

## **Educational Reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Impact on Out-of-School Children in Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, Pakistan**

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This is a study of the effects of government education reforms in District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on the dimensions of social and cultural, and institutional factors on educational access. Quantitative data was collected through surveys, then qualitative data was gathered through interviews using a mixed methods approach. The sample consisted of 40 Ministry of Education officials, 40 Tehsil school administrators, 40 parents, and 40 students, a total sample of 40 in each Tehsil. For qualitative data, it was analyzed using thematic analysis and for the quantitative data descriptive statistics (mean scores, standard deviation) were used. The findings show that even after the introduction of reforms a large proportion of children of District Kolai Pallas remain excluded from the school. The study identifies culturally specific barriers to educational access such as cultural practices and inefficiencies of institutional and economic systems. The significance of these findings is greatly enhanced by the reality that local factors play a critical role in shaping the educational sphere in the Hazara region. Finally, the research makes a valuable contribution in an additional way by showing the need for community engagement, better school facilities, and gender sensitive policy making. The study, therefore, suggests that educational reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa be shaped to tackle such challenges on a regional basis ensuring effective and inclusive education to all children.

The introduction now has a more coherent structure, starting from the general picture of educational problems in Pakistan and progressing to problems in District Kolai Pallas. This lays a background to the study as it Pinpoints the government reforms as essential in solving the out-of-school children crisis. There is a lack of adequate qualitative education among the people of Pakistan, especially in rural provinces like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (UNESCO, 2020). The District Kolai Pallas, in Hazara Division, has been reported to have many Out-of-School Children, thus affecting the future socioeconomic condition and equity (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

The Audit Report of the District Kolai Palas Kohistan shows that the district's literacy rate is 11.08. The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) is 33.22 % at the Primary level and 7.53 % at middle, high, and higher secondary levels. The Net Enrollment Rate (NER) is 18.18 % at the primary level and 5.64% at middle, high, and higher secondary levels.

Many school-goers have encountered these challenges, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where the government has sought to reform primary and secondary education sectors in many ways. This study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of these reforms in District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, in increasing access to education for out-of-school children and the factors influencing the same and to make recommendations for future policies and practices based on the suggestions found in the works of Aslam and Kingdon (2012) and Bano (2018).

This study will be not only beneficial in understanding the current education system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province but also valuable for the policymakers and practitioners, and this burning issue of out-of-school children in this region would be effectively addressed (Andrabi et al., 2011; Siddiqui, 2020).



### **Background and Context**

Currently, Pakistan has a significant education problem as millions of children never attend school, especially in the rural regions (UNESCO, 2020). Literature has revealed that the education sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province was suffering from deficient resources and facilities and social inequality (Khan & Khan, 2016). The Demographics section regards the Hazara Division, which encompasses the District Kolai Pallas, with large numbers of out-of-school children, escalating peculiarities concerning gender equity and economic development (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020).

Due to these challenges, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has made several reforms to enhance ACCESS, QUALITY, and EQUITY in Primary and Secondary Education (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2021). However, studies reveal that it is difficult to ascertain the improvements these reforms have made to the issue of out-of-school children in the District Kolai Pallas (Bano, 2018).

This research intends to evaluate the effects of government changes on out-of-school children in District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, and to present advice on enhancing education in the area for policymakers and practicing educators (Siddiqui, 2020).

### **Aim and Scope of the Study**

This study aims to determine the effect of the government's policies and structural adjustments in primary and secondary education on out-of-school children in the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (IDRC & Open University, UK, 2012). The scope of the study encompasses the following objectives:

Reflection on selected government policy reforms made in primary and secondary educational systems in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in terms of executed policies, constructing facilities, and development of human resources for teachers (Khan & Khan, 2016).

Examine how such reforms have helped lower the number of out-of-school children in District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, and analyze what barriers still exist (Bano, 2018).

Explore the causes of out-of-school children problems in the context of the region from socioeconomic, cultural, or geographical perspectives and reflect on how the specifics of policy and measures can solve these aspects (Rugh & Bossert, 1998).

