Quality of teachers
 - Physical facilities present in the schools.
- To suggest the measure for improvement.

Delimitation of the Study

This study was limited to the Heads of the Government Secondary Schools (boys / Girls) of Sindh Province.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research method was used to elicit the information. Quantitative research design was adopted. With the help of literature, a questionnaire was developed for assessing the actual situation of quality of education.

Population and Sample

All the Government Secondary schools of rural as well as urban areas of sindh province were selected as the population of the study. The population includes the schools of either sex. A total of 800 Heads nearly 50% of either sex were selected as the sample for the study through random sampling method.

Instrument

A 35 item closed structure questionnaire with three point scale with Yes, No and Undecided options was used to collect the data from the respondents. The items were designed to elicit information on various indicators of quality, identified by the researcher. The instrument was validated. Reliability of the instrument for 35 items was $\alpha = 0.79$.

The quality assessment questionnaire surveyed the perceptions of heads of secondary schools. The instrument was in five parts; Part A sought information on the quality of Curriculum; Part B on the quality of Textbooks; Part C on the quality of Examination; Part D on the quality of teaching Staff and Part E on the quality of the physical facility present in schools. For the purpose of data collection, the researcher herself was involved along with the team of trained M.Ed students. In some of the districts where the situation did not acceptable to travel, questionnaires (along with self addressed stamped envelop) were sent by Pakistan post. Receiving of the mail by the respondents was confirmed through telephone and request was made to fill and sent back. A total of 560 out of 800 questionnaire were received back from all the sources after three times reminder. In this way receiving percentage of the questionnaire was 70%. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The agree score (yes) indicate high quality while no scores indicate low quality.

Analysis of data

Data was tabulated and analysed through percentage.

Table 1: Showing the Responses for the *Quality of the Curriculum* in Secondary Schools

No.	Variable	2	1	0	N
		Yes%	No%	UD%	
1	Do you have copies of the curriculum?	28.2	56.7	15	100
2	Are you satisfied with the curriculum at secondary school level?	29.4	56.25	14.28	100
3	Does the content in curriculum match with its objectives?	32.1	25.5	42	100
4	Do the objectives of curriculum match with the future market demands?	26.6	56.25	17.1	100

5	Is sufficient guidance relevant to teaching methodology, activity and teaching resources given in the curriculum?	21.4	37.3	41.3	100
6	Do the assessment techniques support the objectives, content and methodology?	25.4	32.2	42.4	100
7	Does the curriculum change according to the development of the society?	18.39	66.78	14.82	100

The analysis of the table 01 shows that the majority of the Heads 56.7% do not have copy of curriculum with them and 56.25% Heads are not satisfied with the curriculum at secondary school level.

42 % of the Heads were not given any opinion about the matching of objectives with its content in curriculum while 56.25% of the Heads were of opinion that it does not reflect the market demands.

The majority of the Heads (41.3%) were stated that they do not know about the relevancy of teaching methodology, activity and teaching resources and 42 % the assessment techniques support the content and methodology. 66.8% of the Heads were of opinion that the curriculum does not change with the changes in knowledge.

Table 2: Showing the Responses for the *Quality of Textbooks* at Secondary School level

No.	Variable	Yes%	No%	UD%	N
		2	1	0	
1	Do all students have textbook with them?	47.5	40	12.5	100
2	Is the paper used in textbooks of good quality?	36.2	49.2	10.8	100
3	Does the content in the textbooks match with the objectives of curriculum?	34.4	49.8	15.7	100
4	Is the content framed by the experts of the field?	39.6	43.7	16.6	100
5	Is the content written according to the level of the students?	37.8	41.2	20.8	100
6	Is the content updated with the development in knowledge time to time?	20	66.2	13.7	100
7	Does the evaluation at the end of the chapter fulfill the criteria of cognitive domain?	35.8	50.3	13.7	100

Analysis of the table 02 shows that 47.5% of the students have their own textbooks.

Majority 49.2% of the heads states that the papers used in Textbook is not very good, 49.8% the content in the textbooks does not match with the objectives of the curriculum and 43.7% it is not framed by the field experts.

The majority 41.2% of the Heads stated that content is not written according to the level of the students and 66% the content is not updated with development in knowledge. 50.3% of the heads stated that the evaluation at the end of the chapter does not fulfill the criteria of cognitive domain.

