

Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre

Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP) 2005-2010

FINAL REPORT SUMMARY

**Prepared for the Annual Board Meeting of MHHDC
9th December 2010**

1. Purpose and Activities of RECOUP

RECOUP's purpose is to conduct work which results in education and poverty reduction strategies showing a clearer recognition of education's potential contribution. Its underlying hypothesis is twofold: that poverty may prevent individuals from benefiting as much from education as it does those who are better off; secondly, people who are living in poor communities may have more restricted access to education of any given quality than those in richer communities. In that regard the core *objective of the project is to study the mechanisms that drive this potential cycle of deprivation, and to identify policies needed to ensure that educational outcomes benefit the disadvantaged*. The five-year project is carried out in four developing countries - India, Pakistan, Kenya and Ghana.

The agenda comprises research on the effects of education on three categories of outcomes:

- (a) *Theme 1: Social and human development outcomes*. This area of enquiry aims to elucidate the pathways whereby education influences notions of citizenship, cognitive and attitudinal change, subjective well-being, and health and fertility behaviours. The research is particularly interested to examine differences in such processes and outcomes amongst the different genders, and amongst those with and without disabilities.
- (b) *Theme 2: Economic and labour market outcomes*. The ways in which education and training affect future lives and livelihoods is the focus of this theme. A central objective here is to analyse the relationships between education, earnings and other individual and household characteristics in our studied communities. Studies under this theme also examine the ways in which formal and informal training systems contribute to positive outcomes for the poor.
- (c) *Theme 3: Outcomes from partnerships in education between governments, aid agencies and households*. The agenda here is to examine whether, and in what ways, educational aid has affected educational policy and practice in recipient states. A separate project under this theme examines the ways in which public-private partnerships affect the provision and outcomes of education in our partner countries.

The above research agenda is addressed by using *both quantitative and qualitative research methods* in Pakistan and the generation of knowledge by RECOUP is based heavily upon the *analysis of new data collected* by researchers from Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre.

The following section provides the details of the research activities conducted and outputs produced by Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre under each Theme.

2. Research activities and outputs

During the project period i.e. October 2005-September 30th 2010, Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre conducted a quantitative household survey - RECOUP Outcomes of Education Survey, 2006/07¹, and completed five qualitative studies one on each of the sub-themes including Health and Fertility (H&F), Disability (DEPP), Youth, Gender and Citizenship (YGC), Skills and Public Private Partnerships (PPP). A study of financial aid to the education sector has also been completed under Theme 3.

The findings of these studies are in the process of translating into working papers, research reports, journal articles, book chapters and policy briefs (see annex for list of publications). The details of each study under the RECOUP research themes, and their findings are as follows:

2.1 Theme 1: Social Outcomes of Education

- a) The **Health and Fertility Study** aimed at exploring the relationships between schooling, fertility and child health outcomes, and the pathways through which female schooling leads to lower fertility levels and better child health outcomes in Pakistan.

Methods: The study employed a mixed methods approach: utilizing RECOUP Outcomes of Education Survey 2006/07 and a qualitative study conducted in four communities (one rural and one urban in each of the districts of Sargodha and Charsadda). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 71 young women and 13 mother in laws were interviewed.

Main findings: The findings of H&F study indicate that education does help improving the fertility and health outcomes in poor settings but evidence showing that schooling improves health and fertility outcomes through women's empowerment - as usually perceived - is not very strong in Pakistani context. Economic hardships, increasing willingness to invest in child quality i.e. increasing demand for schooling (particularly private schooling) have been observed as the main reasons for willingness to limit the family size.

¹ The survey was conducted in nine districts in Punjab (6 districts) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (3 districts) covering 1094 households and around 9000 individuals from a total of 27 communities.

- b) **Disability, Education and Poverty Project** aimed at enhancing understanding about how schooling impacts the lives of young persons with disabilities.

Methods: The project applied a mixed method approach, which included a detailed disability sub-section in the quantitative survey and a qualitative study conducted in one urban and one rural community in district Sargodha. The methodology for the qualitative study involved in-depth interviews with 30 persons with disabilities (PWDs) and 30 of their significant others (SOs).

