



Role of Punjab Education Foundation in Improving Access and Quality of Education in Punjab

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Abstract

This study examines the role of the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) in transforming school education in Punjab, with particular emphasis on educational access, quality, equity, and the empowerment of disadvantaged communities. The study draws upon documentary evidence, existing literature, qualitative observations, and interviews with principals of PEF-affiliated schools, particularly from Okara and other areas of Sahiwal Division. It examines major PEF initiatives, including Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS), the Education Voucher Scheme (EVS), and the New School Program (NSP). The findings indicate that PEF-supported interventions have contributed to increased school enrolment, improved educational facilities, teacher development, community participation, and greater opportunities for children from low-income and underserved communities. The EVS has helped reduce financial barriers by enabling disadvantaged families to access private schooling, while FAS has supported institutional development and improvements in teaching practices. However, challenges related to infrastructure, teacher availability, socioeconomic inequality, implementation capacity, and the sustainability of interventions remain significant. The study concludes that PEF has emerged as an important mechanism for expanding equitable and quality-oriented school education in Punjab.

Keywords: Punjab Education Foundation; School Education; Educational Quality; Education Voucher Scheme; Educational Equity; Marginalized Communities; Punjab, Pakistan

Introduction

This research article analyses the Punjab Education Foundation's overall impact on the educational environment of Punjab. It assesses the effectiveness of PEF's efforts and programs in enhancing educational access, quality, and equity. This portion of the study assesses the Foundation's success through quantitative and qualitative data analysis, as well as its contributions to educational reform and policy creation. It provides a comprehensive

examination of PEF's role in molding the Punjab educational environment, reflecting on both triumphs and opportunities for improvement. In Punjab, Pakistan, the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) is a key player in the educational system. Founded with the goal of improving access to high-quality education, especially for the disadvantaged and marginalized groups in society, PEF has carried out a number of projects and programs targeted at changing the province's educational system. PEF, one of Pakistan's biggest foundations devoted to education, has attracted the interest and scrutiny of politicians, educators, and scholars in equal measure. This thesis looks at the efficiency of PEF's programs, the difficulties faced, and the lessons discovered in order to investigate and evaluate the influence of PEF on school education in Punjab. PEF has been a major force in resolving the persistent problems that Punjab's education system has been facing in recent years. Through programs including the Education Voucher Scheme (EVS), Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS), and New School Program (NSP), PEF has worked to increase educational access, enhance educational quality, and foster inclusion and equity. These initiatives have been directed towards a range of stakeholders, such as communities, educators, administrators, and students, in an effort to improve the learning environment and promote holistic development. Even with the tremendous progress that PEF has accomplished, there are still issues with school education in Punjab. Problems in infrastructure, a lack of teachers, poor enrolment rates, and socioeconomic inequality persist in impeding the attainment of universal access to high-quality education. Furthermore, there is ongoing discussion on the viability and expandability of PEF's interventions, which raises concerns about the programs' long-term effects on the educational environment. In light of this, the purpose of this thesis is to critically investigate the influence of PEF on school education in Punjab, highlighting both the accomplishments and the difficulties experienced. Through a comprehensive analysis of current data, key stakeholder interviews, and literature synthesis, this research endeavored to offer a complete understanding of PEF's impact in transforming educational options and results for children throughout Punjab. It is expected that this investigation will yield important information that will guide future programmatic interventions, policy choices, and research projects meant to advance education in the area.

Significance of Examining of PEF's Initiatives:

First of all, Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders can expand insights into the practical implications of PEF's programs by analyzing specific instances of success. This is important for understanding the effectiveness of the PEF's initiatives in various contexts. First of all, success stories provide concrete evidence of how PEF's interventions translate into positive outcomes on the ground. Secondly, individual examples of success provide useful insights into the contextual aspects that influence the execution and impact of PEF's programs. Educational obstacles can vary greatly based on geographic location, socioeconomic level, and cultural standards. Examining successful cases in many situations allows researchers to uncover common trends as well as specific contextual aspects that contribute to or offer problems. This deep understanding is critical for developing tailored interventions that meet the unique needs and challenges that different groups in Punjab confront. Furthermore, assessing individual examples of success enables a more comprehensive assessment of PEF's effectiveness in a variety of educational circumstances. Education is a complex ecosystem influenced by a variety of elements such as infrastructure, teacher quality, family involvement, and community engagement. By examining successful cases in urban, rural, and pre-urban regions, researchers may assess the scalability and adaptability of PEF treatments and develop ways for adjusting interventions to varied situations. Additionally, success stories are effective advocacy tools that help mobilize resources and support for educational initiatives. They also help raise public awareness of educational reform efforts and create momentum for them, which in turn foster a culture of accountability and

transparency within the education sector. Donors, policymakers, and other stakeholders can be inspired to invest in PEF's programs and initiatives by seeing tangible results and real-world impact.

