

The South Asian Forum for Education Development (SAFED) is a regional alliance for creating learning and sharing corridors across South Asia. Officially declared in February 2006, and registered in April 2008, SAFED's objectives are to initiate and develop regional partnerships for:

- Undertaking research and learning solutions to common problems
- Learning, adapting and implementing best practices in education
- Promoting partnerships for advocacy and policy solutions
- Creating cross country knowledge fund for effective and timely decision making

This third SAFED Newsletter is dedicated to Education under Crisis and Emergencies, in the wake of the worst flooding in the history of Pakistan. The floods have been an equalizer lashing out with the same fury and without discrimination to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and class. The numbers of displaced is rising rapidly through ordered and forced evacuations. Of the 14 million plus affected, almost 50% are below the age of 18, perhaps many of them enrolled in schools and colleges. The increasingly repetitive cycles of emergency through natural and manmade disasters and conflicts have made the citizens of the country painfully familiar to 'displacement, disruption, and loss of dignity'. Whilst the children/youth wonder if ever they will make up for lost time in education for an improved future, the adults worry about livelihoods and restoration of any quality of life.

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Handling Emergencies Flood Relief and Education



Affected children count their losses: Murtaza's Appeal from Mianwali District, Pakistan

(Newspaper Article from The Dawn Saturday, 14 Aug 2010 by Zulqernain Tahir)

Among the huge crowds ruing the loss of their dear ones, crops and cattle, swept away by raging floods, are a large number of children who complain that they have not only been deprived of their schools but also of their books.

Mortaza, 14, comes from a village where not many children go to school. He was the only one among five siblings allowed the luxury of studying in a school. He would leave Suhrab Khel in Mianwali district early in the morning and ride 8km to the Daud Khel Islami School. His bicycle is gone, washed away by floodwater. So are his books and he is uncertain about the condition of his school. His predicament prompts the extremely depressed seventh-grader to paint the bleakest of scenarios. 'I think my dream is over,' Mortaza says as he sits next to his father in his damaged house. But it is rather easy to rekindle a young dream. Only a few moments after he has ruled out redemption for himself and his family, Mortaza is back to his old positive self. 'My mother wishes me to be a doctor. Please ask the government to help me continue my studies and help my family rebuild our house'. The youth has no idea what shape his school is in. He would have gone to have a look but the route connecting his village to the town of Daud Khel has been cut off by the floods.

An official of the education department says the government has not yet collected the data of the educational institutions and students affected by the floods. This will be a huge task given the number of students and schools hit by the raging waters. The local residents' suspicion of anything and anyone bearing the official label complicates the relief and rehabilitation exercise. A fellow villager Fakir Khan says the villagers cannot sit idle and wait for government's help. 'Even if the government does not give us money we will start building our mud-structures once the floodwater recedes.'

The thought of rebuilding virtually from scrap is too discomfoting. Mortaza's books and bicycle do not figure in his parents rough plans right now. They are not sure if they will have enough resources to let their son continue his studies.

Integrating Education as an Essential Life Saving and Sustaining Response - Some Critical Suggestions to Policy makers, Emergency Planners, Professional and Citizen Volunteers

(Excerpts from the note circulated on August 14, 2010 by Baela Jamil, Director Programmes, ITA)

Blessedly schools/education institutions have been used as the front line shelter in this disaster as they opened doors to the affected communities for protection and respite. Before we knew it we were facing children, youth and mothers in need of healing, nurturing and care in schools as a captive audience for relief and providing them valuable information and support on water, sanitation and hygiene, health and psycho social support through learning, safe play and critical conversations . There was no question but to embrace and integrate education as a core emergency relief agenda into all 'emergency interventions as an essential life-saving and life-sustaining component of humanitarian response'. This needs urgent thinking on the part of planners and citizens.

On 9 July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a first-of-its-kind resolution on education in emergencies entitled The Right to Education in Emergency Situations (A/64/L.58). This resolution is a major advocacy achievement for the field of education in emergencies, and has been brought about by the hard work of many agencies and supportive national governments. The resolution urges Member States to ensure access to education in emergency situations for all affected populations, while implementing strategies and policies to ensure and support the realization of this right as an integral element of humanitarian assistance and response. Furthermore, the urgency of needs assessment in education without any loss of time includes foremost a focus on multiple demands as listed below:

- 1. Provision of Textbooks:** There is an urgent need for children's access to textbooks in flood-ravaged areas. The government had just barely finished free distribution of textbooks to public sector schools and education foundation assisted private institutions and non-formal centres by May 2010. As schools re-open after eid in mid September, or earlier in the case of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan, the students will be lost without textbooks.
- 2. Assessment of Infrastructure Damage:** Assessment of damaged buildings, not just of public sector but also the private sector schools and especially affordable private schools, a critical partner for helping the Government of Pakistan in meeting of MDGs and EFA goals, along with costing on missing facilities and replacement in the need of the hour.
- 3. Supply of Teachers:** Teachers are the most critical element in learning and relief/recovery/rehabilitation phases, and must not be overlooked. Support for displaced teachers or shortage of teachers as more

children may be enrolled in schools on a temporary basis with displaced and affected being assessed on mammoth proportions, is also required. The systems for hiring temporary teachers are well in place since 2005, in fact finalized by civil society organizations that were present during the disaster.