Main findings: While the quantitative survey findings showed that young PWDs were more likely to be denied their rights to education, less likely to participate in the labour market and to form a family union as compared to able-bodied young persons (Singhal and Bhatti with Malik 2009 & Singhal and Bhatti with Malik forthcoming in Disability and Rehabilitation), the narratives from the qualitative study revealed the importance of schooling in the lives of PWDs, particularly in enhancing their social lives. Schooling contributed positively to the social well-being of young PWDs who were educated (completed matric or above); they were more likely to be social and integrated with the society as compared to those without any schooling. PWDs with secondary and above schooling levels reported that their self-confidence levels also enhanced in addition to their capacity to communicate with others, and they were also more aware of the benefits available and their rights. However, the economic returns of schooling in the lives of PWDs were seen to be weak and confirmed the findings of the quantitative survey and qualitative study similarly. Thus, education alone is not very likely to improve the poverty status of PWDs and their households. Disability networks run by committed individuals were witnessed to be helpful for availing rights and benefits available for PWDs, as well as finding suitable jobs for them which on turn is likely to increase the financial status of the individual PWDs and their households.

- c) **Youth, Gender and Citizenship Study:** The YGC project explores the role of gender identities and gender relations in shaping educational and social and human development outcomes. Broadly, it aims to investigate following the social and human development outcomes of (formal and informal) schooling of young women and young men in poor rural and urban communities.

Method: YGC study is an extensively qualitative household study. The in-depth interviews of young men and women (14-25 years) with various levels of schooling, and of their parents were conducted in

both rural and urban sites in Sargodha. In each household, a young male, a young female, their mother and father were interviewed. A total of 20 households with 80 individuals (40 youth and 40 parents) were interviewed. The data is cleaning and processing completed in October 2010, the outputs are planned for the coming year.

2.2. *Theme 2: Economic Outcomes of Education*

Skills and Livelihoods Study was designed to study the contribution of education and skills training in alleviating poverty. The fundamental research question was 'can education and skill training, or any combination of these, lead to poverty alleviation?'

Methods: Consistent with the mixed methods approach, a detailed subsection on technical and vocational training, incomes and nature of businesses was included in the quantitative survey. A qualitative study was also held in one urban and one rural community in the districts of Charsadda (Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa) and Sargodha (Punjab). A total of 80 in-depth interviews were held, with the sample stratified across education and wealth levels.

Main Findings: The study found that access to skill training is strongly influenced by socio-economic background of individuals. Owing to immediacy of income, chronically poor households can only access on-the-job training in elementary vocations. Informal training under the *ustad-shagird* (master-apprentice) system does not entail costs in Pakistan, but low remuneration during the training period (around 2 to 3 years) can prevent the poorest from entering such arrangements. Furthermore, access to the system is strongly dependent on familial and social networks. Formal training, on the other hand, has pre-requisites of middle (grade 8) or secondary education (usually grade 10 or 12) and thus excludes a large portion of Pakistan's workforce. Thus, the poor generally rely on informal training systems. The role of education in informal skill training and utilisation was found to be weak. While respondents frequently made references to education's general benefits (in terms of easily learning names of tools, conducting measurements, keeping accounts, customer-dealing etc.), there was no significant illustration of any particular processes that only educated skilled individuals could undertake. Nonetheless, there were some trades which were likely to attract more educated individuals, for example electricians and mechanics. Typically, labour market outcomes for informally trained and employed individuals were poor. Most mentioned that they were living on a day-to-day basis with negligible savings. Reasons for this included low skills, technology and productivity at such enterprises. Absence of environmental support, in the shape of credit, business development services, and technology and skill outreach programs was found to be highly significant. It was noted that there is also a potential for conflict of interest among trainees and masters - the former seek to completely learn a skill while masters usually require

apprentices for undertaking small chores around the workplace. Pace of skill formation can thus be slow under the system. Diffusion of new practices is also slow.

2.3 Theme 3: Financing of Education and Aid

Public Private Partnerships: looks at the impact of public and private sector provision of education in Pakistan – the implications for school choice, quality and educational outcomes of the expanding market place for education. The underlying questions addressed are: How are the education outcomes for the poor affected by partnership arrangements between donors, government and households? And how do they affect education outcomes of boys and girls from different socio-economic backgrounds?

