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RESEARCH ARTICLE

INVESTIGATING THE CORE FACTORS BEHIND IMPLEMENTATION GAPS IN EDUCATIONAL POLICIES OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The research paper intends to investigate the core reasons behind the implementation gaps that exist within the educational policies of Pakistan. The research paper takes a qualitative research approach and presents a concise overview of the related literature to provide an insight over the issues that have been creating footraces in the way of educational policy implementation. The research finds that there are some critical obstructive areas like mismanagement of financial resources, ideological differences among various ruling elite, lack of political will, low quality level of teachers training, corrupt system, minimum follow ups, weak monitoring system, deprived policy evaluations and absence of visionary leadership that have jointly worked to create flaws within the education system that in turn has created several gaps in the implementation of the educational policies. The research also finds that there has been no systematic continuity in the formulation of educational policies that has drawn obvious impacts upon the implementation process as well. The research concludes that the Pakistani sector is not facing the real problem in the policy formulation areas because on paper the educational sector has ideal policies documented from time to time but the actual problem exists in form of gaps that are found in the implementation of these policies created by the above mentioned factors.

INTRODUCTION

Education policy refers to the procedure and process decided to adopt for assuring the progress of education sector in the desired direction. An adequate educational policy is supposed to address the key issues and concerns being faced by an educational system in a country. However, the formulation of educational policy could not be seen as solution to any problem rather their success depend upon the fact that how well the policies have been implemented and penetrated within the system and society. In Pakistan efforts have been made from time to time to design and implement educational policy that can provide effective base for progression in the education field however, these efforts have so far failed to gain the desired outcomes. According to Educational Development Index (EDI) Pakistan is seriously struggling to provide education to its people and has been standing at 120th rank out of 144 countries in terms of providing literacy to its people because the literacy rate is around 59% and these are the people who can just write their names only and could not truly be regarded as educated population.

Problem Statement: Education plays vital role in the development of societies.

The countries neglecting the importance of education would never be able to take effective step towards prosperity and development. In order to nurture an educated generation it is imperative to formulate effective educational policies that could prepare people to meet the challenges of upcoming time and play constructive roles in the development of their country and society. Formulation of effective educational policies must be backed by proper implementation so that the people of the country could actually receive the benefits from the educational policies. Unfortunately, Pakistan is lagging behind various developed and developing nation in providing adequate education to its people and the core reason behind this malfunctioning is lack of proper implementation of the educational policies that have been designed from time to time. Researchers studied have confirmed that there are various implementation gaps within the educational policies of Pakistan due to which it is not serving people significantly. Keeping in view the importance of education for national development, it is imperative to identify the factors that have been creating implementation gaps so that appropriate measures could be taken for the rectification of these gaps. This research paper hence strived to enlist the factors behind implementation gaps in education sector so that these areas would be improved to assure better performance of the

education sector in coming days. UNESCO (2000) also discloses that the primary level enrolment in Pakistan is as low as 59% among males and 66% among female due to which the country has been considerably lagging behind other countries of the world; even other Asian countries with respect to the literacy rate. Education affects the skills level as well as professional competencies of the population due to which there are vast majority of people in Pakistan that are not able to play positive and constructive role in the development of the country. If provided with adequate education the people could be expected to support the economic growth of Pakistan because education has provided its significant role in fuelling up the prosperity and economic growth of the countries across the globe. It has been found that Pakistani government had formulated several educational policies during different years that tend to address the issues and problems being faced by the educational sector however, due to lack of proper implementation of these policies, the education system is yet to receive true benefits from these policies. Reckoning the importance of understanding the factors behind the implementation gap of education policies in Pakistan, this research paper strived to present a concise overview of the related research studies and presents the analysis of the literature to sort out the core reasons responsible for creating implementation gap in the educational system of Pakistan.

Literature Review

Laauwen (2004) finds that when a policy is formulated, the practical shape of its ideas and structure are decided by the way it is implemented within the system. In order to significantly affect the system it is imperative for a policy to be implemented properly so that it could be reflected through all the activities and practices. Bukhari (1995) explains that proper implementation of policies is very important to assure that the education policies really meet the objectives defined in the policy. Proper implementation of policy assures that the objectives of the policy makers are attained through providing directives to the concerned people. Parvaiz(1994) found that for a developing country like Pakistan education could serve as a mean of seeking development and prosperity however, it could never support the development of nation until and unless adequate policies are formulated and implemented in the sector. Haq and Haq (1998) found that proper implementation of education policy always remain a critical problem area for Pakistan and for decades there is poor implementation practice of education policy beings commenced in Pakistan. Bhatti *et al*(2010) find that after more than six days of establishment Pakistan is not able to provide proper education to its people neither it has developed strong infrastructure that can support the education related activities and this weakness is affecting the progress of Pakistan in every sector because due to lack of educated population Pakistan is lagging behind in several sectors.