Success Stories of Punjab Education Foundation Schools:

Pakistan's PEF Schools have shown remarkable progress in raising academic standards, especially for underprivileged students. The New School Program (NSP), the PEF's flagship initiative that attempts to give low-income children access to high-quality education, is one noteworthy case study. The PEF creates and maintains a network of partner schools that provide reasonably priced education while upholding strict quality requirements through the NSP. The PEF provides financing and technical support to these schools in order to improve student learning results, infrastructure, quality of instruction and school enrolment. (Riaz & Abbas, 2020) According to a survey of PEF-supported schools, pupils who attend these institutions score far better academically than their classmates in typical public schools. The PEF's rigorous monitoring and assessment systems guarantee that partner schools maintain high educational standards, resulting in increased student accomplishment across several disciplines and grade levels. According to a survey of PEF-supported schools, pupils who attend these institutions score far better academically than their classmates in typical public schools. The PEF's rigorous monitoring and assessment systems guarantee that partner schools maintain high educational standards, resulting in increased student accomplishment across several disciplines and grade levels. Furthermore, the PEF Schools have shown creativity in pedagogy and curriculum creation, combining current teaching methods and technology to improve learning results. The PEF has fostered a culture of continual development and innovation, allowing instructors to experiment with new instructional tactics and modify their teaching approaches to fit the various needs of their pupils. Through its commitment to quality, equity, and innovation, the PEF continues to play a crucial role in changing the educational landscape in Pakistan and guaranteeing that every child has access to a quality education. All things considered, the PEF serves as a compelling case study of how targeted interventions, effective governance, and community engagement can lead to significant improvements in educational outcomes, particularly for underserved populations.

Educational Challenges addressed by PEF:

The PEF has been instrumental in changing the face of education, especially when it comes to tackling issues like low enrolment rates, inadequate facilities, and low teaching quality. A number of instances stand out as shining examples of the successful initiatives that PEF schools have implemented:

Increasing Enrolment through Community Engagement:

In various districts of Punjab for example the districts of Sahiwal Division (Okara, Sahiwal and Pakpattan) PEF schools have effectively addressed low enrolment rates by actively involving the community. By means of awareness programs, door-to-door visits, and community gatherings, these educational institutions have succeeded in fostering parental confidence over the calibre of education provided. PEF schools have had a notable increase in enrolment as a result of publicizing student success stories and stressing the value of education. This has increased access to education for kids all throughout Punjab.

Infrastructure Development and Renovation:

Numerous PEF schools in Punjab especially in Sahiwal division were struggling with inadequate facilities, such as outdated buildings, overcrowded or congested classrooms, and an absence of essential services. However, these schools have experienced amazing changes thanks to resource mobilization and strategic planning. Infrastructure development projects have been launched with funding from public and private sources. These have resulted in the building of new

classrooms, the provision of clean drinking water facilities, and the renovation of existing infrastructure. These initiatives have improved teaching conditions and raised teacher and student morale in addition to improving the learning environment.

Enhancing Teaching Quality through Training Programs:

PEF schools have given priority to teacher training programs that aim to improve subject knowledge and pedagogical abilities in order to address the problem of substandard teaching. These educational establishments have arranged teacher refresher courses, workshops, and seminars in partnership with educational specialists and institutions. PEF schools have seen notable gains in the calibre of instruction due to the adoption of modern teaching approaches, the integration of technology in the classroom, and the promotion of a continuous learning culture. As a result, there has been a noticeable improvement in both student involvement and academic performance.