Table 03: Showing the Responses for the *Quality of Teaching Staff* at Secondary School Level

No.	Variable	Yes	No	UD	N
1	Do you have teachers for all subjects in school?	19.1	71.6	9.2	100
2	Are the teachers appointed on merit?	29.2	56.6	15.8	100
3	Are the teachers regular and punctual?	41.7	45.5	12.6	100

4	Does political interference influence the working and appointment of teachers?	37.6	49.6	12.6	100
5	Are teachers professionally qualified?	71.7	16.2	12.5	100
6	Do the teachers have command on subject knowledge?	41	47.5	11.2	100
7	Are the opportunities for professional development present for teachers?	15.5	74.2	10.1	100

Analysis of the table 03 states that the majority (71.6%) of Heads are of opinion that they do not have sufficient number of subject wise teachers in their schools and 56.7% are not satisfied with their appointment system.

Majority (45.5%) of the Heads stated that the teachers are not regular and punctual while; 49.6% stated that Political interference influence the working of the teachers.

Majority (71.7%) of the Heads stated that the teachers have professional degrees with them but 47.5% stated that teachers do not have command over their teaching subject. According to the 74% of the Heads there is no opportunity for the professional development of secondary school teachers.

Table 04: Showing the Responses for the Quality of Examination at Secondary School Level

No.	Variable	Yes %	No%	UD%	N
1	Are you satisfied with the examination system of Pakistan at secondary school level?	37.67	48.5	3.75	100
2	Are you satisfied with the type of question paper framed for examination?	41.25	46.25	12.5	100
3	Are you satisfied with the performance of examination centres?	38.75	48.3	12.85	100
4	Does copy culture at the time of examination discourage hard working students?	33.75	52.85	13.39	100
5	Does corruption in examination develop negative attitude among students?	34	51.42	14.46	100
6	Are you satisfied with the assessment system of examination at Board level?	41	48	10.8	100
7	Are you satisfied with the Board results of your students at secondary school level?	57.3	35.2	73.2	100

Analysis of the Table 04 states that majority (48.5%) of the Heads are not satisfied with the examination system of Pakistan at secondary school level, but 57.3% are satisfied with the result of their students.

Majorities (46.25%) of the Heads are not satisfied with type of question paper framed for examination; according to 57% are not satisfied with the assessment system of examination at Board level.

According to 52.85% heads copy culture at the time of examination discourage hard working while; 34% states that corruption in examination develop negative attitude among students and 48.3% of the Heads are not satisfied with the performance of examination centres.

Table 5: Showing the Responses for the Quality of Physical Facilities at Secondary School Level

No.	Variable	Yes %	No %	UD%	N
1	Does school have play ground, equipment and materials for games and sports?	35.8	51.2	12.8	100
2	Does school have trained physical education teacher?	34.1	55.5	12.1	100
3	Are classrooms spacious enough and well-ventilated?	37.1	48.7	14.1	100
4	Do schools have proper seating arrangements in classroom?	59.6	30	10.3	100
5	Do your schools have science laboratories for practical purpose?	72	27.6	10	100
6	Do schools have facility of clean potable water and basic sanitation?	41.25	47.3	11.42	100
7	Does your school have basic sanitation facility for students?	54.4	33.39	12.1	100

Analysis of the table 05 shows that the majority (51%) of the secondary school Heads were of opinion that they do not have proper play ground and games related items in their schools, also they (55%) do not have physical trained teacher in their school.

Majority (48.7%) of the school Heads stated that the classrooms in their schools neither are spacious, large nor well ventilated. Also according to the (59.6%) there is no proper seating arrangement.

Most (72%) of the schools have science laboratories for practical purpose. Heads of most (47.3%) of the schools stated that potable water is not available while 54.4% stated that their school lacks basic sanitation facility.

Discussion

Findings from the research reveal that most of the respondents are not satisfied with the quality of curriculum because according to them, it is out-dated, out-fashioned and traditional one. Students, after completing Secondary education, can get admission in the higher education but do not get job or participate in economic development. The quality of education in Pakistan is going from bad to worse day by day due to various problems highlighted above. The education problem in Pakistan has much to do with the outdated, traditional and dull content, found in the curriculum of various compulsory subjects (Khalid, 2015).