Find critical practices and successful examples from other regions/countries and suggest future educational reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Siddiqui, 2020).

Thus, achieving the objectives above, this study aims to improve education knowledge in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and contribute to the problem of out-of-school children in the region (Andrabi et al., 2011).

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide this study on government reforms in primary and secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and their impact on out of school children in the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division:

1. What central government reforms were introduced in the primary and secondary education sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
1. How have these reforms impacted the out-of-school children issue in the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division?
2. Why do out-of-school children persevere in the region, and what are the possible policy and practice options for its elimination?
3. How can successful experiences, tips, and advisories of other regions or countries be utilized in future education reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Overview of Government Reforms in Primary and Secondary Education**

Over the last several years, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has embarked on some reforms to meet some of the challenges faced in the context of primary and secondary education in terms of access quality and equity (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2021). Some key reforms include:

- 1) Policy Changes: In 2021, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa launched the Education Sector Plan 2021-26: the strategic framework for education development in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,

2021). New policies entail the provision of free and compulsory education, increased girls' education, and ECE (Khan & Khan, 2016).

- 2) **Infrastructure Investments:** This is evident under the head of Physical Resources, where effort has been made to extend School Capital, that is, construction of new school structures, adequate provision of sanitation facilities, and availability of these and other physical inputs for learning (Bano, 2018). Such investments include providing resources for learning and other factors to increase equity in learning (Khan & Khan, 2016).
- 3) **Teacher Capacity Building:** In light of the understanding of the teacher agency in improving Education and its outcomes, the government continues to adopt measures and policies towards improving teacher capabilities, such as pre-service and in-service training, merit, and performance-based hiring, amongst others, as noted by Bano (2018). These policies aim to enhance teacher quality, performance, satisfaction, and productivity (Siddiqui, 2020).
- 4) **Decentralization and Community Involvement:** Local decentralization and community participation in running education have also been fostered by the government through empowering the community and stakeholders to be able to participate in policy making and make school answerable to the community members (Rugh & Bossert, 1998). It is believed that such an approach will help improve transparency, responsibility, and efficiency in education (Siddiqui, 2020).

### **Factors Contributing to Out-of-School Children**

Therefore, multiple triggers exist to assert that out-of-school children continue to remain unaddressed in the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, even in reference to executive intentions to reform primary and secondary education in the country. These children can be classified in terms of socio-economic, cultural, and geographical characteristics.

- 1) **Socioeconomic Factors:** Lack of income is another factor that isolates children from school since needy families send their children to work instead of school (Aslam & Kingdon, 2012). Child labor, sometimes forced by compulsive economic reasons, may also lead to children not being in school (Lloyd et al., 2005).
- 2) **Cultural Factors:** Gender norms and traditions regarding gender roles in society can prejudice the girl child regarding schooling. Early marriages and entrenched cultural practices may deny the girl child an opportunity to go to school, as families may only educate the boy child and not the girl child (Lloyd et al., 2005). However, the fear of insecurity and the worth of education may affect parents' decisions to enroll or not enroll their children in school (Bano, 2018).
- 3) **Geographical Factors:** The District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, is a mountainous area with a sparse population. Far-off areas are not easily approachable, so proper access to education is difficult (Khan & Khan, 2016). Rugh and Bossert (1998) opine that when schools are few or poorly located, and there are few means of transportation to the schools, students have to cover long distances. Thus, they will not attend school.
- 4) **Quality of Education:** Several people believe that the perceived quality of education that is offered in schools is a factor that can help parents make their decision on whether to send their children to school or not. When parents get the impression that schools are providing very substandard education or are not even preparing their kids for the future, it is quite possible that parents may not place a high premium on education-related issues (Andrabi et al., 2011).