Aly (2007) finds that the implementation of policies always remains a critical issue for education sector in Pakistan because there is widespread mismanagement and misallocation of financial resources. The funds are not evenly distributed among the receivers due to which the activities decided in the educational policies are never conducted in the way they are proposed. Rasool (2007) find that the education sector supervisors and authorities have lost their credibility due to wide range of corruption and mismanagement activities that have been practices for decades in this sector. Shahid (1985)

also pointed out the fact that educational policies are never truly implemented in Pakistan because there is lack of political will among the leadership. Butt (1996) mentions that the teachers in Pakistan are not well educated and well trained enough to conduct high level of activities with the students and this is also an important reason due to which the educational policies fail to practically implement. The initiatives designed in the policies usually need motivated and skilled staff and when the untrained and less skilled staffs is provided with these policies they remain unable to act according to the requirements of the policies. Malik (1999) noticed that Pakistan has been run by different ideologies and there is no uniformity of ideas among the ruling class due to which the education sector is also restructured from time to time. From nationalization to Islamization and privatization, the education sector of Pakistan has went through various ups and downs due to which there is no proper policy structure followed and frequent changes in the political structure has always kept the education sector also destabilized for several decades. Rashid (2004) discloses that the overall attitude of people associated with the educational sector is very irresponsible and non-serious due to which there is lack of proper communication among different stakeholders and eventually the policy goals are never met. Akbar (1995) finds that the mechanism developed for the transmission and implementation of policies in Pakistan is too weak and poor that the policies always fail to meet the desired goals. Abbas (1994) mentions that the corruption in the system usually puts the teachers and educationalists under pressure either it is political and social due to which they are not able to properly utilize the funds provided for the educational improvement neither they are able to properly train the staff to provide quality standard education to the students.

METHODOLOGY

This research paper is focused on the motive of identifying the reasons behind the implementation gaps within the education policies of Pakistan. In this regard, the research work has been carried out using a qualitative research approach. A vast amount of related literature has been accessed from different secondary sources like books, magazines, journal articles, research reports, education policy documents, review reports and other information portals. The information accessed from these sources has been examined to understand the factors that could be credited for creating implementation gaps in educational policies. The analysis has allowed understanding and listing out these factors and some recommendations are also made in order to deal with the identified factors effectively so that these problems could be resolved in best possible manner and the education sector could progress in right direction.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Review of related literature conducted around the topic of educational policies and their implementation of Pakistan allowed having deep insight to the issue. It has been found that there are some major issues that are effecting the progress of education sector in Pakistan by creating gaps and barriers in the process of implementation of education policies. The review of literature the research study finds following major issues responsible for creating gaps in implementation of education policies in Pakistan.

Mismanagement of Financial Resources: This is one of the most important reasons that has created gap in the implementation of the educational policies. The literature explains that for several years it has become obvious that the finance allocated for various educational activities never reach its destination. The people involved in the distribution of the funds are corrupt and most of the times only small proportion of the funds is actually provided to the institutions according to the announced policy. Due to this reason, the teachers are not provided with quality training neither the educational activities are conducted for the students in satisfying manner. Moreover, mismanagement in the financial resources also affect the infrastructure and most of the schools and other educational institutions specially those located in rural areas have very bad infrastructure despite the fact that funds have been granted for their maintenance from time to time. The conditions of most of the government schools in urban and rural areas is so bad that they are not providing regular educational activities to the students and have been closed for years thou the funds have been provided by the government for their maintenance but these funds are not utilized for the decided purpose (Ahmad, 1998).

Corruption: The mismanagement of financial resources is backed by corruption but in addition there are some other damages also that are caused by corruption to the educational sector. The hiring process is not purely based on merit in Pakistan. The government schools have teachers that are mostly hired against their political or racial affiliations either through reference or through domicile or quota system (Ghaffar, 1992). Due to this biased hiring the competent teachers remain unable to reach these schools and the studies of the students are badly affected. Moreover, the issue of ghost employees is also very common and there are uncountable teachers who have been receiving their salaries at home without attending the schools for several years or months. In this way corruption has been damaging the backbone of the educational system allowing none of the educational policy to play its role in the development of the sector (Jatoi, 1995).

