Promotion of Quality Education Through Public Private Partnership

Volume-6
School Education Sector Roadmap Program- A Giant Leap

The Punjab Government has launched a comprehensive school education reform program in 2011 to improve the quality of education by working on different fronts. The prime objective of the roadmap program was to get more children into schools as well as to improve the educational quality and learning outcomes for the students in schools. This program has, since then, brought a silent revolution in the education sector by opening the doors of education to hundreds and thousands of new students. It is quite heartening that promotion of education is the prime objective and passion of the Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif; he is directly supervising the pace of progress and development in the education sector. This has helped to achieve set goals according to their schedule.

In order to keep an eye on the progress of the program, a regular schedule of stocktakings was established, with Chief Minister in the chair, to review progress against the priorities. These stocktakings have become a strong mechanism for measuring progress and a platform for solving any obstacles.

It is important to note that Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) is playing a leading role in achieving the targets of this program. It has been tasked to educate 2.2 million out of school students by 2019. It is hoped that this program will go a long way to eradicate illiteracy and ignorance in the province.
I welcome the publication of Volume 6 of PEF e-newsletter “The Hope.” It is first publication of the year 2015 and I hope that the New Year will reinvigorate the energies and potentials of PEF employees to continue working for the cause of free education with extended zeal.

As Chairman, Punjab Education Foundation (PEF), it would be my priority agenda to extend this free education facility to every needy child in Punjab. It is my utmost conviction that PEF has a great potential to materialize the dream of hundred percent literacy; and it is heartening that PEF is efficiently playing its role in achieving the goals of Punjab Education Sector Roadmap Program. This program is an important milestone in promoting school education. In the end, I conclude with the pledge that we will eradicate illiteracy and alleviate poverty in Punjab.

Q. You have recently taken over as Chairman PEF, what is your opinion about this organization?
Ans. After taking over as Chairman PEF, I went through the working of Punjab Education Foundation and came to the conclusion that it is a very useful and beneficial organization which is wholly working for the cause of the needy and the deserving children in Punjab. In my opinion, this organization has great potential to promote education and root out ignorance and illiteracy.

Q. What is your plan of action?
Ans. I believe that Punjab Education Foundation has a great potential to grow further and arrange education for each and every needy child in Punjab. This would be our priority agenda. I am quite hopeful that the total number of beneficiaries of Punjab Education Foundation will be tripled in next three years. Presently, PEF is shouldering the education of more than 16 lakh needy students in 36 districts of Punjab; and I am most heartened to point out that almost half of them are females which is quite encouraging. This is no small achievement; rather a great change which is improving the lives of disadvantaged segments.

Q. How PEF is changing lives?
Ans. Ans. I would point out that PEF is changing lives of the disadvantaged communities by arranging free education of their children who cannot go to schools for want of resources. In some cases, it has been noticed that family traditions also discourage the education of girls. I feel most proud to claim that PEF has changed this scenario to a great extent. Now, the parents are not afraid about the exorbitant educational expenses as these are borne out by the Punjab Education Foundation. For this purpose, beneficial school education programs, in collaboration with the private sector, have been introduced. This pro bono initiative is helping the disadvantageous strata in educating their children.
I congratulate the PEF Communication Department on bringing out e-newsletter “The Hope.” I am quite sanguine that this year will accord further opportunities of free education to the needy students who cannot afford schooling on their own. I am an ardent supporter of education as it is a basic right of every child which develops nascent students as confident leaders of tomorrow. In this backdrop, PEF has emerged as a great facilitator for the needy students. It has filled the gap and encouraged the parents to send their children, especially the girls, to PEF partnering schools where educational expenditures are borne out by the foundation. In my opinion, PEF is harbingering a silent social revolution in shape of education-promotion. This is a great social service for all those who need it. Here, I would especially thank the Punjab Government for their all-out support to the PEF. It is because of the continuous support and encouragement of the Chief Minister Punjab Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif that the PEF is playing a leading role in achieving the goals of education sector reforms program in Punjab. As a result of that, we are funding the education of more than 1.66 million most deserving students through our partnering schools in Punjab. I hope the role played by the Punjab Education Foundation will not only devour ignorance and illiteracy but will also strengthen the education sector with its supportive role.
TETE-a-TETE with the PEF Board Members

Please tell us about your background and vision.