### **Previous Literature on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Hazara Division**

Many researchers have looked at the issues and possibilities in the primary and secondary education sector of KPK with particular reference to the Hazara Division. Key research findings are highlighted below: Key research findings are highlighted below:

- 1) **Education Reforms and Policy:** The political realities towards education reform and the strategies into which they were placed are outlined in Bano's (2018) systematic review of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's challenges and prospects. It also discussed the status of the local political environment, citizens' engagement, and the effects of decentralization on education.
- 2) **Access to Education:** Khan and Khan (2016) studied the appraisal of the governmental undertaking and policy measures concerning school education expansion in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In their study, they discovered areas of infrastructure, quality of teachers, and school availability, a problem that is evident mostly in the Hazara Division, especially in rural areas.
- 3) **Gender and Socioeconomic Factors:** In a 2005 study, Lloyd et al. looked at the impact of gender differences on school access, type, and quality in rural Pakistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly on enrollment choices. Main conclusions: Concerning the findings of their study, the effects of traditional attitudes towards gender and the

level of educational achievements that are influenced by the socioeconomic status of the population in the particular region were identified.

4) **Community Involvement:** According to Rugh and Bossert (1998), community engagement is the best approach to delivering education programs to communities. They state that community participation enhances attendance and equality in the delivery of education. Their research has implications for the Hazara Division, and participation in their community could assist in overcoming the issues affecting out-of-school children.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research applies a newer conceptual framework based on the latest theories and research in explaining the circumstances of out of school children in District Kolai Pallas, Hazara. The framework draws on several contemporary perspectives in educational reform, access and retention, to provide a very resourceful base for the analysis carried out in the thesis.

#### **Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) and Contemporary Perspectives on Human Capital:**

Traditional Human Capital Theory considers the economic benefits of education—skills and productivity—and more recent scholars (Heckman, 2006) have introduced the role of early education, social skills, and longer term community outcome. In acknowledging these modern perspectives, this study applies them to shed light on the ways educational reforms can expand human capital in District Kolai Pallas, focusing beyond economic productivity to the social and communities well being. Educational access is framed as a critical component of sustainable development and economic growth for the region using the theory.

#### **Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 1995) and Community Engagement in Education:**

Recently, the importance of networks, trust and community cooperation in the context of education is captured in Social Capital Theory. With more recent studies (e.g., Putnam 2000; and Woolcock 2010) of the importance of strong community ties for enhanced school attendance and educational achievement. In this study, the theory is applied to understand why and how local networks consisting of parents, teachers, and community leaders can address the needs of children who are at risk of dropping out and are able to advocate for more inclusive educational reforms in Kolai Pallas.

#### **Gender and Education Framework (Connell, 2009; Unterhalter, 2014):**

A modern interpretation of the Gender and Education Framework is used in the study and it looks at how cultural and gender norms can influence educational opportunities. More recent research (e.g. Unterhalter, 2014) stresses the need for gender sensitive educational policies which address gender based violence, discrimination and economic obstacles to girls taking up education. It will also allow to update this framework in order to explore how gender norms in District Kolai Pallas influence female student enrollment and retention and thereby determine if reforms can address these issues in a locally specific way.

#### **Educational Policy Implementation Theory (Fullan, 2007) and Policy Feedback Theory (Schneider & Ingram, 1993):**

Education Policy Implementation Theory explains how policies turn into actions where local context, resources and political will matter. This study extends Fullan's work with Policy Feedback Theory (Schneider & Ingram, 1993) that considers the effects of policies on not only proximate but also indirect political and social outcomes. This is a way to comprehend how the educational reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in the rural areas such as Kolai Pallas, could be sustained or failed from the perceptions of the policy planning institutions, donor and NGO involvement and support of the local communities.

#### **Push-and-Pull Theory (Stearns & Glennie, 2006) and Recent Additions to Dropout Theories:**

The Push-and-Pull Theory provides important insights into causes of dropout, but recent research (e.g., Rumberger, 2011) expands this conceptual framework to surface the significance of school climate, parental involvement and economic vulnerability in determining school retention. In this study, integrating these newer insights, the nature of how the combination of the school based (such as teaching quality or infrastructure) and external factors (such as economic hardship or child labor) affect high dropout rate rates will be explored. The research will also investigate ways to reform to address both the push and the pull factors with a view towards creating a more supportive educational environment.