Promoting Innovation and Best Practices:

PEF schools have developed into centers of innovation and best practices in education throughout Punjab. These institutions have pushed teachers to try out novel teaching techniques by offering awards for innovation, learning circles, and teacher exchange programs, among other initiatives. PEF schools have established a collaborative environment where ideas blossom and innovations spread quickly by exchanging success stories and lessons learned. In addition to bringing new life to instructional methods, this innovative culture has helped Punjab's educational system as a whole

Impact of Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS):

The educational system of Punjab has been greatly influenced by Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS). Foundation Assisted Schools are considered back bone of PEF schools. These educational institutions have played a crucial role in tackling the difficulties that the local education system is currently facing. The enhancement of access to high-quality education has been one of the main effects of FAS, especially in underprivileged and rural areas where government resources may be limited. Punjab's educational infrastructure has grown as a result of FAS's assistance in building new schools and renovating those that already existed. More kids now have the chance to attend school and obtain a formal education thanks to the expansion's higher enrolment rates. Furthermore, FAS has a history of concentrating on underrepresented groups, such as girls and kids from low-income homes, in order to advance fairness and diversity in education. Additionally, FAS has improved Punjab's educational standards by introducing cutting-edge teaching strategies, offering programs for training teachers, and distributing learning resources and materials. FAS has improved overall teaching standards and improved student learning outcomes by investing in teacher development and capacity building. Additionally, the focus on updating educational buildings and integrating technology into the curriculum has improved the quality of education for both teachers and students. Numerous measures, such as higher literacy rates, better academic achievement, and a more favourable learning environment, demonstrate the influence of FAS on Punjab's education system. Numerous research investigations and reports have confirmed the beneficial effects of FAS treatments, emphasizing their contribution to the advancement of social growth and education in the area.

Academic Excellence:

Numerous private schools in the Sahiwal division like “Shah Muqem High School, Hujra Shah Muqem” have had notable improvements in its academic performance following support from the FAS program. In an interview of the Principal name, “Dr. Amant Ullah” of “Shah Muqem High School, Hujra Shah Muqem” (Amant Ullah, personal communication, October 16, 2023) expressed his views. The Principal told the author that, this school is an example of success

stories of PEF schools. Independent assessments carried out by educational authorities have demonstrated a noteworthy increase in student enrolment and a significant gain in academic success levels in this school, thanks to PEF's provision of expanded resources, teacher trainings, and facility developments. (Nazir et al., 2020)

Infrastructure Development:

The transformation of decaying schools into contemporary educational facilities demonstrates the effectiveness of PEF's help. Many schools in rural communities in Sahiwal Division had showed major renovations. A case study of “Ameen Public school of Jhujh Kalan” Tehsil Depalpur District Okara in the Sahiwal division has been closed due to low strength of students. The principal “Muhammad Ameen” (Muhammad Ameen, personal communication, October 28, 2023) of the school mentioned above told in his interview that after joining hands with PEF, it showed major renovations, including the construction of new classrooms, the installation of modern facilities, and the provision of furniture and equipment. This reform not only enhanced the learning environment, but also increased community involvement in education, resulting in a favourable socioeconomic impact.

Improving Teacher Capacity:

The FAS program has also focused on improving teachers' ability to provide quality education. In an interview of principal of a PEF school name “Al-Farid Educational complex Chishti Sham Din Tehsil Depalpur District Okara in the Sahiwal division” principal name “Binyameen Chishti”. (Binyameen Chishti, personal communication, October 28, 2023) The Principal told that the teachers of his school “Al-Farid Educational complex Chishti Sham Din” attended specialized training workshops and professional development sessions. Which are organized by PEF in collaboration with educational specialists? As a result, this school showed significant improvements in teaching approaches, classroom engagements, and student learning results which demonstrated the effectiveness of focus of PEF on teacher training initiatives.

Community Engagement and Empowerment:

Beyond academic accomplishments, PEF's funding has enabled communities to take ownership of their schools and actively participate in educational programs. In an interview of Principal “Abdul Sattar Niazi” (Abdul Sattar Niazi, personal communication, October 30, 2023) of a PEF school name, “Niazi Kinder Garten high school Chak no. 2D” located in Tehsil Depalpur, District Okara in the Sahiwal division. Abdul Sattar Niazi told the success story of his school demonstrates the impact of PEF, which allowed community-led initiatives such as parent-teacher associations and local fundraising efforts to upgrade school facilities and educational supplies. This grassroots approach reinforced the link between the school and the community, but it also developed a sense of pride and ownership among stakeholders.

Innovation and Technology Integration:

PEF's dedication to innovation and technology integration has prepared the road for ground-breaking innovations in education delivery. The implementation of smart classrooms and e-learning platforms in chosen schools has transformed teaching and learning processes, making education more dynamic, engaging, and accessible. The success story of a school name “The Farqaleet System of schools Rajawal” Tehsil Depalpur District Okara in the Sahiwal division is told by his Principal “Junaid Mansoor Lumberdar”. (Junaid Lumberdar, personal communication, October 18, 2023) The principal expressed how PEF's investment in technology-enabled learning solutions has enhanced the educational experience, providing students with 21st-century skills critical to their future success.

