

Pakistan and Millennium Development Goals: An In-Depth Study

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Abstract

The present research was conducted to explore the achievement of Pakistan regarding Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to education and to find out the reasons of low achievement of Pakistan in MDGs which is related to education. To know the reasons of this failure, the researcher collected data through in-depth interviews from 30 experts (Ph. D in Education) by using convenient sampling technique. Collected data were thematically analysed. Some major reasons pointed out by the experts were natural disasters, lack of commitment, lack of funds, poverty, terrorism, insecurity of girls, lack of implementation and lack of schools. Consumption four (4) % of GDP, provision of security and more schools for girls, and proper planning were recommended for achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

Key words: MDG, Pakistan, SDG

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Background

At the beginning of the new millennium, world leaders under the supervision of the United Nations had shaped a broad vision to fight against poverty in its many dimensions. That vision was translated into eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Prescribed period of these goals was decided 2001 to 2015 (United Nation, 2015 A). These MDGs had remained the overall development framework for the world for the past 15 years. Nations of the world had planned and worked to achieve these goals. At the end of 2015 which was prescribed period of Millennium Development Goal, the nations of the world had celebrated it because in most part of the world these goals were achieved and lives of millions were saved condition of many more people were improved (United Nation, 2016). Unfortunately Pakistan failed to achieve these goals. This research is about MDG No. 2 which was purely about education. Pakistan failed to achieve this goal also. It was needed to find the possible reasons of this failure. Secondly the nations of the world had framed Sustainable Development Goals under the supervision of the United Nation. The Government of Pakistan had also signed to show her commitment on these goals (Sadurddin, 2013). Therefore, it was also essential to find the possible reasons of failure of MDGs by Pakistan so that after removing these reasons, the Government of Pakistan might be able to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially relevant to education, up to prescribed period 2030.

Rationale

Main purpose of this study was to find the reasons of Pakistan's failure in achieving MDG regarding universal of primary education. It would enable the ministries and department of education (Punjab, Sindh, KPK, Baluchistan, Gilgit-Balistan, AJK and Islamabad) to remove these deficiencies and may achieve Sustainable Development Goal by 2030. It would also help concern departments, researchers, scholars and practitioners to understand the reasons of failure and find ways and means for getting better results in attaining SDGs.

Review of Literature

Review of literature is consistent on concept of brief summary of eight MDGs, and SDGs. It also includes targets of MDG 2 and progress of the world and Pakistan in achievement of this goal.

Millennium Development Goals

There were eight (8) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) developed by the world leaders in the beginning of new century (UN, 2015 A). These were;

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empowerment women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve mental health
6. Combat HIV/aids Malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Global partnership for development (UN, 2015 A).

Among these eight (8) goals, focus of education was in goal number 2. Detail of this goal and its sub goals is as under;

Millennium Development Goal No. 2: Education for All

According to UN (2001) this goal was further divided into six sub-goals to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. These sub-goals /targets were as;

1. Expansion and improvement in early childhood care and education, especially for the deprived children.
2. Ensuring access to compulsory basic education of good quality, for all children especially girls by 2015.
3. Ensuring life skills education and better learning environment to youngsters.
4. Improving fifty (50 %) literacy rate of youngsters especially girls by 2015.
5. Decreasing gender gap up to secondary education and ensuring equality by 2015.

6. Improvement in quality of education in life skill, numeracy and literacy

Achievement of MDG 2 in the World

According to UN report (United Nation, 2016) following were achievements of the world regarding MDG 2;

- The net enrolment in primary education increased 83 % to 90 % in the developing countries during prescribed period.
- Out of school children ranging age 5 years to 11 years were decreased from 100 million to 57 million during MDGs period.
- The progress of Sub-Saharan Africa remained the best during MDGs period as enrollment at primary level was increased 20 %.
- The youth literacy rate ranging from age 15 years to 24 years of the whole world was increased from 83 % to 91 %.
- Female enrollment was increased in developing countries at all level.
- In Southern Asia, the target of 100 % enrollment of both genders at primary level was achieved (2015 D).

Achievement of MDG 2 in Pakistan

Pakistan could not achieve its targets of MDG 2. It remained fail in achieving all three indicators till the end of the period 2015 (Sadurddin, 2013). Particularly retention rate at primary level is very low. Target of literacy rate was 88 %, while Pakistan was able to increase her literacy rate up to 58 % which was very low against the MDGs target. (Government of Pakistan, 2013).

Table 1

Targets and Achievement of Universal Primary Education Goal No. 2

Goal No. 2 UPE	Targets	Achievements
Net primary enrolment ratio (%)	100%	57 %
Completion/survival rate Grade 1 to 5 (%t)	100%	50%
Literacy rate (%)	88%	58%

(Government of Pakistan, 2013)

The targets set by Pakistan, to achieve MDG2 were 100 % enrolment and completion of primary education grade 1 to 5. Beside this 88 % literacy rate was set as target for MDG period. Unluckily, Pakistan could not achieve these three targets. At the end of target period, net enrolment ratio was 57 % against the target of 100 %. In the same way, completion rate of primary education was 50 % against the target of 100 %. The literacy rate was also very low. It was 58 % in 2015 against the target of 88 %. It was also highly skewed towards males. The ratio of literacy between male and female was 70 and 47.