Methods: A qualitative study, the PPP project, interviewed 128 parents and youth from one urban and one rural community in the districts of Sargodha and Charsadda. 32 focus group discussions were also held. From the schools, 120 teachers and head teachers were interviewed. Education officers at the district level administration were also interviewed.

Findings: The data reveals perceptions and experiences of people in communities who have engaged with service delivery mechanisms in Pakistan. The study found significant differences along socio-economic lines in the nature and level of engagement with schools. Income levels and parental background determine the choice of type of school, as well as the trajectory within the schools. Pupils from households with a higher socio-economic standing and well connected social networks are more likely to be in private sector schools. So while the expansion of low cost private sector schools, whether by default or through PPP policy, have expanded access of education across income categories, significant equity issues remain. Further, policy design needs to be cognizant of the differences in access and use of the education system.

Given that a majority of the low income households still rely on public sector provision, policy needs to grapple with ways of improving public sector service delivery. Furthermore, social networks play an important role in navigating the education system in the public sector as well. The use of ‘voice’ and ‘exit’ strategies vary across types of school and by income level considerably. Those from lower socio-economic strata do not complain and cannot choose to move away from the public sector. These strategies function as implicit accountability mechanisms, the momentum of which can be harnessed to improve quality of service delivery. However, the PPP study reveals that many assumptions about the conditions under which these mechanisms are effective may not hold in a low income country context. If use of voice and exit strategies is contingent on income levels and social networks, policy design for education sector reform will need to take these into account

to ensure effectiveness. As regards government policies and the effectiveness of institutions of governance in place, the study revealed that there is a disconnect between the rights parents have been provided on paper and which they are aware of. School Management Committees (SMCs) which have been designed to espouse greater parental participation in school affairs are not functioning effectively. This is not because of apathy on part of the parents. Rather it is a function of lack of information about parental rights. The communities as well as the teachers see a useful role for bodies like SMCs.

2.4 Other outputs

Strong **capacity development of staff** at MHHDC, arising from regular training workshops and from collaborative research papers jointly-authored by staff is the main capacity building output of the RECOUP project.

2.5 Dissemination activities

- a) Mid-term dissemination conferences held to present the preliminary findings of Pakistan RECOUP household survey
- b) UKFIET international conferences on Education and Development in 2007 and 2009
- c) Final RPC London conference in 2010

The papers presented during these are included in section 3.

3. Products and Publications

3.1 Peer reviewed publications

Theme 1: Social and human development outcomes of education

Singal, N., Bhatti, F. and Malik R. (2010). Counting the invisible: understanding the lives of people with disabilities in Pakistan. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, Early Online, 1-14.

Theme 2: Economic and Labour Market Outcomes of Education

Aslam, M. (2009). Education gender gaps in Pakistan: Is the labour market to blame? *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 57, 4, 747-784.

Aslam, M. (2009). The Relative effectiveness of government and private schools in Pakistan: Are Girls Worse Off? *Education Economics* 17, 3, 329-353.

Aslam, M., Bari, F. and Kingdon, G. (2010). Returns to schooling, ability and skills. *Education Economics* 1-35.

Aslam, M. and Kingdon, G. (2008). Gender and Household Education Expenditure in Pakistan. *Applied Economics* 40, 2573-2591.

Aslam, M. and Kingdon, G. (2008). Public-Private sector segmentation in the labour market in Pakistan. *Journal of Asian Economics* 34-49.

3.2 Publications (in press) or submitted

Theme 1: Social and Human development outcomes

Bhatti, F. and Jeffery, R. (forthcoming). Health and Fertility outcomes of education for poor women in Pakistan. Special Issue of Comparative Education, *Education Outcomes and Poverty*.

Jeffery, R., Bhatti, F., Jeffery, P. and Noronha, C. (forthcoming). Girls' schooling and women's autonomy in South Asia: revisiting old debates with new data from India and Pakistan. In Colclough, Christopher, ed. *Education Outcomes and Poverty in the South: A Reassessment*, ed. London: Routledge.