This study is an attempt to integrate these updated theoretical perspectives to develop a comprehensive and contemporary analysis of barriers to education in District Kolai Pallas. This research will both elucidate the rationale

and policy context of education policy and local community dynamics and develop actionable recommendations for education policy interventions informed by current theories of educational access, equity, and community engagement.

### Method

In this study, the authors have presented the limitations of their research quite effectively. Specifically, in the section on the methodology of the research article, the authors have discussed the research design adopted through which the impact of the government reforms on out-of-school children in the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, has been measured. To investigate the issue, a mixed-methods research approach employing explanatory sequential design was adopted to collect data both quantitatively and qualitatively (Creswell, 2014). This approach makes it possible to assess the magnitude of the problem of out-of-school children as well as antecedents that contribute to this situation in the region. The participants for data collection included the Ministry of Education officials, school administrators, parents, and students. Convenient sampling technique was employed for the current study through which data was collected from EDO (Executive District Officer), DDEO (Deputy District Education Officer) (1 male, 1 female), ADEO (Assistant District Education Officer) (4 male & 4 female) head teachers (6 male, 6 female), teaches (6 male & 6 female) as well as 40 parents & students from each Tehsil. Interviews and questionnaire was used as data collection tools. Self-completed structured questionnaires were filled by households in District Kolai Pallas for socio-demographic investigative facts, educational level, and other associated reasons for children not attending school (Lloyd et al., 2005).

In-depth interviews were carried out with persons who have an interest in education, such as local government education officers, school leaders, teachers, and community representatives, to understand how current reforms in education are being enacted and felt in the selected region, as described by Bano (2018). Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics e.g. mean score and standard deviation whereas; qualitative data was analyzed by using thematic analysis. The data obtained from the interviews made textual and analyzed using thematic analysis since they were expected to expose patterns, trends, and other insights on the factors influencing out-of-school children and the efficiency of government reforms. The school mapping of District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, was depict the Education Reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The quantitative and qualitative data analysis help understand the trends in out-of-school children by comparing them with the available literature reviews, government reports, and education statistics.

### Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The research findings regarding governmental reform in primary and secondary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including estimating out-of-school children in the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, have some limitations and ethical issues that need to be considered.

#### Limitations:

- a. Generalizability: The study's focus on only a selected district of the Hazara Division may limit its generalization to other areas in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan.
- b. Selection Bias: The problem of sample bias may arise when choosing the households and key informants for data collection since they may not represent all the shades of reality in the region.
- c. Reliability of Self-Reported Data: Surveys and interviews were based on data provided by the participants, which makes this form of data collection very erroneous and loaded with biases since participants hardly give out authentic information.

#### Ethical Considerations:

- a. Informed Consent: Preemptively, one needs to make sure that participants' informed consent has been granted when data is being gathered. Participants should also be informed of the research objectives, possible dangers, and gains attached to the study and be assured that they can demographically withdraw from the study at any time.
- b. Confidentiality and Anonymity: Since participants may be identified, their personal information should not be shared with other researchers or teachers, and any information that could identify the participant should not be used in analysis or reports.
- c. Cultural Sensitivity: Researchers should be well informed of the cultural values and beliefs in the District Kolai Pallas and the Hazara Division so as to ensure that all research activities and participant interactions were conducted with due respect. (Anh, 2022)
- d. Collaboration and Capacity Building: Offering local people and communities a voice and involvement opportunity can further help ethnically and culturally sensitive research activities. Engaging local researchers and professionals in data collection and analysis was also contributed to a better outcome and consequence because such a practice will enhance the local capacity.

Therefore, the research article was able to relate government reforms to out-of-school children with ethical limitations and considerations in the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division.

