

CONTRIBUTION OF NATIONAL RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME IN THE PROMOTION OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UN, 2008) and The World Education Forum, Dakar Framework of Action (UNESCO, 2000) stressed on two major areas. Those are the provision of basic and quality education specially in the developing and under developing countries. Unfortunately, in Pakistan low literacy rate is a major issue. Government needs support of the nation to resolve it. National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) is a nongovernmental organization that is working in Pakistan on the social projects in the rural areas of Pakistan, since November, 1991. At present this organization is working in Islamabad, in 27 districts of all four provinces and in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the contribution of National Rural Support Programme in the field of primary education and its difficulties. Policy of NRSP prefers to open educational centres in such areas where, there is no other school in the surroundings. Therefore, majority of the teachers are fresh and lack professional qualification. Basic infrastructure is available and majority of the schools are providing free education. Thus, it is recommended that teachers may be offered some in-service training courses, and they may be paid on the basis of their qualification. Programmes on T.V and Radio can also be prepared to develop awareness among the community. Some financial aid, as well as vocational courses keeping in view the needs of the area may also be offered.

Key words: National Rural Support Programme (NRSP), Primary education

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is considered as the most important agent of social change. The Nations who invest on their education gets fruit in long run. Unfortunately Pakistan is one of the developing countries where education is not the only issue. We have a number of challenges to face at the same time. That is the reason that education is not getting its due importance. Shortage of finances in budget results in the poor performance of the system. To overcome this problem now the Government of Pakistan is encouraging community participation and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to provide helping hands to improve the situation.

According to Jagannathan (2001) NGOs are Private organizations that pursue activities to relieve sufferings, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development.

In the wider usage, the term NGO can be applied to any non-profit organization, which is independent from Government. NGOs are typically value-based organizations that depend in the whole or in part on charitable donations and voluntary services.

According to National Education Policy-2009 (Government of Pakistan, 2009) has set the target to raise the literacy rate up to 86 percent by the end of the year 2015. Keeping in view the current situation in Pakistan this seems to an ideal target. To achieve this target not only the Government of Pakistan is working but a number of NGOs are also working in the rural areas of Pakistan where the education is not accessible due to the shortage of resources, lack of awareness and gender discriminations. According to Government of Pakistan (2009) only 2.7 percent of the GDP is allocated for the sector of education that is surely not sufficient according to the needs of the Nation. To raise the literacy rate in Pakistan as an initial step the primary education is under prime focus. That is the reason the area of primary education is the most critical area, while the condition of primary education in the rural areas is more critical as compared to the urban areas of Pakistan.

Due to its importance, this area has been selected by many of the researchers for their researches. Such as Naz (2007) conduct a research on the impact of basic education on the rural development in Barani areas. A research that was conducted by Reddy (2001) in Manipur, a state of India near Asam explains the same condition of primary education in that area as in Pakistan. According to Reddy (2001) most of the primary schools in rural areas provide the basic infrastructure but other basic facilities, such as drinking water, are not available. In most of the cases such schools are also not in easy access of the students. The teachers teaching in these schools also lack their professional qualification. Thus, these facts have also been observed in the present study.

1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Following were the objectives of the study;

1. To find the contribution of National Rural Support Programme in the promotion of primary education.
2. To investigate the difficulties of an NGO in the private sector of education.
3. To develop a strategy for an NGO working in the field of primary education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to UNESCO (2006) the results of the education for all monitoring report conducted between 2000 to 2004, shows that in Pakistan, people belonging from the age of 55-64 had the literacy rate of 30 percent, people from the age of 45 to 54 had 40 percent literacy rate, people between 25-34 had 50 percent literacy rate and those who were of the age of 15 to 24 years had more than 60 percent literacy rate. This shows clearly that the efforts made by the Government in collaboration with the Non Governmental Organizations and community participation are changing the situation of education in Pakistan. Still a lot of effort is needed as according to UNESCO (2009) the target of Universalization of Primary Education (UPE) by the end of 2015 under the programme of Education for all (EFA) will not be achieved. In this way the major barriers are the insufficient resources, poor quality of education, lack of awareness and disparities such as wealth, gender, location, and ethnicity.

Millennium Development Goals and the development strategy adopted by Pakistan government for Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF) 2005-10 served as the basic framework for the development of the current study. MTDF has targeted seven major areas that are poverty reduction, basic education, health, population, water supply and sustainable development. Thus, the provision of basic education was one of the foremost targets of MTDF under millennium Development Goals.

In a review carried out in 2005-6 on millennium development goals, it was claimed that the net enrolment in primary schools of Pakistan has increased up to 53 % while the overall literacy rate has reached up to 54 %.

The World Education Forum, Dakar Framework of Action (UNESCO, 2000) also stressed on two major areas in this regard. The first is the provision of basic education especially in the developing countries under the agenda of Education For All (EFA), While the second aspect of this framework was focused on the provision of quality education. The Recife Declaration of UNESCO E-9 Project Jan, 2000 was focused on Education For All in nine most populous developing countries by showing a major concern to the basic quality education. The World Bank (1997) reported that to attract the students and their parents to come and stay in schools we need to improve the quality of education first.

