



An NGO for integrated Development through Community Participation

Report on Research
**“PRIMARY EDUCATION MONITORING
PROGRAM”**



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Executive summary

This research paper is the output of action research on primary education monitoring program held by the researchers' team of LAFAM with partnership and support of SPO. The research report encompasses the general issues faced at primary school level in district Ziarat. The report unveils the methodologies and tools adopted during action research; this research is therefore helpful to present the true picture of primary education and existing scenario because the research team with their zealous efforts visited all 216 government primary schools in district Ziarat.

The potential of the report is focused on to provide impartial analysis assessed during focus groups discussions, community meetings, meetings with line department, concerned departments and with non governmental organizations working in field of education. Visits to various schools are the basis for the findings of this report while in support the specific recommendations are also given. This report also provides an overview of the overall drawbacks and major areas and spaces for work assessed during action research.

Acknowledgment

LAFAM team is having heartfelt thanks to its partner organization SPO, who felt the need to conduct action research on primary school issues; this shows the organization's commitment to support the every effort taken for education. LAFAM appreciates its research team, completed all the quality research work within given timeframe.

LAFAM cordially appreciates and thankful for all concered government education departments on district level, government personnel i.e. EDO education, DDO Education, DDO Education female and other education officers who provided their full support in information gathering and data collection.

LAFAM is thankful to the NGOs and INGOs and other departments supported action research teams and provided positive relevant inputs of vital importance to shape and part of analysis, the organization are National Commission for Human Development, Taragee foundation, IUCN, local government and district revenue department.

Organization is also grateful of all individuals, groups, teachers, elders and community members endowed their precious time and opinions on voluntarily basis for action research.

District Ziarat Profile

This Pashtun-dominated district was formed in 1986 when Ziarat sub-Tehsil of Sibi district was upgraded. In terms of population, it is the smallest of the four districts in Sibi division, the other three being Sibi, Kohlu and Dera Bugti. Ziarat,



which literally means shrine, is named after the shrine of Baba Kharwari, a highly esteemed saint who lived here in the early eighteenth century. The shrine is located about nine kilometers south of Ziarat town. The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, spent his last days at the Ziarat Residency, which was originally meant to be a sanatorium when it was built in 1892 and is now a national monument. Locals believe that Quaid-e-Azam in fact breathed his last here, contrary to the official account that he died in Karachi on September 11, 1948. The Ziarat mountain resort is a popular tourist destination as is the vast Juniper forest surrounding the Ziarat Valley believed to be the second largest forest of its kind in the world. Agriculture is one of the major sources of employment in the area, and Ziarat Valley produces delicious cherries and apples. The livestock sector is another important employer. Goats and sheep constitute the bulk of the district's total livestock, but donkeys and cattle are also reared.

Background:

Despite its overstretched area, it's a least populated district of the province. Scattered population, cold weather, seasonal migration and the recent earthquake contributed in the dilemma of backwardness and low literacy rate. This has made situation gravest. In a land where the most part of life is passed in search of adequate food and water, Education and other current day needs are never been considered the top priority. According to the literacy figures of year 2008 provided by government departments, specified literacy rate in urban of district Ziarat is 51 to 52 percent, while the situation is further worse in rural areas i.e. 31 percent to 32 percent, with total 34000 population of the district, occupying the population density for 22 persons per square kilo meter.

The situation is especially alarming in rural areas due to social and cultural obstacles. One of the most deplorable aspects is that in some places, the education of girls is strictly prohibited on religious grounds. This is a gross misinterpretation of Islam. Religious education is more focused most of the young boys and girls attend mosques to learn and practice the religious teachings, the district has also large number of Madrassas (religious schools), where boys come for religious education from far and near places. Women are relatively well-to-do and also of middle income families attend only to household work. Their participation in farm activities is not reported. Those belonging to low income households are heavily engaged in domestic work and also assist their men in several farming activities, especially livestock care.

Scattered population on hill sides, seasonal migration, less geographical coverage by government primary schools, weak governance and lack of facilities in schools are major challenges for upgrading the literacy ratio in district.

Purpose of the Action research

Purpose of the action research was to get familiar with the existing issues of primary school at district Ziarat level, its impact on society, available supporting facilities in schools and governance drawbacks or advantages of existing setup at primary school level. The research team was also supposed to compile the overall Primary School data by conducting coordination meetings with Education Department, school visits, Community meetings and focus group discussions with different line departments and civil Society Organizations.

