



## Urban Trends in Education

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Education is one of the keys to understanding and combating causes and manifestations of inequality, both for increasing national wealth and improving one's individual life chances. Pakistan is now facing a challenge with the new constitutional decree of Article 25-A, declaring Education as the fundamental and compulsory right for children of 5-16 years of age on the basis of equal opportunities. Reporting on the state of education in rural areas, ASER Pakistan 2011 for the first time brings data from urban districts to help out with analysis of the situation in education sector in cities. Urban context has its own specifics and needs to be treated as a separate category when developing policies for fulfillment of EFA and MDG's commitments.

### Urbanization matters

According to United Nations Population Fund, since 2008 majority of world's population lives in cities. Urbanization trend is seen as a result of a natural increase in population and social changes such as shift from agricultural to industrial sector in development. Urban centers are the main engines of development growth with high concentration of resources, hence providing much better economic opportunities. Mainly due to migration from rural areas to cities driven by economic reasons, growth rate of the cities as compared to rural areas is much higher.

A rapid urban transformation, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, brings about significant changes in socio-economic dynamics. Along with urban advantages, big urban agglomerations face challenges in form of environment deprivation, high criminality rates and unequal delivery of social services, including education. Leaving the emerging issues of urban context without proper attention, education sector would fail to

effectively support development and wealth of the country, and may even contribute to reinforce poverty circle and exacerbate inequalities. An urgent call is raised towards policymakers to design policies that respond to the needs of urban population. Urbanization trends of the country with the specific side-effects need to be taken into account, together with a closer look on the state of education in urban context.

### Urbanization in Pakistan

Pakistan is a country with rapid urbanization. During the census of 1972 and 1981, the urban population in Pakistan grew at 4.4% annually, while the population growth rate of the rural areas was 2.6%. Constantly higher growth of the urban population leads to an important demographic transformation of the country. During the second half of the last century, the total population of Pakistan increased over four-fold and urban population increased over seven-fold, from 18% in 1951 census up to 32.52% in 1998 census. Currently, Pakistan is the most urbanized nation in South Asia. Urban population is estimated to constitute about 36% of the total and it is expected to reach 50% in 2030. (Jan et. al 2008, Nizami 2010).

An important aspect of the urbanization pattern is its uneven distribution. Major parts of the country are left with low urbanization, while a handful of centers have to deal with extremely high urbanization resulting in emergence of mega-cities. Pakistan's biggest city of Karachi constitutes 21.7% of the total urban population. It is followed by Lahore constituting 12.7% and next 7 biggest cities of Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Multan, Hyderabad, Gujranwala, Peshawar and Quetta. These 9 urban centers alone constitute 54.6% of total urban population in Pakistan. (Jan et. al 2008)

### Understanding urban context and challenges to education

According to UNICEF 2012 report, the scale of inequality between rich and poor in the cities of Pakistan is greater than in the rural areas. (UNICEF 2012, pp.6) Even though urban setting generally brings expansion of education opportunities, with highly diversified population, education services stay beyond the reach of the disadvantaged communities. Moreover, urban middle class and elites secure themselves against the urban badlands; they become disconnected from public space and local governance and privately provide for their own services. This creates a huge gap in the quality of education between public and private sector, and its accessibility for various socially stratified groups. (Beall et al.2010)

Another feature of urban context is dynamics, represented as high migration to cities, most often from poor rural areas. The 'newcomers' mainly contribute to the growth of peripheral and poor neighborhoods, increasing the population density and overloading already insufficient and fragmented infrastructure. Growth of the population is very fast and existing school facilities are becoming too overcrowded, which negatively affects the quality of the whole teaching process.

### ASER 2011: Education trends in Urban districts

Along with data from rural areas of the country, ASER Pakistan 2011 brings information about the state of education in urban districts of Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar. Comparing the performance of children from rural and urban parts of districts of Peshawar and Lahore, the data clearly support 'Urban Advantage' predictions. Children from urban parts of

the districts have better achievements and enrollment rates are higher. However, trends in education in urban areas still indicate a need for better results.

