



RESEARCH PAPER

Role of Overseas Pakistanis Ministry and Facilities for Children of Overseas Pakistanis in the Field of Education: The Case Study of Students Residing in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The goal of the current study was to determine how the Overseas Pakistanis Ministry influences the educational resources that children of Pakistani expatriates residing in Pakistan have access to. The study's objective is to get a deeper understanding of the ministry's support networks in order to enhance the educational chances for these children. The study uses a case study approach to investigate the specific policies and initiatives implemented by the ministry to support the education of Pakistani expatriate children. These consist of financial help plans, career counselling, language assistance, cultural orientation, counselling, financial aid programs, and entrance support. The study also identifies gaps in the corpus of prior research on the topic. A needs analysis to identify the specific challenges these students face, ensuring that policies and programs are inclusive, conducting a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of the current facilities and support services, and investigating the long-term effects of government initiatives on the educational and professional outcomes of Pakistani-immigrant children living abroad are some of these gaps. These research gaps must be taken into account in evidence-based policymaking and program formulation to properly support the educational needs of this student group.

KEYWORDS Overseas Pakistanis Ministry, OPF, Children of Overseas Pakistanis, Contribution, Education, Scholarship, Seat Reservation

Introduction

OPF was founded in accordance with the 1979 Emigration Ordinance. It was registered on July 8, 1979, under the Companies Act, 1913 (currently Companies Act 2017, Section-42) as a Not-for-Profit Company. The Public Sector Companies (Corporate Governance) Rules, 2013 of the Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan would apply to this public sector business. The Board of Governors is the highest authority in the organization, and it controls all aspects of its operations while also receiving directives from the government about policy. The social welfare of immigrants and their families, both in Pakistan and outside, is OPF's primary goal. For the benefit of Pakistanis living abroad, OPF is offering its services in the areas of housing, health, education, vocational training, and financial aid. OPF has always made it a goal to launch fresh initiatives and programs for the benefit of Pakistanis living abroad. To make sure the well-being of Overseas Pakistanis and their families & to make sure welfare of Overseas Pakistanis and their families and pay towards their regular rehabilitation on yield, by producing adequate means and management with the stakeholders.

A significant figure of Pakistanis living abroad recognized as Overseas Pakistanis (OPs) play a role in the diaspora. They make contributions, to the economy. Keep close social connections with their home country. As per data available, total 99 Lacs Overseas Pakistanis are settled in different countries and Remittances Received from Overseas Pakistanis: during the Financial Year 2022-23, Rs. 27.027 Billion US \$ Remittances received from Overseas Pakistanis. The government has familiar the importance of providing quality schooling for these Overseas Pakistanis resident's children who live in Pakistan. As an outcome, they have established the Overseas Pakistanis Ministry (M/o OP). Implemented initiatives to address this concern. This paper examines the efficiency of these efforts in ensuring that OPs, in Pakistan receive a standard of education. Over eight (08) million Overseas Pakistanis make up the majority of the country's population, often residing with their children who attend school in Pakistan while their parents remain abroad, presenting unique challenges and opportunities.

The Overseas Pakistanis Foundation is a government-controlled body which was formed to enhance the welfare of overseas Pakistanis. The Foundation's Head Office is situated in Islamabad whereas its regional offices are in all provincial capitals and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The OPF's mandate extends to Azad Jammu & Kashmir as well as to the listed members and their families in Pakistan.

Literature Review

Case examples from different countries or areas are included in this section to demonstrate how road safety initiatives truly impact people in the real world. Case studies might include both unsuccessful initiatives that ran into problems or did not provide the desired outcomes, as well as successful programs that led to a noticeable drop in traffic accidents (Heydari, et al., 2019). Through the examination of several scenarios, this part aims to draw attention to key lessons learned and recommended procedures for organizing and carrying out road safety campaigns.

This review of the literature looks at studies on how the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD) help children of Pakistani expatriates further their education. It focuses on pointing up areas of current knowledge and possible research gaps.

