Effectiveness of Non-Formal Schools for Provision of Primary Education to Out of School Children

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Abstract

The study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of Non-Formal Schools (NFS) established, for provision of primary education to out of school children of disempowered and neglected segment of Punjab, Pakistan, under Punjab Non-formal Education Project of Literacy and Non-formal Basic Education (L&NFBE) Department, Government of the Punjab. Data of enrolled students was collected from the web portal of the department. It revealed that the project envisioned establishing 990 NFBE Schools. The 100% target regarding establishment of schools were achieved and 33625 children were enrolled, as the target of enrolment was 19800 students. The enrollment was 61% more than the actual target. All fifth grade 373 students were selected as sample of the study through multistage sampling technique. The researcher developed an achievement test comprising of Urdu, English, Mathematics and Science subjects to assess achievement of students. The researcher personally administered the test to the students and marked it. Analysis of achievement scores showed that 61% students achieved more than 33% marks in the test. It was found that achievement mean score of male students was better as compared to female students. The achievement mean score of urban and rural students was almost same. Hence, it was concluded that the Non-Formal Schools were effective for provision of primary education to out of school children of disempowered and neglected segment of the society.

Key words: *Non Formal Basic Education Schools, disempowered / Neglected Segment of the society, literacy & numeracy skills*

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Introduction

The state of Pakistan, realizing the importance, benefits of education and hazards of illiteracy has made vivid provisions in its constitution for eradication of illiteracy and promotion of education. According to Article: 25-A of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, it is duty of the state to provide free and compulsory secondary education to the cohort of the children from age 5 to 16 years (Fatima, Fatima & Ali, 2018). As per Article: 37- B of the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973, the state is responsible for eradication of illiteracy and provision of free and compulsory secondary education within minimum time in the country (Sadruddin, 2013). Despite the constitutional provisions to increase the literacy rate and promotion of education, the real condition in terms of free and compulsory secondary education to be given to all children for age five to sixteen is alarming.

Education Statistics Report 2016-2017, Academy of Educational Planning and Management, Government of Pakistan highlighted that five million children of age 5-9, 6.5 million children of age 10-12 and11.3 million of age 13-16 were out of schools. Total number of out of school children of age 5-16 was 22.844 million in Pakistan. In province of Punjab, 1.91million children of age 5-9, 2.86 million children of age 10-12 and5.75 million of age 13-16 were out of schools. Total number of out of school children of age 5-16 was 10.52 million (Academy of Educational Planning and Management, 2017). UNESCO report 2018 states that around the world seven hundred and fifty million people cannot read and write (United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2018: Malik, 2011). Pakistan is one of the most affected countries in the world. Illiteracy is a burning issue in Pakistan and fortunately government is well aware of this situation (Rehman, Jingdong, & Hussain, 2015).

In terms of curriculum, primary education is confined to impart the skills of reading, writing, arithmetic skills, basic social studies and science (Chin, & Phillips, 2004). Actually Primary education is a source to provide students fundamental skills that will be the foundation for the rest of their academic careers (Spillane, 2013: Boroch, Fillpot, Hope, Johnstone, Mery, Serban, & Gabriner, 2007) . According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), primary education helps to reduce poverty, decrease child mortality rates, encourage gender equality, and increase environmental concern. Primary education institutions provide children very first opportunities to meet people from different religions, races and socioeconomic statuses, as well as people with different disabilities (Spillane, 2013). Students are taught basic lifetime skills like reading, writing, spellings, interpersonal communication, concentration, time management, multi-tasking and organization, short and long-term planning and test preparation (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2007). An accumulative settlement may be found among nations that preparation for citizenship is one of the main purposes of elementary education (Bogler, & Somech, 2004).