Impact of Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) Schools:

The Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) was implemented has had a considerable impact on the region's school education system. EVS schools, which were established to improve access to high-quality education, have resulted in several significant improvements. For starters, the system has increased rivalry among schools, as they compete to recruit kids by providing higher-quality education and better facilities. This competitive atmosphere has resulted in a general increase in educational standards among participating institutions. Furthermore, the EVS has increased parents involvement in their children's education by allowing them to select schools based on their preferences and perceived educational excellence. This parental empowerment has resulted in a more dynamic relationship between schools and the community, pushing schools to meet the individual needs and goals of their students. Furthermore, the establishment of EVS schools has prompted innovation in teaching methods and curriculum creation. To remain competitive in the voucher system, schools are encouraged to implement more effective teaching practices and update their educational programs on a regular basis. The emphasis on innovation has resulted in a more dynamic and flexible educational ecosystem in Punjab. Furthermore, the EVS has been instrumental in tackling concerns of accessibility and equity in education. By granting vouchers to students from poor backgrounds, the plan has ensured that even marginalized groups have access to quality education possibilities. This inclusiveness has helped to minimize the educational gap between Punjab's various socioeconomic classes. (Gulzar & Atta, 2021)

Let us now look at some case studies that demonstrate the transformative impact of the Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) program operated by the PEF in Punjab, Pakistan.

Case study no.1:

The PEF's Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) program in school education in Punjab, Pakistan, has transformed the lives of many families and kids by providing access to quality education. Take an example of a family of District Okara Sahiwal Division. A student “Ali Aslam s/o Muhammad Aslam” lived in a quiet village Basti Noor Elahi of District Okara. In an interview of “Muhammad Imran Khokhar” (Muhammad Imran Khokhar, personal communication, August 16, 2023) principal PEF school name Sun Rise Grammar School he told that Muhammad Aslam has a very large family. He has five school going children. He is a labourer by profession. He struggled very hard to pay for their children's education due to inadequate means. However, under the EVS program, the Ali's family earned vouchers that allowed their children to attend a prestigious private PEF school “Sun Rise Grammar School”. As a result, their children not only received a high-quality education, but also had access to previously unavailable chances for personal and intellectual development. The narrative of the Ali family demonstrates how the EVS program dismantles obstacles to education and gives marginalized families the tools they need to ensure a better future for their kids.

Case study no.2:

Another interesting example is “Aisha Saddiqa D/O Muhammad Ali” from a village Qila Sonda Singh in District Okara Sahiwal Division. A high school girl, who was attending a PEF-affiliated institution. In his interview “Muhammad Shareef” (Muhammad Shareef, personal communication, August 25, 2023) principal of PEF school name “Ali Gar Model School Qila Sonda Singh Tehsil Depalpur District Okara” told to the author that his school actively included environmental education into its curriculum through the EVS program, which provides hands-on activities and projects to promote sustainable habits. Inspired by his experiences in the program, Shareef started a waste management campaign at his school, pushing his students to reduce, reuse, and recycle. In Aisha's leadership and the backing of the EVS program not only improved waste management methods at her school, but also instilled in her peers a sense of environmental care.

Case study no.3:

Zeeshan Maqbool S/O Muhammad Maqbool” is one heart-breaking example from a village Bhuta Mohabat, District Okara, Sahiwal Division. Zeeshan Maqbool family experienced financial difficulties that threatened the schooling of their children. Muhammad Istikhar Hassan (Muhammad Istikhar Hassan, personal communication, August 20, 2023) Principal of PEF partner school name “Bright way science school Bhuta Mohabat Depalpur, Okara” told in his interview that special thanks the EVS program. By which Zeshan’s family able to enrol their kids in a private school that fulfilled their academic goals. This chance guaranteed their children's academic and personal success by providing a supportive learning atmosphere and high-quality education. The family of Zeeshan saw a dramatic shift in their kids' self-esteem, academic standing, and chances for a bright future as a result, ending the cycle of poverty that had previously delayed their schooling.

