

Govt. Educational Policies and their impact on Student's Retention in Public Schools of District Karak

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Abstract

This study endeavored to check the effects of Government Educational policies on the rate of retention of school children in different government schools in Karak district at Prime level (boys & girls), a south district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The main goal of this research study includes checking the influence of Public Sector Govt. Educational Policies on students' retention rate at prime level School education system. Population of the this research study comprised Government Prime level Schools of Karak district which comprised both Boys & Girls. Sample of the study involved 60 Government primary schools. The sample also consists of 12 school management heads for the determination of a closed ended interview. For this purpose, Stratified-Random sampling technique was used. Data collection was carried out by Students Retention Proforma (SRP). Principals of different schools through self-developed closed ended interview in order to collect data about effect of delivery of free of cost education material for reading & writing for students in order to enhance the rate of their retention and to discourage dropout/absenteeism rate of the students. The collected data was examined & evaluated through percentage. On the other hand, the data which was collected by the school Principal's interview arranged as per their replies. Key conclusions of this research study: providing of free of cost reading & writing material including books & copies has significantly enhanced the rate of retention of children in 1 & 5 classes in different government prime level schools for boys and girls: most of the principals of these institutions observed that delivery of free of cost education

material including books/ copies has positively impacted the rate of retention of children and has declined their de-registration from institutes. This research study also recommended: Government may endure & withstand with the free of cost delivery of notebooks/ books to the students as this may have constructive influence & effects on rate of retention of children in all level schools especially at primary level; Government may also deliver free school uniforms, notebooks & textbooks, payment to the students in the shape of stipends.

Key Words: Government Initiatives, Students Retention, Students Dropout, Absenteeism.

Introduction:

About half of the students in the world who are enrolled and registered in primary level education in different parts of the world, among them about 46% girl's students enrolled in different primary schools complete their prime level education while on the other hand it is estimated that male students complete their prime education wholly at this level. 02 main difficulties which are faced while getting & implementation of EFA targets whose aim is "Education for All" which are, early & untimely withdrawal of kids from schools and secondly low rate of retention of children in these schools. Poor economic condition of student's families, psychological problems, expensive notebooks, text-books & exercise books, ignorance & high literacy rate of parents of students are the main reasons behind the rate off dropout of children from these educational institutions at prime level (Government of Pakistan, 2003). It has been also concluded that many education developmental programs like incentives in the shape of financial aid/ concession of fee, free education material will be extended to the children students both to male & female for equipping with basic schooling & to help them for easily access to primary educational institutions and make them to retain in these schools. Such enticements comprised of early delivery of free notebooks & textbooks, free uniform to deprived families, and financial help in the shape of stipends to those who left their schools due the said reasons and also poor economic conditions (Madani, 2019). These encouragements and incentives will be provided to the children who are enrolled in public sector educational institutions. Financial programmes like Need Based Stipends & Scholarships to be provided to the poor and needy students in order to facilitate & expedite their different costs regarding education, also through Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (Malik et al, 2022: Government of Pakistan, 2003).

In 2004, an assessment was executed regarding the societal & quality of people's life and it was concluded that many students who are joining prime level schools divided by the sum of students who must to be attending (5-9 years) by Gross Enrolment Rate (GER), has enhanced in the year of 2001 to 2002 from 72% to 86% in the year of 2004 to 2005. The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) - No of students registered in Govt. primary schools at prime level, divided by the No. of students in the age group for that level of education has enhanced from percentage of 42 to 52. So concluded from the results that NER is the No of school students between ages of 05 to 9 years who are joining public prime level educational institutions divided by the No of students who are aged between 5 to 09 years. The value of NER is more in the Punjab and fewer in the province of Baluchistan (Malik et al, 2022: Pakistan Social Living Measurement, 2005).

