

**RESEARCH PAPER****Perceptions and Implementation of Legislative Acts regarding Universal Primary Education Programs to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals****¹ Qamar ul Zaman* and ²Dr. Muhammad Ramzan**

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***Corresponding Author:** qamarrzaman@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

Pakistan made no improvement in Net Primary Enrolment Rate (5-9 Years) that remained 57 percent, same as last year while the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) require 100 per cent primary enrollment. The key focus of this research article was to find the perceptions and performance results of Legislative Acts regarding Universal Primary Education Programmes to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by the Government of Punjab in Pakistan. the objectives of the study were: to identify the major legislation made to facilitate Universal Primary Education Programmes to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and to find out the impact of legislation on Universal Primary Education Programmes to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. The study was descriptive in nature. The results are based on a sample comprised of 40 teachers and 40 head teachers from Southern Punjab who, using a multi-stage sample, responded to the questionnaire for teachers and head teachers through planned consultations. For this effort, a structured survey questionnaire was utilized that was modified after the review of the related literature. The questionnaire was based on three main choices: promulgation of the Universal Primary Education Act, implementation of the Child Labour Act, and approval of educational policy with three-point Likert scales on each option. The findings were based on calculating percentages and t-test values. Three pieces of legislation-promulgation of the Universal Primary Education Act, implementation of the Child Labour Act and approval of educational policy were analyzed through a questionnaire. SPSS software was applied to analyze quantitative data. It was determined from the results that the satisfaction level of teachers and head teachers was moderate. Recommendations were suggested to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

KEYWORDS Educational Policy, Implementation, Promulgation, Satisfaction Level**Introduction**

Education is considered the backbone of a nation and fundamental to the sustainable progress of every society. It is one of the strongest instruments for poverty alleviation and improving health. It enables individuals to be more productive and have a healthy and pleasant life. In any sustainable society, children are viewed as a useful human resource. A child brought up on sound educational grounds can avail himself of higher chances in every domain of life if his or her educational investment is proper. In several United Nations' meetings, the world leaders believed that without access to education, it is hard to produce quality human resources for the future (Global Monitoring Report, 2013). To promote education at the grass-roots level, it was decided to give more priority to Early Childhood Care Education (ECEE), free, compulsory and

quality primary education (UNESCO, 2016). The agenda for sustainable development has always included universal education as a key component (Agbedahin, 2019; Leicht et al., 2018). International recognition of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as a crucial component of high-quality education and a key enabler of sustainable development are growing (Wals & Kieft, 2010).

The world community established the objective of universal primary education (UPE) in 2000 to guarantee that all children, boys and girls alike, finish a full course of primary schooling by the year 2015 (Dembele & Oliawe, 2007). According to Iiping and Likando (2013), UPE is a goal that is actively pursued by the governments of the majority of developing nations and is mentioned in numerous national development plans. Primary education is viewed as the initial step in setting the groundwork for future educational possibilities and lifelong skills (Iiping & Likando, 2013). Primary education equips people with the knowledge and skills necessary to fully engage in the social, political, and economic life of their communities. Additionally, it is regarded as a fundamental human right that liberates people from ignorance and lessens the detrimental effects of poverty, particularly those that pertain to nutrition and health (Kinyanjui, Mwasu & Mbutu, 2014).

According to Miles and Singal (2010), after the inaugural "World Conference on Education for All" in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, attempts to acknowledge and advance EFA expanded rapidly on a global scale. This conference's nature was important because it acknowledged that most students, especially those from marginalized and vulnerable backgrounds, remain excluded from most educational systems across the world. According to Miles and Singal (2010), this specific conference was a turning point in the evolution of the idea of inclusive education (Hazelton & Haigh, 2010; Djordjevic & Cotton, 2011; Bahae et al., 2012; Antonites & De Villiers, 2003). The field of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is becoming more and more well-known. The UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) was established in recognition of the significance of ESD. Sustainable development is predicated on education (Blewitt & Cullingford, 2004; Prinsloo & Van Rooyen, 2007). In addition to imparting knowledge and promoting awareness of sustainable development, education has the power to literally change the material world in which we live (Blewitt & Cullingford, 2004). According to Von Der Heidt and Lamberton (2011), ESD should empower people and give them the tools they need to make wise decisions about how to build a more sustainable future.

Pakistan was counter signer to Millennium development goals beside many other treaties and documents like Government of Pakistan National Plan of Action (NPA) on Education for All in 2002, to achieve the international commitment Education for All in the light of Dakar Framework of action which was signed by the international community on April 28, 2000, in Dakar Senegal (NEMIS-2014). (Muzaffar, 2016) Keeping in view the second Millennium Development Goal ("MDG2"), in Pakistan, it was aimed to achieve 100 percent primary school enrolment, 100 percent completion of education from grades 1-5 and an 88 percent literacy rate. Universal primary education remained a main objective of the Governments of Pakistan since its inception (PSLM-2016). Pakistan continues to have the second-largest number of out of school children in the world and only one in three children manage to complete primary school (Global Monitoring Report, 2013). Unfortunately, Pakistan is among those countries which are not likely to achieve the second Millennium Development Goal (MDG2) (National Review Report, 2015).