Facilities Offered by the OPF

1. The OPF provides a range of educational facilities for children of overseas Pakistanis in Pakistan:

OPF Educational Institutions: Across the nation, OPF has founded 27 educational institutions, including Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The general public and children of Overseas Pakistanis are served by these institutions, which offer high-quality education from Pre-Nursery to Intermediate, O, and A level. Adequate attention is being paid towards extra-curricular activities of the students of these schools / colleges the total numbers of student about these educational institutions are 21050 whereas; the students of OP's children are 5050 which is 24% of the total strength. Throughout the school year, admission is granted to the offspring of Pakistanis living abroad. Additionally, they receive a 50% tuition cost reduction for up to four (4) children.

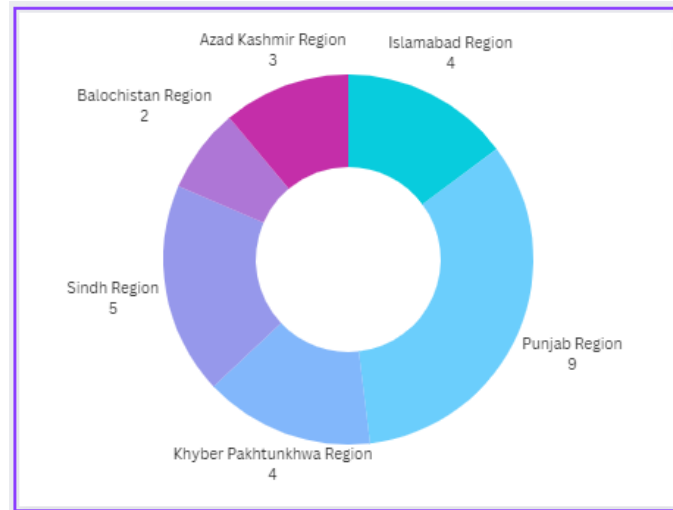


Figure # 1. Province-wise bifurcation of OPF Educational Institutions

Scholarship Programs (OPEF): The Overseas Pakistanis Facilitation Wing established the Overseas Pakistanis Education Fund to help pay for the education of Overseas Pakistanis' children enrolled in Pakistani public and private schools. The following programs' recipients of the scholarships are the offspring of Pakistanis living abroad:

- ✓ Either intermediate or comparable
- ✓ Graduation Program: Bachelor of Engineering, BDS, MBBS
- ✓ Master/MS Program: eighteen years of schooling

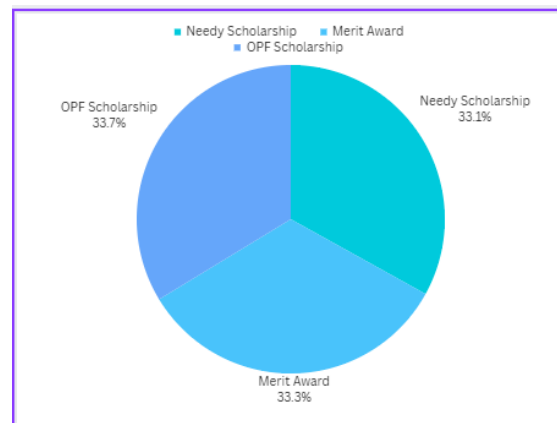


Figure # 2. Bifurcation of OPF Scholarship Scheme

E-Learning Initiative: OPF Education Division made the decision to implement online lectures in order to provide these students, who are enrolled in OPF Educational Institutions spread out over the nation, with a high-quality education after realizing the value of e-Learning (online lectures) in improving the educational system. The online lecture is being given from the e-Learning Studio Rooms set up at the top OPF universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

