

## **Impact of Devolution on Enrolment Rate at Primary School Level in Selected Districts of the Punjab**

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### **Abstract**

Drop out may be considered as a subsidiary problem or cause of low enrolment. Pakistan has been facing scores of educational problems from the day of independence. This article addresses the impact of educational devolution on students' enrolment among different district (from developed districts with high literacy rate to under developed districts with low literacy rate) and their rural and urban areas at primary level in Punjab. Four Districts were randomly selected, which covers the high, low medium and medium high literacy rate and also examine the enrolment from urban and rural areas of the similar selected districts of the Punjab. Data regarding enrolment were collected from Program Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU). Devolution has drastically influenced the enrolment rates at primary level, mostly the rural areas from the developed districts and low literacy rate districts of the Punjab. Thus the finding supports the statement that the devolution has positive impact on the participation rate of students and similarly it also increased literacy rate of poor as well as rich districts of the Punjab at primary level. This may lead Pakistan towards the accomplishment of universalization of the primary education an important agenda of the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDG).

**Keywords:** Devolution, enrolment rate, Punjab districts, rural urban areas, primary schools

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### **Introduction**

Decentralization has become a globalized policy since the beginning of 1980s. Large number of countries around the world has formulated such policy and

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many have also implemented it like U.S.A (Dawn, 2007). It is hot debatable issues in developing and under developing countries. Decentralization is the delegation of power and authority of decision making from federal to local level to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of low level management (Khan and Mirza, 2010). Decentralization also encourages greater participation of community and financial support of school. It can also increase the enrolment rate of poor district and rural areas to give quality education. Decentralization saves money, improve management efficiency and flexibility, raise require revenue, and administrative responsibility should be distributed (Rondinelli, 1983: Florestal, Cooper, 1997 & Grauwe, et. al, 2005) “A Decentralized system is one which requires multiple parties to make their own independent decisions (Kare, 2006) The organization will work more better and effective way when implementer have a right and say in decision making process.

Devolution in education is the transfer of authority from provincial to central or local level to improve the deficiencies in education.

As international studies shows that the result of decentralization are positive but in some countries it gives less benefit to education because of its weak management. The debate on decentralization has always been a contentious one. It has been argued that in many of the least developed countries the decentralization of public services, including education, has not been the result of an internal debate, even if there was a conviction that such a policy would lead to higher quality services. Pressure from the local authorities or communities, who demand a more participatory decision-making process, has generally been absent (De Grauwe, Lugaz, Baldé, Diakhaté, Dougnon, Moustapha, & Odushina, 2005). The common problems which effect the effective implementation of decentralization in many countries are the internal political instability and external global relation with other countries. The overall aim of decentralization is to improve quality, access, finance, management, equity of education and to fulfill the need of teachers and society (Khan, 2010). Most developed countries have achieved full enrollment at the primary level includingsome developing countries such as Albania, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Russia and others (Heredia, 2007).

### **Devolution in Pakistan:**

Pakistan had a weak educational setup at the time of independence. Most of the people were illiterate and numbers of educational institutions were insufficient for educating people. In Pakistan, usually educational administration has been practiced through centralized system. For decentralization of education administration, each province was divided into divisions comprising of four to six Districts (Khan, 2010).

The government of Pakistan has undertaken devolution to facilitate people centered participation, greater accountability and transparency. As a part of these overall reforms as stated in Provincial Local Government Ordinance, 2001 and reflected in Education Sector Reform Action Plan 2001-2005, the districts rather than the provinces, have become the operational tiers of governance and the focus of all development activity. The main purpose of this devolution is to improve the service delivery (UNESCO, 2003). The existing education system in Pakistan does not meet the need of society and could not fill the gap of education for all. From the start of 21<sup>st</sup> century Pakistan meet many challenges from provincial and district government so he decide to devolve some authority at local level to solve fiscal problem and to make some common decision. The main objective of devolution plan is to empower local management and community in planning, budgeting, recourse utilization, monitoring and evaluation to improve the service delivery at that level (Khan & Mirza, 2010). The main educational issues are; teacher absenteeism, increase in dropout rate of student at primary level, high repetition rate, low attrition rate, poor performance of teacher and lack of basic facilities

The factor which were diversely affect enrolment of primary school student in Pakistan are, mostly schools in rural area are situated far away from homes so distance to primary school is big problem of low enrollment especially of girls. Poverty is another problem. Illiterate parents did not allow their children to attend school. In poor districts lack of basic facilities in schools was the big problem. Mostly in village area the harsh attitude of teachers toward student and corporal punishment are the reason to leave the school. Defective textbooks and curriculum which is beyond the comprehension level of students and as well teacher. Lack of separate schools for girls is the other problem of the religious thought parents (Shah 2003). The other reason is unattractive/unfamiliar environment of the school. In some hilly areas natural calamities is the reason of low enrollment. Only 63% of Pakistani children finish primary school education (UNESCO, 2006). USAID has launched Whole District Initiative (WDI) to make district-level education system fully functional with a view to ensuring 90 per cent enrolment of children (Dawn, 2003)

