

# **OUT OF SCHOOLCHILDREN**

## **Is Pakistan Working in the Right Direction?**



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**For my Mother, who made me what I am today**

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## **Abstract**

This research aimed to determine the causes behind primary drop outs in rural areas of Pakistan as well as to determine the reasons why Out of School children choose to enroll in Non-Formal Basic Education Institutions rather than Formal Systems. The study looked at both genders and the differences in their reasons. Children do not simply drop out of school because they do not want to study but rather are prone to a series of events that eventually leads to such behaviour of dropping out. The main cause behind school drop outs in the case of developing countries is believed to be poverty, however this study looks at the various other factors from both within school as well as environmental, social and household factors that simultaneously push and pull the children to drop out of their schools and courses institutions respectively. The Rawalpindi District in Punjab is taken as the locale of the research focusing on the Taxila Tehsil. Non Formal Education Institutions were visited in order to gather both quantitative as well as qualitative data in the form of survey and Focus Group Discussions. In order to determine why the children have dropped out of formal institutions as well as to look at those children who have not enrolled in any formal schools to begin with. The gap between what is being provided in Formal Education Systems and the needs and requirements of these children that are proving to be hindrances in their enrolment were identified. Descriptive and Thematic Analysis was carried out on the collected data and gaps between the existing Punjab Policy and the ground reality were identified emphasizing why simply the provision of universal primary education is not sufficient rather follow through methods are required to keep a track of the children who have been enrolled along with the factors that need to be addressed in order to enrol children in rural areas in Formal Education Schools. Recommendations are given on how to identify “high risk” children who might drop out in order to tackle the problem before it occurs and minimize the annual turnover of children from schools. The research aimed to prove that there is not simply

one factor leading to drop out but rather an integration of a number of factors that accumulate and eventually lead to children dropping out and that similarly, the decision to not enroll in a Formal Education System but rather to opt for an Informal Basic Education is made on the basis of various interrelated factors. Results of the study indicated that economic factors proved to create an overall umbrella to reasons behind out of school children and formed the basis behind it. In each case, one or two more factors simply added to the economic reason. These were mostly school related and socio-cultural reasons. Distance and household reasons were found to not be of great significance in this particular locale. However, the factor that did stand out in this case were religious reasons which were found to have a strong impact on children being out of school in the Tehsil. Furthermore, overall satisfaction has been found in children studying in NFBE schools. In order to implement the numerous policies decided upon, recommendations have been given to fulfill the existing gap in the case of out of school children.

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