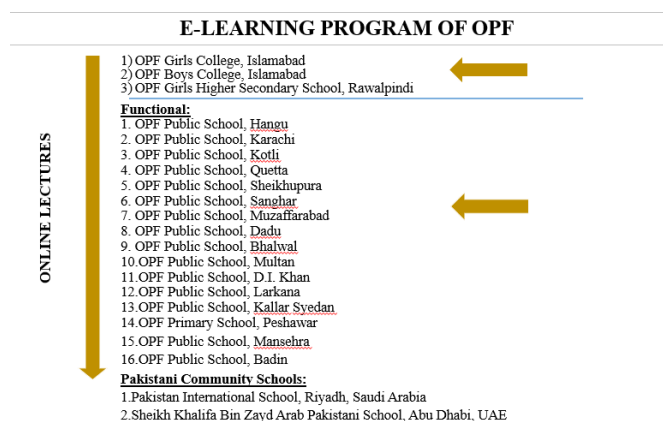


Figure # 3. Bifurcation of OPF E-Learning Chapter

Reserved Seats: In Pakistan, children of Pakistanis living abroad are entitled to a set number of places in both public and private educational institutions. Currently, 292 spaces have been set aside for the admission of overseas Pakistani students at a number of reputable universities around the nation.

Table 1. Institution-wise details of Reserved Seats for the children of Overseas Pakistanis

**RESERVATION OF SEATS
FOR THE CHILDREN OF OVERSEAS PAKISTANIS**

| Sr. No. | Institutes | Current Status |
|---------|---|--------------------------------|
| 01. | KPK Agriculture University, Peshawar | 2 seats |
| 02. | Ayub Medical College, Abbottabad | 2 seats (Only KPK Domicile) |
| 03. | Khyber Medical College, Peshawar | 3 seats (Only KPK Domicile) |
| 04. | Khyber College of Dentistry, Peshawar | 2 seats (Only KPK Domicile) |
| 05. | Ayub Dental Section, Abbottabad | 1 seat (Only KPK Domicile) |
| 06. | Bacha Khan Dental Section, Mardan | 1 seat (Only KPK Domicile) |
| 07. | Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan (under Graduate & Post Graduate Programs) | 125 seats |
| 08. | University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (under degree program) | 22 seats |
| 09. | University of Education, Lahore | 133 seats |
| 10. | Government Swedish Pakistani College of Technology, Gujrat | 01 seat |

Faculty Development Program: To improve the soft skills of teachers, a comprehensive Faculty Development Program has been initiated with support of **British Council**. An MoU was signed between OPF and British Council to conduct comprehensive Faculty Development Program for teachers for a period of two years. Nineteen (19) training sessions have been conducted by British Council to date where 234 teachers of OPF Educational Institutions from Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Jammu & Kashmir have been trained by British Council Trainers. The British Council has given International School Awards to eleven (11) OPF Educational Institutions, including Rawalpindi, Karachi, Sheikhupura, Multan, Hangu, Muzaffarabad, Bhalwal, Quetta, Turbat, Sialkot, and Kallar Syedan. The British Council has recently granted permission for these organizations to use its emblem on their marketing materials.



Figure # 4. Detail of OPF Educational Institutions who got British Council Award

Financial Assistance: OPF provides financial assistance to Overseas Pakistanis families struggling to afford their children's education.

Financial Aid Scheme: Financial Assistance amounting to Rs. 400,000/- & Rs. 300,000/- in death and disability respectively to overcome initial financial difficulties. Rs.3.53 Billion disbursed to 15,090 beneficiaries.

Free Transportation of Deceased: Provision of free ambulance service for transportation of the deceased overseas Pakistanis from all international airports of Pakistan to their native towns. (4,488 cases handled).

Settlement of Dues: Recovery of outstanding end of services benefits of repatriated and deceased Pakistani workers, who have served abroad. (Rs. 6.98 Billion disbursed in 9,232 cases).

Complaint Cell: Redressal of various natures of complaints of overseas Pakistanis in Pakistan, through Online Complaint Management System / Pakistan Citizen's Portal (PCP) and Manually. 29,854 complaints out of 36,819 resolved. (success rate - 81.08%).

OPF NADRA Swift Centre: OPF-NADRA Swift Center at OPF Head Office, Islamabad to provide exclusive services to overseas Pakistanis and their families for issuance of NICOP/CNIC and related services offered by NADRA.

