

Pakistan misses all EFA targets

Islamabad - Pakistan has not reached any of the six Education for All (EFA) goals with measurable targets set in 2000, but made significant progress in closing the gender gap, particularly in the early years after 2000.

When the goals were set, there were 68 girls enrolled for 100 boys. And, by 2007, there were 83 girls but this only increased to 87 by 2012.

EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2015 "Education for All 2000-2015: Achievements and Challenges", that has been launched globally before was unveiled in Pakistan by UNESCO on Wednesday.

The report tracks progress on EFA goals—Early childhood care and education, universal primary education, youth and adult skills, adult literacy, gender equality, quality of education—for the past 15 years.

47 per cent of countries reached the goal of expand early childhood care and education and another eight per cent were close, including Pakistan.

20 per cent were very far from the goal, says the report.

Vibeke JENSEN, Director UNESCO-Islamabad while sharing the key findings of the report said that Pakistan was one of the remaining 38 per cent countries in the world that were far from achieving the goal of universal primary education.

52 per cent of countries achieved this goal and ten percent were close to achieve.

"In Pakistan, more than six million children of primary school age were not enrolled in 2012 while less than half of adolescents are enrolled in lower secondary education in Pakistan."

Regarding the fourth goal—achieving a 50 per cent reduction in levels of adult illiteracy— the report says only 25 per cent of countries reached this goal; 32 per cent remain very far from it, including Pakistan.

Pakistan will miss all the goals and has low standard of Education for all Development Index (EDI); far from EFA overall achievement.

The index ranks Pakistan at 106 among all 180 countries in terms of overall EFA achievements.

According to the report, since 2000 many governments significantly increased their spending on education: 38 countries increased their commitment to education by one percentage point or more of GNP.

But in Pakistan, spending on education fell from 2.6 per cent of GNP to 2 per cent.

It says Afghanistan tripled the number of female teachers and Nepal invested \$35 million in a campaign and achieved huge increase in literacy by 2011.

Bangladesh, BRAC, also targets out of school children and prepares them for secondary education. It is unfortunate that Pakistan is lagging behind the targets due to various reasons, stated Minister of State Baleegh Ur Rehman.

“The government is focusing on the enhancement of technical and vocational training facilities and we are going to launch vocational secondary schools (from grade 6th to grade 10th) very soon to help achieve the goals.”

Baela Raza Jamil, Director Programs, Idara-e-taleem-o-Agahi said that in spite of many efforts by the government of Pakistan and the civil society to upgrade the education sector, the education indicators do not add up to a picture of a glass half full.

To reverse this, it is imperative that partnerships between the government and non-state actors are matched by coherence, upgraded norms of quality learning facilities, post primary opportunities and above all progressively higher financing of education.

Financing for education has to be significantly stepped up, recommends the report. “Governments must ensure that 15-20 per cent of national budgets are spent on education and donors also need to step up and fulfill their promises.

Source: <http://nation.com.pk/islamabad/23-Apr-2015/pakistan-misses-all-efa-targets>