

## Understanding the Societal Impact of Government Programs on Public School Enrollment in District Karak



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**Abstract:** This study assessed the impact of a Government Initiative on primary school enrollment in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Stratified-random sampling assessed how the initiative affected public school enrolment for boys and girls. The data for this study came from Students Enrollment Proforma (SEP) and structured interviews with school administrators from a random sample of 12 principals (6 boys and 6 girls, representing the full gender distribution of the schools involved in the study). The findings indicated that providing complimentary textbooks significantly increased attendance for male and female students in the first and fifth grades. School administrators observed a positive effect on students' enrollment and enhanced engagement in the educational process. The study recommends continuing the provision of complimentary textbooks and expanding the initiative to include free uniforms, notebooks, and stipends for students. Additionally, conducting similar studies at the provincial level is suggested to assess the overall impact of these incentives.

**Key Words:** Government Initiative, Primary School Enrollment, Complimentary Textbooks

### Introduction

The significance of promoting equitable access to education remains a crucial imperative in achieving sustainable development goals. In this vein, understanding the efficacy of government initiatives aimed at fostering primary school enrollment, particularly among male and female students, assumes paramount importance. In the context of District Karak, located in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, this study endeavors to scrutinize the multifaceted impact of a specific government intervention on the enrollment rates of both genders within the primary education system. By employing a comprehensive analytical approach, encompassing quantitative and qualitative methodologies, this

research seeks to illuminate the intricate dynamics underlying gendered enrollment patterns in District Karak, thereby contributing valuable insights to educational policy formulation and implementation at regional and national levels.

### Education Plans

The Pakistani government has created eight upbeat five-year plans for the nation's economy and educational system, totaling forty (40) years, since 1975. The five-year plans for Pakistan were designed to better adapt the educational system to the nation's shifting a socioeconomic one national, and ideological needs. (Awan, 2005)

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**Table I**

*Features of Pakistan's Five-Year Plans that Are Particularly Relevant to Education*

Years	Policies and five years Plans	Key elements
1955-1960	1 <sup>st</sup>	Primary education for all. improving instruction, modernizing facilities, and increasing human resources in higher education.
1960-1965	2 <sup>nd</sup>	The facilities have been improved and enrollment has increased universally. Scholarships are offered to gifted students, while primary education is provided at no cost.
1965-1970	3 <sup>rd</sup>	The initiatives include enhancing teacher productivity, expanding student enrollment at all levels, with a focus on primary education, and prioritizing research, science, and technology.
1970-1975	4 <sup>th</sup>	To improve the educational system and increase literacy rates, it is necessary to close the gap between rural and urban schooling by enhancing facilities and increasing enrollment. This can be achieved by improving agricultural education, research, and planning.
1977-1983	5 <sup>th</sup>	The facilities have been improved and enrollment has increased uniformly. The objectives are to increase kindergarten attendance, reduce the academic disparity between affluent and underprivileged students, and enhance the caliber of post-secondary and vocational education.
1983-1988	6 <sup>th</sup>	Access to Primary Education for All, Enhanced Facilities and Increased Enrollment at All Grade Levels Start a Literacy Initiative, With the goal of raising educator standards, To promote the non-public schooling industry
1988-1992	7 <sup>th</sup>	Primary education for everyone, high literacy rates, high quality education at all levels, increased enrollment, and better facilities are all part of this goal.
1993-1998	8 <sup>th</sup>	Increase funding for schools from the private sector, In order to expand facilities and student body, Primary schools within reasonable traveling distance, We need a better examination system, better textbooks, and better courses. Boosting Literacy Rates