Absence of Highly trained and skilled staff: This reasons is also linked with the above two mentioned factors. This is because of the financial mismanagement and corruption that the teachers in Pakistan are not provided by adequate training and skills development opportunities. Government and some NGOs or international bodies have been providing finance for the training of teachers in Pakistan during different time. However, due to corrupt system and mismanagement of monitory funds, the training is not actually provided to the teachers and even if some training programs are arranged to satisfy the sponsors or government, these are not up to the international standards and only small proportion of funds is utilized in these training and rest is distributed among the people involved.

Ideological Differences among changing ruling class: This is a real unfortunate fact for the education sector of Pakistan that after each change in the political and ruling system the educational system is also diverted towards new goals according to the ideologies held by the ruling elite. Pakistan has gone through different phases of military and civilian rule and during these rules the governments have done their best to impose their philosophies and ideologies to the nation by making changes in the educational policies and system. During the early years there was trend of nationalization of the

educational institutions however, due to the corrupt system and mismanagement the government owned or national educational institutions fail to perform at high level. The Zia era influenced by his Islamization policy changed in the educational system by adding the essence of extremism among students. The political oppression result in the creation of various students' political organization and the actual purpose of educational institutions was damaged. Later, the trend of privatization created a general of private educational institutions that use to provide education but there are lot of variations in the standard of education provided by these private institutions. The fee of the private institutions is also higher than the government ones but due to trend of commercialization the actual transfer of knowledge and skills in the students is not practiced in many of private institutions also.

Weak monitoring and Evaluation system: Akbar (1995) elaborates that specific, perfect and clear policy directives produce creativity and adaptability which helps in the effective implementation as well. On the other hand, less precise directive does not leave room for the policy implementers to use their prudence and flexibility which is normally needed for better policy implementation. According to Bukhari (1995) it must also be ensured that not just information rather a highly relevant and adequate information, as well as strong monitoring and evaluation system needed for implementation of educational policy

Lack of Political Will and Visionary Leadership: The political instability has also make contributions in ruining the education sector of Pakistan by creating various gaps in it. This is unfortunate fact hat the leaders in Pakistan have no vision regarding educating the masses and their promises are never met with regard of providing sufficient funds to different schools and other institutions. From time to time the ruling class and politicians use to make promises and show their commitment towards the betterment of the educational system but in practical these commitments and promises are not met and there is no proper implementation of the educational policies introduced by the governments and authorities. The issue of the control over the educational system always remain an area of interest for the ruling class because with control of these institutions they would become able to control the funds that have been allocated to them. According to the 18th amendment made in the constitution, the provincial governments have been given the responsibility of managing the educational sector at their level. This step was taken keeping in view the fact that there are different needs and resources available to each province so they can manage their education system according to their own circumstances. As a result, the provincial budgets use of allot different amount for education in each province and there is variation in the educational system across the country. It was expected that provincial supervision will make it easy for the respective government to manage their education system however the government educational institutions are by and large facing problems almost in all provinces.

Conclusion

The research paper explores the core reasons behind the implementations gaps in the education policies of Pakistan. The student has been carried out by reviewing the related literature around the topic. It has been found that for many decades the educational sector of Pakistan has been struggling to provide standard education but it widely fails because the

formulation and implementation of the educational policy has several gaps. With the help of the review of the related literature, the research paper finds that there are several important factors behind this gap. Some of the core reasons identified in the research study include financial resources mismanagement, corruption, lack of political will, variation in the ideology of ruling class and lack of adequate and advanced teacher training. As a result of these issues, the educational policies in Pakistan are not serving the sector in the best way. The research paper concludes that all of the above mentioned issues need to be resolved at an immediate basis. The government and the operators of the education sector need to understand the sensitivity of the situation. They have to understand that the country could not progress in the right direction until and unless it gets significant and strong support from the education system. When the intentions of the ruling class would be pure and honest towards the system there would be chances that they will end or at least reduce the mismanagement practice and corruption. The people have to perform an important role in the scenario because they can elect people in the election whom they believe are really honest and concerned towards providing education in Pakistan. Improvement in monitoring and evaluation system of implementation process has been needed. The change within the sector is the foremost demand of the situation but it could not be brought in short time but the governments have to take initiatives at the soonest possible time to assure that in coming days the educational system would be effective and supportive towards the national development.

Future research: This research study accepts its limitations that due to lack of time and sources, this review of literature could not thoroughly explore some of the other major reasons for poor policy implementation in the education system of Pakistan. Therefore, it is suggested that a more vast and sufficient qualitative and quantitative analysis should be carried out into the problem of poor policy implementation in Pakistan so that the system of education is able to function appropriately and achieve the national goals.

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