This research was aimed to present analysis on the basis of findings from survey team and to provide appropriate recommendations for the readers to invest the efforts in more focus manner. This research would also help to provide positive inputs in assessing the existing governmental educational setup and to identifying further improvement in primary schools.

Methodology & Tools for Action Research

Hiring and orientation of action research staff:

To conduct and ensure the quality of research LAFAM, called the CVs from various professional, in focus having the previous research experiences. Potential candidates were short listed and in presence of BoDs they were interviewed and selected.

One day orientation session on action research was arranged for 4 of the selected research team members, teams were briefed about the purpose of the action research, methodology; major research tools i.e. meetings with concerned departments, NGOs and groups, focus group discussions, corner meetings and interviews. The standard survey formats and the procedure of interviewing were shared in detail. Participants were also briefed about information/data collection, situation analysis and to present their recommendations at the end of the research.



Team Shaping:

Participants were divided into two main groups, each team was given their specific locations and union councils for research work. Total 10 union councils were divided with accordance to the 5 union councils to each team.

These teams were directed to also produce quality analysis on basis of their daily visits and meetings with various personnel from line departments, organizations working in education field, specific groups and communities.

Major Tools for information collection

- **Meetings and interviews with Government Education department**

Action research team held meetings with EDO education of district Ziarat, Deputy District Education officer Ziarat, Education supervisors, Assistant Deputy Education officer, Education Supervisors, learning coordinators and Female DDEO.

The purpose of the meetings with above mentioned government personnel of education department was to share the purpose of the action research, get ethical permission regarding data collection and to get information regarding schools location within district Ziarat. These meetings were also helpful to get the opinion of the government officials regarding the existing schools and available facilities. Maps of the different schools were taken in addition to the rest of the required data.

EDO also directed his sub ordinates to provide the required data for survey purpose to action research team of LAFAM, EDO ensured his full cooperation with research team. The DDO education of Tehsil Sinjavi was also oriented about above mentioned research program; he assured the full support in terms of data collection from those schools existing in Tehsil Sinjavi.



- **Meetings with NGOs and departments**

Various meetings were held with relevant organizations working in field of education, i.e. National Commission for Human Development, Taraqee foundation, IUNC, representatives from local government. They were oriented on action research program by LAFAM. The above



mentioned organizations and department provided their opinion regarding education system in district Ziarat, drawbacks, major gaps, areas of work for improvement and the impact of the existing education system as whole on society. These inputs/views would reflect ahead in report especially in analysis and or finding section.

- **School Surveys by LAFAM Action Research Team**

To get direct eyesight of the existing schools in district Ziarat and to guess the issues facing by either school or pupils, action research team visited all 216 primary schools of district Ziarat, this number encompasses the total government primary schools existed in district. These schools were targeted as part of the research program, where research teams were supposed to hold survey. During the visit of each school the prescribed survey forms were filled with sought data to make appropriate analysis. The detail of the each school with major problems and missing facilities are given as attached in annexure. While major problems found during assessment mentioned here in this report at analysis/finding section.

Enrolment of All 216 Primary Girls Schools of District Ziarat by Grade , Gender

School Type	No. of Schools			Unadmitted Children			Urban Enrollment			Rural Enrolment			Total Enrolment		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary	143	73	216	210	167	377	321	90	411	3934	2408	6342	4465	2665	7130

- **Focus group Discussions, Corner meetings**

During the action research focus group discussion, corner meetings were also the vital tools of making general analysis. People which were part of the focus group discussions are part rather indirect beneficiaries of these schools. Meetings at various locations were conducted, people from various age groups and sects ensured their participation and provided positive inputs in point outing the major gaps existed. Corner meetings and meetings with concerned teachers also helped action research team to report the exact findings.