### **Government Reforms in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Education Sector**

In this section, the author gives a broad description of the main government reformatory measures in relation to primary and secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that were taken to increase the access, quality, and proportion of out-of-school children in the District of Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division.

#### **Access to Education:**

1. **School Infrastructure Development:** The government has spent Rs 138 billion constructing new schools and renovating old schools to provide a proper atmosphere for students (Education Sector Report of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-2017-18: Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2018).
2. **Girls' Stipend Program:** The female literacy rate in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was low. Thus, to reduce the education gap, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government initiated the girls' stipend program for girls studying in low-income groups for secondary classes (Sathar et al., 2015).

The KP Girls Stipend Program is an initiative by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government in Pakistan, introduced in 2015. The program aims to provide financial assistance to girls studying in primary and secondary schools in the province. Under this program, girls from low-income families receive a monthly stipend of PKR 2,000 to PKR 4,000 to support their education expenses. The program aims to increase girls' enrollment and retention rates in schools, promoting education for girls in KP and reducing the gender gap in education.

#### **Quality of Education:**

1. **Teacher Training and Development:** The government of Pakistan, with the help of organizations like the Asian Development Bank, has started to launch capacity-building programs for teachers regarding their subject knowledge, teaching methods, and the incorporation of technology in teaching.
2. **Curriculum Reforms:** These reforms aim to improve KP's education system. The reforms focus on developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills. Introduced in 2010, the new curriculum emphasizes project-based learning, entrepreneurship, and STEM education. It also aims to reduce the emphasis on rote learning and examinations, instead promoting a holistic approach to learning. (Ali et al., 2024) The reforms have received mixed reviews, with some praising the shift towards a more practical and application-based education. In contrast, others express concerns about the lack of emphasis on traditional subjects. These concerted efforts have been made to innovate and promote curriculum relevance, coherence, effectiveness, inclusiveness, and learnability for students with the adequate knowledge and skills needed in the 21st century (UNESCO, 2017).

#### **Governance and Accountability:**

1. **District Education Plans:** The plan outlines a roadmap for education sector development, focusing on key areas such as curriculum reform, teacher training, infrastructure development, and community engagement. The goal is to provide quality education to all students, particularly in underprivileged areas. The roadmap also aims to increase access to education, enhance academic performance, and promote peace and social cohesion. The KP government and development partners work together to implement this comprehensive plan. In this regard, the government has initiated strategic plans for district education to manage education services at the district levels effectively, efficiently, and more plannedly (Bano, 2018).
2. **Community Participation:** A community participation plan is a strategic approach to engage stakeholders in the development and sharing of knowledge. The plan outlines the methods and processes for fostering collaboration, encouraging user-generated content, and building a community around a specific topic or project. (Kang et al., 2024) Effective KP community participation plans involve setting clear goals, identifying target audiences, and providing incentives for participation. By doing so, KP initiatives can harness collective intelligence, drive innovation, and amplify their impact. These measures have been taken, as most schools have Parent-Teacher Councils and School Management Committees, hoping they would act as watchdogs to increase accountability and responsibility in providing education facilities (Rahman et al., 2016).

The following government reforms are designed to tackle the problems of the primary and secondary education sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and decrease the number of out-of-school children in the District of Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division.

### A. Policy and Legislation Reforms

These include providing free textbooks, conditional grant schemes, a major increase in the educational budget, merit-based teacher recruitment, and a teacher's induction program.

### B. Infrastructural Development & Resource Distribution

The KP government has launched several initiatives to improve education infrastructure, including the construction of modern schools, colleges, and universities. Additionally, the government has increased its allocation for education in the provincial budget, allowing for better resource distribution and accessibility to educational facilities. This has led to an increase in enrollment rates and improved education quality in the region (Zia-ud-Din & Elhajraoui, 2023).