Pakistan had made concentrated efforts since its commencement in 1947 to eradicate illiteracy by adopting different ways of education and literacy such as Village AID Program 1953; Literacy Program under Basic Democracies 1964-69; Experimental Pilot Project 1977-78; Iqra Pilot Program 1987; Nai Roshni Schools 1987-89 at federal level (Saleem, 2009). In the recent a number of developing countries and Pakistan have supplemented the formal system of education with non-formal system of education to fulfill the constitutional commitments related to provision of basic education and literacy to the out of school children of age 5-16years (Roser, & Ortiz-Ospina, 2016).

The term "Non Formal Education" (NFE) came into view in 1950s from less developed countries (Rogers, 2014). Non Formal Education became the part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s (Evans, 1981). Non-formal education is highly supportive to the marginalized cohort of children. Non-formal education warmly welcomes those children who fail to continue their studies in the formal education owing to the rigid standards adopted and parasitized by the formal schools. Non-formal education also accommodates the children who must work to make both ends meet.

Non Formal Education is a flexible form of education, which targets a specific group of people, mostly under privileged children who have been left out by the formal education system; out of school children, working children or children who have dropped out of the formal education system as well as adults (Owiny, 2006). Learning in the non-formal system of education often fulfills basic learning requirements of the learner and provides them with knowledge and skills on their basic rights, needs and enhances their survival in the community (Hoppers, 2006). Non Formal Education programs have provided an opportunity to low income countries (such as Pakistan) where formal education system is alone unable to educate all its school going children and illiteracy is a huge problem (Kedrayate, 2012). Most of the countries are, politically or economically, feeling difficult to carry formal education because it has to pay heavy cost for the expansion of formal education to meet the demands of basic education (Coombs, 1968). Generally Non Formal Education programs are flexible, multipurpose and adaptable and have capacity to carry out educational tasks, which the formal school cannot (Coombs, 1973; Education, 2004; Latchem, 2014). Non Formal Education is often used interchangeably with 'community education', 'adult education', 'lifelong education' and 'second-chance education'. It is open ended educational system with age, time and curriculum flexibility. Although public / private and formal/ non-formal sector institutions are involved in this process so, it is now need of the time to assess the effectiveness of schools.

Effectiveness

There is consensus regarding meaning of the term 'Effectiveness' in the perspective of an institution as the achievement of its objectives (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989)

but the concept of effective school has triggered international and transnational debate and dialogue with no unanimous agreement (Mortimore, 2000 & Gray 2004), The concept of 'school effectiveness' is limited to only academic learning which is measured through achievement tests scores. The point of view given by Gray (2004) depicts one-dimensional picture of academic and learning outcomes. The effectiveness of school in the contemporary postmodern era has assumed multidimensionality.

As holistic development of learners determines the effectiveness of school in the contemporary age. Research in school effectiveness is dependent on measures which address multifaceted educational outcomes with variegated, valid and reliable research criteria. The criteria of research in school effectiveness have been changing from time to time. Four stages of evolution regarding development of criteria of research in school effectiveness have been traced. The first stage which existed during 1980s intended to investigate the effect of teachers on the achievement of learners. At the second stage(1990s), researchers tried to find out the traits of effective schools. The development of models of effective schools was the focus of researchers in the third stage during the 2000s. The fourth stage which is the contemporary phase inclines to highlight dynamism in school effectiveness. The contemporary researchers realize that components of school effectiveness are not static; they are dynamic and keep on changing according to socio-economic, political and individual needs, (Creemers, Kyriakides. 2010; Reynolds, Teddlie, Hopkins &Stringfield. 2000; Reynolds, Sammons, De Fraine, Van Damme, Townsend, Teddlie, &Stringfield, 2014). The current research aims to study Effectiveness of Non Formal Basic Education Schools having all necessary elements of changing nature for provision of primary education to out of school children. To improve the literacy rate in Punjab, Literacy & Non Formal Basic Education Department is working through different projects. Punjab Non Formal Basic Education Project was also one of them. To establish sustainable and effective Non formal schools, establishing criteria was introduced in PC1 of Punjab Non-formal Education Project. These schools were non-permanent (from grade 0-V) in non-formal setting and leading to Punjab Examination Commission (PEC). These schools were in all the areas, where were no formal Government primary schools within 1 kilometer radius, any philanthropic primary education facility nearby, areas where child labor was rife, workplace, industrial areas, brick kilns and market places or any other location as approved by Literacy and Non Formal Basic Education Department. Sites for NFBE Schools can be in private premises of non-formal teacher, community arranged premises, business / industrial / commercial organization arranged premises, private philanthropic organization arranged premises, officially govt. provided premises, or any other site prescribed by L&NFBE Department. According to PC1 of Punjab Non-Formal Education Project, there should be minimum 20 maximum 45 out of school children to establish the non-formal school in any disempowered/ neglected segment of society.