General Analysis

The overall existing system of the primary education/school system in Ziarat district is although maintained but not up to the mark, as there many reasons counts, the seasonal



migration is the major source in breaks of routine attendance, the devastation resulted from earthquake damaged the schools physical infrastructures replacing the insufficient shelter schools and temporary learning spaces, the governance issues and low monitoring mechanism supported the stereotypes of old teaching methods in schools. Governance in education system is faulty to attain the trend shift from that of the religious schools (Madrasas) to the government schools, quality of the education is very poor, random attention made on capacity building of teachers, training need assessment for teachers never cared, school development plans are never developed, co curricular or extra curriculum activities very fewer arranged. The modern or computer education never considered as one of the essential part of the primary education. Besides the traditional chart pasting on room walls with specific quotations in few schools, never prepared any strategy to maintain the interest of the child in school. Low enrollment in schools causes although acknowledged by people and by teachers there selves but no alternate plan developed to enroll them back in schools. Parent teacher committees although existed in various locations but it randomly taken any action in matter of school or child education which can also be considered as inactive committees. Teachers absenteeism is the proof of the below average monitoring mechanism by responsible government personnel. Unionism in schools by teacher groups further protected teachers from critics and improvement in existing education mechanism.

During action research it was analyzed/people complained that unavailability of separate schoolings for boys and girls is also one of the major obstacle for future education especially for girls. Teachers complained many times for the poor facilities and improper boundary walls from government department which randomly noticed, also contributed in absenteeism of female teachers in schools and boosted the sense of insecurity in female teachers. Motivation and less coordination with religious clergies in existing schooling setup strengthen the misconception regarding schoolings, where the child education always discouraged than religious Madrasas. Political favors to the specific group also made the ground supportive for less qualified teachers. The traditional perception regarding the opposition of girls' education in society randomly discussed and parents are fewer mobilized although these children has



great potential of learning and reflecting whenever their innovation analyzed, thus situation further strengthened gender discrimination. While in most of the cases poor economy was the constraint for head of the families to enroll their child in schools. Missing facilities in schools i.e. toilets, water, shelter and poor sitting arrangements is the part of the gaps, besides there are some schools that are occupied by influential of the area.

The general and most prevailing scenario in government primary schools analysis is although alarming but still there is a lot of spaces of improvement, the areas of priorities needed attention would be elaborated in this report ahead in recommendation section.

Major Findings

Action research team on basis of survey to various schools, holding meetings with focus groups, teachers, government departments, organizations and communities, enable them to present major findings existing in primary schools at district Ziarat, given as below;

- Low coordination, communication and poor governance issues in education department extended the gaps b/w higher education authorities within district i.e. EDOs, DDOs etc and teachers, resulted as the low quality of education.
- PTSMCs although existed but their passive role rather inactive role was on of the causes that failed in identification and resolution of the major gaps.
- Poor facilities in class rooms, weak infrastructures of schools, absentees of teachers is now part of the routine and rarely felt/noticed and in against any action taken by concerned department or even communities as a whole.
- Improvement in quality of education would certainly be felt if the capacity of teachers would have been built or improved.
- Lack of Sensitization and awareness regarding the important role of education in society as a whole was comparatively noticed in district.
- Economic instability, fees (purchasing of books, bags) was also in addition of the causes that remained as constraint in child education while people preferred to engage their child in earning sources.
- Low coordination between communities and school management prolonged the minor issues in major issues.
- Girls' education rarely kept in agendas of the political parties, influential discussions or even in government priorities, which resulting gender disparity in district's education.

- Due to the traditional perceptions and religious factors, people depends more on religious schoolings i.e. Madrasas rather than the academic schools.
- Number of schools are still not repaired after devastating earthquake in 2008 that damaged the infrastructure of the schools badly, while children are getting education in shelter schools with insufficient facilities which resulting long absentees of children from schools.
- The seasonal migration is also one of the main causes as major break in education while most of the child disconnected from schools during these migration periods.
- Along with government education department, fewer of the organizations made their attention and priorities to improve the quality of education, to build the capacity of teachers and to provide schools with extra curriculum modules/equipments so could maintain the child interest in school, in fact school reflects as place of fear for innocent children.

On the basis of above mentioned major findings that came forward through action research team, there can be long term negative impacts on communities if the situation not improved.