Poor distract school teachers and administrative staff face many constrains and problems like refreshable course for teacher. Lack of school facilities and funding problems, due to these reasons teachers are very strict and give corporal punishment to student. Limited recourses like, less equipment of laboratories student didn't able to do any practical work. Low salaries of teacher and Accountability of teachers is challenging (Howley, 2005). After devolution in Pakistan the development and non-development budget were transferred to district level. For year 2002/03, each district

was provided a single line transfer in the provincial budget. Most of the districts adopted the given budget as their own, with minor changes in some cases with the authority of making budget district can solve many problems related to students and teachers (Hagedorn, 2005).

Devolution also increase literacy rate of rich and poor district of Punjab. The low literacy rate is in Ranjpur district 30.18% and was high in Gujrate by 93.11%. Devolution play effective role in increasing enrolment rate and decreasing teacher turnover in poor as well as in rich district of Punjab (UNESCO, 2010). According to Khan & Mirza, (2010) there was an impressive increase in the enrolment rate of boys and girls in low literacy rate district from pre-devolution to post devolution in Punjab at primary level.

This study is conducted to find out the impact of devolution on enrolment rate in rich or poor districts and rural urban areas of Punjab at primary level. The purpose of this study was to witness weather devolution is able to increase the enrollment rate in rural areas where literacy rate was very low and children's are deprived from basic facilities and also the study may help in exploring that the enrolment rate was increase in post devolution era of poor district. The aim of the study is to define interlink between students enrollment in rich and poor districts and in rural urban areas of Punjab.

### **Participation Rate of student:**

Participation rate can be defined as the ratio between the enrollments in the school-age range to the total population of that age range.(web search) we consider here enrollment as the participation rate of school going children at primary level.

### **Objectives of the study**

This study attempts to:

- Discover whether devolution in education has helped in increasing enrollment rate at primary level.
- Analyze the increase or decrease in the enrolment rate of students with respect to gender at primary level.
- Explore the way of how devolution improves the students' participation rate with respect to location at primary level.

### **Population and sample of the Study**

The population of the study was the primary school students of four districts of the Punjab. To get the true representative sample out of accessible population, 35

districts of the Punjab province were randomly selected and placed under the four following categories according to the literacy rate therein:

Category A: High literacy rate districts

Category B: Medium literacy rate district

Category C: Medium low literacy rate districts

Category D: Low literacy rate districts

### ***Categorization of Districts Based on Literacy Rate***

Sr. No	Category of district	Rank order by literacy rate	Literacy rate range	Name of districts	Total No. of districts
1.	A	1-10	93.11 % to 71.82%	Gujarat, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Jhelum, Gujranwala, Narowal, Lahore, Attock, MandiBahauddin	9
2.	B	11-19	69.98% to 62.21%	Chakwal, Faisalabad, TobaTekSingh, Sargodha, Sahiwal, Sheikhpura, Mianwali, Hafizabad, Multan	9
3.	C	20-27	58.99% to 50.28%	Khushab, Layyah, Vehari, Kasur, Pakpattan, Jhang, Khanewal, Bhakkar	8
4	D	28-34	49.49% to 30.18%	Bahawalnagar, Okara, Bahawalpur, Lodhran, Rahim Yar Khan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur	8

*Source: UNESCO 2010 (Age 10 years and above).*

### **Procedure of data collection**

Data regarding enrolment rates of student of rich and poor district as well as rural urban areas of these districts at primary level from 2003 to 2009 were obtained through PMIU.

**Bahawalnagar:** is the district of Punjab province situated on the boarder of Indo-Pak. The old name of Bahawalnagar was "RojhanWaali". Its total area is 8,878 kilometer

and its population is 2,584,786 people. School going population is 242115 (from Kachi to grade 8). The literacy rate of district in 2008 was 49.49 (Bahawalnagar, 2010).

**Lahore:** is the capital city of Punjab. The total area is 1772 kilometer and it has a population of 10,000,000 people (the true knowledge). School going population is 231686. The literacy rate of district in 2008 was 76.67 (Lahore, 2010).

**Mianwali:** is situated in the west of Punjab province but it is located almost at the center of the Pakistan. The district cover an area of 6975 sq.km and its population is 1056,420 (786 Isakhel, 2006). The literacy rate of Mianwali in 2008 was 64.25 (Mianwali, 2010).

