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AN EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR BOYS

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This study attempts to evaluate the adequacy of educational facilities and assess its relevance to the needs and requirements of rural people with special reference to Tehsil Ferozewala, District Sheikhupura, Punjab. The study showed that about 3/4th of the students enrolled in class 10th were satisfied with quality and availability of the text books, whereas they expressed enblock dissatisfaction about the library facilities and experimental laboratories. A high ratio of student-teacher was found in sampled schools. Using a student teacher ratio of 35:1 as a yardstick, there seems a need to more than double the number of teachers in order to attain an optimum student teacher ratio. A set of policy guidelines for the improvement of educational facilities in rural areas has been proposed.

INTRODUCTION

Despite a steady overall improvement in educational facilities over the years, literacy rate and educational levels among the rural masses have remained dismally low. Explanations and causes have been described variously, but usually in a general way. High population growth rate has been the most popular cause explained by the educational planners. The current literacy rate of Pakistan estimated at 40% (51% for males and 28% for females) in 1997-98 is still behind other countries of the region (Anonymous, 1997-98). The discrepancy in the literacy rates of urban and rural areas may be attributed to the lack of educational facilities in rural areas. The non-availability of teaching staff especially those well trained in teaching methods is a serious problem. Prohibitive costs of books and stationery for the very large number of rural poor may have added to the gravity of the problem. Irrelevance of the courses of study with the needs and job requirements of the people is adversely affecting educational achievements both in rural and urban schools. Poor quality of text books, both of Urdu and English are believed to be affecting the comprehension of the students and deteriorating educational standard. Reliance of the school teachers on made-easy books which are of poor quality is another factor (Tauhiduddin, 1989).

The irrelevance of the content and mode of education has led to many socio-economic problems like unemployment and poor living standard of people. In fact, low literacy level is the root cause of a number of problems which reinforce each other. The present state of affairs in education seetor requires an immediate attention of the policy makers and administrators. It is thus high time that studies should be conducted to evaluate the existing educational facilities in rural areas with a view to suggest appropriate policy measures to help resolve the problems. The present study was, therefore, specifically designed to evaluate the adequacy of educational facilities and to assess its relevance to the needs and requirements of rural secondary schools for boys.

METHODOLOGY

Six high schools situated in the villages of Tehsil (Sub-division) Ferozewala, District Sheikhupura were randomly selected as universe for the present study. The respondents were male students of 10th class enrolled in these schools. An equi-sized sample of 25 students from each school was drawn at random to make the total sample size 150.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Economic Profile of Students

Age: A close perusal of Table 1 shows that majority of 10th class students (55%) were aged between 15-16 years. However, about one-fourth of the students were in relatively younger age group of 13-14 years. A relatively smaller proportion (20%) were aged between 17-19. It implies that majority of the parents in these villages send their children to school at proper age.

Mother's Educational Level: The analysis showed that majority of the mothers of the students were illiterate (82%) and only a small fraction (3%) had intermediate level of education, whereas 15% of the literate mothers, had studied up to primary or secondary level (Table 1). Clearly, a large proportion of the respondent's mothers were illiterate.

Family Income: As shown in Table 1, majority of the respondents (58%) belonged to the families with incomes well below subsistence level i.e. between Rs. 1200 to 2000 per month. About one-fourth had an income level of Rs. 2100-3000 per month, whereas only 16% of the students were from families with an income of Rs. 3100 per month or above.

Table 1. Socio-economic profile of sample students

Age (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
13-14	35	25
15-16	82	55
17-19	30	20
Educational level of mothers		
Illiterate	123	82.00
Primary	3	2.00
Matriculate	20	13.00
Intermediate	4	3.00
Family income (Rs.)		
1200-2000	86	57.33
2100-3000"	40	26.67
3100 +	24	16.00

Evaluation of Educational Facilities: Evaluation of educational facilities is defined in terms of availability, needs, adequacy, and utilization of these facilities. Regarding availability major parameters considered, however, were the availability of text books, teaching staff, laboratory facilities and the library service. The specific response of the students (satisfactory or unsatisfactory) concerning availability of text books, teaching staff, laboratory facilities and library service is shown in Table 2. Majority (74%) of the students were satisfied with the quality and availability of the text books, however, about one-fourth of the students were ranked as being unsatisfied. The response regarding the availability of books may be somewhat biased as the poor students, who cannot afford to purchase their own books, may well have disguised their concerns. Regarding the availability of teachers and their teaching competence, a predominant majority (about 93%) was satisfied, whereas only a small fraction of students was not satisfied. However, there may be a response bias which may be attributed to a number of socio-cultural and religious factors. As the teacher is considered a respectable member of the society and most of the students hold them in high esteem, it is possible that this element may have been reflected in the responses, increasing thereby the proportion of students showing satisfaction about the teaching staff.

Majority of the students (70%) were not satisfied about the availability of experimental laboratories in the sampled schools. They also expressed enblock dissatisfaction about the library facilities in their schools. Clearly, the students of rural schools are deprived of experimental laboratories and much needed library facilities and this hampers the development of their intellect and mental capabilities.