In Pakistan, the Education Sector Reforms (ESR) are in the line with the Pakistan Constitution of 1973 which is giving assurance to achieve the primary level education which is the basic right of each & every individual of this country without any kind of discrimination. These reforms in education sector has planned & prepared the targets for education at primary level, literacy of adults as well as to attain gender equality keeping in view the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Dakar Declaration's guidelines. The officials who are responsible for accomplishment of such events at district level as well as at provincial level are well aware about the principles and goals of Education Sector Reforms. Ministers for Education of different provinces are in need to arrange gathering after every 03 months in order to formulate procedures, actions & techniques and also altered mechanisms for its successful implementation at each level. Ministry of Education at Federal level and also at all Provincial levels need to extend essential funds & resources for the successful execution of ESR strategic plans (2001-02, 2005-06). The funds were transferred by the Federal to the Provincial Governments in order to rationalize its perfect allocation by giving the right directions for regular expenditure of educational institutions. They were also directed for early provision of necessary facilities like infrastructure to schools, necessary trainings to teachers and provision of incentives both boys especially to girls of free notebooks & textbooks, free school uniforms and also provision of financial aid to students (Education Sector Reform, 2004).

Institutional Reform Program was planned & arranged by the KPK Govt. in order to make growth in admission rate and their retention in educational institutions, in order to take

practical steps for the successful implementation for education sector like delivery of cost free notebooks/ education material for prime level both boys & girls beginners (World Bank, & Department for International Development, 2005). From 2003, Govt. of KPK initiated programmes regarding provision of free notebooks/ educational material for all government educational institutions especially at primary level. For the purpose, the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has provided Rs. 5m for providing notebooks/ education material in order to facilitate the primary level admitted children as well as students of higher classes in the previous 04 years (Khan et al, 2023: Malik et al, 2022).

In order to encourage the female students and also their parents & families to take admission for their female children, the Govt. of KPK also decided to make payment of Rs. 200 to each female enrolled student. For the purpose, Education for All plan were planned & then implemented by each district as well as provincial governments. To get good results and equip all people with basic education and to ensure 100% literacy and school admission/ enrolment by the year of 2015, almost Rs.100 billion is required by the stakeholders. Under this plan, free of cost prime level education in Govt. educational institutions is a target for these governments. In this context, provision & delivery of free textbooks to 300,000 Govt. School Students, Rs. 100 million was provided by the provincial government (Khan et al, 2023). Much more quantity of money was consumed on the free delivery education related material like copies, books, school bags, scholarships to different Govt. schools in past. But in order to get best and fruitful results, no appropriate study has been conducted to check out & evaluate the paybacks of this massive investment. Due to this reason, the researcher is on the point and felt it appropriate to conduct a study on this topic and perceive the results/ effects of free delivery of textbooks on retention of students at prime level in different government institutions/ schools.

Problem Statement:

Problem of this current research is formulated on basis of previous educational policies and research studies. It was that, to check out the influence of Government Educational Policies on the retention and stay of students at Prime level in Govt. Schools of Karak district, south district of KPK. This research study is clearly focused on description and exploration of the impact of free delivery of education materials comprising of notebooks, textbooks and related materials on students' stay at prime level in Govt. Schools in District Karak.

Study Objectives:

The objectives of the study are as under:

1. To examine the influence of Government Educational Policies on retention of students at entry level in Govt. Boys Primary Schools.
2. To check overall impression of Government Educational Policies on retention of students at entry level in Govt. Girls Primary Schools.

Research Questions:

The aim of this study is to finding out answers to the below mentioned specific research questions:

1. What is the difference in the rate of retention of Boys students in class-1 before and after the free delivery of textbooks?
2. What is the difference in the rate of retention of Boys students in class-5 before and after the free delivery of textbooks?
3. What is the difference in the rate of retention of Girls students in class-1 before and after the free delivery of textbooks?
4. What is the difference in the rate of retention of Girls students in class-5 before and after the free delivery of textbooks?

Methods and Procedure:

Population for the current research study comprised of Govt. Prime level Boys Schools & Govt. Prime level Girls Schools of Karak district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to the available data in the EDO office of Karak district, the total no. of public prime level schools are as under:

No. of Boys & Girls Govt. Primary School's data as per tehsil are as under;

Serial No.	Tehsil	Boys	Girls	Total
A	Karak	168	125	293
B	Thakhte Nasrati	169	120	289
C	Banda Daud Shah	99	80	179
	Total	436	325	761

Source: EDEO Education, district Karak record, 2012.