Pakistan agreed to uphold the principle that all individuals should have access to educational opportunities that are tailored to their fundamental learning requirements when it signed the Declaration on Education for All (EFA) (UNESCO, 2016). According to Article 25(A) of the Pakistani Constitution, every citizen has the fundamental human right to an education. For our state to "provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of five to sixteen years" is a basic duty. According to Pakistan's Constitution, all children must get free, obligatory education within a reasonable time frame, and the state is required to eradicate illiteracy (Muzaffar, et. al 2020)

Punjab is a most populous province of Pakistan consists of 53 percent of the country's population (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2018-19). According to Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19, in Punjab, the literacy rate is 64 percent among the total population, whereas it is 57 percent among female population and 73 percent among male population as compared to Pakistan Economic Survey 2015-16, in Punjab, the literacy rate was 64.2 percent among the total population, whereas it was 54 percent among female population and 72 percent among male population. In rural areas, the count is 47 percent for females and 67 percent for males with 57% literacy rate and in urban area; it is 73 percent for females and 82 percent for males with 77% literacy rate (Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19). In Punjab province, the school education department is a controlling authority of educational institutions with the strength of 60,000 government schools and 35,000 private institutions in 36 districts of provincial jurisdiction under a robust administrative setup. Many interventions were experienced by the department focusing on universal primary and secondary education. Compared to the other provinces, Punjab showed the best participation rate at school level (ASER, 2013). Punjab elaborates sound educational administrative structure, but results are less satisfied. Low enrollment rates, insufficient levels of learning in schools, inadequate access to schooling for girls, and poor transition to middle and higher levels of education are a concern (PEAS-2014). Despite all around improvement in school education in Punjab, still there is a significant number of children who are out of school or dropped out. Even after considerable achievement with respect to primary education, dream was never become true (PEAS-2014).

Literature Review

The idea of sustainable development has recently attracted a lot of attention in scholarly articles as a means of drawing attention to the fact that our current way of life and consumption habits may cause a scarcity of resources far sooner than anyone has predicted. A better grasp of the reality and the impetus for change that results from this conversation is what ultimately gives rise to the idea of sustainable development. The idea of sustainable development arose from a number of stakeholder summits and conferences, as mentioned in the first chapter, wherein they sought to reach a consensus on how to address pressing problems like poverty, growing inequality, and the deterioration of both the environment and human health that have plagued us this century. Environmental concerns originally took front stage at an international meeting in 1972 in Stockholm, Sweden, at the Human Environment meeting (Paul, 2008). One hundred and thirteen governments and nineteen international organisations were represented at the 1972 conference. Participants from both developed and developing countries drew on previous work by Mebratu (1998), Robinson (2004), White (2013), Holden, Linnerud and Bannister (2014), and Hak, Janouskova, and Moldan (2016) to outline the 'right' of humans to healthy and productive environments at the conference. In addition, they pointed out the tensions that exist when economic and environmental concerns are not adequately addressed. The UN Environmental Programme was established during the summit. Inspiring, informing, and equipping nations to improve

their populations' quality of life without compromising that of future generations is the mission of this body, which is to provide leadership and foster participation in caring for the environment (Vogler, 2007). As a follow-up to the 1972 summit, the United Nations General Assembly established the WCED in 1983. The World Commission on Environmental Democracy is more commonly known as the Brundtland Commission, after the former Norwegian prime minister and WCED chairman Gro Harlem Brundtland (Brundtland, 1985). The commission's report, often called "Our Common Future" (Brundtland & Khalid, 1987), was published four years later in 1987. This report expanded on the goals set out at the Stockholm Summit and offered the definition of sustainable development that has since become the de jure standard: "sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland & Khalid, 1987, p.41).

Material and Methods

In this study four districts of Multan Division; District Multan, Khanewal, Mian Channu and Jahanian from the province Punjab were selected. The Questionnaire was circulated among teachers and, head teachers from districts of Multan Division working in the public funded institutions of school education department, Govt. of Punjab. In the light of scholars' feedback, required modifications were made in the instrument before launching in the field.

Sample

The sample of the study was comprised on 40 teachers and 40 head teachers from districts of Multan Division; District Multan, Khanewal, Mian Channu and Jahanian. From each district 20 respondents and from each district; 5 male teachers and 5 female teachers, and from each district 5 male head teachers and 5 female head teachers were selected by using multi sampling techniques.