Table 2. Availability of educational facilities

Facilities	Response categories			
	Satisfactory		Not-satisfactory	
	Frequency	(%)	Frequency	(%)
Availability of books	110	73.33	40	26.67
Teaching staff	140	93.33	10	6.67
Laboratory	45	30.00	105	70.00
Library	0	0.00	100	100.00

Utilization of Educational Facilities: The utilization of educational facilities is defined in terms of the population of male children of school going ages (5-15 years) enrolled in the schools. The results show that the overall enrolment in the study areas was around 91%, being the highest (99.55%) in the Narang Mandi and the lowest (73%) in Imamia Colony (Table 3). It is evident that the villages situated around metropolitan Lahore, being center of industrial and commercial activity and thus faced with a high influx of rural migrants, has received an unprecedented enrolment boom. The utilization of educational facilities thus seems to be directly correlated with the size of population and the scale and magnitude of industrial and commercial activity.

The student teacher ratio in the sampled schools on an average was 67:1, being very high. Although analysts differ as to what should be the recommended student teacher ratio in primary and secondary schools, there is, however, a consensus that the optimum class size (i.e. a desirable student teacher ratio» should be thirty-five to one. Using this ratio as a yardstick, there appears a shortfall of 116 teachers. Imamia Colony, despite having the lowest enrolment percentage, had the maximum shortfall of teachers (63%). Not withstanding the

Table 3. Utilization of educational facilities

	Students enrolled		Students out of school		Population of children of school going aze
	F	%	F	%	
Imamia Colony	150	73.01	573	26.9	2123
Kala Khatai	465	76.86	140	23.14	605
Naranz Mandi	2635	99.55	12	0,45	2647
Muridkey	4000	95,42	192	4.58	4192
Total	8650	90,42	917	9.58	9567

F= Frequency; % = Percent.

Table 4. Adequacy of educationa 1£aciTties for boys

Villages	No. of students enrolled	No. of teachers	Present student-teacher ratio	Required No. of teachers	Shortage of teachers (No.)	(%)
Kala Khatai	465	8	58:1	13	5	40.08
Imamia Colony	1550	27	57:1	44	17	62.96
Narang Mandi	2635	44	60:1	75	31	58.60
Muridkey	4000	51	78:1	114	63	44.73
Total	8650	130	67:1	246	116	52.83

question of providing educational facilities for all the school going children in the area, there is a need to increase the number of teachers from 130 to 246 in order to cater for the educational requirements of presently enrolled students as shown in Table 4.

Clearly, the present student-teacher ratio falls seriously short of the suggested ratio of 35:1 which implies that the present educational facilities, measured simply by availability of appropriate number of teachers in the schools are inadequate. Unless the required number of teachers are available, other facilities like library and labs, where available, will remain underutilized which in turn implies the misuse of national educational resources and facilities. The teaching staff in these schools should be increased to 246, almost double than what is presently available. Thus for attaining full enrolment level in these schools there is a need to employ 116 more teachers in order to attain an optimum student teacher ration of 35:1. However, to attain 100% enrolment of children in the sampled area of school going age, 144 more teachers would need to be employed, making the total numbers of teacher as 274 (Table 5).

Another dimension of the inadequacy of educational facilities is that there is, at present, a severe problem of room space for the enrolled students. The class rooms seem to be flocked with the students as, on an average, 100 students are being accommodated in a class room. This shows that the present infrastructure facilities are highly overcrowded and there is hardly a proper educational environment for the students in rural areas.

Policy Implications and Suggestions

1. National policy makers should pay immediate attention towards high student-teacher ratio, inadequate buildings, playgrounds, teaching space, non-availability of experimental labs and scientific instruments and provision! improvement of library facilities in the schools so as to ensure the success of national educational programmes.
2. The Text Book Boards should ensure that up to date and quality text books are timely available to students at reasonable rates.
3. In the villages which are proving to be the epi-centers of growth and industrial activity,

Table 5. Need for educational facilities for 100% enrolment of boys of school going age

Villages	Total school going age population	Available teachers	Required No. of teachers	Shortage of teachers (No.)	(%)
Kala Khatai	635	8	17	9	44.26
Imamia Colony	2123	27	61	34	47.05
Narang Mandi	2647	44	76	32	57.89
Muridkey	4192	51	120	69	42.50
Total	9597	130	274	144	48.55

3. government should strengthen educational facilities through the cooperation of local industrialists and philanthropists. It should be a legal requirement for big industrial units to earmark sufficient funds for establishing their own schools. However, where the size of industrial units is small or these are fragmented, they be required to make contribution to an educational fund which may be utilized by the Education Cooperative Society to establish local schools.
4. More incentives need to be given to encourage the private sector to establish new schools and improve the quality and standard of existing ones. Some of these schools are charging exorbitantly high fees which poor citizens can hardly afford to pay, hence, immediate attention need to be paid to establish a national code of practice, both for rural and urban areas regarding fees and charges by the schools of private sector. A national spirit needs to be inculcated to make these private schools effective partners in national educational programmes and not money making machines.

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