- 4. Out of School Children:** Children will and should be allowed as early as possible to seek entry in any school near or at the temporary shelter with additional teachers to support learning, life skills with appropriate learning materials at hand. In the 2005 earthquake, a small intervention inspired by inclusive education called, the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) costing merely Rs. 15 per child was used as the vital record keeper for children who are on the move in transition situations (www.itacec.org/ click on emergencies) and this IEP travelled with the child to the next school to show that she/he was in temporary learning institution during the emergency enabling admissions.
- 5. Assessment of Learning Packs:** Assessment and support for learning packs to suit different levels of grades/sub-sectors in education, pre primary, primary, middle, and high is needed. This too has been done extensively more so at primary levels but can be extended and many organizations specializing in education can come to give a hand in this effort for learning kits/packs and approaches. These have been well tested during emergencies in Pakistan since 2005.
- 6. Health and Hygiene:** Health and hygiene issues are huge with threats of disease spreading in the aftermath or during floods and rains amongst the displaced which will have to be addressed at the level of the displaced affected communities/families and at education sites. Extensive programmes on Water & Environment Sanitation Health (WASH) can be simply introduced widely across schools serving as shelters to wider communities.
- 7. Upgradation of Schools:** It is also a time to quickly take policy action, in line with the National Education Policy, on upgrading major number of facilities in principle from primary to middle and middle to secondary levels but particularly to middle levels, ensuring that the facilities are sensitively built around inclusive education for the challenged. .
- 8. Teacher Training:** Teachers/caregivers and supporters to the programmes of education as a core area for all stages of humanitarian response would have to be trained in the vision/concepts, skills and approaches entailed in this philosophy a world view.

If we do the above, we will be in fact doing a great favour to the early implementation of the National Education Policy 2009's segment on Education in Emergencies (www.moe.gov.pk pg. 32). Pakistan is often cited as a best practice land for public private partnerships and what better time to invoke these than now. There can only be a comprehensive response through partnerships and the education sector is as ready as other sectors.

Let's Talk about Outcomes: Education Cess in India

(Article by Mr. Madhav Chavan from Times of India - The writer works in the field of elementary education)

In 2004, the UPA-I government in India imposed a 2% cess on all central taxes to provide resources for elementary education..The government ensured that cess proceeds were protected and used only for elementary education by creating a non-lapsable fund, the Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh. Subsequently, the cess was raised to 3 per cent on all central taxes to provide for secondary education too, but the additional 1 per cent collected did not go into any non-lapsable fund.

A cess should be withdrawn unless the government can demonstrate its need and effectiveness. The situation has changed substantially over six years and there is no serious justification for the government to continue collecting the 2 per cent cess for elementary education. Specifically, there are four major arguments against continuation of the cess.

1. First, the government's total revenue receipts have increased from Rs 3 lakh crore in 2004-05 and are projected at Rs 6.88 lakh crore in 2010-11. The cess is insignificant in these calculations.

2. Second, as the cess amount has increased, the government has been quietly reducing its own contribution to the elementary education budget. Allocations for elementary education from general revenues have dropped from Rs 7,200 crore in 2006-07 to about Rs 5,000 crore in 2009-10, as the cess allocation has correspondingly increased from Rs 8,200 crore to Rs 12,300 crore. Clearly, the government is relying on the cess to help reduce its own fiscal burden.

3. Third, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, makes it obligatory on the government to allocate funds on a priority basis, regardless of the amount involved. Competing demands can no longer lead to diversion of funds from elementary education, thus eliminating one major reason for imposing a cess in the first place.

4. Fourth, the cess is a special instrument that found wide support in 2004-05 not only due to paucity of funds but also thanks to the implicit promise of "outcome over outlays". This promise is not being kept. In fact, there is reason to believe that the RTE Act works against accountability to learning outcomes. At the same time, it is expected to triple government expenditure to an annual Rs 60,000 crore.

Should we not measure the productivity of the classroom process after we spend something like an average of Rs 6,000 per annum per child across India? Today, after spending four years in school, in standard V, more than half of India's children cannot do a division sum and a little under half cannot read a standard II level text with some comprehension. That means about half of India's children are being denied the right to acquire some core deliverables of basic education. To be fair, the Right To Education Act does have its merits. However, it is based

on a discredited faith that if you provide schools, 'trained' teachers and books, and if all the schools function according to the detailed clauses of the Act and the model rules, education will have been delivered. This situation in different forms has existed in many parts of the country in thousands of government schools and yet the learning outcomes remain extremely poor year after year. The government has no right to ask citizens to keep on paying special taxes when it is getting richer by the day, and yet refuses even to measure its own performance transparently, leave alone guaranteeing outcomes.

Indian court opens education for 874 children

(Article from One World South Asia - 06 August 2010)



The Delhi High Court, in a recent landmark judgment declared that 874 children, who were previously denied access to education, be admitted to schools in accordance with provisions of the Right to Education Act, four months after it came into force. Most of these children belong to disadvantaged sections of society and 350 are differently abled.

Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw allowed the petition of advocate Ashok Aggarwal of NGO Social Jurist and directed the Delhi government and its schools to admit these children, mostly belonging to lower strata of the society, preferably in schools located in their neighborhood and in accordance with the RTE Act provisions without delay. On the question of the classes in which the children should be admitted according to their ages and suitability, the judge said that should be decided by the head of the schools in consultation with the education officers concerned.

Justice Endlaw also observed that the provisions of the Delhi School Education Act could not be factored in while giving admission to the children under the RTE Act. Hence, a ward, irrespective of whether he/she had ever studied in a recognised school, must first be given admission in a school before a training programme was decided on and imparted to them for adaptation, the court ruled. Aggarwal added that denying entry to physically challenged students on any reason was the contempt of a ruling by former Chief Delhi High Court Justice A P Shah dated September 16, 2009, which stated: 'It is made clear that no disabled child shall be refused admission in any of the schools either run by the state government or the local bodies (like MCD, NDMC and Delhi Cantonment Board)'.

The Annual Status of Education Report

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) is a survey for assessing the quality of education, now in place in both India and Pakistan. The report seeks to fill a gap in educational data by providing a reliable set of data at the national level that is comprehensive and, at the same time, easy to understand. In India, the process is being facilitated, on a yearly basis, since 2005 by Pratham, a local NGO and in Pakistan since 2008 by SAFED. The ASER team in India surveys all the rural districts in India, selecting 30 villages from each district and 20 households from each village, giving a total of 600 households per village. The process involved ordinary citizens. In order to train these surveyors, workshops are held where the necessary skills are imparted. After the trainings are complete, the survey takes place and upon its completion, the results are sent in by the surveyors themselves. In Pakistan, some assessment systems are already in place, such as NEAS (National Education Assessment System) and Punjab Examination Commission. However, ASER is different from the above mentioned systems because ASER is a household-based survey looking at the more generic skills of numeracy and literacy, compared to subject specific learning levels.

ASER Pakistan

The ASER Pakistan Roll-out

Timelines are as follows

- National Workshop: July 20-23, 2010
- ASER Survey: September October 2010
- Data Analysis: November 2010
- Report Writing: December 2010
- ASER Release: January 2011

National Workshop 2010

ASER Pakistan 2010 preparatory workshop was held at the ITA office, Islamabad in August 2010, facilitated by resource persons from both ASER center and Pratham, India. The workshop covered the ASER rollout process, impacts of the ASER survey, lesson learnt from the first year ASER exercise in Pakistan and a way forward to ASER 2010 in Pakistan. ASER Pakistan workshop participants were trained on ASER methodology. The workshop also shared experiences of ASER in India, covered issues of sampling, practice mapping, selection of households and testing.

ASER India

Do schools get their money? Paisa By M Govinda Rao (Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi)

Enhancing expenditures on various development schemes in the social sector is necessary to improve human development, build capabilities and remove 'unfreedoms' (as stated by Prof. Amartya Sen) of

disadvantaged sections of society. However, targeting expenditures to the intended groups, ensuring their utilization and enhancing their efficacy in augmenting the desired public services is equally, if not more important. In the absence of systems and institutions to generate information on the flow of funds, pattern of their utilization and their effectiveness in augmenting public services, the discussion on the usefulness of these schemes has not been well informed.

It is in this regard that PAISA, the collaborative project run by the Accountability Initiative, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) and the ASER Centre to generate information on the flow of funds in the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is important. Every year, an annual PAISA survey is conducted through the ASER survey. In 2009, PAISA collected information from 14,560 schools all over the country pertaining to the flow of funds, pattern of their utilization and the quality of infrastructure generated through expenditure. The focus of PAISA was on the school development grant, school maintenance grant and the teaching learning material grant provided through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The information thus generated is analysed and disseminated widely to educate the public and enable policy makers to identify the required policy and institutional reforms to make spending on the programme effective. This information will help to identify the sources of inefficiency and leakages more in SSA. It will also provide useful insights in formulating similar programmes in the future. Hopefully, it will be used extensively by the general public, scholars and policy makers alike. Complete report can be downloaded from: www.asercentre.org

Interesting Publications

Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery Safe and qualitative learning opportunities (05 July 2010), **Publisher: INEE, 2010**

The Working Group on Minimum Standards and the INEE Secretariat launched the 2010 updated edition of the Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery articulating the minimum level of educational quality and access in emergencies through to recovery. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) facilitated a consultative process that engaged national authorities, practitioners, policy-makers, academics and other educators around the world in the development of this handbook in 2004 and its update in 2010. It can be used by all stakeholders involved in emergency education preparedness, response and recovery, including disaster risk reduction and conflict mitigation, should use and promote these minimum standards, key actions and guidance notes. The INEE Minimum Standards also serve as a key accountability tool for education providers. Donor agencies are increasingly using them as a quality and accountability framework for education projects that they support.

Prepared by:

The Editorial Team, SAFED Secretariat
With contributions from Volunteers