Source: (Zaidi, 1999),

The table presents a chronological overview of various government initiatives and five-year plans implemented in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, focusing on their impact on primary school enrollment of male and female students. Starting from 1955 to 1998, these policies aimed to address different aspects of education. The first policy emphasized primary education for all and focused on improving instruction, modernizing facilities, and increasing human resources in higher education. The second policy aimed at improving facilities and achieving universal enrollment by providing free primary education and offering scholarships to gifted students. The third policy focused on enhancing teacher productivity, expanding student enrollment, and prioritizing research, science, and technology, with a particular emphasis on primary education. The fourth policy aimed to improve the

educational system and literacy rates by closing the rural-urban schooling gap, improving agricultural education, and enhancing research and planning. The fifth policy aimed to increase kindergarten attendance, reduce academic disparities, and enhance post-secondary and vocational education. The sixth policy prioritized access to primary education for all, enhanced facilities, increased enrollment at all grade levels, and promoted the non-public schooling industry. The seventh policy aimed to achieve primary education for everyone, high literacy rates, quality education, increased enrollment, and better facilities. The eighth policy focused on increasing funding from the private sector, expanding facilities, improving the examination system, textbooks, and courses, and boosting literacy rates. Overall, these initiatives reflect a progressive approach towards improving primary

school enrollment, addressing disparities, and enhancing educational infrastructure in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Approximately 50% of global children are enrolled in school, with only 46% of girls completing the first grade. It is anticipated that the boys will complete the task. Primary education faces significant challenges, including high rates of early dropout and class repetition. As a result, only 54% of countries have achieved the Education for All (EFA) targets. High dropout rates can be attributed to various factors such as financial constraints preventing families from purchasing necessary school supplies and inadequate parental guidance for children. (Ghaffar & Ambreen, 2003).

The proposal recommends implementing incentives to enhance enrollment and graduation rates for children's fundamental education. Examples of incentives include free textbooks, notebooks, school uniforms, and monetary compensation for students who drop out due to financial hardship. Public school students will receive rewards. The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund will offer assistance to underprivileged students to enable their academic pursuits. (Ahsan, 2003).

The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) increased from 72% to 86% between 2001-02 and 2004-05, as per a survey on individuals' social and living conditions. To calculate the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), divide the number of primary school children by the expected number of primary school children aged 5 to 9. The Net Enrollment Rate (NER) has increased from 42% to 52%, indicating the proportion of compulsory school-age children enrolled in primary education. The NER is calculated by dividing the count of elementary school children aged 5 to 9 by the total number of children aged 5 to 9. Punjab exhibits a higher prevalence of NER compared to Balochistan (Shaheen, Awan, & Cheema, 2016).

The Education Sector Reforms (ESR) in Pakistan align with the constitutional obligation to provide all citizens with the right to formal education, which is a fundamental human right. ESR has established targets for primary education, adult literacy, and gender equality based on the principles of the Dakar Declaration and the MDGs. ESR's requirements and goals were communicated to the officers at the province and district levels, who are accountable for executing the program. Previously, provincial education ministers convened quarterly to strategize

the implementation of the education system and address any obstacles. ESR's strategic plans for 2001-02 and 2005-06 were executed through Ministry of Education funding. Provincial governments were allocated funds with the directive to reduce inefficient expenditures in the education sector. They were instructed to finance school infrastructure, arrange professional development for teachers, and provide complimentary resources such as uniforms and books to female pupils. (Memon, 2007).

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government established the Institutional Reform Program (IRP) to execute significant education sector initiatives, including the distribution of complimentary primary school textbooks, with the aim of enhancing student enrolment and retention. (Psacharopoulos, 2006). In 2003, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government initiated the provision of free textbooks to students in public schools. The government has allocated Rs 5.00 million towards providing books to students in elementary, middle, and high schools over the last four years. (Mustafa, 2012).

The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa pledged to provide a monthly incentive of Rs. 200 to parents for each female student enrolled in school. EFA Plans have been developed by provincial and municipal governments. An additional amount of Rs.100 billion is required to ensure universal enrollment in primary and secondary schools and achieve literacy by 2015. Public school students are eligible for free tuition through SSC. A budget of Rs. 100 million will provide free textbooks to 300,000 students. (Malik, 2015)

The cost of providing free textbooks to students has significantly increased in recent decades. Insufficient research has been carried out to determine the cost-effectiveness of this substantial investment. The researcher posited that conducting a study was necessary to ascertain the effect of providing complimentary textbooks on the enrollment and retention rates of primary school students.