Timing of school was four hours. These schools were for 4 to 15 years old students. Teacher was also selected from the community where school was established or nearby the community. Teacher was selected with minimum F.A qualification at 6000/ Rs remunerations and 1000/ Rs contingency for all male, female and transgender.

Through different projects students of marginalized areas were facilitated by imparting primary education. Currently 5.06 million children of primary school age are out of school. Non-Formal Basic Education Schools are enrolling and educating the out of school children from disempowered areas. One reason for repeated lack of success in the field of literacy might be lack of evaluation of these programs through academic lenses. Therefore, evaluation of the effectiveness of formal and non-formal education institution is need of the hour. Present study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of Non-Formal Basic Education Schools for Provision of Primary Education to out of School Children in disempowered / marginalized society.

Objective of the study

The objective of the study was to:
  i.   examine the achievement level of student in literacy and numeracy of Non-Formal Basic Education Schools (NFBES)

The effectiveness of Non-Formal Schools was assessed with respected to establishment of the schools, enrollment in the schools and achievement of enrolled students of these schools in literacy and numeracy skills.

Hypothesis

Difference in achievement score of male female students and rural urban students was measured through hypothesis by applying Mann-Whitney U Test. Hypothesis of the study were as under:

  1. There is no significant difference in achievement mean scores of male and female learners of NFBE Schools
  2. There is no significant difference in achievement mean scores of rural and urban learners of NFBE Schools

Methodology

This study was survey type descriptive in nature. Survey method technique was used to collect data. "Typical descriptive studies were concerned with the assessment of attitude, opinions, demographic information, conditions and procedures" (Freeman, Anderson, Scotti, 2000). The locale of the study was Punjab, Pakistan. The study was carried out in

the three districts of province Punjab. Punjab has densely populated informal settlement, has cosmopolitan population and has many NFBES thus providing an ideal place to undertake the current study. Non-Formal Basic Education Schools under Non-Formal Education Project (PNFEP) are located only within informal settlement (slums) of urban and rural areas in Punjab.

Population of the study

All the thirty-six District Education Officers (literacy) from all over the Punjab and all the students of Non Formal Basic Education Schools were the population of the study.

Sampling techniques of the study

Sample of the study was selected by using multistage sampling technique. At first stage of sampling the entire thirty six districts were divided into three parts: South Punjab, North Punjab and Central Punjab. At second stage one district was selected from each part of Punjab through simple random sampling. Rahim Yar Khan from South Punjab, Chiniot from Central Punjab and Attock from North Punjab were the sample of the study. At third stage 20% (sixty, sixty) NFBE Schools out of three hundred (300) schools were selected from each district (Chiniot and Attock). Out of 390 Non-Formal Schools seventy eight schools were selected from Rahim Yar Khan.

Sample of the study

Three hundred seventy-three fifth grade graduates of NFBE Schools were selected as sample of the study. Data of enrolled students was accessed from the web portal of literacy department.

Data collection tool

Achievement test consisting of questions on four subject English, Urdu, Mathematics and Science was developed. Questions of all the four subjects were selected from the annual paper of Punjab Examination Commission for class five. Subject Urdu and English were assessed through essay writing. Mathematics was assessed through basic concept of unitary method and geography and basic concept of Science was assessed. To generate the achievement scores, marking scheme provided by Punjab Examination Commission was followed. Because rubric provide the teacher with a bridge between instructions and assessment (Schirmer & Bailey, 2000). To mark the Urdu, English, mathematics and science test rubric was followed by the researcher. Rubric is helpful to produce more effective writing skill to primary school students (Andrade, Du, & Wang, 2008). Total marks of achievement test were 80. Twenty marks were for each subject. Test was marked by researcher herself.