The Action Plan 2001- 2005 of Education Sectors Reform (Govt. of Pakistan, 2002) that was based on National Education Policy 1998- 2010 (Govt. of Pakistan, 1998) and the National Plan of Action for EFA also addressed the target of providing basic quality education. While related to teachers at primary level Dakar Framework for EFA reported that “Enhance the status, morale and professionalism of the teachers.”

Under the discussion of Dakar Framework of Action 2000, the following measures were suggested in regard of basic education.

1. Healthy, well nourished and motivated students
2. Adequate facilities and learning material
3. Relevant content
4. Encouraging environment
5. Clear Learning outcomes
6. Assessment of learning out comes
7. Participatory governance and management
8. Engaging local communities

To achieve these millennium Development Goals and targets of EFA and to ensure Universalization of Primary Education the Government of Pakistan is taking its steps. It also encourages the participation of community and nongovernmental organizations in this regard. National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) is one such NGO, which is working in Pakistan to upgrade the living standard of the people in rural and urban areas. The National Rural Support Programme was established as a non-profit organization and it was registered under section 42 of the companies’ ordinance 1984 to undertake development activities in the rural areas of Pakistan. National Rural Support Programme is also providing technical assistance to other rural support programmes covering additional areas.

The National Rural Support Programme aims at fostering a network of community organizations at the grassroots level. It enables the rural communities to plan, implement and manage their development plans independently for the purpose of ensuring productive employment and improvement in the quality of life. Currently NRSP is working in Islamabad Capital Territory and 27 districts of all four provinces of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. These include districts in Azad Jammu and Kashmir were Bagh, Kotli, Sudnti (Pallandri), and Poonch. In Baluchistan selected districts were Gawadar and Turbat (Kech). In NWFP districts included were Malakand, Mardan, and Sawabi. In Sindh districts focused were Badin, Thatha, Mir pur Khas, Hyderabad and Sukhur. In Punjab focused districts were Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Khushab, Bhakkar, Landhran, Vehari, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan.

3. METHODOLOGY

The design of the study was descriptive in nature. The sample was selected through purposive sampling technique. A sample of 24 teachers and 36 students from six schools working under the supervision of NRSP in Rawalpindi Region were selected for this study.

The students were of primary level and were not able to fill-in a questionnaire by themselves. Therefore, an interview schedule is structured for students. One questionnaire was developed for the teachers in order to collect data from them. The researchers visited the schools supervised by NRSP and met the teachers and students for the purpose of data collection. The researchers conducted interviews of the students and distributed the questionnaires to the teachers in order to get their responses on NSPR. The responses were analyzed and percentages are used as a statistical tool. The conclusions were drawn and the recommendations were made.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions are drawn;

1. Teachers are not professionally qualified. Most of them are fresh and are only F.A/F.Sc with no other professional training in education field.
2. Teachers are satisfied with their pay scales, curriculum, examination system and administration of the schools.
3. Schools have basic infrastructure such as classes, teachers, electricity and playgrounds, but important facilities like washrooms, waiting rooms, library, computer lab, transport and medical facilities are not available in the schools.

4. NRSP arranges teacher training and refresher courses for teachers.
5. Financial aid is given only to the needy students. Merit scholarships are not available.
6. Administration of NRSP supervises the schools regularly and effectively and also arranges meetings with teachers.
7. Teachers do not use audio-visual aids during teaching.
8. Lack of facilities and non co-operation of community create problems for teachers.
9. Teachers are punctual and teach regularly. They also conduct monthly tests and check homework regularly, thus they are fulfilling their responsibilities efficiently.
10. Schools are providing free education. However, students purchase books by their own expenses.
11. There is no concept of arranging teacher- parent meetings in schools to discuss the performance of students.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of conclusions, following recommendations are drawn;

1. The quality of education is linked with the quality of teachers. The role of the teacher is pivotal in raising the standard of education. It has been observed that most of the teachers are F.A/F.SC and they have no professional qualification. It is recommended that it may be made compulsory for teachers to acquire some professional teaching certificate or at least should have CT (Certificate of Teaching). The teachers who are working in schools located in rural areas of Pakistan may be given a chance to improve their qualification in their own localities with the help of short courses.
2. Teachers may be offered some incentives on the basis of their qualifications; this would motivate them to improve their qualifications.
3. Important facilities were not available in rural areas. It is, therefore, recommended that Government and Non Governmental Organizations may join hands in providing physical facilities in rural areas. It is recommended that Government may introduce a rewarding system to such non-governmental organizations which are working for developing projects on non-profit basis, it would create a sense of competition and would encourage other NGO's to work in a better way.
4. Community was not aware of the importance of education, as the Government may promote some programs on T.V or Radio to create awareness about benefits of education in upgrading the society.
5. The people in rural areas were very poor. They preferred to send their children on work instead of sending them to schools. It is, therefore, recommended to introduce some vocational courses at primary level. It would attract people and they may send their children to schools in order to learn vocational skills.
6. Different types of scholarships may be introduced to attract the people who are poor and cannot afford education.
7. Teachers were not using audio-visual aids during teaching. Government and Non Governmental Organizations may arrange workshops on the importance of the use of audio visual aids.
8. Government may encourage the NGOs like NRSP, working all over the Pakistan on non-profit basis.