Tool for Data Collection

A survey form i.e., structured questionnaire was based on 3-point Likert scale from to some extent, strongly disagrees to fully agree: (1-3). This questionnaire was for teachers and, head teachers from districts of Multan Division. The data was collected by the personal visit to the respondents.

Results and Discussion

The considered results in tables are in the form of percentages and t-test values. Percentages and t-test values show the respondents opinion. Consequently, the difference also shows the lack of implementation of the legislations. t-test values further illustrate significant values of the responses. Questions were sum up and were calculated the results by giving values; to some Extent =1, Disagreed =2 and Fully Agreed =3 of the respondents about the responses. T-tests and percentages were applied for the quantitative data analysis to the individual statements asked of teachers and, head teachers from districts of Multan Division. The demographic features of gender (male/female) were used as group variables. Highlighted results from table 1 & 2 were checked for the cross validation with the observation sheet. The results with findings are given below:

Table 1
Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire Items, Independent Sample t-test, on
Legislations of UPE programs with significant difference by Gender

S. No	Statements	Gender	To some Extent	Disagreed	Fully Agreed	t-value	p-value
1	Promulgation of Compulsory Universal Primary Education act	Male	11.20%	71.09%	17.71%	-	0.04
		Female	13.07%	79.98%	6.95%		
2	Implementation of Child labor Act	Male	31.25%	44.64%	24.11%	-	0.000
		Female	2.86%	48.98%	48.16%		
3	Approval of educational policy from Provincial Assembly	Male	11.09%	5.53%	83.38%	-	0.04
		Female	10.02%	21.83%	68.15%		

The results of gender variable are presented in the table-1. The data shows the Legislations aspect of Universal Primary Education Programs and calculated t-value are found statistically significant at p-value (0.05 levels). The respondents, male and female teachers are not satisfied with legislations aspect of Universal Primary Education Programs. But with respect to percentages, it indicates the results of various statements. Values of first statement describes that around 71.09% male and 79.98% female teachers were found disagreed with the statement that promulgation of Compulsory Universal Primary Education Act was ensured. In the same way, the result of second statement indicates that approximately 44.64% male teachers and 48.98% female teachers were found not satisfied with the statement that implementation of Child labor Act was in true letter and spirit. In the same way, according to the last statement of the table-1, around 83.38% male teachers and 68.15% female teachers were agreed that approval of educational policy from Provincial Assembly was made. Both male and female teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the legislations related to UPE programs as indicated by the disagreement percentages. The statistically significant gender differences observed in the t-test results suggest variations in perceptions between male and female teachers regarding the effectiveness and adequacy of these legislations.

Table 2
Analysis of Head Teachers' Questionnaire Items, Independent Sample t-test, on
Legislations of Education with significant difference by Gender

S. No.	Statements	Gender	To some Extent	Disagreed	Fully Agreed	t-value	p-value
1	Promulgation of Compulsory Universal Primary Education act	Male	18.55%	61.64%	19.81%	1.963	0.05
		Female	10.85%	65.61%	23.54%		
2	Implementation of Child labor Act	Male	6.80%	83.15%	10.05%	2.11	0.035
		Female	10.85%	75.40%	13.75%		
3	Approval of educational policy from Provincial Assembly	Male	9.02%	74.32%	16.66%	-4.773	.000
		Female	6.99%	63.97%	29.04%		

The results of gender variable are presented in the table-2. The data describes the legislations aspect of Universal Primary Education Programs and calculated t-value are found statistically significant at p-value (0.05 levels). The respondents, male and female head teachers are not satisfied with the legislation's aspect of Universal Primary Education Programs. But with respect to percentages, it indicates the results of various statements. Values of first statement describes that around 61.64% male head teachers and 65.61% female head teachers were found disagreed with the statement that promulgation of Compulsory Universal Primary Education Act was ensured. In the same way, the result of second statement indicates that approximately 83.15% male head teachers and 75.40% female head teachers were found not satisfied with the statement that implementation of Child labor Act was in true letter and spirit. In the same way,

according to the last statement of the table-2, around 74.32% male head teachers and 63.97% female head teachers were not agreed that approval of educational policy from Provincial Assembly was made. The result of table-4.1 shows that around 71.09% male and 79.98% female teachers were found disagreed with the statement that promulgation of Compulsory Universal Primary Education Act was ensured in its true spirit and as per table-4.2 approximately, 61.64% male head teachers and 65.61% female head teachers were found disagreed with the statement about promotion of compulsory primary education act.