**Attock:** is the big district of Punjab. District located in the north-west border of Punjab. The district covers an area of 6,857 kilometer (linkvi, 2006) and its population is 1.58 million. The literacy rate of Attock in 2008 was 75.04 (Attock, 2010).

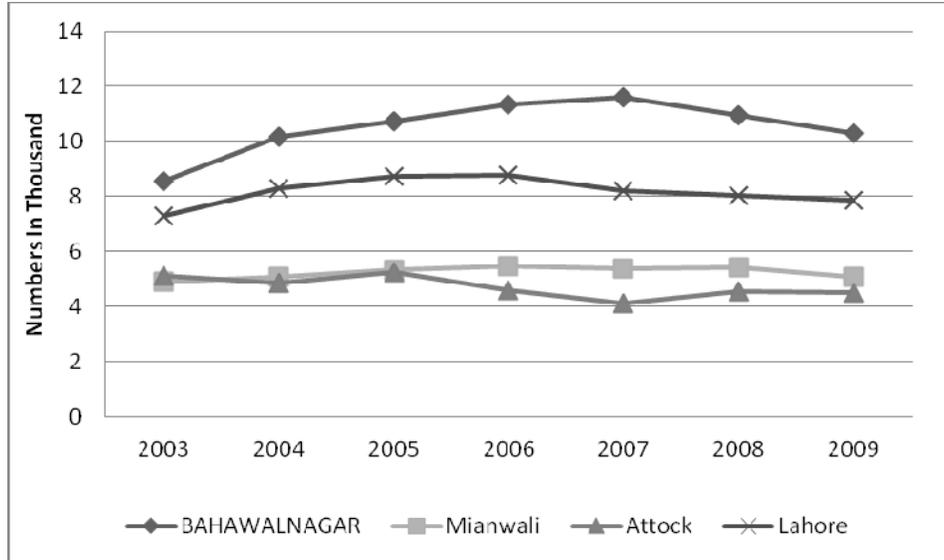
**Results:** results and interpretation of the study are given below:

### Male Student's Participation Rate at Primary Level

Proceeding table and graph represent year wise data of participation and fluctuation rate of four district of Punjab from 2003 to 2009. It shows the statistical data of boy's enrolment rate in four district of Punjab.

**Table 1: By District Boys' Enrolment and Fluctuation Rate at Primary Level (year wise)**

Year	Bahawalnagar		Mianwali		Attock		Lahore	
	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation
2003	85433		48830		51037		73119	
2004	101810	19.17	50880	4.20	48566	-4.84	82816	13.26
2005	107377	5.47	53470	5.09	52348	7.79	87227	5.33
2006	113318	5.53	54559	2.04	45856	-12.40	87921	0.80
2007	116217	2.56	53808	-1.38	41338	-9.85	82128	-6.59
2008	109711	-5.60	54068	0.48	45752	10.68	80538	-1.94
2009	103213	-5.92	50743	-6.15	44890	-1.88	78557	-2.46



**Figure 1- By District Boys' Enrolment at Primary Level (year wise)**

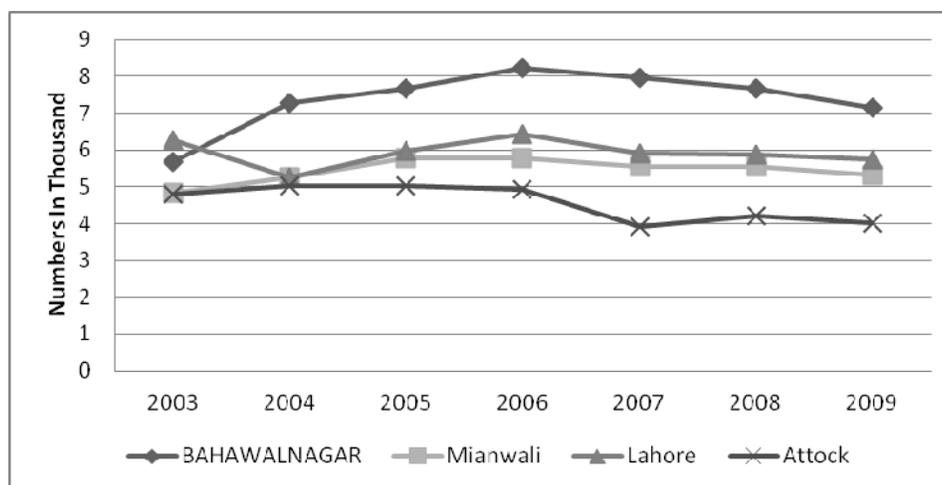
Figure 1 depicts the data in Table 1 on a schematic form. The results show that there was an impressive increase of overall participation rate in Bahawalnagar in 2007 as compared to 2008. The rate of student enrolment increased and decreased with every passing year. This means devolution has more positive impact for district with low literacy rate at primary level in Punjab.