	% Out of school	% Enrolled in different types of schools	% in Govt. Schools	% in Pvt. Schools	% Other
Lahore	10.7	89.2	42.9	55.8	1.3
Karachi	9.6	90.4	26.5	70.8	2.6
Peshawar	10.8	89.2	28.1	68	3.9

In all Urban districts, the number of children not enrolled in any kind of school is around 10%. Significantly higher numbers of pupils are enrolled in private schools, 55.8 % children in Lahore, 70.8 % children in Karachi and 68% children in Peshawar.

Gender wise analysis of out of school children		
	% Boys	% Girls
Lahore	43.0	57.0
Karachi	62.5	36.5
Peshawar	55.6	44.4

Gender wise analysis of out of school children shows that girls represent bigger proportion of the vulnerable group in Lahore (57%), however, there are more boys not enrolled at any type of school in Peshawar (55.6%) and Karachi (62.5%).

Urban District	% of Grade 5 children that can read Urdu Story		% of Grade 5 children that can read English Sentences		% of Grade 5 children that can do 3-digit division sums	
	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.
Lahore	76.7	78.8	61.3	78.8	54.8	48.5
Karachi	47.8	51.4	34.8	91.4	34.8	62.9
Peshawar	47.1	57.6	50.0	69.7	35.3	56.1

Assessing competences in Urdu, English and Arithmetic of grade 5 children finishing the primary stage of education in all three urban districts, ASER 2011 confirms an urgent need for improvement of the quality of both government and private schools. Other important findings that need to be pointed out are overall better results for private sector, most obviously seen for children's competences in English. In Lahore, 78.8% can read English sentences in Private schools, compared to 61.3% in Government Schools. In Karachi, 91.4% of grade 5 children in Private schools proved

to have grade 2 level competences, whereas in government schools it was only 34.8%. The same trend was found in Peshawar with 69.7% children in private and 50% children in government schools being able to read English Sentences.

Urban District	%Primary Schools with Useable Water		%Primary Schools with Useable Toilets	
	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt.	Pvt.
Lahore	87.5	100	87.5	100
Karachi	58.3	66.7	58.3	100
Peshawar	81.0	100	76.2	100

Gaps in quality between government and private schools are reflected in results of assessment of availability of school facilities as well. All private schools assessed in Lahore and Peshawar have basic sanitation facilities of drinkable water and toilets. These are missing in more than 12% of government schools in Lahore, while 14% of schools in Peshawar do not have toilets and 19% cannot provide the pupils with usable water.

Private sector clearly becomes an important part of education sector. 50.2% children in Lahore, 31.8 % in Karachi and 31.2% children in Peshawar reported taking paid tuitions.

### Policy recommendations

In an endeavour to fulfil the EFA and MDG commitments in urban context with a growing gap between public and private sector, the greatest challenge to education sector comes with ensuring equality in access to education and equality in opportunities for achievement in education.

### Equality in access to education:

- In order to increase enrollment, sufficient number of affordable schools in all urban localities must be ensured
- Education planners and specialists should be encouraged in elaboration and implementation of additional educational programs for the needs of children, who cannot go to school in a standard manner due to child labor and other social causes.

### Equality in opportunities for achievement in education

- In overcrowded schools, school management should be required to follow the norm of regulating the maximum number of pupils per one teacher in order to prevent the learning process from becoming dysfunctional
- Teachers often do not want to teach in schools struggling with overcrowded capacities, non-regular attendance of children, and scarce resources. There must be a constant effort made for general improvement of school conditions and increase of motivation of both teachers and students to participate in the educational process in a responsible manner.
- For children from low income families who require additional tuition programs due to poor achievements, scholarship programs should be promoted among civil-society organizations
- Attention must be paid to improving basic sanitary school facilities

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