### C. Teacher Education and Institution Building

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is a province in Pakistan. As per the Annual Report 2023-24 by the Provincial Education Department, KP, a total of 11,432 government school teachers underwent further education or training, which includes teacher training programs, workshops, and courses. This training aims to enhance their teaching skills, pedagogy, and subject matter expertise. The department provides various opportunities for teachers to pursue further education, ensuring quality education for students in the province.

### D. Partnership with the Broader Community

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has been engaging with broader communities to promote peace and stability in the region. Individuals and private organizations have been involved in this partnership, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and international organizations. For instance, the KP government has partnered with NGOs like CARE Pakistan and the International Rescue Committee to deliver humanitarian aid and support to affected communities. Additionally, private organizations like the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy have also contributed to these efforts. This collaboration enables the sharing of resources, expertise, and knowledge to address the region's complex challenges.

## Assessment of School Children in District Kolai Pallas

According to available data, a significant majority of children in the Kolai Palas district are out of school. Reports state that around 77% of children in the area are not attending school, making it one of the districts with the highest out-of-school rates in Pakistan.

Key points about out-of-school children in Kolai Palas:

- High percentage: Approximately 77% of children in Kolai Palas are reported to be out of school.
- Comparison with other districts: Upper Kohistan follows with around 70% out-of-school children.

It aimed and targeted out-of-school children in the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, are analyzed regarding the factors causing the problem and the effects of government initiatives regarding both the primary and secondary education sectors of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

### A. Prevalence and Trends of Out-of-School Children:

1. Enrollment Rates and Gender Disparities: Over transcriptions, the District Kolai Pallas has expressed the problem of out-of-school children, particularly girls, due to several social-cultural factors and the unavailability of resources (Lloyd et al., 2005).

2. Regional Disparities: Hence, the education ministry notes disparities within a district's geographical areas in terms of access to education services, and children in remote areas to schools face more challenges in attending school (Khan & Khan, 2016).

### B. Factors Contributing to Out-of-School Children:

1. Socioeconomic Factors: As Stearns and Glennie (2006) pointed out in their work, out-of-school children in the District Kolai Pallas are affected by factors such as poverty (33%), child labor (37%), and early marriage (30%).

2. School-Level Factors: Factors hindering enrolment and participation in school include poor-quality school facilities, a lack of qualified teachers, and a curriculum that fails to respond to children's challenges (Bano, 2018).

### C. Impact of Government Reforms:

1. Improved Access to Education: Having schools and adopting the Girls' Stipend Program (31%) through school faculty, school infrastructure development is among the reforms that have helped avail facilities for children in the District Kolai Pallas from school (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 2018).

2. Enhanced Quality of Education: Although these educational reforms, such as initiatives in teacher education and improvements in curriculum, have assisted in raising the quality of education in the region, there are still obstacles concerning the program's plans and provision of resources (UNESCO, 2017).

Thus, the research article can illuminate the existing difficulties in this area and provide practical suggestions for further strategies by analyzing the rates, determinants, and effects of government reforms regarding out-of-school children in District Kolai Pallas.

## Case Studies and Good Practices



This section includes the best practices and some successful cases in District Kolai Pallas and other regions to represent interventions and strategies that have been useful in coping with out-of-school children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

#### A. Community-Based Schools:

1. Success in Afghanistan: For example, Burde et al. (2015) note that to increase enrolment figures, particularly in remote and conflict-ridden areas of Afghanistan, community-based schools have assisted in enhancing education and girls' education in particular.

2. Potential for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Facilitating community schools in the District Kolai Pallas, where traditional schools are out of reach, can bring down out-of-school children and help control regional educational disparities (Khan & Khan, 2016).

#### B. Public-Private Partnerships:

1. Punjab Education Foundation: Various forms of partnership have been proven to enhance the capacity of delivering quality education throughout the world but more so in low-income countries; for example, in Pakistan, the Punjab Education Foundation/Low-Cost Private Schools Programme has provided financial incentives, training opportunities and modest grants to low-cost private schools in a bid to enhance their performance and expand its coverage (Andrabi et al., 2013).