**Girls' Enrolment at Primary Level (Year Wise)**

Above table and graph shows the Year wise participation and fluctuation rate of girls from four districts of Punjab at primary level are presented in table 2 and in graph.

**Table 2: Girls'Enrolment at Primary Level (Year Wise)**

Year	Bahawalnagar		Mianwali		Attock		Lahore	
	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation
2003	56733		48220		47839		62758	
2004	72613	27.99	52620	9.12	50222	4.98	52544	-16.28
2005	76800	5.77	57659	9.58	50287	0.13	59630	13.49
2006	82147	6.96	57806	0.25	49342	-1.88	64357	7.93
2007	79672	-3.01	55590	-3.83	39219	-20.52	59103	-8.16
2008	76812	-3.59	55334	-0.46	42206	7.62	58683	-0.71
2009	71546	-6.86	53327	-3.63	39991	-5.25	57281	-2.39



**Figure 2 - By District Girls' Enrolment at Primary Level (Year Wise)**

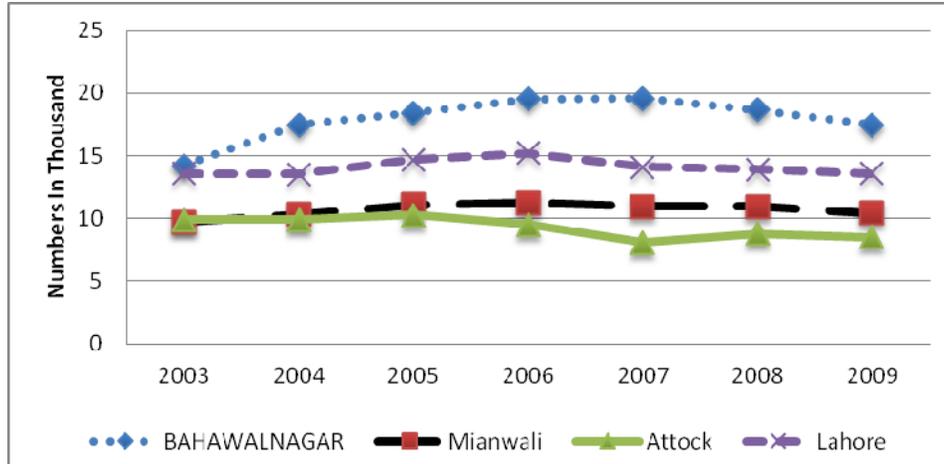
The district with low literacy rate like Bahawalnagar and Mianwali able to improve girls' participation at primary classes and the district with high literacy rate like Attock and Lahore have low progression in improving its participation rate. The enrolment rate of girls of Lahore and Mianwali slightly increased in 2006. District Attock has a low enrolment rate of girls and boys from other three districts. The data of this research shows that Bahawalnagar has a high enrolment rate of both boys and girls from Lahore Mianwali and Attock.

#### **Total Number of Enrolment at Primary Level (Year Wise)**

Proceeding data and graphs shows the Total participation and fluctuation rate of boys and girls in four district of Punjab is shown in table 3 and figure as above.

**Table 3: By District Enrolment and Fluctuation Rate at Primary Level (Year Wise)**

Year	Bahawalnagar		Mianwali		Attock		Lahore	
	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation
2003	142166		97050		98876		135877	
2004	174423	22.69	103500	6.65	98788	-0.1	135360	-0.38
2005	184177	5.59	111129	7.37	102635	3.9	146857	8.49
2006	195465	6.13	112365	1.11	95198	-7.2	152278	3.69
2007	195889	0.22	109398	-2.64	80557	-15.4	141231	-7.25
2008	186523	-4.78	109402	0.00	87958	9.2	139221	-1.42
2009	174759	-6.31	104070	-4.87	84881	-3.5	135838	-2.43