Theme 2: Economic and labour market outcomes of education

Aslam, M. (in press). Collecting primary-level quantitative data - experience from a public and private school survey in Pakistan. In Sadaf Rizvi. ed. *Multidisciplinary Approaches in Educational Research: Case Studies from Pakistan and UK*. Institute of Education, University of London, Agha Khan University - Institute for Education Development AKU-IED, Pakistan.

Aslam, M., De, A., Kingdon, G. and Kumar, R. (forthcoming). Economic returns to schooling and skills - An analysis of India and Pakistan. In *Education Outcomes and Poverty in the South*, (ed.) Colclough, C. London: Routledge.

Palmer, R., Akabzaa, R., Janjua, S., King, K. and Noronha C. (forthcoming). Skills acquisition and its impact upon lives and livelihoods in Ghana, India and Pakistan. In Colclough, C., (ed.) *Education outcomes and poverty in the South: a reassessment*. London: Routledge.

3.3 Books or book chapters

Theme 1: Social and human development outcomes

Theme 2: Economic and labour market outcomes of education

Aslam, M., Kingdon, G. and Söderbom, M. (2008). Is Female education a pathway to gender equality in the labor market? Some evidence from Pakistan. In Tembon, M. (ed.) *Girl's Education in the 21st Century: Gender Equality, Empowerment and Growth*. Washington D.C.:The World Bank

3.4 RECOUP Working Papers

Aslam, M. (2007a). Rates Return to Education by Gender in Pakistan. RECOUP Working Paper No.1, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Aslam, M. (2007b). Female Autonomy and Gender Gaps in Education in Pakistan. RECOUP Working Paper No. 3, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Aslam, M. (2007c). The Relative Effectiveness of Government and Private Schools in Pakistan: Are Girls Worse Off? RECOUP Working Paper No. 4, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Aslam, M. and Kingdon, G. (2008a). What can teachers do to raise pupil achievement? RECOUP Working Paper No.19, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Aslam, M. and Kingdon, G. (2010). Parental Education and Child Health - Understanding the Pathways of Impact in Pakistan. RECOUP Working Paper No. 30, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Aslam, M., Bari, F. and G. Kingdon (2008b). Returns to schooling, ability and cognitive skills in Pakistan. RECOUP Working Paper No.20, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Malik, R. (2007). Aid Effectiveness and the Role of Donor Intervention in the Education Sector in Pakistan - a Review of Issues and Literature. RECOUP Working Paper No. 6, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Naveed, A. and Tanweer-ul-Islam. (2010). Estimating Multidimensional Poverty and Identifying the Poor in Pakistan: An Alternative Approach. RECOUP Working Paper No. 28, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Palmer, R. (2007). Education, Training and Labour Market Outcomes in Ghana: A review of the Evidence. RECOUP Working Paper No. 9, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge

Singal, N. and Bhatti, F. with Malik, R. (2009). Counting the invisible: understanding the lives of people with disabilities in Pakistan. RECOUP Working Paper No.23, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

3.5 RECOUP Policy Briefs

Aslam, M. (2009). Education, Employment and Earnings in Pakistan, RECOUP Policy Brief No. 6.

Janjua, S. and Naveed, A. (2009). Skills acquisition and the significance of informal training system in Pakistan: Some policy implications, RECOUP Policy Brief No.7, written for the Working Group on Employment and Income Distribution for the 10th Five Year Plan of Pakistan.

3.6 Conference papers

Bhatti, F. and Jeffery, R. (2009). Education's role in health and fertility change in Pakistan. Paper presented at UKFIET Conference on International Education and Development, 15-17 September 2009, Oxford

3.7 Publications Currently In Progress

Fennell, S., and Malik, R. Between a Rock and a Hard Place: the emerging educational market for the poor in Pakistan.' Draft working paper.

Fennell, S. Markets and Privatisation in Education: a heterodox analysis. Paper being prepared as an accompanying working paper to the conceptual framework paper.

Malik, R. and King, K. Donor Involvement in Education Policy in Pakistan: A Mixed Blessing. Journal article in preparation.