OPF-DGI&P MRP Facilitation Centre for overseas Pakistanis: Establishment of Machine-Readable Passport (MRP) facility in collaboration with Directorate General of Immigration & Passports (DGI&P), for the overseas Pakistanis and their dependents at OPF Head Office, Islamabad.

2. **Facilitation Desks (Airport Counters):** One Window Facilitation Desks (OWFD) have been created at all major international airports in Pakistan to facilitate overseas Pakistanis to sort out the discrete and systemic matters of the overseas Pakistanis linked to the Government Ministries, Departments, Organization and Agencies

The Challenges of Third Culture Kids (TCKs)

Numerous scholarly works investigate the difficulties encountered by migrating children, commonly known as Third Culture Kids (TCKs). [Umaña-Taylor & Guarnaccia, 2009] look at the challenges TCKs have in forming their identities, integrating academically, and adjusting to a new culture. This study is important because children of Pakistanis living abroad may have comparable difficulties because of their parents' foreign employment.

Education Initiatives for Migrant Children

Studies on educational programs for children of migrants might provide insightful information. Support initiatives that help close the gap between home culture and the educational system in the host nation are examined by [Agyapong & Byram, 2014]. In a similar vein, [OECD, 2018] investigates measures that support immigrant pupils' assimilation. These studies offer a framework for assessing how well the OPF's initiatives support the academic and cultural integration of children of Pakistanis living abroad in Pakistan.

Limited Research on Domestic Students

There may be a research deficit that focuses only on the experiences of children of Pakistanis living abroad in Pakistan. Research may concentrate on the OPF's programs' overall efficacy or on the experiences of Pakistani students studying overseas as foreign students. As an illustration, [Aslam & Shah, 2013] look at the chances and difficulties Pakistani students encounter overseas. Although this research is helpful, it does not address the unique demands of pupils who are trying to navigate the Pakistani educational system while their parents are employed abroad.

Focus on Quantitative Data

A possible vulnerability is the dependence on numerical information. Statistics on program enrolment or scholarship distribution may be examined in research. Qualitative research that delves into the real-life experiences of students and their families is vital, though.

For instance, [Brubaker, 2005] argues for the importance of qualitative research in understanding the social and cultural experiences of migrants. Studies employing interviews or focus groups with students, families, and OPF officials could provide valuable insights into the social integration, academic challenges, and any cultural adjustment difficulties faced by these students.

Challenges Faced

- **Limited Awareness:** The government's benefits should be accessible to Overseas Pakistanis and their families by addressing their limited awareness about available educational opportunities and support systems.
- **Bureaucracy and Accessibility:** The complex and bureaucratic application processes for scholarships and admission to OPF institutions can hinder the accessibility of eligible students.
- **Quality and Curriculum Disparity:** Some OPF institutions and public schools face resource constraints, affecting educational quality and offering different curricula compared to international counterparts.

- **Social and Cultural Integration:** Overseas Pakistanis may face difficulties in adjusting to the Pakistani social and cultural environment in schools, which could impact their academic performance.

Advisory Role of OPF

In a contemporary economy, information is crucial for socio-economic braining. Labour unions and special interest agencies prioritize supplying information to their members. As an Overseas Pakistani community’s special interest organization, it is important for them to regard the Overseas Pakistanis (OPF) as a reliable consular. The guidance might cover formal issues, such departing the nation, OP’s rights abroad, delivering goods and money to Pakistan. It may also address opportunities for families and community privileges. The advice may also focus on tales of triumph and setbacks shared by OP’s, influencing their behavior. The advice may also address new activities like building a house, seeking education and medical care, and starting businesses. The OP has never had these experiences before, who may not have been informed about these matters due to wealth or lineage. It would be beneficial to prevent them from learning about these activities by their hands getting burned, as they can’t afford to make mistakes and a unique opportunity in their lives may never come again.

