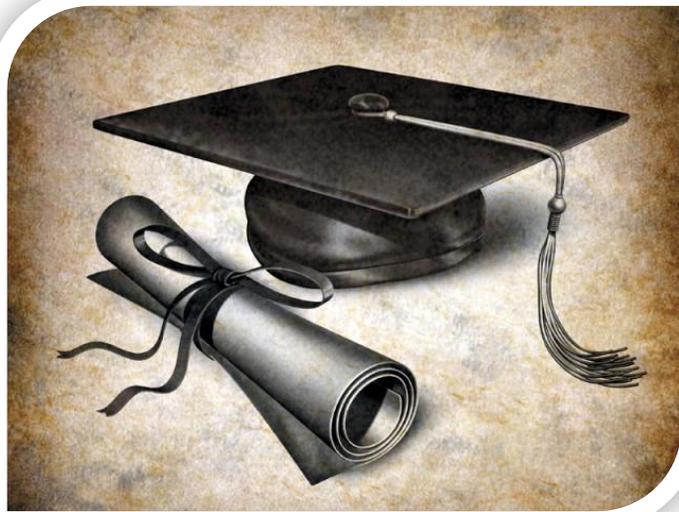


“State of Education in Balochistan: Capacity Gap Analysis for Policy Making”

- Working Paper by Omar Amir, INP



Balochistan is the least literate province of Pakistan. This may be partially due to the lack of connectivity in this province which accounts for 44% of the land area or due to the security issues or lack of political will or motivation to improve the condition of the province. Studies show that 70 percent of the people in Balochistan are in the midst of poverty and cannot afford to send their children to Quetta for quality education. This mars for a small amount of teachers subsequently generated

from the province particularly women and rural area teachers. Mostly at the primary level, dropout from schools is at high level. From primary to middle level, the transition rate is a mere 23% (Sami, 2011). According to Federal Bureau of Statistics, at secondary level for age groups 14 to 15 the net enrolment ratio (NER) reduces to 14% and for age groups 13 to 14 its 6% (PSLM Survey 2010-11). Ms. Naghmana Ambreen (Coordinator Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)) said, students who have even passed 5th grade in the provinces have a hard time reading simple sentences in Urdu or performing basic arithmetic operations. Although the Constitution of Pakistan, under Article 25-A which was included through the 18th Amendment, mandates universal education for children up till the age of 16, there is large section of Balochistan's population that remains uneducated. To deny children of their right to education is therefore a violation of the fundamental rights of children under the

Constitution of Pakistan. The province also lags behind the more populous provinces in terms of literacy rates and when it comes to gender discrepancy with regards to literacy, Balochistan leads the way. Within Pakistan, Balochistan covers 43% of the land and even though it is blessed with natural resources, its educational facilities are woefully low. As a federation 48 percent of Pakistani educational institutions are in Punjab, 22 percent in Sind, 17 percent in KPK but only 5 percent in Balochistan as per National Economic Survey 2005-06.

The teachers across Balochistan are deployed to their respective positions through district officers. Thus, all the power to appoint, hire and transfer the teachers in a respective area is under the control of district officers in Balochistan. However, as is the practice in many areas of the country many appointments are not made on merit. People who have barely managed to pass their matriculation or board examinations are hired on the basis of good 'contacts' in higher places. Moreover, transfers are made due to personal enmities between the district administrators and some teachers. This is particularly harsh on teachers who have been teaching in a particular area for a long period of time and are well acquainted with the way a particular school is run. Also most teachers are

employed with 'strings attached'. What is meant here is that government offers them plenty of money and most of them do not take the job unless they are promised less working hours and more vacationing time. According to reliable inside sources favoritism runs deep in the selection process and is a much preferred method over recruitment based on merit. Also, due to a lack of teachers, the small lots of them that are available are offered more fringe benefits even though they have scarce amount of knowledge and experience. Thus, there is not only a scarcity of quality Baluch teacher but also that are available are sidelined in place of less competent ones. Candidates appointed for teaching posts have no pre-service training experience because of severe shortfall of teachers in Balochistan. Most teachers in Balochistan have secured their positions through endorsements from provincial and national politicians.