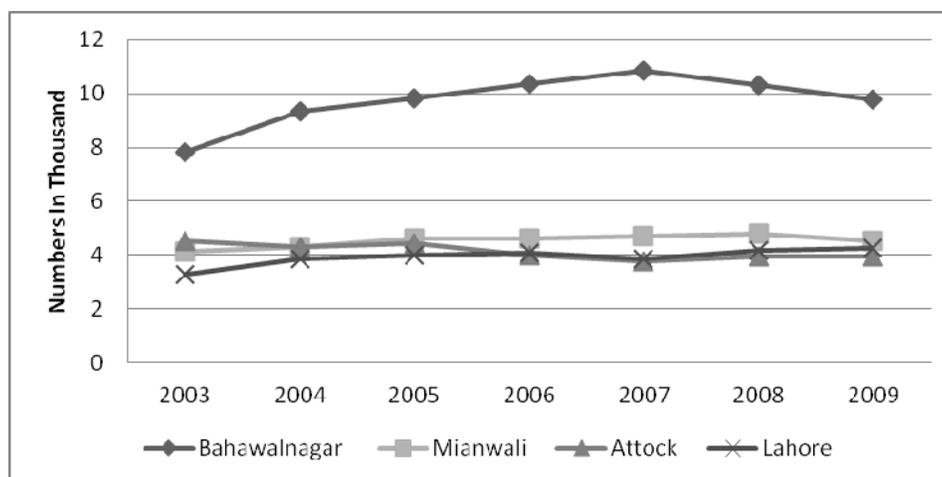
**Figure 3: By District Enrolment and Fluctuation Rate at Primary Level (Year Wise)**

Finding of the results shows that Political unstable condition of the country effect badly the participation rate of primary age going children of all districts of Punjab. The progress through devolution can be seen in the low literacy rate district like Bahawalnagar with high participation rate from other three districts. Devolution also influences the district Mianwali and increases their participation rate. In 2005 the total enrolment of Attock was above from other years by 9.2%. Total participation rate of primary age going children increased in Lahore 2005 by 8.49%. Total participation rate of four districts greatly decreased in the year of 2009 because of unstable Scio-political condition of the country. As above figure shows that Bahawalnagar was on the top of other three districts. But its enrolment rate decreased 4 to 6 percent in 2009.

**Table 4- Male Enrolment Rate of Rural Area (Year Wise)**

Proceeding Statistic data and graph shows the enrolment rate of boys in rural area of four district of Punjab at primary level from 2003 to 2009.

Year	Bahawalnagar		Mianwali		Attock		Lahore	
	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation
2003	78116		41351		45340		32878	
2004	93275	19.41	43160	4.37	43167	-4.79	38518	17.15
2005	98459	5.56	46026	6.64	44348	2.74	39839	3.43
2006	103650	5.27	46075	0.11	39931	-9.96	40635	2.00
2007	108590	4.77	47071	2.16	37787	-5.37	38489	-5.28
2008	103123	-5.03	47988	1.95	39665	4.97	41671	8.27
2009	97755	-5.21	45396	-5.40	39367	-0.75	42815	2.75



**Figure 4: By District Male Enrolment in Rural Area at Primary Level (Year Wise)**

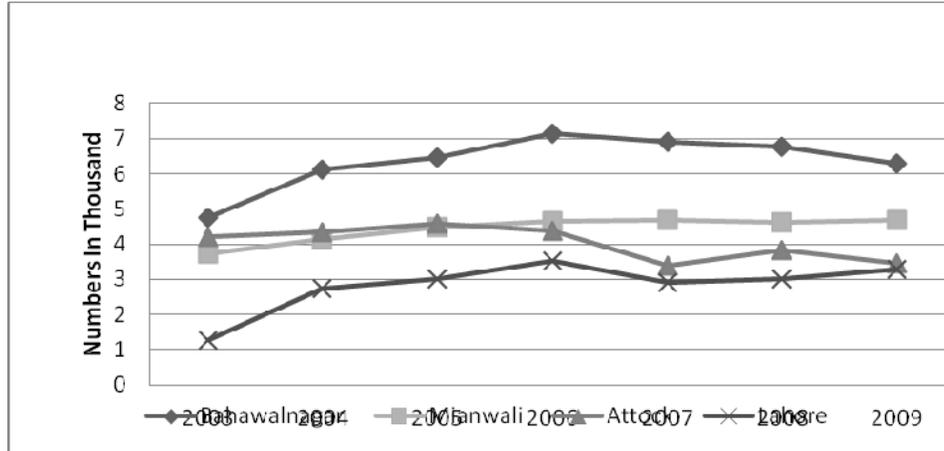
The empirical data shows that the participation rate of boys was very high in low literacy rate district (Bahawalnagar), and become very low in high literacy rate district like Lahore and Attock. This result proved that, Decentralization greatly influence district Bahawalnagar. We see dramatic down fall in the year of 2004 and 2005 but again sharp increase in the year of 2007 with low fluctuation 4.77%.

#### **Girls Enrolment in Rural Area at Primary Level (year wise)**

Proceeding Statistic table and graph shows the year wise participation and fluctuation rate of girls in rural area of four district of Punjab at primary level from 2003 to 2009.