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Table No. 1 Academic Qualification (N = 24 Teachers)

Qualification	Matric	FA/FSc	BA/BSc.	MA/MSc	Total
Responses	7	13	4	0	24
Percentage	29.17%	54.17%	16.66%	0%	100%

Table No. 2 Professional Qualification (N = 24 Teachers)

Qualification	PTC	B.Ed.	None	Total
Responses	4	2	18	24
Percentage	16.67%	8.33%	75%	100%

Table No. 3 Satisfaction (N =24 Teachers)

Sr. #	Statements	Yes	No	Total
1	Satisfaction with Income	13(54.17%)	11(45.83%)	24(100%)
2	Satisfaction with curriculum	18 (75%)	6 (25%)	24 (100%)
3	Satisfaction with examination system	21 (87.5%)	3 (12.5%)	24 (100%)
4	Satisfaction with administration	15 (62.5%)	9 (37.5%)	24 (100%)
5	Refresher courses for teachers	21 (87.5%)	3 (12.5%)	24 (100%)

Table No. 4 Facilities Available in School (N = 24 Teachers & 36 Students)

Sr. #	Facilities	Teacher/ Students	Yes Responses	No Responses	Total Responses
1	Proper Class rooms	Teacher	19 (79.17%)	5 (20.83%)	24 (100%)
		Students	21 (58.33%)	15 (41.67%)	36 (100%)
2	Proper Teaching staff	Teacher	20 (83.33%)	4 (16.67%)	24 (100%)
		Students	29 (80.56%)	7 (19.44%)	36 (100%)
3	Drinking Water	Teacher	20 (83.33%)	4 (16.67%)	24 (100%)
		Students	23 (63.89%)	13 (36.11%)	36 (100%)
4	Medical facilities	Teacher	4 (16.67%)	20(83.33%)	24 (100%)
		Students	0 (0%)	36(100%)	36 (100%)
5	Wash rooms	Teacher	15 (62.5%)	9 (37.5%)	24 (100%)
		Students	14 (38.89%)	22 (61.11%)	36 (100%)
6	Electricity	Teacher	17 (70.83%)	7 (29.17%)	24 (100%)
		Students	17 (47.22%)	19 (52.78%)	36 (100%)
7	Sports	Teacher	16 (66.67%)	8 (33.33%)	24 (100%)
		Students	21 (58.33%)	15 (41.67%)	36 (100%)
8	Play Grounds	Teacher	21 (87.5%)	3 (12.5%)	24 (100%)
		Students	23 (63.88%)	13 (36.11%)	36 (100%)
9	Transport	Teacher	8 (33.33%)	16(66.67%)	24 (100%)
		Students	0 (0%)	36(100%)	36 (100%)
10	Waiting Rooms	Teacher	8 (33.33%)	16(66.67%)	24 (100%)
		Students	0 (0%)	36 (100%)	36 (100%)
11	Library	Teacher	11 (45.83%)	13(54.17%)	24 (100%)
		Students	7 (19.44%)	29 (80.56%)	36 (100%)
12	Computer Lab.	Teacher	9 (37.5%)	15 (62.5%)	24 (100%)
		Students	3 (8.33%)	33 (91.67%)	36 (100%)
13	A.V. Aids	Teacher	11 (45.83%)	13(54.17%)	24 (100%)
		Students	9 (25%)	27 (75%)	36 (100%)

Table No. 5 Facilities Available for Students (N = 24 Teachers)

Sr. #	Facilities	Yes	No	Total
		Responses	Responses	Responses
1	Free education	22 (91.67%)	2 (8.33%)	24 (100%)
2	Free books	19 (79.17%)	5 (20.83%)	24 (100%)
3	Fee concession	23 (95.83%)	1 (4.17%)	24 (100%)
4	Merit scholar- ship	6 (25%)	18 (75%)	24 (100%)
5	Financial aid	11 (45.83%)	13 (54.17%)	24 (100%)

Table No. 6 Behavior of Teachers towards Teaching/students (N = 36 Students)

Sr. #	Facilities	Yes	No	Total
		Responses	Responses	Responses
1	The teacher teaches you regularly?	34(94.44%)	2(5.56%)	36(100%)
2	Are the teachers punctual?	33(91.67%)	3(8.33%)	36(100%)
3	Do the teachers conduct monthly tests?	28(77.78%)	8(22.22%)	36(100%)
4	Do you understand what teacher teaches you?	29(80.56%)	31(19.44%)	36(100%)
5	Do the teachers check your homework regularly?	31(86.11%)	5(13.89%)	36(100%)
6	Do the teachers deal with students kindly?	20(55.56%)	16(44.44%)	36(100%)
7	Do the teachers treat all the students equally?	25(69.44%)	11(30.56%)	36(100%)
8	Do teachers arrange meetings with students' parents?	17(47.22%)	19(52.78%)	36(100%)