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AN INVESTIGATION OF ISSUES AND PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION SYSTEM AT PRIMARY LEVEL IN DISTRICT TOBA TEK SINGH

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ABSTRACT

Primary schooling is the basic framework and first pillar of a child's future. Therefore, a study was planned to identify the core issues and difficulties related to education systems at the primary school level in district Toba Tek Singh. All the administration, staff, teachers, parents, and students were the study's target population. A mix methods research tools (interview and focus group discussion) were used to collect the data. The 20 public primary schools were selected and made a sample of 140 respondents through random technique. The interview was pretested on a small group of school administrators, students, and teachers from non-selected schools having similar subjects to evaluate the validity and reliability of the tool. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) in the form of mean, standard deviation, and percentage. The result showed that 69.3% of respondents belong to the 15-32 years age category, and the vast majority of participants stated that the literacy rate is not increasing as the population is due to poverty. The study recommended the policymakers that primary education is a basic pillar and should be better quality, well-trained teachers, proper funds provision, teacher-student ratio, and merit-based recruitment.

Keywords: Primary Schools; Education; Problems; Education system; Policy.

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INTRODUCTION

The learning process plays a significant role in the professional development of an individual, leading to personality development, efficiency in productivity, and a skilled workforce that keeps harmony in society and develops the country's sustainable economic growth (Adams, 1998). All developments in the world are based on education, and a sound education system is the prerequisite of all types of progress and developments that make the nations prosperous (Ball, 1990; Rasheed, 2004). Learning education at the primary level makes the basis for developing personalities and creates awareness among the individuals about the ups and down of life and how to tackle the challenges. Education develops minds with creative ideas with leadership qualities in the young generation (Polishook & Cortese, 2000). However, the teacher's attitude in primary education plays an important role and the teachers need to deal with students in a friendly environment (Monsen et al., 2014; Kraft et al., 2015).

In Pakistan, the education system is not well developed and could not progress due to narrow-minded feudal, politicians, corrupt government functionaries, brittle civil society, and immature democracy. The education system at primary level was also intentionally ignored in the country (Zafar, 2003; Ahmad et al., 2013). The sound and quality primary education provides a bright future of the country by educating the nursery of the country. But unfortunately some issues like political uncertainty, nepotism culture and corruption seriously hampered the pace of children education (Ashraf, 1983). It was observed that the primary schools in Pakistan are deprived of basic needs such as classrooms, buildings, teachers and text

books. The primary schools at govt. level were usually opened under the trees and the children from poor class families are the students of these schools, while the children from elite class are studying in high quality private schools with high expenses which cannot be afforded by the poor families (GOP, 1998). Even at present, the priority of government officials focused towards the improvement of higher education and there is continuous ignorance towards the development of primary education systems. That is why; a gap can be seen between different levels of primary education institutions. This imbalance situation is reflected in the performance of children from poor class which is far below from the elite class (GOP, 2002). The parents, teachers and the students are in confusion due to lot of problems in primary school at govt. level. This situation keeps the Pakistan very much behind in terms of basic literacy rate as compared to other countries (GOP, 2004). The other problems of primary school education systems are related to structural and gross management. At rural level, the condition of primary school is more miserable as compared to urban schools. The primary schools at rural level are lacking the teachers and basic infrastructures to conduct teaching and learning planning. Resultantly, these types of schools are producing incompetent and unskilled batches of students having poor knowledge in their subjects (Elsiddig, 1993).

Primary schooling is the basic framework and first pillar of a child's future. Pakistan has faced a lot of problems, difficulties, and challenges in developing quality education at the primary level since its inception. The system of education at the primary level could not deliver because of the weak, mismanaged, and ignored system of primary education. The lack of funds is another core issue in this regard. The policymakers could not introduce reforms to rectify the issues and problems faced in primary school education (Saleem, 2002; Ahmad et al., 2013). It is the need of time to identify and address all the issues and problems faced at primary school education to improve our literacy rate. By keeping in view the lowest progress rate of primary schools, a study was planned with the objectives to point out the core issues of the public primary school education system and suggest remedial measures for rehabilitation of public primary schools.

METHODOLOGY

The mix-method was used in this study, and District Toba Tek Singh was selected as a target area. All the school administrations, teachers, parents, and students of public primary schools are considered for the population. The 20 public primary schools of tehsil Toba Tek Singh were selected purposely. From the selected schools, all heads, 3 teachers and 3 students of each were chosen randomly and made a sample of 140 participants.

The interview and focus group discussion tools were used to gather data. An interview (research instrument) was formulated with multiple questions about problems, issues, and challenges faced by the school administration, teachers, and primary school students. The interview was pretested on a small group of school administrators, students, and teachers from non-selected schools having similar subjects to evaluate the validity and reliability of the tool. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) in the form of mean, standard deviation, and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 demonstrates the age group of all the respondents surveyed with a mean 2.73 ± 1.234 . According to the table, 53% of the respondents were between 15 to 24 years of age, followed by the 25-32 years age group representing 16.4% of the population and 33-44 years old representing 9% of the respondents. The other age groups were 45-54 years old (12%) and the least represented (above 55 years old) in the survey representing only 2%. The table showed significant results ($P < 0.05$).