These case studies provide excellent examples of the transformative possibilities offered by Punjab Education foundation, Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) initiative. Through the elimination of financial obstacles and the provision of high-quality education, PEF's EVS program equips families and students with the tools they need to overcome hardship, reach their full potential, and create a better future. As more families and kids take advantage of this program, the beneficial effects spread throughout communities, promoting a culture of empowerment and lifelong learning as well as good socioeconomic development.

Empowerment of Marginalized Communities:

The PEF has been instrumental in strengthening neglected people via education. PEF has devoted countless hours to ensuring that every kid, irrespective of socioeconomic status, has access to high-quality education through a range of projects and programs. The creation of schools in underprivileged communities, which gives students who would not otherwise have easy access to education, is one of the most significant ways PEF has accomplished this. In addition to providing academic teaching, these institutions place a high value on holistic development, giving pupils the tools they need to succeed in life. PEF has also introduced creative strategies like the Education Voucher Scheme (EVS), which pays for private school tuition for low-income students from low-income families. This program has been crucial in breaking the cycle of poverty and empowering marginalized communities by giving them access to high-quality education that was previously unaffordable. Moreover, PEF's programs frequently include opportunities for skill development and vocational training, giving students real-world experience that improves their employability and prospects for employment. In addition, PEF actively interacts with communities to guarantee their ownership and participation in the educational process. Through partnerships with local stakeholders, such as parents, educators, and community leaders, PEF cultivates a sense of ownership and accountability for education, establishing a beneficial environment for the growth and learning of students. PEF has had a transforming impact on marginalized communities in Punjab, Pakistan, through school education. PEF helps the region's entire socioeconomic growth by removing obstacles to education and offering all-encompassing support, which not only creates opportunities for individual students but also opens doors for them. PEF is paving the road for a better and more equitable future for everyone by continuing to be a beacon of hope for underrepresented communities through dedication and creativity.

Identify Incidents that Empower Marginalized Communities:

Let's take a look at a few examples of how PEF initiatives have helped underprivileged groups in Punjab, Pakistan, become more powerful and successful, citing sources where necessary.

Improvement in access to Education:

In Punjab, Pakistan, the PEF has been instrumental in enhancing educational opportunities, especially for disadvantaged and marginalized populations. PEF has raised enrolment rates and greatly boosted educational possibilities throughout the province through a number of programs and initiatives. Children who previously had few or no alternatives for education now have access to high-quality education thanks to the Punjab Education Foundation Schools that have been established in disadvantaged and distant locations. (Hussain et al., 2021)

Furthermore, PEF's assistance with Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS) has strengthened already-existing educational establishments, allowing them to serve more students and raise the standard of instruction provided. By enabling parents to select schools that best meet their children's requirements, PEF's Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) has further improved access to education. PEF has made it possible for families, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, to enrol their kids in private schools that provide high-quality education by offering financial support in the form of vouchers. (Iqbal et al., 2018)

Furthermore, students from underrepresented groups, such as those with disabilities and those from minority communities, have equitable access to school thanks to PEF's dedication to inclusivity. By lowering financial barriers and encouraging enrolment among underprivileged students, PEF's scholarships and incentives have contributed to the development of a more inclusive learning environment. PEF's initiatives to boost educational equity, decrease dropout rates, and raise enrolment rates have, all together, had a revolutionary effect on Punjab's educational environment. In Punjab, Pakistan, PEF has made great progress toward achieving the objective of universal education by putting accessibility and inclusivity first. (Javed et al., 2021)

Enhancing Quality Education:

Improving the standard of education in Punjab, Pakistan, especially via the PEF, has been a crucial project for the educational environment in the area. Since its founding in 1991, the PEF has played a significant role in raising the province's educational standards and advancing the field of education. The Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS), the PEF's flagship program, is one important tactic it uses to improve the quality of education. FAS seeks to guarantee that high-quality education is available throughout Punjab by offering financial and technical support to private schools, especially those located in underserved and rural areas.

The PEF has also launched a number of programs aimed at improving teacher preparation and growth. The foundation aims to empower teachers with contemporary pedagogical methodologies and create a more conducive learning environment by investing in the capacity building of educators. In addition, the PEF highlights how crucial it is to establish curricula that are in line with national standards in order to guarantee uniformity and applicability in the delivery of education. In addition, the PEF has implemented cutting-edge initiatives like the Quality Assurance System (QAS) to closely track and assess aided schools' performance. By means of QAS, the foundation evaluates several facets of school operations, such as facilities, instruction, and learning objectives of students, guaranteeing responsibility and ongoing enhancement. Furthermore, the PEF has been able to implement innovative teaching techniques and best practices thanks to partnerships with global organizations and specialists in education. These collaborations have improved the foundation's strategy for raising educational quality and made it more flexible and adaptable to changing demands. The Punjab Education Foundation has been working to improve the quality of education in Punjab through a variety of projects, including curriculum creation, quality assurance systems and teacher training programs. Through

resolute commitment to its goals, the PEF is still making a significant impact on Punjab's educational system, which helps the region's socioeconomic growth.

