



## **Center for Global & Strategic Studies**

**Islamabad**

### **Education reforms in KPK**

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*Published on March 9, 2020*

KPK schools have suffered both from neglect and from the concerted attacks on schools across various parts of the province. Education at large has been the domain for severe political contestation between ordinary Pakistanis and violent extremist. Yet the people of KPK have consistently sought schools that offer quality education to their children.

This demand for education has constantly been compromised by both historical neglect and by the very specific circumstances in the province. We identifies challenges and enduring gaps whilst acknowledging meaningful progress that needs to quickly evolve and grow in order to address the mammoth needs of the province.

Governments since 2008 have sought to address the demand for education in KPK through a series of reforms. The current government that took power in the province in 2013 has made substantial efforts to provide schools with key inputs, including improved school and infrastructure, increased budgetary allocations and a new generation of teachers, recruited through a merit based process.

Pakistan's district education ranking 2017 has shown that KPK has moved up the index and now leads the provision of infrastructure at the primary level across all provinces in Pakistan; however, at the middle school level, KPK is at the second spot after Punjab. Similarly, on the education score and beyond primary readiness score index, KPK lags behind the Punjab, Islamabad capital territory and Gilgit Baltistan.

The reforms introduced during the current tenure have had some success in identifying closed schools in recruiting teachers on the basis of merit and reducing teacher absenteeism in government schools through accountability

### **A Bird Eye View at the Current Reforms.**

An eminent progress has been noticed in the educational sector of KPK as a result of extensive reforms introduced by the current government in the education field. As far

as the knowledge seeking is concerned, sky is the limit and there is no denying the fact that the government is working extensively to achieve some noticeable targets in the said field.

Education being the top priority of the govt, a big chunk of the budget has been set for its promotion. The budget of Elementary and Secondary education has also been increasing since 2013.

The revision of the core books (Eng, Urdu, Math, Science) for grades 1-9 and their free provision was a big sigh of relief. Major changes in Islamiyat course will prove to be quite beneficial for the religious uplift of the youth.

The hefty amount of Rs. 10 Billion has been set for the standardization project. The infrastructure of the schools has been visibly improved with additional classrooms, boundary walls, electrification and solar paneling.

The present government has set up the recruitment system through NTS test due to which human discretion and nepotism has been abolished completely in appointments. Besides, the recruitment number in this government is higher than the previous governments. For the first time in KPK, over 40,000 School based teachers recruited through NTS test to meet student teacher ratio of 40:1 since June 2013. Teachers recruited in previous governments were 7,000.

A six months mandatory induction program is designed for the teachers to develop their key professional knowledge areas through state of the art learning system installed on android.

The equally impressive high achiever's scholarship programs are announced and given to the deserving students. The spent budget on the scholarships so far is Rs. 98,499,400. The number of scholarships has been increased from 97 to 200 students. Another noticeable initiative for the sole benefit of the girls is the stipend program worth PKR 1.72 billion to promote enrollment and retention in secondary government schools for those students who are having 80% attendance. The purpose is to ensure that they remain in government schools and does not drop out due to economic hardships.

The girl community schools (GCS) are introduced in rural and remote areas across all districts of the province that do not have government primary schools. There were 196 schools in year 2010-2013. Now ESEF has set over 1700 GCS with the total grant of PKR 1.4 billion. It has given an opportunity of livelihood to women living in rural areas who became teachers. These schools provide education to 99,000 students; out of these 65% are girls.

An education voucher scheme (Iqra Farogh I Taleem) is an initiative to provide education to out of school children (ages 5-10 years) living in the areas that do not have government schools. Rs. 500 million have been allocated. Through a voucher, these students are able to avail free of cost education in the private schools with free books,

uniforms and schools. 50% vouchers have been provided to girls. 60,000 vouchers have been distributed.

Before 2013, there were only 308 higher secondary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and now more than 2000 schools have been established all across KPK. During the last three years, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESED) has successfully established and completed about 450 new schools in KPK. All of those schools are fully resourced and functioning according to the data available at ESED. About 229 schools have been sanctioned while 221 are in process.

**Conclusion:**

The gains made since 2013 are not permanent without sustained efforts, a sharper focus and even stronger political will, these gains may suffer being removed. KPK schools require a singular emphasis on improved learning outcomes which means a renewed commitment to measuring quality, a dramatic improvement in assessments, the framing of public policy that is committed to the cognitive and non-cognitive skills of the children of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.