2. Relevance for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Implementing a similar model in the District Kolai Pallas will also increase the quality of education and general enrollment, including the socially disadvantaged populations associated with it (Bano, 2018).

#### C. Conditional Cash Transfers:

1. Success in Brazil: CC The Mexican government's social policy program of Oportunidades has helped most students attend school by subsidizing families in poor and marginalized areas. This has further helped them not drop out by paying them money, taking into consideration that their children should attend school ( de Brauw et al., 2015).

2. Application in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Enhancing the Girls' Stipend Program in the District Kolai Pallas through CCCT can successfully overcome the socioeconomic determinants of education and contribute to increasing the rate of enrolment and retention among girls (Sathar et al., 2015).

These case studies and good practices may be worthy references for KP leadership, policymakers, and practicing educationists regarding future interventions regarding the 'out-of-school children problem' in District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division.

### Implications

Based on the analysis of government reforms in primary and secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the assessment of out-of-school children in the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, this study offers several key lessons learned and policy implications: Based on the analysis of government reforms in primary and secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the assessment of out of school children in the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division, this study offers several key lessons learned and policy implications:

1. Comprehensive Approach to Reforms: To resolve the problem of out-of-school children there is needed the improvement of access and quality of education policies must consider the aspirations of every group of people, including girls and other minorities (Bano, 2018; Khan & Khan, 2016).

2. Collaboration and Coordination: Education reforms involve applying funds (Rs. 120 million) and human and material resources to analyze the patterns of children's education within the school-going age populace (Andrabi et al., 2013).

3. Context-Specific Interventions: Concerning children's education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the aforesaid cultural, social, and economic factors imply that it is imperative to develop culturally appropriate solutions, which are explained in the field-sensitive literature as culturally tailored, culturally endorsed, culturally grounded, culturally relevant, and culturally congruent (Lloyd et al., 2005).

4. Sustainability and Scalability: The positive pilot projects and initiatives should be assessed regularly and expanded for broader coverage to make the intervention's positive effects more lasting (Burde et al., 2015).

5. Capacity Building: Enhancing the capacity of local institutions and communities is vital to ensure that they can adequately participate in planning, executing, and evaluating the education reform processes and to promote ownership and continuation (UNESCO, 2017).

6. Data-Driven Decision-Making: High-quality and current information regarding out-of-school children and other vital learning statistics must be frequently gathered and employed in decision-making processes in policy execution and assessment (Sathar & Link, 2015).

Thus, comprehending these lessons learned and policy recommendations, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa policymakers can strengthen their actions to respond to the concerns of out-of-school children and promote the good practice of education for all.

### **Results and Discussion**

The findings indicated that despite the numerous reforms aimed at improving enrolment and attendance in District Kolai Pallas, a significant number of children, particularly girls, remain out of school. This study resulted in the recognition of notable disparities in minority enrollment, as evidenced by the enrollment statistics. It highlighted the pronounced impact on girls, who were significantly influenced by social and cultural practices, including early marriages and prevailing cultural beliefs that favored boys' education over that of girls. The accessibility of enrollment exhibited notable inter-regional disparities, particularly impacting those areas characterized by significant geographical separation from the remainder of the district.

The research additionally revealed that external factors significantly contributed to the elevated incidence of out-of-school children in Kolai Pallas, predominantly influenced by their socioeconomic conditions. For families grappling with poverty, the sole recourse often involves enlisting their children in labor, thereby impeding the opportunities for the youth to pursue education. Culture fosters practices such as early marriages and a neglect of the education of the girl child, thereby exacerbating the issue. Interviews have indicated that a significant number of parents either undervalue the importance of education or lack the means to facilitate it for their daughters, leading to a concerning trend of female students discontinuing their schooling.