## Statement of the Problem

This study set out to address the question, this study set out to address the question, "What are the causes of the increasing enrollment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's public elementary schools?" by examining the relationship between government programs and the province's expanding public school system. This research looked into how offering free textbooks

affected enrollment in public elementary schools for both boys and girls in District Karak, by examining the relationship between government programs and the province's expanding public school system. This research looked into how offering free textbooks affected enrollment in public elementary schools for both boys and girls in District Karak.

## **Theoretical Framework**

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This theoretical framework aims to analyze the effect of a Government Initiative on primary school enrollment of male and female students in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through a conceptual structure. This study aims to investigate the impact of the Government Initiative on primary school enrollment for both male and female students by examining the underlying factors and mechanisms.

The Human Capital Theory suggests that investing in education results in higher productivity and economic growth. The Government Initiative may increase primary school enrollment through the provision of incentives, resources, and infrastructure to support education, as posited by this theory. This framework posits a positive correlation between enrollment rates and the potential for future development of human capital and socioeconomic progress.

Gender equality is crucial for ensuring equal access and enrollment in education. Girls' education can be disproportionately impacted by gender biases, cultural norms, and socio-economic conditions. Theoretical framework acknowledges the significance of tackling gender inequalities in primary school enrollment and evaluates the distinct effects of the Government Initiative on male and female pupils.

Effective policy measures and institutional capacity are crucial for the successful implementation of government initiatives. The theoretical framework recognizes the importance of policy formulation and implementation, the function of educational institutions, and their receptiveness to government initiatives. The assessment takes into account various aspects, including financial distribution, establishment of facilities, professional development of educators, and engagement of the local populace.

Socio-cultural factors exert a significant influence on educational participation, particularly in conservative areas such as District Karak. The theoretical framework considers social norms, cultural

practices, and community attitudes regarding education. The study examines how the Government Initiative can mitigate these factors and establish a conducive atmosphere for enhanced enrollment.

Parental and community involvement are significant factors in shaping the academic achievements of children. Theoretical framework acknowledges the role of parental attitudes, awareness, and socioeconomic status in influencing enrollment trends. The study investigates the ways in which the Government Initiative can involve parents and communities in enhancing primary school enrollment. This includes implementing awareness campaigns, providing parental education, and establishing community partnerships.

The theoretical framework recognizes that primary school enrollment can be impeded by barriers related to accessibility and affordability. This approach takes into account the geographic location of schools, transportation options, distance, and associated costs of attendance. The Government Initiative can mitigate these obstacles by establishing schools in remote regions, providing transportation services, and offering monetary incentives to guardians.

The theoretical framework presented here offers a thorough examination of the factors and mechanisms that could affect the effectiveness of a Government Initiative on primary school enrollment in District Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This study analyzes the effectiveness of the Government Initiative in the education sector, taking into account factors such as Human Capital Theory, gender equality, policy implementation, social and cultural factors, parental involvement, and access and affordability barriers. The goal is to provide insights for policy improvement.

## **Objectives of the Study**

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Following objectives were made to reach to the conclusion of the study

1. The study aimed to determine the influence of a government initiative on the enrollment of students in boys' public schools at the primary level.
2. The study aimed to determine the influence of a government initiative on the enrollment of students in girls' public schools at the primary level.

## Research Questions

The study's focus was on answering the following narrow research questions:

1. Is there a change in the proportion of male pupils enrolled in Grade 1 before and after free textbooks were made available?
2. When comparing the number of male students enrolled in Grade 5 before and after free textbooks were made available, what was the difference?
3. When comparing the number of female students enrolled in Grade 1 before and after

free textbooks were made available, what was the impact?