**Table 5: By District Girls Enrolment at Primary Level (rural areas)**

Year	Bahawalnagar		Mianwali		Attock		Lahore	
	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation
2003	47379		37234		42031		12758	
2004	61019	28.79	41479	11.40	43555	3.63	27333	114.24
2005	64428	5.59	44674	7.70	45919	5.43	30059	9.97
2006	71209	10.52	46649	4.42	43674	-4.89	35226	17.19
2007	68970	-3.14	46812	0.35	34007	-22.13	29033	-17.58
2008	67505	-2.12	46204	-1.30	38281	12.57	30131	3.78
2009	62862	-6.88	46844	1.39	34378	-10.20	32846	9.01



**Figure 5: By District Girls' Enrolment at Primary Level (rural areas)**

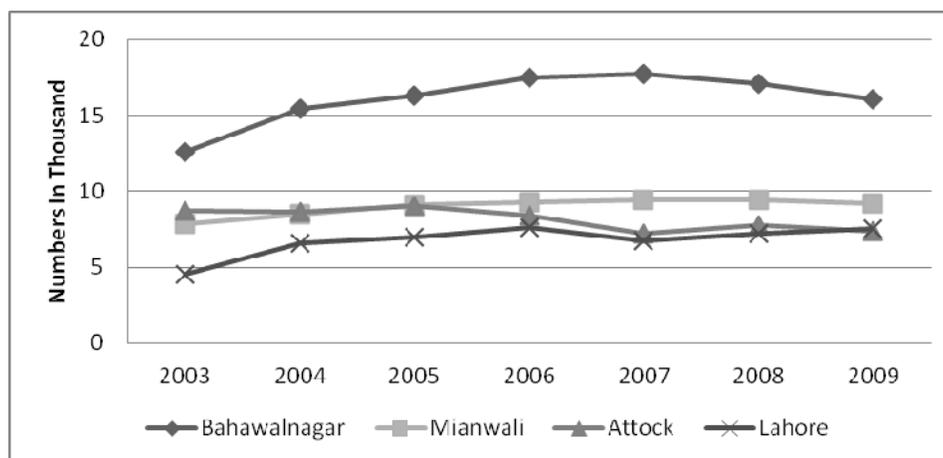
The rural areas of Bahawalnager were greatly influenced by the decentralization, with the highest participation rate of girls from all three districts at primary level.

**Total Enrolment in Rural Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**

Proceeding Statistic table and graph shows the year wise Total participation and fluctuation rate of students in rural area of four district of Punjab at primary level from 2003 to 2009. It shows the statistical data of total enrolment of rural teacher rate in four district of Punjab.

**Table 6: By District Enrolment Rate of Rural Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**

Year	Bahawalnagar		Mianwali		Attock		Lahore	
	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation
2003	125495		78585		87371		45636	
2004	154294	22.95	84639	7.70	86722	-0.74	65851	44.296
2005	162887	5.57	90700	7.16	90267	4.09	69898	6.146
2006	174856	7.35	92724	2.23	83605	-7.38	75861	8.531
2007	177560	1.55	93883	1.25	71794	-14.13	67522	-10.992
2008	170637	-3.90	94192	0.33	77946	8.57	71802	6.339
2009	160617	-5.87	92240	-2.07	73745	-5.39	75661	5.375



**Figure 6: By District Enrolment Rate in Rural Area at Primary Level (year wise)**

Bahawalnagar maintained its participation rate in rural areas as compared to Lahore. In Bahawalnagar the participation rate increased high every year except 2009 because of poor administrative system. During the period of 2003-06 the participation rate was high in both Mianwali and Attock but it started decreasing badly in Attock from 2007-09.

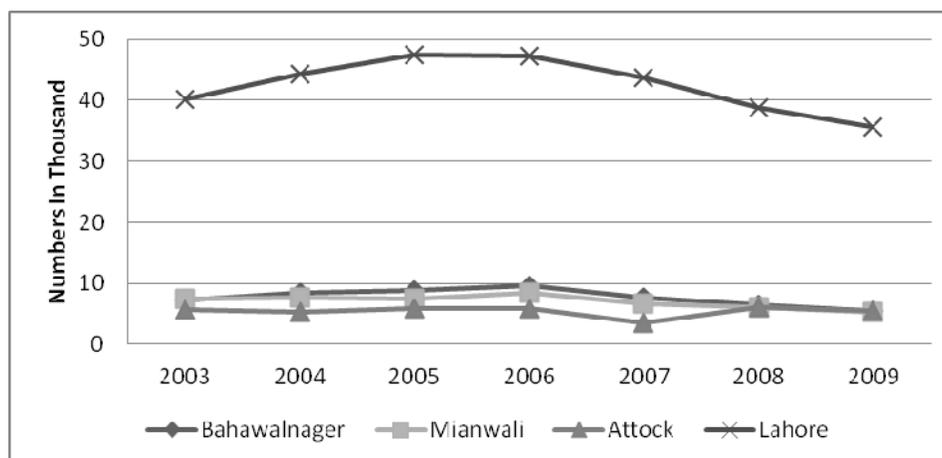
#### **Male Enrolment Rate of Urban Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**

Proceeding Statistic table and graph shows the year wise participation and fluctuation rate of male students in urban areas of four district of Punjab at primary level from 2003 to 2009.

