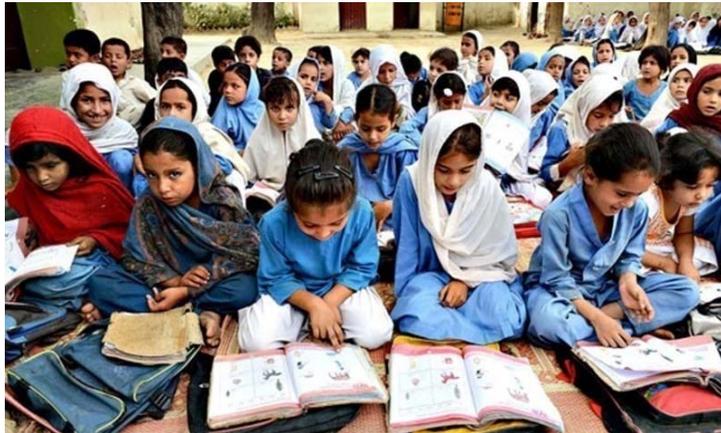




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## **264m children out of school, 100m unable to even read: GEM report**

ISLAMABAD: The latest UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report 2017 has made a startling revelation that a whopping number of 264 million children and youth are out of school, while another 100 million young people currently unable to even read.



UNESCO Islamabad, in collaboration with I-SAPS (Institute of Social and Policy Sciences), launched the GEM Report 'Accountability in education: Meeting our commitments' here on Thursday.

Speaking at the launching ceremony of the GEM report, Federal Education Minister Muhammad Balighur Rehman emphasised that the 2017 report looks at the topic of accountability in education, which is very relevant and pertinent to Pakistan.

He said that democracy is the best accountability where you listen to people and get feedback, adding that the incumbent government is taking special steps for promoting quality education in the country.

The report looks at the different ways people and institutions should be held accountable for reaching the Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education.

It stresses that accountability is indispensable in achieving the global education goal. It describes accountability in terms of how teachers teach, students learn, governments act, private sector behaves and donors respond.

UNESCO Representative to Pakistan Vibeke Jensen and Balighur Rehman officially launched the report.

The minister stated that financial allocation on education in Pakistan has increased considerably during the last few years, and because of that more out of school children are now in schools.

He said that Pakistan has already adopted SDG-4 and has converted it into the national development goals, where “education is our first priority and we are fully committed to achieving the target.”

The report warns that disproportionate blame on any one actor for systemic educational problems can have serious negative side effects, widening inequality and damaging learning. The report cites an accountability vacuum with donors not delivering on their aid commitments for those in need. The share of aid to education has fallen for six years in a row. At the same time, donors increasingly demand that, in exchange for aid, countries achieve results that sometimes divert energy away from systemic improvements in the education system.

The report highlights, “No approach to accountability will be successful without a strong enabling environment that provides actors with adequate resources, capacity, motivation and information to fulfil their responsibilities.”

It calls on governments to design accountability for schools and teachers that is supportive and avoid punitive mechanisms, especially those based on narrow performance measures. It also calls for democratic participation, respect media freedom to scrutinise education and set up independent institutions to handle complaints.

It calls for developing credible and efficient regulations with associated sanctions for all education providers—public and private—ensuring non-discrimination and the quality of education. Make the right to education justiciable, which is not the case in 45% of countries. During the presentation of the key findings of the report, Vibeke Jensen highlighted that the ambitious education outcomes, such as those in SDG 4, rely on multiple actors, starting from government right down to students often fulfilling shared responsibilities. “But while responsibilities are shared, accountability is not: it is connected to single actors, who are held to account for their individual or institutional responsibilities,” she added.

She also stressed that accountability started with governments, as they are ultimately the primary duty bearers of the right to education.

Dr Jamila Razzaq, who has also co-authored a national case study, said, “A well-performing education system in Pakistan can only be built by creating enabling political, social and legislative conditions.”

**Source:** <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/11/16/264m-children-out-of-school-100m-unable-to-even-read-gem-report/>