Pilot Testing of Instruments

The researcher conducted pilot study on fifth grade students of 23 NFBE Schools to assess validity and reliability of instruments used for data collection. The pilot study helped the researcher to improve the data collection tool to ensure valid and reliable data required for this study. The validity of research instrument was established in two ways. Firstly, experts" judgment (Gay, 1981) suggests that experts can carefully examine research data collection tools" items and give suggestions to enhance their validity. Expert judgment was sought from the research supervisory committee, PhD supervisors of the department of education and active researchers. Secondly, the research instruments were pilot tested and revised to collect valid data from the respondents of the research study. The researcher pre-tested the research instrument used for this study namely "Achievement test". The internal reliability of research instrument was calculated Cronbach's Alpha reliability test by using SPSS computer software (version 16). The reliability coefficients for the research instrument was $\alpha = 0.899$ for the achievement test. The above reliability levels were taken as acceptable internal reliability for data collection instrument (Gay, 1981; Graham, Liu, & Jeziorski, 2006).

Data analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS software by using descriptive statistics (percentages, mean) and inferential statistic by applying Independent Sample Mann-Whitney U Test. The Mann-Whitney U Test is the non-parametric alternative to Independent Sample t-test. The test is used to test for differences between two independent groups on an ordinal/ continues measures.

Results

Detail of established NFBE schools and enrolled learners was accessed from literacy web portal. As there are 990 NFBE Schools functional in three districts (Chiniot, Attock and Rahim Yar Khan). Target regarding schools and students and detail of enrolled learners was as under:

Table No1 *Accessed Enrollment Data of Non-formal Basic Education Schools*

Sr. No	District	Total centers	Target to cater the illiterates	Enrolled students on literacy web portal	Percentage after achieving the target
1	Chiniot	300	6000	10908	182%
2	Attock	300	6000	8500	142%
3	RahimYar	390	7800	12436	159%

Khan			
Total	990	19800	33625	161%

In Table 2 Data show that in district Chiniot, there were three hundred (300) Non-Formal Basic Education Schools having target of six thousand (6000) students. According to web portal of Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Department there were ten thousand nine hundred eight (10908) students enrolled. In Rahim Yar Khan there were three hundred ninety centers, target for catchment and enrollment of missed out /dropped out students was 7800. Target was achieved in Rahim Yar Khan by accessing 12436 drop out/ missed out children. In Attock there were 300 functional centers, and the target to enroll the out of school children was 8500. Data show that target to enroll the students in these districts was achieved very successfully.

Achievement of Students in Literacy and Numeracy Skills

A test was administered to assess the achievement score of the students of class five. Students show good results as they were given a chance to enter again in the formal school system. The reliability of four test items was calculated and .899 Cronbach's Alpha reliability was found.

Table No 2 *Student's Achievement Scores of Literacy and Numeracy*

Marks %	Urdu		English		Mathematics		Science		Cumulative score	
Marks out of 100	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
90 to 100%	60	(16.1)	14	(3.8)	45	(12.0)	71	(19.1)	16	(4.3)
80 to 89%	4	(1.1)	5	(1.3)	18	(4.8)	67	(17.9)	43	(11.5)
70 to 79%	102	(27.3)	0	(00.0)	132	(35.4)	62	(16.6)	76	(20.4)
60 to 69%	37	(9.9)	79	(21.2)	8	(2.2)	43	(11.5)	118	(31.6)
45 to 59%	51	(13.7)	105	(28.1)	59	(15.9)	18	(4.9)	9	(2.4)
33 to 44%	48	(1.1)	00	(00.0)	13	(3.5)	00	(000)	00	(000)
Less than 33%	111	(30.8)	170	(35.5)	98	(26.2)	112	(30.0)	111	(29.8)
Sum total	373	100.00	373	100.00	373	100.00	373	100.	373	100.0