Ans. I have a diverse experience of different fields. Starting with MBBS from the King Edward Medical College, Lahore I then joined Civil Service of Pakistan as a DMG officer in 1985 and founded ‘Akhuwat’ in 2001, which is the pioneering interest free microfinance program in Pakistan. I have also authored six books and occasionally write columns in the newspapers. It gives me pleasure to mention that ‘Akhuwat’ Initiative has won world fame and recognition due to its unique vision. Meanwhile, President of Pakistan has honored me with Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 2010. I believe that education is a strong catalyst for changing lives of the deprived and it helps to alleviate poverty too. Meanwhile,

You are a PEF Board Member for the last many years; how it’s helping the needy students in their education.

Ans. I am most happy to witness the many phases of developments in the foundation as its Board Member. I have always encouraged launching educational endeavors which could open the golden gate of education to the underlings. PEF is giving free textbooks and monthly fee to partnering schools students. I am happy that PEF is playing a leading role in education sector reforms program of the Punjab government.

How PEF is promoting girls education?

Ans. Punjab Education Foundation is offering free education to the deserving girls in partnering schools which are often available in their localities. As Board Member, I have fully supported programs of free education for the needy girls. I am happy that half of the PEF beneficiaries are girls, which is a big contribution towards promotion of girls’ education at the grass roots.

As Board Member what is your vision of Punjab Education Foundation?

Ans. It is good to note that the Punjab Education Foundation has filled the necessary gap in the education sector and encouraged the deserving communities to send their children to schools. This is, by all means, a big service to society. I hope the disfranchised communities will continue to send their children to PEF partner schools for free education of these children. This would change lives of countless communities.
What in your opinion is the real importance of education?

Ans. I strongly believe that education is the strong agent of social change and development in the society. Education changes societies and encourages innovation and social developments which alter human lives. I am happy that PEF is doing all this. Another point which I am most sanguine to mention here is provision of equal opportunities to the needy. They now don’t need to go out in search of some connections for getting free education. Rather, PEF reaches out to them. This is a unique phenomenon in our society. Kudos to PEF.

How the vision of Chief Minister’s Shahbaz Sharif is bringing a social change?

Ans. There is no doubt that Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif has done a lot for the children. In fact, I would credit him as the Chief Education Minister of Punjab who is a ray of hope for hopeless. His efforts in the field of education are simply marvelous and unmatched. He is fully dedicated to the cause of education. Under his vision and leadership, we are working to promote school education. As PEF Board Member, I am playing my role in the promotion of free education in the deserving communities. I am quite hopeful that we will root out illiteracy from the province as it is the biggest bane behind every social evil.

How PEF is promoting education in the disfranchised communities?

Ans. I have been serving as Member BOD of Punjab Education Foundation for quite a long time. During this period, I have tried to play my role in the promotion of education so that our students could improve their lives through education. I am most happy that half of the PEF beneficiaries are girls. It is also heartening that PEF has given new confidence to the deserving communities through the education of their children. Now the girls have an opportunity to study in nearby PEF partner schools so they are also saved from the hassle of boarding public transport vehicles which could be quite burdensome for them. This is a small social change which PEF has introduced and I am hopeful that the coming days will further strengthen this process of social change.
Punjab Government Fully Supporting PEF’s Gratis Education

Chief Minister Punjab Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has fully supported the public private partnership model of Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) for extending the opportunities of free education to the children of disfranchised segments at the grassroots. He has also provided ample funds to extend the free education programs to the doorstep of the needy students. Due to the continuous patronage and support of the Punjab Government, PEF is playing a leading role in achieving the targets of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by promoting school education and enabling every child to study without any fear of expenditures.

Managing Director, Punjab Education Foundation (PEF), Dr. Aneela Salman stated this while addressing the certificates distribution ceremony at DCO Office Hall, Rawalpindi. The function was organized by the PEF in collaboration with Diya Pakistan and People first to award consolation certificates to position holder students of partner schools from the districts of Sargodha, Mianwali, Bhakkar, Chakwal, Gujrat and Khushab.

Addressing the function, MD said that PEF students, by taking top positions in the matric 2014 exams, have proved that they have great potential and can excel in life if provided the opportunities of quality education. She maintained that education is a key to success in the 21st century of continuous competition and only those nations will survive and lead the world who will arrange best education for their children. She expressed the satisfaction that girl students are showing great results in PEF partnering schools as girls makeup half of the 1.66 million PEF students.

The function was also addressed by Vice President Diya Pakistan, Iftikhar Hussain and representative of Dubai based HR firm, People first, Ms. Elena D. Clark who appreciated the good work of the foundation in the field of school education. Later, MD PEF and others distributed certificates among the students.
Condolence Meeting on Peshawar Carnage

A condolence meeting was held at the head office of Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) to condole the deaths of innocent students in Peshawar school tragedy as well as to show solidarity and sympathy with the bereaved families. The condolence meeting was largely attended by employees, heads of different departments and Deputy Managing Directors with PEF Managing Director Dr. Aneela Salman in the chair.