Sampling Technique:

Stratified-Random Sampling Technique was used for collection of a Sample. The sample size comprised of sixty Prime level Government Schools (30 boys & 30 girls of different schools). The subgroups were 03 tehsils: Tehsil Karak, Tehsil Thakhte Nasrati, and Tehsil Banda Daud Shah. To make the representative sample, 20 Primary Government Schools from each tehsil (10 Boys Schools & 10 Girls Schools) were randomly selected. The classification of subgroups is as under;

No. of Boys & Girls Govt. Primary School's data as per tehsil are as under;

Serial No.	Tehsil	Boys	Girls	Total
A	Karak	10	10	20
B	Thakhte Nasrati	10	10	20
C	Banda Daud Shah	10	10	20
	Total	30	30	60

The data also comprised of 12 Primary Government School's Principals (6 Boys and 6 Girls). These School Principals were casually nominated from the sample of 60 schools as stated in above tables. 4 School principals (2 Boys Heads & 2 Girls Heads) were randomly selected from each tehsil.

Sample of the Primary Government School's Principals for the interview are as under;

Serial No.	Tehsil	Boys	Girls	Total
A	Karak	2	2	4
B	Thakhte Nasrati	2	2	4
C	Banda Daud Shah	2	2	4
	Total	6	6	12

Data Collection and Analysis:

Data was collected through self-developed proforma called Students Retention Proforma (SRP). The researcher of the study personally visited the said educational institutions in order to gather data related to stay of students in IST class & 5TH class of those schools. The requisite data was put together for 03 years in 2000, 2001 and 2002 respectively before free provision of textbooks and for 03 years in 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively after free delivery of textbooks. Closed ended structured interview was planned & arranged in order to do school head's interview. School heads interrogated about the total influence of free delivery of textbooks for the purpose of retention of students in their schools, tutors' interest in teaching learning process, and the procedure of supply & distribution of books and also clearance & disposal of additional books. Data was examined on the basis of percentages. School head interview's data was processed & examined on the basis of replies of these Government School Principals.

Table1: Student's retention in Ist Class in Govt. Boys Prime level Schools;

Status	Year	Enrolment	Retention	% Retention
Before provision of free textbooks	2000	612	581	95%
	2001	675	654	97%
	2002	747	709	95%
After provision of free textbooks	2003	893	875	98%
	2004	1080	1069	99%
	2005	1295	1295	100%

The above mentioned table indicates and gives information regarding the rate of retaining of Ist class students of different Government Boys Schools before and after the free delivery of schoolbooks. It indicates that, afore the delivery of free of cost schoolbooks, rate of retaining of students was 95%, 97% and 95% respectively in years of 2000, 2001 and 2002. On the other hand, afterwards of the free delivery of schoolbooks, the rate of retaining of students was 98%, 99% and 100% respectively in the years of 2003, 2004 and 2005. Therefore, it was concluded that free provision of schoolbooks has enhanced the rate of retaining of students in Ist class in Government Boys' Prime level Schools.

Table2: Student's retention in 5th Class in Govt. Boys Prime level Schools;

Status	Year	Enrolment	Retention	% Retention
Before provision of free textbooks	2000	549	521	95%
	2001	631	606	96%
	2002	703	668	95%
After provision of free textbooks	2003	840	823	98%
	2004	969	959	99%
	2005	1139	1128	99%

The above mentioned table indicates and gives information regarding the rate of retaining of 5th class students of different Government Boys schools before and after the free delivery of notebooks. It indicates that, afore the delivery of free of cost schoolbooks, rate of retaining of students was 95%, 96% and 95% respectively in 2000, 2001 and 2002. On the other hand, afterwards of the free delivery of schoolbooks, the rate of retaining of students was 98%, 99% and 99% respectively in 2003, 2004 and 2005. Therefore, it was concluded that free provision of schoolbooks has enhanced the rate of retaining of students in 5th class in Government Boys' Prime level Schools.