Whereas on the implementation of Child labor Act was in true letter and spirit about 44.64% male teachers and 48.98% female teachers were found not satisfied (table-4.1) while the head teachers' data of table-4.2 indicates that approximately 83.15% male head teachers and 75.40% female head teachers were found not satisfied with the statement the implementation of Child labor Act was in true letter. In the same way, according to the last statement of the table-1, around 83.38% male teachers and 68.15% female teachers were agreed that approval of educational policy from Provincial Assembly was made while approximately, 74.32% male head teachers and 63.97% female head teachers were not agreed that approval of educational policy from Provincial Assembly was made. While, majority number of respondents were not agreed that compulsory primary education act was promoted in its true spirit. It was also showed not satisfaction by the respondent with regard to second that implementation of Child labor Act was in true letter and spirit. Whereas, it was emphasized on third statement, male and female teachers are satisfied that approval of educational policy from Provincial Assembly was made while male and female head teachers are not satisfied with the statement. It was expressed by the male and female teachers also head teachers that support from political elite and civil provincial management was not exercised in executions of these legislations. In this connection, it was emphasized by the respondents that public sector executors did not own these legislation's regarding Universal Primary Education Programs. Gap in perceptions and issues regarding their implementation of legislative Acts regarding Universal Primary Education Programs to achieve Sustainable Development Goals were not considered which are resulting out disaster of the Universal Primary Education Programs. The implementation of legislative acts regarding Universal Primary Education (UPE) programs in the context of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) involves examining the effectiveness, challenges and potential improvements in the legal frameworks designed to promote education for all. Many countries have enshrined the right to education in their constitutions or legal frameworks, reflecting a global acknowledgment of education as a fundamental human right (UNESCO, 2017). SDG 4 which emphasizes the significance of inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030 is frequently incorporated into legislative actions relevant to UPE (United Nations, 2015).

Public awareness and lobbying initiatives influence how UPE legislation is enacted. Effective advocacy efforts and communication that highlight the benefits of UPE often lead to positive impressions (Lloyd & White, 2017). Adequate resource allocation and financial resources are essential for successful implementation. Problems can arise when statutory requirements and funding for UPE programs are allocated (Alderman & Orazem, 2009). Successful implementation requires strong monitoring and evaluation systems. To improve program effectiveness, regular evaluations help identify bottlenecks and ensure corrective actions are implemented (World Bank, 2020). Successful implementation to achieve inclusion requires addressing socio-economic gaps and ensuring that UPE programs reach disadvantaged and marginalized communities (Hossain, 2018). There may be legal measures that favor quantity over

quality, which raises questions about the effectiveness of the education offered. One ongoing challenge is striking a balance between educational standards and accessibility (Chudgar & Quin, 2012). Inadequate infrastructure and accessibility issues can impede the successful implementation of UPE programs, particularly in remote or conflict-affected areas (Chakroun, 2018). The rapid ascent of COVID-19 has a significant impact on the global education system (Singh et al., 2021). Among the countries most severely impacted by this new coronavirus is India (Pillai et al., 2020). During this time, the Indian government has launched a number of efforts to enable education (Singh et al., 2021). In addition to the current situation, the Indian government is eager to deliver high-quality education by enforcing regular updates and necessary modifications to the educational framework. One of the ongoing processes of educational advancement under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4) is the recently announced New Education Policy 2020.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that gender differences exist in the perceptions of both teachers and head teachers across all three legislative aspects. These differences highlight the need for a nuanced understanding of educators' perspectives, which may have implications for policy implementation. Further investigation into the specific factors contributing to these gender-based distinctions could provide valuable insights for educational policymakers and administrators. It was proposed that specialists on the subjects be hired for their training because the analytical study indicated that it is difficult to create teacher competence in accordance with the SDGs. There might be cooperation between the implementers and the stakeholders.

Recommendations

It was suggested that future educators may receive a comprehensive education on this subject in order to better prepare them for the SDG agenda. Workshops and seminars can be used to educate teachers, educators and student teachers about GCED and ESD. It is possible that during the curriculum design process, pre-service teachers would be asked for input on the abilities they currently possess and would like to develop. Due to the social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects of sustainable development goals, 280 connections between the various courses were suggested in the proposed curriculum. Pre-service teacher education can incorporate the concepts of GCED and ESD through the use of an integrated approach. Clinical psychologists and physicians may add a topic of health and well-being to the curriculum, emphasising healthy lifestyles and mental education. It may be possible to create formative and summative assessment techniques to monitor the full implementation of GCED and ESD. Teaching global citizenship is crucial to preparing future educators for global trends and equipping them with the knowledge and abilities to support sustainable development. Incorporating these concepts can aid in achieving Agenda 2030 for Education. Social media must be used to shape public opinion because it can be difficult to introduce these new GCED and ESD issues because of "Social Taboo." The agenda needs to be incorporated into the ECE, primary, and elementary curricula in order to be completed, whether it is a short-term or long-term programme. This idea should be introduced early on since it can have a greater impact than when it is introduced later in the learning process.

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