Teachers Capacity Gap Assessment:

There is a substantial gap in the number of qualified teachers and requirement of qualified teachers. This results in hiring of semi-professional teachers who either do not have the will to or are not equipped to adequately perform their duties. A general view about majority of the government school teachers is that most teachers have barely passed college

and some are not even certified with an official degree. Also in Balochistan, many educators have been relocated from remote areas to cities due to security situation. According to Abbasi (2013) the teachers that are left in the villages are extremely negligent of their duties. This results in the students turning to informal methods of education particularly at primary level which include *kachi* education. Teachers are also reluctant to come from the most literate province i.e. Punjab due to the fear of their lives. Although the teacher student ratio stands at a healthy [1:21] ratio in the province, this is not a true indication of the setup in the province due to a much heavier concentration of teachers in the urban areas. According to a survey report (Dawn, 2013), due to political support, majority of teachers in government-run schools do not bother to take classes. Because of that about 78 per cent of children in Balochistan are deprived of primary education.

Teachers Development Capacity Gap Assessment:

Pakistan has no primary policy framework, which explicitly focused on Teachers Professional Development. (USAID and UNESCO, 2006). There is a substantial gap in the way the U.N MDG's memorandum expects teacher proficiency to be and the way teachers are trained in Pakistan. As per Mr. Munir



Ahmad (former Education Minister of Balochistan), "Our teachers are not properly trained. Instead of adopting a dictatorial attitude towards students, they should focus on learning." (Dawn, 2013) According to Baloch Students Action Committee spokesperson Dr. Ababagar Baloch, "matriculation passed and unqualified teachers has been inducted by the provincial government and they send them to the rural areas of Balochistan like Gwadar, Washuk, Hub and Chaghi, etc. They are most of the time enjoying their salary in provincial capital of Quetta and rarely go to take classes in rural areas."

Education Management Information System Capacity Gap Assessment:

The EMIS is one tool through which universal education distribution is ensured. EMIS is an

integrated human and computer based process for providing all the information needed to support the activities of Education Department including management, planning and decision making. This department calls for highly trained professionals who are not only well-versed in management but are also proficient in computer & IT knowledge. EMIS usually forms the information hub which policy makers and executive administrators use to plan, organize and execute their tasks. However, the Balochistan EMIS is not fully equipped to provide such detailed and manipulated data in order for these authorities to gain a true picture of education in the province. Firstly the site appears to have not been fully updated since 2011. Secondly, all the achievements listed including the full mapping of GIS and the annual & bi-annual school census appear to be of the previous decade. Lastly, 8 slots of the

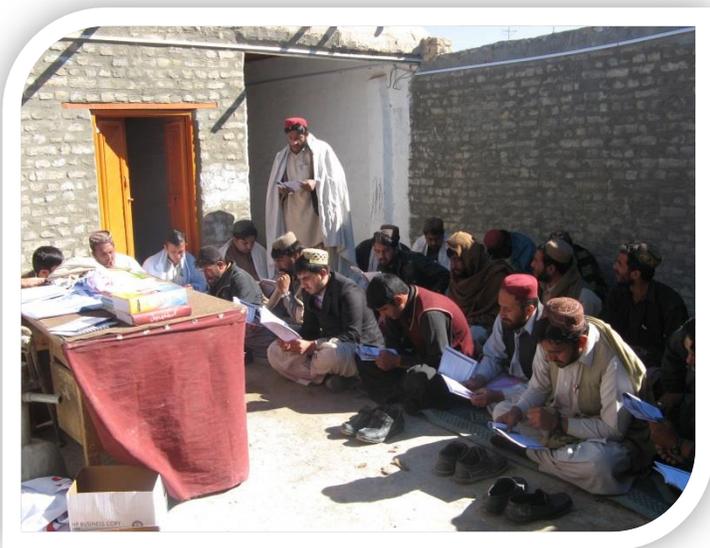
computer operators of the BEMIS emerge to be vacant. Thus there is a considerable gap in what should be the EMIS of such a vast province and what actually is the EMIS of it.

Textbook Distribution Capacity Gap Assessment:

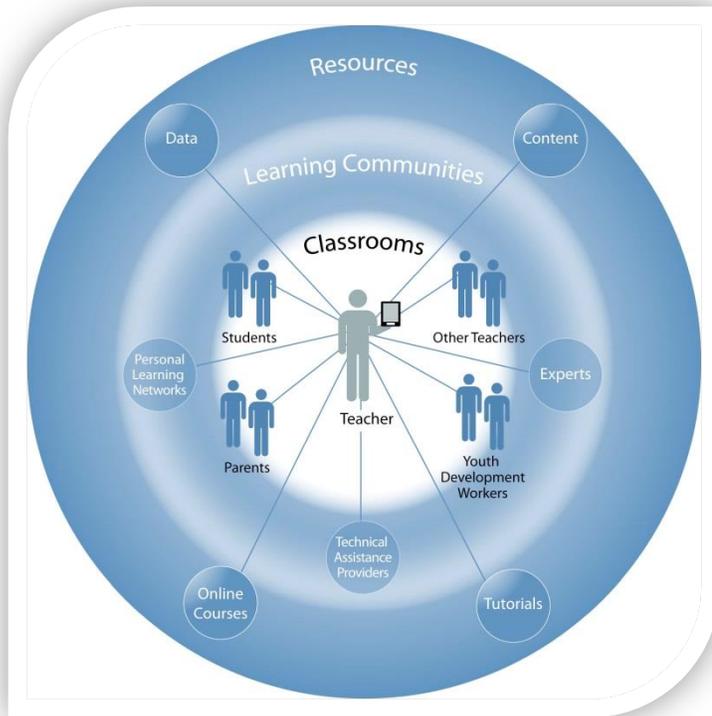
Over the years books in the province like the rest of the country have been criticized for poor quality (Abdus Sami, 2011). Not only that but also there is a lack of efficient distribution to all parts of the province. Many textbooks that children receive are either torn or lacking some pages. This can also be seen in some urban areas of the province. As Abdus Sami notes, "Textbooks available in the province are not considered to be of good pedagogic value." Furthermore, in some areas the funds allocated for free textbooks distribution are embezzled by corrupt officials in the province. This leads to more disenfranchisement as additional students are deprived of their source of knowledge.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PLANS – POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

If there are a good amount of institutions in the other provinces of Pakistan, then Balochistan also deserves to have improvement in its educational sector. Firstly, a plan should



develop to bring *government* education system at par with other schools in the country as a substantial section of the population in Balochistan turn to these schools for education.



Teacher Management:

To ensure well-coordinated teacher management program, a central bureau should be established within the Ministry of Education Balochistan MoE(B) that ensures that all teacher activities are harmonized i.e. a week by week syllabus is set for each year and given to teachers to teach. It is further recommended that a complaint cell formed that ensures that teachers get the right to anonymous complaints and these complaints are professionally acted

upon to guarantee that no teacher grievances remain.

Teacher Continuous Professional Development (CPD):

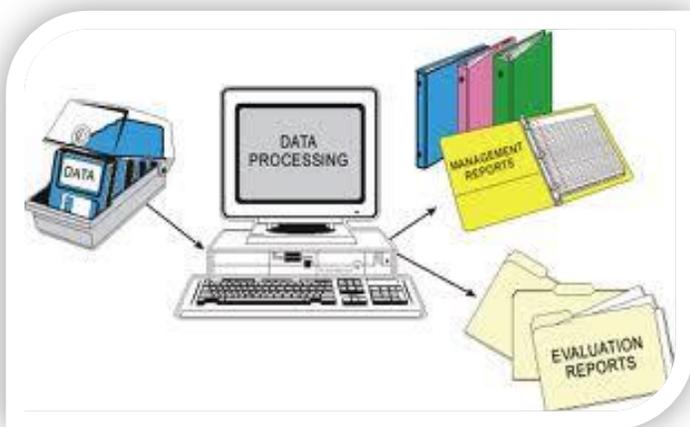
To educate a young generation, teachers must be fully trained and they must have more than just sufficient amount of knowledge. The CPD among teachers is a norm that is practiced worldwide particularly in the western countries to improve the quality of education and ensure teacher remain at par to fulfill their duties. According to Institute for learning, U.K (2009) the following techniques can be used to fulfill this task : Peer reviewing, Work Shadowing, peer coaching, team teaching, peer observation, designing feedback mechanisms, organizing team meetings and constructing professional dialogue.

Other ways for teacher professional development can include ministry sponsored monitoring team visits around the province, mandating confidential reviews from students, organizing teaching workshops in every district monthly to enhance the skills of current stock and mentoring newly inducts and also giving monetary rewards on basis of teacher's own performances and not on their students to ensure he/she doesn't show leniency in marking in order to improve their students'

score. Subsequent to that, before being officially contracted teachers should receive six months of probationary job training, while being continuously examined of their capability to do teaching. Engagement with Education NGOs is critical in this regard.

Education Management Information System (EMIS):

There are many ways through which the EMIS in the province can be improved. Firstly, more and much better skilled computer operators can be hired. This will not only ensure that EMIS stays up to date to provide the required information that is needed but also new and innovative ideas might be generated to improve the overall look of the system. Secondly, more monitoring officers can be posted in different areas of the province to improve information collection. This can also be done through tapping into the data of different NGO's working in the field in the province.