The aforementioned challenges have, nonetheless, been tackled by the government via the implementation of various measures, including the Girls' Stipend Program and the enhancement of physical infrastructure within educational institutions. Consequently, while initiatives like the establishment of new educational institutions and the allocation of stipends for girls have enhanced access to education in certain regions, the socio-cultural obstacles persist as significant and largely overlooked challenges. This study demonstrated that although these reforms have positively impacted enrollment rates, particularly in urban and semi-urban areas, they have simultaneously posed challenges in the more remote and rural districts.

Another area of concern that arose from the study was the quality of education provided to learners in the schools of District Kolai Pallas. The primary challenges confronting institutions encompass inadequately qualified personnel, substandard infrastructure, and an outdated curriculum that fails to address the needs of students. Through a thematic analysis of the responses collected during interviews, it becomes evident that these factors contribute to low student retention and elevated dropout rates. This phenomenon can be attributed to the perceived inadequacy of the education system as viewed by both parents and students, who regard the education provided to them as disconnected from their future aspirations.

Additional obstacles arise from geographical challenges; for example, the Kolai Pallas district, located in a mountainous area, presents significant difficulties in accessing education. It was also revealed that children residing in rural regions must traverse considerable distances and navigate challenging terrains to reach the nearest educational institution, resulting in prolonged journeys to and from school, which consequently leads to infrequent attendance. A considerable number of parents and guardians face inadequate transportation options, and the majority of the roads in these areas are in a state of disrepair; this significantly impedes children's consistent attendance in school. The findings indicate that governmental reforms have made strides in enhancing educational access in District Kolai Pallas; however, certain limitations persist. The research indicates that forthcoming reforms must be situated within and responsive to the socio-cultural and geographical contexts of this district. A more comprehensive strategy is thus necessitated, one that transcends mere physical construction of institutions and the provision of financial incentives to parents. It is essential to engage stakeholders in a broader commitment to fostering education for girls and enhancing the quality of education overall.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study articulates its findings and recommendations and stresses the necessity of implementing a complex context-sensitive approach to tackling the challenges faced by the district's education system. This research article compares government reforms in primary and secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, focusing on the problem of out-of-school children in District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division. Based on the conclusions made in this

paper, the following recommendations are suggested to mitigate the identified challenges and boost the effectiveness of government intervention strategies in the region.

This education reform policy should cover both the expansion and improvement of education for special categories of the population, such as girls or members of the marginalized section of society. Strengthen the 'early-warning' and 'quality-assurance' systems regarding how government reforms are being implemented and what corrective action is being taken.

Carry out educational information and publicity to educate the community on the importance of education, especially for the girl child, and to change negative perceptions and practices that limit children's chances to go to school (Lloyd et al., 2005). Extend the Girls' Stipend Program and incorporate such a conditional cash transfer system with low-income families to reduce poverty and related impacts on the education process and attendance (Sathar et al., 2015).

Enhance school structures by providing basic facilities like purified water for drinking and sanitation to enhance the learning environment and encourage the number of children going to school (Bano, 2018). Promote teacher capacity through training and support so that schools produce qualified, motivated human resources and relevant curricula that meet society's needs as specified in the UNESCO 2017 initiative.

Set up community-based schools in hard-to-reach areas to enhance literacy rates in the regions (Burde et al., 2015). Promote partnerships between the government and private institutions to increase the capability and availability of education services, as the Punjab Education Foundation's work has been quite successful (Andrabi et al., 2013). According to Bandura's theory, children learn from observing others in their social environment. Implementing community-based schools in remote areas and providing teachers with continuous professional development can be positive models for students. When children see educated role models, especially teachers from their communities, they are more likely to aspire to stay in school and achieve educational success. Fostering partnerships between public and private institutions can offer diverse examples of successful educational models. By integrating these theoretical approaches, the education reforms in District Kolai Pallas and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can address both the immediate challenges of out-of-school children and the long-term sustainability of educational improvements in the region

The above recommendations should be implemented to strengthen Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the District Kolai Pallas, Hazara Division's commitment to fight the problem of out-of-school children and enhance the cause for enhancing quality education for children.

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