OPF as an Educator

The OPF is establishing prestigious educational institutions in Pakistan to cater to the needs of Pakistanis living abroad in the field of education. The division aims to deliver high quality instruction to children in various provinces and cities, ensuring their well-being and development. The following lists OPF Educational Institutions' locations by province:



Figure # 5. Detail of OPF Educational Institutions through Map of Pakistan

Overseas Pakistanis Foundation Public Schools / Colleges Province Wise

Table 2
OPF Educational Institutions

| <i>Province</i> | <i>No of Institutions</i> | <i>Location</i> |
|-----------------|---------------------------|---|
| Islamabad | 04 | Sector H-8/4, H-8/4-1, F-8/2, F-11/2 |
| Punjab | 09 | Rawalpindi, Bhalwal, Depalpur, Kallar Syedan, Gujrat, Multan, Pakpattan, Sialkot, Sheikhupura |
| Sindh | 05 | Dadu, Karachi, Larkana, Badin and Sanghar |
| KPK | 04 | Mansehra, Peshawar, Hangu, D.I.Khan |
| Baluchistan | 02 | Quetta and Turbat |

Material and Methods

The study is descriptive in nature. Survey method was used to assess the contribution of OPF schools for Pakistani at secondary level. There were three OPF institutions in the target area. The heads of all the three institutions and the eighty teacher of secondary level of OPF institutions served as the population. 100 % heads of the OPF institution within the targeted area and 50% teachers teaching secondary classes from all the institution were taken as sample. Sample of the study details as:

Table 3

| <i>Institutions</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Sample</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| OPF Girls College Rawalpindi | 10 | 5 |
| OPF Girls College Islamabad | 50 | 25 |
| OPF Boys College Islamabad | 20 | 10 |
| Total | 80 | 40 |

Two detailed questionnaire were developed for secondary school teacher and head of the institution, the questionnaires comprises all necessary aspect related to the job of secondary school teacher and heads of the institutions. The collected data by keeping in views the objective of the study the mean score method was used.

Result and Discussion

The finding of the study inferred that OPF is providing physical facilities in its institution to a satisfactory extent. The teacher of the OPF institution is regular and full-time teacher. Learning in these institutions is student based and teachers try to involve students in discussion during lecturer and always encouraging questioning from students to clear their concepts. The positive responses of teacher towards students' and parents' complaints are an indicator pointing that teachers are devoted, hardworking and work at their best which gives us understanding about education system of OPF where environment for teaching learning processes is conducive.

The performance of students of secondary level was analyzed from their SSC results and it was found that a majority of students passed their SSC examination in B grades. It is therefore, recommended that the OPF institution need improvement in Board results in term of quality. This may be done by giving incentive to teachers, on their better performance.

Finding of the study also revealed that OP's students are given preference during admission processes and review of literature revealed that OP's students are given 50% concession in fee which shows the efforts made by the OPF for the welfare of children of Overseas Pakistan although much more still needs to be done in this area.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while the Overseas Pakistanis Ministry is instrumental in facilitating the provision of education to OCPs in Pakistan, challenges of awareness, access, and quality exist. Therefore, this research implies a holistic approach including financial assistance, quality education improvement, and support from different socio-economic backgrounds to create a seamless experience for all learners. By focusing on and addressing these gaps, in addition, focusing on enhancing current approaches is an indication that the government can realize the full educational potential of this population. The research paper will be helpful to identify what OCP children go through and why the available supports are not enough. Finally, following the proposed recommendations will ensure all OCP children have access to quality education, hence living to their potentials.

Recommendations

The recommendations are drawn from the findings and conclusions.

- The proposed initiative aims to raise awareness among OPs families on the various educational options and support systems.
- It seeks to improve the quality of education in OPF institutions and other schools with OPs children. The initiative further targets to improve the language support programs to ease the integration of OPs children into the Pakistani education domain.
- The initiative recommends that the government increases the provision of scholarships and financial aid to reduce the financial burden on OPF families.
- Program to support the children into adjusting to the Pakistani social and cultural system should equally be intensified.
- The Overseas Ministry collaborates with schools and other stakeholders to help address the issues of OP children in a better and coordinated manner.

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