4. How has the distribution of free textbooks affected the number of female students enrolled in Grade 5?

## Methods and Procedure

The study included all public primary schools in Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, encompassing both genders. The subsequent is a categorization of primary schools in Karak, as per data obtained from the Executive District Officer (Education) office.

**Table 2**

*Number of Public Primary Schools by Tehsil for Boys and Girls*

Ser	TEHSIL	Boys	Girls	Total
A	Banda Daud Shah	184	131	315
B	Thakht-e- Nasrati	174	123	297
C	Karak	119	89	208
Total		477	343	820

Source. Data is taken from Karak EDO Office, 2012.

## Sample

Stratified-random sampling techniques was used for Selection of a Sample. The sample consisted of 48 primary schools, equally divided into 24 schools for boys and 24 schools for girls. The subgroups consisted

of three tehsils: Karak, Thakhte Nasrati, and Tehsil Banda Daud Shah. Each tehsil comprises of 16 elementary schools, selected randomly, with an equal distribution of 8 boys' and 8 girls' schools. Subgroups are structured in the following manner:

**Table 3**

*Schools Included In Student Enrolment Sample*

Ser	TEHSIL	Boys	Girls	Total
A	Banda Daud Shah	8	8	16
B	Thakhte Nasrati	8	8	16
C	Karak	8	8	16
Total		24	24	48

There were also 18 school principals in the sample (6 boys' and 6 girls'). These principals were picked aforementioned 48 schools' samples. Six principals (9

boys' and 9 girls') were chosen at random from each tehsil.

**Table 4**

*Sample of the School Heads for Interview*

Ser	TEHSIL	Boys	Girls	Total
A	Banda Daud Shah	3	3	6
B	Thakhte Nasrati	3	3	6
C	Karak	3	3	8
Total		9	9	18

## Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected through a proprietary data collection instrument known as the Students Enrollment Proforma (SEP). The researcher collected first and fifth grade enrollment data directly from the schools. Data was collected for three years prior to and three years following the implementation of the free textbook provision, spanning from 2000 to 2002

and 2003 to 2005, respectively. Contemporary interviews with school administrators adhere to a standardized protocol. The study participants were interviewed regarding teacher involvement, student enrollment, and extra textbook usage in the classroom. The data were segregated through percentage analysis. The school heads' responses from the interviews were evaluated.

**Table 5**

*Enrollment of Male Students in Grade 1 at Public Schools in Karak.*

Year	Comparison	Enrolment	Enrollment Growth	Enrollment Growth in %
2000	Before provision of free textbooks	611	--	
2001		674	62	10%
2002		746	71	11%
2003	After provision of free textbooks	894	149	19%
2004		1080	187	21%
2005	Status	1295	215	20%

The table presents enrollment data for class I students prior to and following the implementation of free textbook provision. The table illustrates that prior to the implementation of complimentary textbooks, there was an annual enrollment growth of 10% in 2001 and 11% in 2002. The provision of free

textbooks has resulted in annual increases of 19%, 21%, and 20% in student enrollment in 2003, 2004, and 2005, respectively. The study concluded that providing free textbooks has increased the enrollment of male students in first grade at public primary schools.

**Table 6**

*Enrollment of Male Students in Grade 5 at Public Schools in Karak.*

Year	Comparison	Enrolment	Enrollment Growth	Enrollment Growth in %
2000	Before provision of free textbooks	549	--	
2001		631	82	14%
2002		703	72	11%
2003	After provision of free textbooks	840	137	18%
2004		969	129	15%
2005		1139	170	17%

Enrollment figures for Class 5 are presented pre- and post-implementation of a complimentary textbook initiative. Prior to the implementation of free textbook provision, student enrollment experienced a 14% increase in 2001 and an 11% increase in 2002, as indicated in the table. Enrollment demonstrated a

yearly increase of 18%, 15%, and 17% in 2003, 2004, and 2005, respectively, following the implementation of free textbooks for students. The provision of free textbooks in public primary schools has been found to correlate with an increase in enrollment of male students in fifth grade.