Table3: Student's retention in Ist Class in Govt. Girls Prime level Schools;

Status	Year	Enrolment	Retention	% Retention
Before provision of free textbooks	2000	360	342	95%
	2001	403	387	96%
	2002	469	450	96%
After provision of free textbooks	2003	565	554	98%
	2004	670	663	99%
	2005	803	795	99%

The above mentioned table indicates and gives information regarding the rate of retaining of Ist class students of different Government Girls schools before and after the free delivery of notebooks. It indicates that, afore the delivery of free of cost schoolbooks, rate of retaining of students was 95%, 96% and 96% respectively in years of 2000, 2001 and 2002. On the other hand, afterwards of the free delivery of schoolbooks, the rate of retaining of students was 98%, 99% and 99% respectively in the years of 2003, 2004 and 2005. Therefore, it was determined that free & free of cost provision of schoolbooks to students of these schools has enhanced the rate of retaining of students in Ist class in Government Girls Prime Level Schools.

Table4: Student's retention in 5th Class in Govt. Girls Prime level Schools;

Status	Year	Enrolment	Retention	% Retention
Before provision of free textbooks	2000	556	526	94%
	2001	590	570	96%
	2002	630	605	96%
After provision of free textbooks	2003	700	685	98%
	2004	765	760	99%
	2005	845	835	99%

The above mentioned table indicates and gives information regarding the rate of retaining of 5th class students of different Government Girls schools before and after the free delivery of notebooks. It indicates that, afore the delivery of free of cost schoolbooks, rate of retaining of students was 94%, 96% and 96% respectively in 2000, 2001 and 2002. On the other hand, afterwards of the free delivery of schoolbooks, the rate of retaining of students was 98%, 99% and 99% respectively in 2003, 2004 and 2005. So it is clear that free delivery of schoolbooks has enhanced the rate of retaining of students in 5th class in Government Girls' Prime level Schools.

Analysis of the views of School Heads:

All school heads were of the interpretation that delivery of free of cost education material has increased the rate of retention of students in schools, reduced the dropout rate and their regular absenteeism. These steps have been encouraged, welcomed & much appreciated by the parents, teachers and students. Therefore, it has been recommended by the School's Heads that more encouragements like free of cost uniform, free notebooks and financial aid/ fee may be given to the school's students to make the students more retention.

The responses / views of the school heads clearly show that the steps taken by the government regarding the free delivery of textbooks to students of different Government Primary School has been broadly greeted by the people because these steps have greatly improved the level of overall advocating of general people about the significance of schooling. The results of these steps would be comprehended & appreciated in the near future, when every child would get an opportunity to have access to school, which would ultimately result in achieving hundred percent literacy rate in the country (Khan et al, 2023).

Conclusions:

Investigation, statistical analysis and results of this study, conclusions are as under:

1. The data revealed that free delivery of textbooks has enhanced the rate of stay of Boy students in Ist class and 5th class in different Government Primary Schools.
2. It is also concluded from the data that free delivery of textbooks has enhanced the rate of stay of Girl students in Ist class and 5th class in different Government Primary Schools.

Recommendations:

As per results of this study, below mentioned are some recommendations which are:

1. Results of this study indicated that free delivery of education related material like notebooks, books has significantly developed the rate of retention of students in schools, it is therefore it is strongly recommended that the structure of delivery of free textbooks to students of Government Primary Schools may remain continue.
2. School Principals are on the opinion that the policies about providing of free of cost notebooks/ textbooks has amended the retaining rate of students and has also been strongly valued & appreciated by families of the enrolled students of these schools. The school principals also advised that much more facilities and benefits be extended and provided to the

students in this regard like, free of cost uniform, free notebooks, education material and financial aids in the shape of stipends and scholarships to the students.

3. The results of this study were applied & generalized at the district level of Karak only. It is strongly recommended that studies of this nature may be carried out at provincial level also in order to check out the effects of such policy.
4. Although delivery of free of cost notebooks has optimistic influence on rate of stay of students at prime level in Government schools, it is suggested that research work may be taken in order to check the influence of the Govt. Educational Policies on students' education fulfillment also.
5. The free delivery of education related material has enhanced registration & admission of students at primary level in different Government Primary Schools, it is recommended that studies may be carried out at Secondary level off schooling also to find out the effects & its results on student's enrolment policy.

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