Table 1. Age distribution of the study participants.

Age	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.	P-Value
less than 15	10	7.1	2.73	1.234	0.010
15-24	74	52.9			
25-32	23	16.4			
33-44	13	9.3			
45-54	17	12.1			
Above 55	3	2.1			
Total	140	100.0			

Table 2 represented that showed how low-income families have been rising for the last many years with a mean of 3.99 ± 1.00 . According to this, most respondents (47.9%) agreed, and 32.9% strongly agreed that low-income families have been rising for the last many years. However, 10% have disagreed, and only 2.1% were strongly disagreed with this statement. The table showed significant results ($P < 0.05$). However, 7.1% of respondents were neutral.

Table 2. Rising poverty is affecting education.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.	P-Value
SDA	3	2.1	3.99	1.000	0.000
DA	14	10.0			
U	10	7.1			
A	67	47.9			
SA	46	32.9			
Total	140	100.0			

Table 3 depicts that the high rate of the population could not equal the high literacy rate in Pakistan with a mean of 3.53 ± 1.172 . Most of the respondents (47.9%) agreed, and 16.4% strongly agreed that the high rate of the population could not equal the high literacy rate in Pakistan. It was also revealed that only 5% have disagreed and 11.4% were strongly disagreed with this statement. But, 19.3% were neutral. The table showed significant results ($P < 0.05$).

Table 3. The high rate of population is not equal to the high literacy rate in Pakistan.

Response	Frequency	Percent	Mean	Std. Dev.	P-Value
SDA	16	11.4	3.53	1.172	0.000
DA	7	5.0			
U	27	19.3			
A	67	47.9			
SA	23	16.4			
Total	140	100.0			

Some issues are discussed with the administration, teachers, parents, and students during a focus group discussion, and the different problems are identified. (1) The learning system in Pakistan is not working according to basic needs. (2) The availability of resources and their usage is not at the needs of learners. (3) The gender difference is a reason that pays to women's low role at the basic level of learning. (4) There is not an equal chance for all members of society at every level of education. (5) The provision of funds for education is very little. (6) The public fails to offer charm to the gifted people getting jobs in education institutes. (7) There is also no use of national language in school. (8) The uneducated people ran the schools as an industry and failed to meet the compulsory values. (9) Teachers' Salaries are not attractive. (10) Technical education is not part of the regular education system.

The results indicated that the majority of respondents agreed that the education system in Pakistan is not properly functioning and according to local requirements. The present study is in line with Erbas et al. (2010) inspected that instructor's around the globe face issues same time overseeing overcrowded classes. These issues might identify with instructional, managing, appraisal and discipline. The overcrowded classrooms influence the pupil listening, perusing capacity and teacher's guidelines. In overcrowded classes, the rate of absentees attempting state for educators gets to be distressing and upsetting. Makunja (2016) observed the challenges to applying educational modules at the secondary school level. He accounted for that differentiated educational module influenced the execution from student's academic achievements and hampered the academic execution of the learners. It might have been recommended that the educators must have participated in the curriculum development. Marais (2016) concentrated on the impacts of overcrowded classrooms on educators and learners. Mostly the parents select the schools for their kid at their own choice. All the head-teachers must ensure the proper training for their educators to make proper arrangements in overcrowded classes. It might have been indicated that the scholar-teachers, who were showing for overcrowded classrooms, confronted incessant challenges. Tayeg (2015) investigated the fundamental issues that hamper teacher-student cooperation in overcrowded classes, especially teaching-learning methodology, and the techniques that educators testament ought to use in huge span classes influencing teacher-student communication. The information was created through questionnaires to 30 pupils from distinctive classes and to 8 educators who have been decided haphazardly. The fundamental challenges watched were clamor-making overcrowded classes, absence of individual consideration and classroom plan influencing cooperation in the population. The teacher-students connection might have been affirmed. It might have been felt that there is have for the reception about present-day showing aids, of the systems and strategies that ought to be a chance to be connected same time educating help the individual's classes (Beauchemin et al., 2008; Tilya & Mafumiko, 2010).

The present results are also in line with Muranda et al. (2015) reported that the teachers faced a lot of difficulties in the primary schools of rural areas. The investigation was on the reading of English subjects by the students of primary school. It was noted that the English language was not the mother language of the children. That is why the students are in problem in reading the English course. The teachers were also not competent in teaching the English language subject. This situation is worst in the rural areas of Zimbabwe, and the teachers and students both faced problems in studying English subjects. It was recommended that the qualification of the primary school teacher must be improved. The students must be provided written notes and related materials to easily understand the subject. There should be arranged a training program to enhance teachers' proficiency in their concerned subjects (Henricsson & Rydell, 2004; Erbas et al., 2010).

CONCLUSIONS

This study identified the core issues and difficulties related to education systems at the primary school level in district Toba Tek Singh. The results revealed that lack of infrastructure, lack of funds, shortages of physical structures, the rapid rate of drop out and low rate of truancy were major problems in our education system. The recent result concluded that the education system might be better in our country if we overcame to minimize our current issues and problems faced by our education system.

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