Expressing her views, MD PEF termed the Peshawar carnage as most barbaric and inhuman act. She said that whole nation is united and is firmly standing with the affected families in this moment of anguish and pain.

She condemned the killings in strongest words and said that Punjab Education Foundation fully shares the grief and sorrows of the affected families. She prayed to Almighty God to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and grant courage and solace to the parents and mothers to bear this irreparable loss with equanimity.

The meeting also prayed for the early recovery of the injured.
Qamar ul Islam Raja Elected as New PEF Chairman

Engineer Qamar ul Islam Raja has been elected as the new Chairman of Board of Directors of Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) in a meeting of Board of Directors which held at PEF head office.

Dr. Zafar Iqbal Qureshi presided over the meeting and presented the name of Mr. Qamar ul Islam as the new Chairman of PEF Board of Directors which was unanimously approved by the Board Members. On the occasion, different Board Members congratulated Mr. Qamar ul Islam and hoped that his chairmanship would further facilitate the deserving students in their education.

Later, presiding over the meeting, the new PEF Chairman vowed to continue the free educational drive of the foundation for extending this vital facility to more and more deserving children in the province. He said that PEF is a vibrant organization which is robustly pursuing the cause of free school education.

The meeting also lauded the services of outgoing Chairman Raja Muhammad Anwar and appreciated his untiring efforts for the growth and progress of PEF as CM’s flagship program to provide free education to children of poor and marginalized communities.

PEF Chairman Visit Regional Office

The Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) will arrange free school education of four million most deserving students through its partnering schools in the province during the current year. At present, PEF is shouldering the free education of 1.66 million needy students in 36 districts of Punjab through its private partners.

Chairman Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) Engineer Qamar ul Islam Raja disclosed this while presiding over a departmental meeting at regional office Multan. This was his maiden visit to PEF regional office after assuming the charge of the post of Chairman PEF.

He expressed the satisfaction that PEF is doing a wonderful job by arranging free school education of the needy in the province; adding that keeping in view the effectiveness of PEF’s public private partnership based models of free education, the same would be further expanded so that every needy students could study free of cost. He assured that all-out resources would be provided to ensure that every child could have equal access to the basic right of education. Punjab government is committed to ensure 100 percent literacy in the province as quality education is a key to progress and prosperity in the 21st century. Earlier, PEF Regional Director Shafiq Ahmad briefed the Chairman about role and responsibilities of the regional office in promoting school education in the southern districts through its private partners.
Christmas Cake Cutting Ceremony Held

A Christmas cake cutting ceremony was held at PEF head office on December 24 which was largely attended by high ups and other officers. On the occasion, the Christian members of the foundation were warmly felicitated on their sacred festival of Christmas.

CSA Probationers Visit PEF

A 13 member delegation of probationers of Civil Service Academy, Lahore paid a two-day visit to Punjab Education Foundation (PEF). On the occasion, the officers were briefed by the Managing Director Dr. Aneela Salman about various programs of free education and their socio-economic impacts on the lower echelon of the society. She told that PEF is playing a leading role in achieving the goals and objectives of Punjab School Education Reforms Program by arranging free education for 2.2 million out of school and dropout children in different districts. The delegation also visited two different PEF partner schools in Lahore and enquired the students and teachers about the quality of education.

Pre-QAT Concluded

The Punjab Education Foundation has completed pre Quality Assurance Test (Pre-QAT) drive for selecting new partners for Foundation Assisted School (FAS) program. A total of 1390 private schools appeared for partnership under expansion phase 9 of FAS program of free education. Under this program, PEF provides free text books as well as monthly fee @ Rs. 500 for elementary, Rs. 600 for matric (Arts) and Rs. 700 for matric (Science) to its FAS partners so that the deserving students could study free of cost. PEF also trains the school teachers for improving their capacity building.
Rs. 15 crore for 75 Cholistan community school buildings

Pakistan’s leading cellular company Ufone has provided one thousand school bags, water bottles and geometry boxes to the students of non-formal community schools in Cholistan area of Bahawalpur division. This material is provided under corporate social responsibility principles. These schools are situated in Cholistan for giving education to the local children who cannot go afar due to various reasons. In this regard, a colorful function was held at Chak 29/DRB in Cholistan to distribute bags to the students. The function was jointly attended by DCO Bahawalpur Imran Sikander Baloch and MD PEF Dr. Aneela Salman. Addressing the function, Managing Director Punjab Education Foundation (PEF), Dr. Aneela Salman told that PEF has adopted these schools, and now it is paying Rs. 450 per student to Cholistan Development Authority, while the textbooks have also been provided to the 5258 students. She said that educational partnership between PEF and CDA will greatly benefit the local students, especially the girls, who cannot go afar. She observed that promotion of education will catalyze the rapid socio-economic development in the area as well as creating more job opportunities for the educated youth. MD PEF further told that more schools will be opened in the Cholistan areas where needed, so that the local children could study in nearby schools.