The textbook is not framed according to the level of the students and the content in the textbooks does not match with the objectives of curriculum. It is not revised according to the need of the time. The quality of Textbooks is not pleasing and there is cry for its irrelevancy with the environment and the market demands. These books have bad quality papers, outdated and low standard content. Textbooks often do not reflect the curriculum and require skill and experiences (UNESCO, 1998). It is also found that the Heads of the school are satisfied with the result of students in examination board but at the same time they stated that the quality of examination is not good, while copy culture, corruption and type of examination paper are responsible for the deteriorating standard of the quality of education at secondary school level.

The number of teachers, in respect of quantity, is quite satisfactory, but the imbalance is found when compared with the subject especially for science, mathematics and English language. The general quality of teaching was also not satisfactory. Though the teachers are

professionally qualified, but the appointment procedure and political involvement hinder the quality. Also, the opportunities for professional development are not available for these teachers which ultimately affect the quality of education.

Another factor, in terms of hindrances to quality education, is the proficiency level of teachers. The practice of hiring teachers is not on merit because of political interference which has severely lowered the quality of education (Karim, 2005). Favoritism and discrimination which cause problems in the school system create a perception among teachers that political appointments are responsible for the hiring of incompetent teachers (Nazir, 2010).

The quality of physical facilities is also not encouraging, specially in rural areas of the Sindh province. Most of the schools do not have the proper playground and those have lack the materials for games and sports. The lack of potable water, basic sanitation, classroom furniture and science laboratories are generally studied. According to National Education Policy 1998-2010 the schools lack basic facilities; desk space is in short supply and often students do not have a proper surface for writing. Many schools do not have all the required equipment in them (NEP, 1998-2010).

Physical and teaching facilities play an important role in the enhancement of quality. Our schools are poor in laboratories, which are not operational there is a lack of teachers, poor quality of teachers, out-dated curriculum, double medium of instruction at secondary school level, corruption in the examinations and overcrowded classrooms (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2002). The factors that affect the quality and accessibility of education due to certain degree on budget are qualified teachers, adequate facilities, proper funding, comprehensive curriculums, affordable tuition fees and the availability of scholarships (Education at Local levels, Aug 08, 2010).

There are four areas that cry for immediate and quick change: curriculum, textbooks, examinations, and teacher training. Each has been the subject of rich Investments (Hoodbhoy, 2001). Among the factors that affect the quality and accessibility of education are qualified teachers, adequate facilities, proper funding, comprehensive curriculums etc. All these factors need proper funding in education along with monitoring and evaluation for its utilization. The quality of education is adversely affected by untrained or poorly trained teachers, lack of classrooms, teaching and physical resources and the unavailability of textbooks either due to distribution or the failure of parents to pay for them. (Report EC, 2002).

Conclusion

Considering the finding of the study, it was concluded that the importance and the standard of quality education is well recognized by the planners in every Five year plans of Pakistan and suggestions for the improvement are given. The policy makers, educationists and general public also show their concern for the alarming condition. All the quality indicators mentioned in the study for the Sindh province are below average and urgent need is required for improving the whole education system in the country.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it has been recommended that:

- i. For the improvement of the system of education in Pakistan, it is imperative to involve all the political parties, armed forces and the general public along with local government in the education planning process and bound them for proper implementation.

- ii. Local governments should be made responsible for collection of education data, identification of challenges and their possible solutions regarding the education of their vicinity and the government of the time should help them to improve the condition.
- iii. Funds for education sector should be increased and larger amount should be allocated for all the quality indicators described in the study because without sufficient amount none of the quality element can be improved.
- iv. To cope with developing countries, the curriculum should be revised and updated according to the need of the local, national and the international market.
- v. The textbook should be framed by the proper academic and professional experts and contain matter according to the objectives and demands of local as well international demands.
- vi. It should be assured that every student of the secondary school has their own textbooks right from the start of the year.
- vii. The examination system should be fair and free from corruption, maladministration and copy culture. The pattern of question paper should shift from testing of rote memorization to the skill based testing.
- viii. Appointments and posting of teachers should be on merit. Female teachers should be either posted near to their homes or the pick and drop facility should be provided.
- ix. Every teacher should have opportunities for professional development through refresher courses and must be trained in the new concepts at least once in a year.
- x. Teachers should be made responsible for students learning and their academic achievement.
- xi. In the government schools physical facilities like playground, classroom furniture, sickrooms, seating place and special facilities for girls' students should be improved along with drinking water and toilet etc. and teaching aids and other related facilities should be improved.

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