In table: 3 results show that in Urdu 16.1% students achieved 90% to 100% marks. 1.1% student passed 80% to 89% marks and 27.3% students got 70% to 79% marks. But 30.8% students were unable to perform well and achieved passing marks. In subject English 3.8% students got 90% to 100% marks. 1.3% Students achieved 80% to 89% marks; no student has got 70% to 79% marks. 21.2% students achieved 60% to 69% marks and 28.1% students got 45% to 59% marks. No student got passing marks 33% to

44% marks. 35.5% students did not pass the test in subject English. In Mathematics 12.0% students achieved 90% to 100% marks. 4.8% student passed 80% to 89% marks and 35.4% students got 70% to 79% marks. 2.2% students got 60% to 69% marks. 15.9% students got 45% to 59% marks and 3.5% students achieved 33% to 44% marks. 26.2% students were unable to attempt the test successfully by getting passing mark in Mathematic. In Science 19.1% students achieved 90% to 100% marks. 17.9% students passed 80% to 89% marks and 16.6% students got 70% to 79% marks. 11.5% students got 60% to 69% marks. 4.9% students got 45% to 59% marks but no any student got 33% to 44% marks. 30.0% students were unable to attempt the test successfully by getting passing mark. In literacy and numeracy skills, 4.3% students got 90% 100% marks. 11.5% students got 80% 89% marks, 20.4% students achieved 70% to 79% marks, 31.6% students achieved 60% 69% marks and 2.4%students got 45% to 59% marks. No any student could get 33% to 44% marks. 29.8% students were unable to pass all the four tests to assess the literacy and numeracy of the NFBEs students. In subject Urdu 69.2 % students, in subject English 64.5% students, 73.8% students in Science and 70 % student in Mathematics achieved 33% to 100% marks. Most of the students perform better in Mathematics as compare to other subjects, whereas less number of students got pass marks in subject English. In subject Urdu and Science, almost 70% student show good performance. In subject English and Science, no any student has got 33% to 44% marks.

Hypothesis testing

Independent Sample Mann-Whitney U Test was applied on the sample through SPSS to calculate the value of mean performance gender wise and area wise comparison of the NFBE learners.

H_0 1: There is no significant difference in achievement scores of male and female NFBE School learners

Comparison of Mean Achievement Score of Male and Female Students in Literacy and Numeracy Test.

Table No 3 *Hypothesis Test Summary*

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of mean score of Math, English, Urdu & Science is the same across categories of Gender	Independent Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed, the significance level is .05.

Results in the table 3 Independent Sample Mann-Whitney U Test showed asymptotic significances at the significance level of .05. Sig. value was .000 with independent Sample Mann-Whitney U Test. As the p value less than the level of 5% significance, so hypothesis was rejected. The Sig. (2- tailed value) .000 shows that there was significant difference between the mean achievement score of male and female students. On the basis of results mentioned in the table, it was concluded that the null hypothesis ($H_0 2$) was rejected.

$H_0 1$: There is no significant difference in achievement scores of rural and urban NFBE School learners

Comparison of Mean Achievement Score of Students from Rural and Urban Areas in Achievement Test of Literacy and Numeracy skills

Table No 5 *Hypothesis Test Summary*

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of mean score of Math, English, Urdu & Science is the same across categories of Area	Independent Sample Mann-Whitney U Test	.196	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed, the significance level is .05.

Results in the table 6 Independent Sample Mann-Whitney U Test showed asymptotic significances at the significance level of .05. Sig. value was .196 with independent Sample Mann-Whitney U Test. As the p value less than the level of 5% significance, so hypothesis was not rejected. The Sig. 0.196 shows that there was no significant difference between the mean achievement score of rural and urban students. On the basis of results mentioned in the table, it was concluded that the null hypothesis ($H_0 2$) was retain the null hypothesis.