Equality of Gender & Women's Empowerment

In MDG 2, some targets were set to empower the women and remove gender discrimination. This targets had three indicators of Gender Parity Index (GPI) at primary, secondary and youth literacy. It was noted this target, progress of Pakistan was not satisfactory (Government of Pakistan, 2013).

Table 2

Targets and Achievement in Promoting Gender Equality

Goal No. 2 Gender Equality	Targets	Achievements
GPI Primary Education	1.00	0.90
GPI Secondary Education	1.00	0.81
Youth Literacy GPI	1.00	0.81

(Government of Pakistan, 2013)

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Table 2 shows that GPI was 0.9 for primary education and 0.81 for secondary education against the targets 1.00. in the same way GPI for youth literacy was found 0.81 while the target was 1.00 at the end of target period. Although the girls education was improved at all level but it is still very behind from the target level (Sadurddin, 2013).

The position of Punjab is comparatively better than other units of Pakistan while the Baluchistan is worst (Sadurddin, 2013). In short it can be said that Pakistan has partially achieve MDG 2.

Sustainable Development Goals

At the end of MDGs period 2015, the United Nation had developed seventeen (17) goals having 169 targets, with the consultation of 194 member states (United Nation, 2016). These goals were finalized on September 25, 2015 and were mentioned in paragraph 54 of United Nations Resolution A/RES/70/1 (United Nation, 2016). These goals are known Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Official name of these goals is Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agreed agenda of these goals was the Future we Want on the basis of the well saying of General Secretary of United Nations Ban Ki Moon that "there can be no Plan B, because there is no Planet B" (UN, 2016; Dodds, Donoghue, and Roesch, 2016; UN, 2015 C).

Among these goals, goal number 4 is purely about education while goal number 5 is partially related to education. Goal number four (4) is to ensure quality education and lifelong learning to all the masses of the world. Its main target is to ensure that all boys and girls complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education by 2030. On the other hand goal number five (5) is to ensure Gender Equality and empower all women and girls by providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes.

Methodology

This research was descriptive in nature and survey by method.

Population

All 510 educationists holding Ph. D degree in Education working in departments of Education, education colleges, and Institute of Education and Researches in universities in Pakistan were population of the study.

Sample

Among these 510 educationists, Thirty (30) Doctors of Education were selected conveniently.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected through in-depth interviews. Collected data were thematically analyzed with the help of panel of expert consisting on four (4) educationists.

Results and Discussion

The data were collected through in-depth interview to know the reasons of Pakistan's failure in achieving MDGs No2 and 3 which were related to education.

Table 3

Cause of Failure in achieving MDGs

Sr. No.	Themes	Total Response	Responses (%)
1	Natural Disasters	30	100
2	Terrorism	30	100
3	Lack of commitment of Government	27	90
4	Implementation gap by education leaders	25	83
5	Lack of funds	25	83
6	Lack of facilities	24	80
7	Poverty	22	73
8	Insecurity for girls	21	70
9	Lack of schools especially for girls	20	67
10	Lack of coordination among provinces	19	63
11	Lawlessness	18	60
12	Unemployment among educated person	18	60
13	Lack of accountability	17	57
14	Religious and political pressure groups	15	50

1. Natural disasters

100 % respondents think that due to natural disasters Pakistan could not achieve MDGs. Pakistan had faced many natural disasters. In the beginning of the new century (2005) a heavy earth quack had destroyed everything in Northern part of Pakistan. Almost all schools buildings of these areas were damaged (Government of Pakistan, 2015). About 10 billion people were homeless due to this earth quack. The government had to use almost all her financial resources to settle the people. In the same way, in 2009 and 2012 heavy floods had damaged many school buildings in the plain areas of Pakistan (Government of Pakistan, 2015).

2. Terrorism

All 30 (100 %) respondents think that terrorism is major cause of failure of Pakistan in achieving MDGs. Terrorism is one major cause of not achieving DMGs. Due to strategic partnership with USA in war against Afghanistan, many Pakhtoon (Afghani+ Pakistani) start terrorism in Pakistan especially in province of Khayber Pakhtoon Khaw. Girls' schools were closed in this area. Hence, our target of Education for All, and equality of education of both gender could not be achieved.

3. Lack of commitment of Government

Opinions of 90 % respondents show that lack of commitment is the second main reason of not achieving MDGs. Respondents told that central, provincial and district government were not committed for the said purpose. It was also found that mostly educational ministers had no knowledge of MDGs. Due to negligence of education officers, education minister, and government, MDGs was given preference and as a result Pakistan fail to achieve MDG 2.

4. Implementation gap by education leaders

25 respondents (83 %) had also pointed out that, there was implementation gap between education leaders and administrators in achieving MDGs. Educational leaders were not committed to achieve MDGs.