**Table 7: By District Male Enrolment Rate of in Urban Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**

Year	Bahawalnagar		Mianwali		Attock		Lahore	
	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation
2003	7317		7479		5697		40241	
2004	8535	16.65	7720	3.22	5399	-5.23	44298	10.08
2005	8918	4.49	7444	-3.58	5939	10.00	47388	6.98
2006	9668	8.41	8484	13.97	5925	-0.24	47286	-0.22
2007	7627	-21.11	6737	-20.59	3551	-40.07	43639	-7.71
2008	6579	-13.74	6080	-9.75	6087	71.42	38867	-10.94
2009	5458	-17.04	5345	-12.09	5523	-9.27	35742	-8.04





**Figure 7: By District Enrolment in Urban Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**

There was a high increase in overall participation in 2005 in Lahore. But during the period of 2008-09 the participation rate kept decreasing 10% in Lahore. Statistical data shows that, in Lahore there was a high increase in enrolment in the year of 2005 and 2006. Decentralization seems to have good effect in district where literacy rate was already high. It also improved the participation rate of those districts where literacy rate was low. Bahawalnagar and Mianwali dramatically had great participation rate than Attock district, where literacy rate was high.

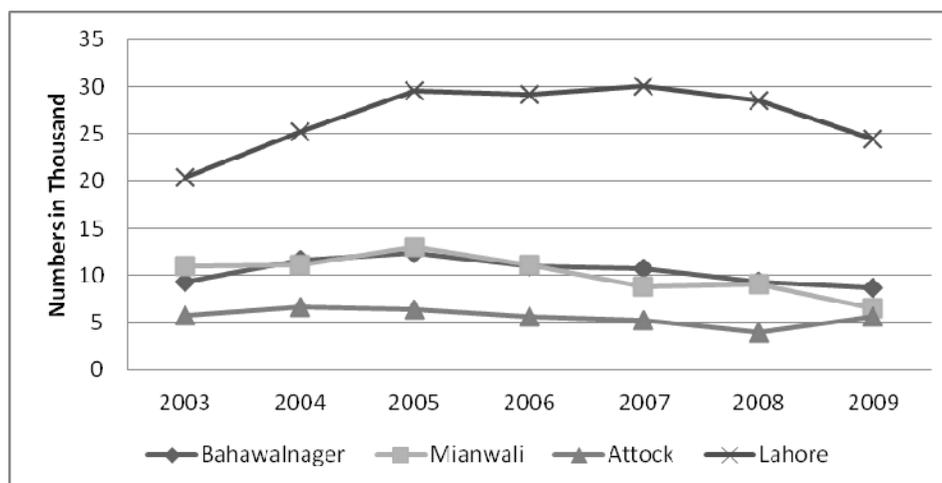
#### **By District Female Enrolment in Urban Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**

Proceeding Statistic table and graph shows the year wise participation and fluctuation rate of female students in urban areas of four district of Punjab at primary level from 2003 to 2009.

**Table 8: By District Number of Female Enrolment and Fluctuation Rate of Urban Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**

Year	Bahawalnagar		Mianwali		Attock		Lahore	
	Fluctuation	Fluctuation	Fluctuation	Fluctuation	Fluctuation	Fluctuation	Fluctuation	
2003	9354		10986		5808		20443	
2004	11594	23.95	11141	1.41	6667	14.79	25211	23.32
2005	12372	6.71	12985	16.55	6429	-3.57	29571	17.29
2006	10938	-11.59	11157	-14.08	5668	-11.84	29131	-1.49
2007	10702	-2.16	8779	-21.32	5212	-8.05	30070	3.22
2008	9307	-13.03	9130	4.01	3925	-24.69	28552	-5.05
2009	8684	-6.69	6483	-28.99	5613	43.01	24435	-14.42