Findings and Discussion

Present research revealed that 100% percent NFBE Schools were established in sampled cities and enrolment of learners in Non-Formal Basic Education Schools was 61% more than the target. But unfortunately, "inconsistencies in literacy policies have downgraded literacy efforts and undermined literacy practitioners"(Sandhu, 2019). Basic purpose of opening these centers was to cater the dropped out / missed out children (Thompson, 2001), but most of the students again dropped out from the schools and again become the part of drop out (Zhang, 2011).

Finding also revealed that 70% students showed good achievement scores in Urdu, English, Science and Mathematics, but 30% students could not achieve passing criteria. This study was in favor of students to acquire basic skills in reading, writing and work practice (Khan, 2011). First objective of the Punjab Non Formal Basic Education Project (PNFEP) "Impart primary education to out of school children via non formal approach" was aligned with the objective of the present study. A study also confirmed that the most effective schools tend to be those where children are tested frequently (Willms & Somer, 2001). Performance in subject of English was not good as 64.5% students got 33% to 100 % marks, 29.7% students did not attempt test or did not show good performance. Study conducted by Shiundu & Omulando (1992) proposes that written and oral examinations are some of the normally used processes of evaluation.

The performance in achievement score of literacy and numeracy test, the students of Non Formal Basic Education Schools were better. It was also evident that in subject Urdu 69.2% students have achieved the passing criteria and 31% students were unable to pass the test. The results of another study show that students execute better in native language test / Urdu medium of instruction as compared English medium of instruction. The details of results show that maximum numbers of students pass the test of Mathematics whereas minimum numbers of students pass the test of English. Findings of basic concepts of Science showed that two third students of class five have clear concept while the one third students still unable to achieve passing criteria in Science. The quality of education needs to improve as there is multi-grade teaching in Non-Formal Basic Education Schools (Weaver, 2011).

According to the study of H. Khan and his companions (1999), students show high level of performance in Science and Urdu as compare to Mathematics. Some studies favor to native language as medium of instruction but according to present study in subject Urdu achievement score of students was not high, but according to the present study students show high level of performance in Mathematic as compare to Urdu, English and Science (Willms, & Somer, 2001). A study conducted to identify the quality of primary education concluded that despite the many challenges Non Formal Primary Schools provide quality education (Micheni, 2015).

Research exposed that male students showed better performance in achievement scores in test to assess the literacy and numeracy skills as compare to female students. It was also evident that there was no significant difference between the achievement score of rural residential and urban.

Conclusion

On the basis of above mentioned results and findings following conclusions were drawn:

1. The targets regarding establishment of Non Formal Schools and enrollment of students were achieved as per the project. Hundred percent (100%) schools were established as per the target of the project.
2. Students were enrolled sixty one percent (61%) more than the target mentioned in the project.
3. Seventy percent (70%) students pass the achievement test (Mathematics, Science, English and Urdu) and 30% students were failed in the test.
4. Male Student performed better as compared to female students in achievement test.
5. The performance of both urban and rural students in the test was same.

In a nutshell, overall, the effectiveness of Non-Formal Basic Education Schools was to some extent better, but 30% student's academic condition was alarming. However, delivery of high-quality education has been expected to satisfy the actual demand regarding delivery of high-quality education. Therefore, concrete measures are required to improve the Effectiveness of Non-Formal Schools. Optimistically, it would be uplift the professional reputation of NFBE teachers.

Suggestion for Further Research

The current study was on effectiveness of Non-Formal Basic Education Schools for provision of primary education through the curriculum of Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board which was very lengthy but in NFBE Schools; there were single teachers who have to teach multi-grade students. Therefore, it is suggested to develop smart and skewed curriculum for NFBE students to accelerate the educational process for the learners of disempowered segment of the society. There is a need to conduct research on:

i) training need assessment of NFBE School teachers for service delivery to multi-grade out of school children.

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