5. Lack of funds

Lack of funds was also one reason of not achieving MDGs as per opinions of 25 experts. It was proposed by UNSECO to

allocate 4 % of GDP on education for developing countries (Saduruddin, 2013). In the light of this recommendation Government of Pakistan had decided to increase her budget on education from 2 % to 4 % of GDP (Government of Pakistan, 2015) but unluckily, budget could not be allocated as per government decision. Budgets history of Pakistan from 2001 to 2015 proofs that almost two (02) % of budgets were allocated for education which show complete negligence of Government.

6. Lack of facilities

80 % respondents pointed out that there is lack of educational facilities for students in Pakistan. Transport facilities are not available to students. There is also shortage of health and hygienic facilities. Absence of boundary wall, clean drinking water, and furniture etc. are common in schools problems in schools. A lot number of primary schools consisted on single teachers and single room. Due to this Pakistan could not achieve MDGs.

7. Poverty

According to 73 % experts, poverty among people is also one reason of failing to achieve MDGs. Respondents told that poor people prefer to send their male children on work rather than to school. Education is not priority for parent of poor girls. Early marriages of girls are still in practice in some areas although it is banned by law in Pakistan.

8. Insecurity for girls

70 % respondents views indicated that due to insecurity of girls, is also the reason of not achieving MDGs. Security system for girls does not exist in public sector schools. Government has not formulated any policy for the said purpose. In remote areas of country, this problem is found too much. As our society is very conscious for protection of their girls, therefore, people do not take any risk especially in villages, for which the enrolment of girls could not be increased. Therefore, MDGs could not be achieved.

9. Lack of schools especially for girls

67 % respondents views showed that lack of schools for girls is also reason of low enrollment and retention in girls. Number of schools for girls are very small, therefore girls cannot be enrolled. There should be access of school for girls within walking distance, so that every poor and rich girl can go to

school with her parents or alone. But unfortunately, there is shortage of schools especially for girls. There are many villages which have no school. In such cases almost half of boys enroll nearby schools and go to school mostly on foot, but less than 10 % girls enroll in such schools. In urban areas, population is too large while schools are very short. Hence many students cannot get admission in any schools.

10. Lack of coordination among provinces

According to 63 % respondents, lack of coordination among provinces is also cause of low achievement of Pakistan in achieving MDGs. After 18th amendment in constitution of Pakistan, education is responsibility of provinces but the provinces were not well prepared for this job. They could not formulate any policy regarding MDGs. Performance of Punjab province was better. She had also made some structure and reform in education sector for Universalisation of Primary Education like “No Child left Behind”, “Cent percent enrollment and zero dropout rate” at elementary level. But unfortunately neither other provinces had taken any help from this advance province nor they had developed their own system.

11. Lawlessness

60 % experts considered that lawlessness is also cause of failure in achieving MDGs. As it is major problem of our country. Worker, junior and senior administrators do not take serious of any government policy. Therefore, they do not take care of seniors orders and plan. They mostly break the law and no one ask why they had done so. As a result many good programs could not be implemented in past. Experts think that due to lawlessness, educational targets were not achieved.

12. Unemployment among educated person

60 % respondents told that lake of employment, and underemployment among educated person is also reason of low performance in education. There is unemployment in our country. This ratio is very high in educated person. It had disappointed the people from education. Mostly people relate the education with jobs. Due to unemployment and under employment of educated person, many people do not like to send their children in schools rather they prefer to send their children in workshop to lean some skill for future life.

13. Lack of accountability

According to opinion of 53 % experts, there is lack of accountability in government department especially in department of education in our county. There is very poor system of check and balance in education departments of all provinces. Physically minor or major penalties are not in practice in the administrative units of country except in the province of Punjab. This is why, that some targets of MDGs were achieved in Punjab only. Due to absence of check and balance in education department, targets of MDGs were not achieved.

14. Pressure groups

Opinions of 50 % experts showed that pressure groups had also affected our education targets. There are two types of pressure groups, religious group and political groups. They are also hurdle in the way of educational improvement. Factor of Taliban is its example. They think that the present formal education is against Islam, especially for girls.

Recommendations

For achieving Sustainable Development Goal, it is recommended that;

1. Federal as well as provincial governments should allocate at least 4 % of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education.
2. Government should open new schools to ensure access of schools within two (2) Kilo Meter of students' residence, especially for girls. Otherwise there must be free transport facilities to the nearby school.
3. Up to secondary level, Education should be free and compulsory as per constitution of Pakistan.
4. In backward areas, there should be some incentives for girls as it is practiced in Southern Punjab and some remote districts of KPK.
5. Hard areas allowance may be introduced for the teachers serving in far furlong and hard areas of Pakistan.
6. Adult literacy program may be introduced for uneducated adult at their work places as well as at home. Employer must be bound to free such adult at least for one hour. For this purpose,

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university graduate may be employed initially for one year or till their regular appointment.

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