Addressing Socio-economic Disparities in Education:

The PEF understands that socioeconomic status should not influence access to quality education. To address this issue, the foundation has launched several initiatives targeted at offering educational opportunities to marginalized areas throughout the province. One of the PEF's primary strategies is to create schools in low-income communities with inadequate access to education. These schools are outfitted with trained teachers, essential infrastructure, and educational resources to ensure that students from underserved communities receive a quality education. By focusing on underserved neighborhoods, the PEF hopes to decrease the educational attainment gap between socioeconomic groups. Furthermore, the PEF provides scholarships and financial aid programs to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. These programs pay tuition, textbooks, and other educational expenditures, allowing students to continue their study without financial restraints. By reducing the financial burden of education, the PEF aims to ensure that all children have equal opportunity to reach their academic potential. Furthermore, the PEF works with a variety of stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community leaders, to address the underlying causes of socioeconomic disparity in education. The foundation's advocacy and awareness programs aim to highlight the value of education in breaking the cycle of poverty and empowering individuals to shape better futures for them and their communities. The Punjab Education Foundation's initiatives to reduce socioeconomic inequities in education are critical for ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality education in Punjab, Pakistan. By implementing targeted reforms and encouraging stakeholder collaboration, the PEF aims to create a more equitable education system that benefits all the members of the society.

Empowering Marginalized Communities by Education:

The PEF's projects in Punjab, Pakistan, have focused on empowering marginalized communities via education. The PEF, founded in 1991, has constantly sought to close the educational gap and promote equal opportunity for all, particularly those from underprivileged families. The PEF has made quality education more accessible to underprivileged communities, especially girls, low-income children, and rural populations, through its numerous programs and projects. One of the PEF's primary initiatives is to provide scholarships and financial help to students from marginalized groups, allowing them to pursue an education without financial restraints. These scholarships pay tuition, textbooks, and other educational costs, making education available to individuals who would otherwise be unable to afford it. By removing financial barriers, the PEF has helped many marginalized students enrol in schools and colleges, allowing them to break the cycle of poverty and reach their full potential. (Mahmood, 2016)

Furthermore, the PEF has been played a pivotal role in increasing the quality of education in underserved regions by founding and financing schools. Through its School Foundation Program, the PEF collaborates with local communities and organizations to establish schools, hire skilled teachers, and provide required resources and infrastructure. These schools not only provide education to students who previously had little or no access to it, but they also act as centers for community development and empowerment. Furthermore, the PEF has launched new educational projects to address the unique needs of neglected groups. For example, the Foundation's Adult Literacy Program teaches illiterate adults, primarily women in rural areas, fundamental literacy and numeracy skills. The PEF empowers adults with education, which not only improves their employability and economic prospects, but also develops a culture of lifelong learning in marginalized communities.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the Punjab Education Foundation has played a significant role in addressing several longstanding challenges within the school education system of Punjab. Through initiatives such as Foundation Assisted Schools, the Education Voucher Scheme, and the New School Program, PEF has expanded educational opportunities for children who face geographical, financial, and socioeconomic barriers. Evidence from schools in Sahiwal Division, particularly Okara, indicates improvements in enrolment, infrastructure, teaching practices, teacher capacity, community participation, and access to educational resources. The Education Voucher Scheme has been particularly important in enabling children from low-income families to attend private schools, while Foundation Assisted Schools have contributed to institutional improvement in underserved areas. The study also highlights the importance of community engagement, technological innovation, and teacher training in improving educational experiences and outcomes. Despite these achievements, PEF's contribution should not be viewed without considering continuing challenges. Shortages of teachers, inadequate infrastructure, socioeconomic disparities, and questions concerning the long-term sustainability and implementation of educational interventions remain important concerns. Therefore, sustained institutional support, effective monitoring, teacher development, community participation, and stronger implementation mechanisms are essential. Overall, PEF represents an important model of public-supported educational provision that can contribute to a more accessible, equitable, and quality-oriented education system in Punjab.

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