**Table 7***Enrollment of Female Students in Grade 1 at Public Schools in Karak*

Year	Comparison	Enrolment	Enrollment Growth	Enrollment Growth in %
2000	Before provision of free textbooks	360	--	
2001		403	43	12%
2002		469	66	16%
2003	After provision of free textbooks	565	96	20%
2004		670	101	18%
2005		803	133	19%

The table presents enrollment data for class 1 students before and after the implementation of a free textbook program. The table illustrates that prior to the implementation of free textbooks, there was an annual enrollment growth of 12% in 2001 and 16% in 2002.

The provision of free textbooks has resulted in annual increases of 20%, 18%, and 19% in student enrollment in 2003, 2004, and 2005, respectively. Free textbooks have helped public elementary schools attract more girls to Grade 1.

**Table 8***Enrollment of Female Students in Grade 5 at Public Schools in Karak.*

Year	Comparison	Enrolment	Enrollment Growth	Enrollment Growth in %
2000	Before provision of free textbooks	333	--	
2001		379	46	14%
2002		437	58	15%
2003	After provision of free textbooks	513	76	17%
2004		595	82	15%
2005		709	114	19%

The table compares enrollment figures for fifth graders before and after free textbooks were made available to them. Prior to the distribution of free textbooks, the table shows that student enrollment increased by 14% in 2001 and 15% in 2002. Nonetheless, enrollment has increased annually after free textbooks were made available, by 17% in 2003, 15% in 2004, and 19% in 2005. Free textbooks have likely contributed to a rise in class 5 enrollment at public elementary schools serving female pupils.

recommended that additional incentives, such as free uniforms, notebooks, and stipends, be provided to students. These responses highlight the widespread acceptance and appreciation of the government's initiative to provide free textbooks to students. This initiative has also played a significant role in raising public awareness about the importance of education. The true impact of this initiative will be realized in the future, as every child will have the opportunity to attend school, leading to a 100% literacy rate in the country.

### Analysis of the views of School heads

The school heads have expressed their belief that providing free textbooks to students has had numerous positive effects on the education system. They believe that this initiative has led to an increase in student enrolment and retention, as well as a decrease in the dropout rate and student absenteeism. The positive response from parents, teachers, and students further supports the success of this initiative. In light of these positive outcomes, the school heads have

### Conclusions

After thoroughly examining and interpreting the results of the study, we have arrived at the following insightful conclusions:

1. Our analysis of the data uncovered a noteworthy trend - the introduction of free textbooks has significantly bolstered the number of boys enrolling in both first and fifth grades. This suggests that the provision of free

educational resources has played a pivotal role in attracting male students to these particular classes.

2. Equally compelling is the data indicating that the availability of free textbooks has had a positive impact on the enrollment of female students in both first and fifth grades. These findings lend support to the notion that the provision of complimentary educational materials has successfully encouraged girls to pursue their education in these crucial stages.

Overall, our study highlights the immense value of providing free textbooks, as it has not only attracted more boys to enroll in class 1 and class 5 but has also effectively improved the enrollment rates of girls in these grades.

### Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the scheme of providing free textbooks to students should

continue, as the study's findings indicate that it has significantly improved student enrollment.

2. Based on feedback from school heads, it is recommended that additional incentives, such as free uniforms, notebooks, and stipends, be provided to students in order to further enhance enrollment rates.
3. While the findings of this study are applicable to the district of Karak, it is suggested that similar research be conducted at the provincial level to assess the impact of the policy on the entire province.
4. Given the positive impact of providing free textbooks on student enrollment at the primary level, it is recommended that further studies be conducted to examine the policy's effects on students' academic achievements.
5. Building on the success of free textbook provision at the primary level, it is suggested that research be conducted at the secondary level to determine the impact of the policy on student enrollment and retention.



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