Textbook Distribution:

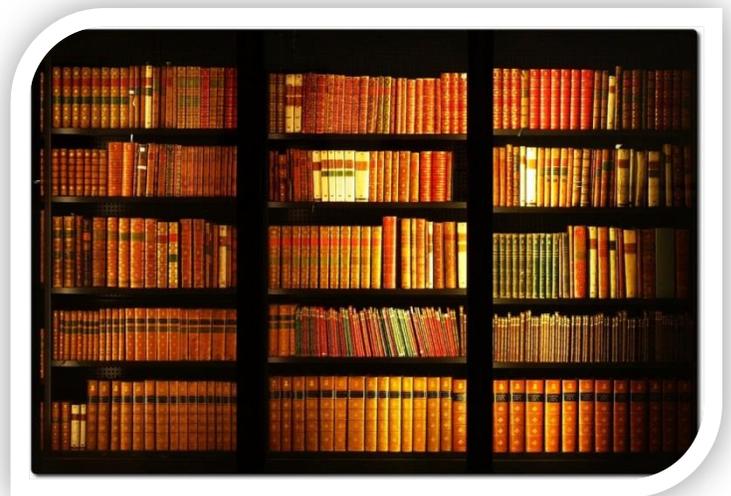
Although statistics do not allow us to - evaluate with any precision the present situation of school textbook provision in Balochistan, they do indicate that this situation varies considerably from district to district. . The importance of the role of the textbook is, nonetheless, recognized and efforts have been made to supply textbooks to schools. Provision of textbooks for all pupils at the various levels of instruction is a problem which Balochistan can only solve gradually and incrementally, given the multifarious nature of challenges and needs. Priority is accorded practically everywhere to primary education where needs are most urgent.

The production and distribution of school textbooks is a complex and long-term venture, necessitating large investments, the work of competent personnel, forward planning and organization of the whole process from the elaboration of manuscripts up to their distribution to schools. It is essential that textbook needs be studied in-depth and quantitative estimations made, on the one hand, for the different levels of instruction and, on the other of the objectives and content of programmes. In order to obviate the production of books which are not adapted to needs, such studies are generally based on surveys of

books already used in schools, on the opinions of the most qualified teachers, and on comparable books published in other countries. It is usually one of the tasks of Textbook Board to undertake these surveys. Planning of the provision of books to schools should be undertaken on a long-term basis and, therefore, foresee needs in accordance with well calculated estimations of growth in school enrollment figures.

In the absence of private publishers any such distribution project will require substantial long-term funding, at least for operational implementation. Drafting manuscripts, publishing, printing and distribution require a lot of investment and time, given the time needed for preliminary stages, planning, recruitment and often staff training. Financial resources must be anticipated and guaranteed if there is to be continuity of production. Continuity can be ensured either by selling books at a price families can afford, or by allocating a budget which will cover the difference resulting from a retail price lower than production cost. It will usually take many years to reach financial equilibrium between expenditure and profit from sales. Free distribution of textbooks is only possible when a stable state budget is sufficient to cover the costs. This is where donor funding can be useful.

Moreover, such distribution requires active follow-up and control which is not always easily guaranteed. If it is recognized that textbooks play an important part in successful schooling, then it should be possible to obtain resources, whether from the provincial government or otherwise. What is often lacking is a valid policy to promote books as an essential component in education - both in-school and out of-school - within the framework of a province's social and economic development plans.



To ensure that textbook distribution is effectively undertaken and quality is maintained a quality control function has to be introduced within the MoE. This department needs to oversee proper printing, cataloguing and inventory of textbooks. Each textbook needs to be physically verified and then approved for re-routing. Once the books are approved and

authorized for delivery, these need to be allotted to the student who is issuing them. Each student should have a record – either computerized or paper based- indicating the number of books issued. The student being issued books should be required to sit and verify that the books are in order and accurately identified in his or her record.

Furthermore, mobile teams for textbook distribution should be created to provide books in far flung areas of the province. A closer coordination between the textbook board and these teams should be devised where these teams can have access to books when required. If certain books are not available, an arrangement for temporary provision through computer-printed or photocopied textbooks should be arrived at legally, without violating any copyrights or other intellectual property rights. Clear accounting of the number of books delivered should be done and the MoE should have the overall monitoring and evaluation control.

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