**Figure 8: By District Girls' Enrolment Rate in Urban Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**

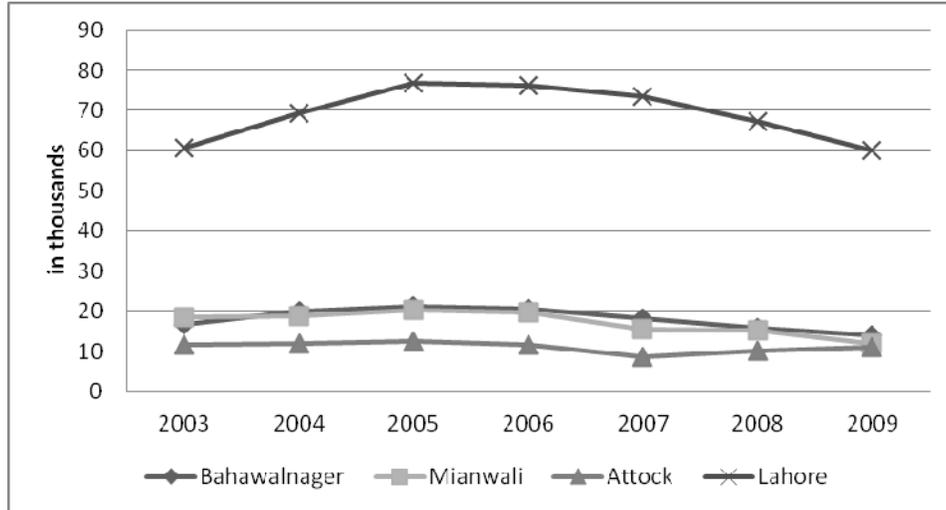
The level of participation gradually increased every year except in 2008-09 when it decreased by 5 to 10 percent. District Bahawalnagar and Mianwali also showed improvement in participation level at that area. There was an impressive increase in girl's participation rate in the year of 2005 in both low literacy districts. Decentralization seems to have good effect in the district where literacy rate was already high and in low literacy rate district as well.

#### **By District Enrolment in Urban Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**

Proceeding Statistic table and graph shows the year wise participation and fluctuation rate of male students in urban areas of four district of Punjab at primary level from 2003 to 2009.

**Table 9: By District Enrolment Rate in Urban Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**

Year	Bahawalnagar		Mianwali		Attock		Lahore	
	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation	Enrolment	Fluctuation
2003	16671		18465		11505		60684	
2004	20129	20.74	18861	2.14	12066	4.88	69509	14.54
2005	21290	5.77	20429	8.31	12368	2.50	76959	10.72
2006	20606	-3.21	19641	-3.86	11593	-6.27	76417	-0.70
2007	18329	-11.05	15515	-21.01	8763	-24.41	73709	-3.54
2008	15886	-13.33	15210	-1.97	10012	14.25	67419	-8.53
2009	14142	-10.98	11830	-22.22	11136	11.23	60177	-10.74



**Figure 9: By District Enrolment Rate in Urban Areas at Primary Level (year wise)**  
Enrolment rate gradually increased every year but fell down in the year of 2008-09 because of poor monitoring at local level and political problems of country. There was no significant improvement in participation rate of students in districts except Lahore.

## Conclusions

The results of this research show that Bahawalnager and Mianwali have a high enrolment rate of both boys and girls in its rural areas. In rural areas of Bahawalnager and Mianwali the participation rate of primary student was comparatively high from the high literacy rate district Lahore and Attock. Thus the impact of decentralization can be seen more in rural areas of those districts where literacy rate was low.

Besides in urban areas enrolment was high in Lahore. So devolution drastically influences the enrolment rate in backward rural areas of the Punjab. Ministry of education should pay more concerned to the rural areas of Lahore and find out the actual problem of low participation at primary level. Decentralization and devolution of authority within the administrative hierarchies in the district should be considered. School based management should properly implement and monitored by EDOs. Contribution of stake holders in policy making should be monitored and opinion of each participant should be evaluated equally.

Local governments should pay more attention to the growing problems in education sector and should improve the monitoring of worker and find out the reason of sudden decrease in participation rate of all type of districts.

### **Implications of the study**

This study has theoretical as well as practical implication. The study focuses on the impact of devolution on the on enrolment by district variation as well as rural urban disparities. The result of this study show that the district where the literacy rate was low before decentralization, the enrolment rate of students significantly increased in post decentralization era. It shows that when administrative and financial powers are delegated to lower level of governments, it improves the efficiency of the local stakeholder and thus has positive impact so far as enrolment is concerned. In some poor district where the literacy rate was low but after implementation of devolution plan, the participation rate at primary level especially of girls improved as compared to developed and districts with high literacy rate. This also shows that decentralization of powers to lower level must go on. The more we delegate the power at local level, the better result we get to improve our education system and setup. By this community also takes part in decision making process and problem solving activities related to education. It is hoped that this findings can generate new knowledge to this field.

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