Possible expected Alarming Impacts

If the issues in primary education system not addressed properly, the long term negative impacts can be expected which would be alarming to attain the interest of communities to invest in education. People depends on religious schools easily than academic schools only because the Madrasas provides children with free hostelling facilities, food, no fee etc, although the religious schoolings are also part of the education, but considering the importance of the academic education, government dire focus should certainly be on to strengthen the academic education. In most of the occasions girls education fewer preferred than boys, this obviously leading to the gender disparity minimizing girls enrollment in schools which is alarming, this trend shift if not changed through vigorous community mobilization it would further expend its roots in traditional social and cultural perceptions. The poor facilities in schools and lack of separate schooling system for girls are certainly discouraging the trust level of head of the families.

The poor governance in education department is providing the supportive role to avoid any positive change in primary schooling, this

would ultimately have alarming impact on communities, whether to enroll their child in school or not? Would rarely matter, this can dramatically would be resulted as drop outs. Major discussions related to quality in different policies are directly associated with teacher capability, the relevance of curricula, assessment systems, pedagogical methods, teaching environment, and materials. A key criticism of teacher education, especially in the public sector, is that it has not resulted in enhancement in student learning outcomes, this would only possible if education department play its role on quality of education otherwise the remaining schools would also be part of the occupation of influential or suitable gathering places for unionism. Whereas the commitment made by government of Pakistan with MDGs would be only a dream and illiteracy would rarely beaten.

Key Recommendations

Improved Coordination and governance in education:

Higher Education authority at district level has needed to be well aware to the problems existing in lower level and thus immediate actions are needed in support to resolve the issues raised by lower staff or communities, if government can not properly address theses issues the matter is needed to be discussed with other partner organizations investing in education side. This would help obviously to improve the coordination mechanism in government department within and will establish linkages with NGOs.



PTSMCs:

Parent Teachers School Management Committees can play positive role in drawing the problems faced by the school management, child education, school infrastructure, enrollment of child and the active role of PTSMCs would helpful to make the opinion of communities as whole in favor of maximizing the enrollment of child in schools.



PTSMCs needed to be well mobilized and organized, their continuous check on child, quality of teaching, school issues and meetings with teachers along with proper record keeping would play vital role in sustainability and quality of primary school level education, for the

purpose education department or other working NGOs conduct training sessions for the members of PTSMCs.

Quality of Education:

The numbers of the government primary schools are not good enough to cover the whole geographical population i.e. scattered and dwelling on hill sides but in existing primary schools the quality of education needed full attention. Teachers' capacities are needed to be built continuously on need basis. Instead of the violence culture in schools there should be supporting and interesting teaching aids, co curricular activities, extra curriculum activities, practical learning methods, exposure visits and modern teaching techniques that could maintain the interest level of child during school's timing.



Physical infrastructure of the schools:

The physical infrastructure of the schools existing in district Ziarat is not satisfactory, after all the devastating earth quake damaged many buildings, most of the schools are deprived from their boundary walls, while the general facilities such as water, electricity, proper sitting arrangement, separate schools for girls child and white wash etc, are the key factors that matters a lot to maintain the interest level of child and parents. During action research teams noted that female teachers avoids those school mostly who either haven't or partial boundary walls which makes them insecure to teach in open space. Parents also emphasized on establishment of separate schools for girls specially, because in higher primary classes people avoid their child to get co education due to the cultural constraints. While during survey of the primary schools it was also noted that no proper toilets in schools also one of the main causes in dropping out of the child from schools.



Awareness in mass:

General awareness regarding the role and importance of education in mass as whole is essential, lacking of which already resulting the low literacy rate of the district. Awareness regarding girls' education equally important as boys, the religious elders, political elders, and notables, influential can play major role in shaping the views of people in this regard. It is recommended if once opinion shaped of mentioned notable figures, this would help to fade the negative perception about girls' education and thus in long term fruitful result would be appeared.

Temporary learning spaces:

Seasonal migration of the area dwellers is also main challenge for increasing the literacy rate. Temporary learning spaces needed to be created through volunteers and teachers by government and organizations for those people who migrates continuously to other adjacent districts. This would helpful to maintain the relations of child with education/schools.

The above mentioned analysis, findings, impacts and recommendations are the cream areas of the research study, which needed serious attention to be on priorities of either district education department, concerned departments or organizations working in field of education. There can be expected long term negative impacts on society if scenario not changed or not taken any action, which would also possibly contribute in illiteracy rate and would be in no way less than a challenge for the commitments made with **MDG # 2**.