District Coordination Officer Bahawalpur, Imran Sikandar Baloch stated that Government of the Punjab has allocated an amount of Rs. 15 crore for the construction of 75 school buildings in Cholistan. He told that these schools were setup under “Literate Cholistan Project” and now handed over to Punjab Education Foundation for providing free education to the local students. Under this scheme, besides construction of purpose-built school buildings, latest furniture and other necessary educational facilities, including clean drinking water, will be provided so that the students could study in conducive atmosphere and improve the quality of life through education. The function was also addressed by Ufone representative Wasiq who assured their full support to the cause of education. Later, DCO and MD PEF distributed school bags among the students. PEF Regional Directors Syed Naveed Abbas and Shafiq Ahmad, besides locals, were also present on the occasion.

Expansion Phase 6 of NSP Launched

The Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) has launched the expansion phase 6 of its New School Program (NSP). The purpose of this expansion is to extend the opportunity of free school education to more deserving students in different districts. According to details, 225 suitable sites for setting up partner schools under the NSP in different districts have been identified and offered to the intending partners to establish schools for giving free education to the needy students in partnership with the PEF. The prospective partners have been divided into ‘individual’ as well as in ‘NGOs’ category; NGOs are required to have running at least 50 schools, they must be registered along with five years relevant experience. The individual category requires that the person must be at least intermediate as well as a non PEF partner. The NSP is public private partnership based program of free school education for the needy students in remote and far-flung areas of the province. Under this program, PEF provides monthly fee and text books to the partnering schools students.
PEF Teachers Training Workshop Concluded at Ali Institute of Education

In line with the objectives of the national educational policy which calls for the standardization of the teachers for ensuring quality education at schools, Continuous Professional Development Program (CPDP) of the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) has launched a rigorous program of teachers training of partnering schools. The purpose of this program is to standardize the school teachers through their capacity building so that the partnering schools students could get best education.

In this regard, two different trainings, of two-days each, were arranged at Ali Institute of Education, Lahore by the PEF-CPDP department for the partnering schools working in the districts of Lahore, Kasur, Sheikhupura and Okara. 55 school teachers of 35 FAS and EVS partnering schools attended these workshops.

The participants were taught about different topics including action research, school management and child psychology so that they could better perform and deliver. PEF Director-CPDP Bushra Saeed Khan briefed the participants about the objectives of the workshops and asked them to learn new educational concepts to best deliver to their students.

Certificates giving ceremony was held at the conclusion of the workshops.

SBSP a Boon for Private Schools

A meeting of SBSP school partners was held at Regional Office Multan. PEF-Director (CPDP) Bushra Saeed khan chaired the meeting. 11 school partners from the southern region participated in the meeting.

The meeting reviewed in detail the performance of Subject Specialists provided to SBSP partners in these districts to teach the subjects of Science, Math and English. They also partake in the overall academic improvement of the schools. PEF Director Bushra expressed the satisfaction that SBSP program is helping the low-cost private schools to improve their educational level. In fact, SBSP has proved a great boon for the low-cost private schools who cannot afford highly qualified teaching faculty due to pecuniary constraints, she added. The school partners observed that the PEF Subject Specialists are wholly contributing in the academic improvement. Their presence has also benefited other teachers to improve their teaching capacity, they further observed.
PEF Partner School Student Won Essay Writing Competition

Nagina Rafiq, a Lahore based partner school student of Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) has won the essay-writing competition held under the aegis of Science Museum, Lahore to promote a culture of scientific thinking in the youth. She is enrolled in class 10th in a private school which is attached with the PEF under its Subject Based Support Program. PEF has provided Ms. Roohi Zia as Subject Specialist (Chemistry) to this school. The topic of the essay was, “what are the impediments in the progress of Pakistan.” A colorful function was held in the auditorium of Science Museum, Lahore to award prizes among the winners including students as well as general public.

The function was presided over by Ms. Naheed Gul Baloch, Additional Secretary, MPDD who gave away prizes to the winners. She asked the students to work hard to excel in their life. Earlier, Director, Science Museum, Najma Chattah presented her address of welcome.

PEF Inclusive Education Project to Help Children with Special Needs

The Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) is working on a three pronged-strategy to fully introduce inclusive education in its partner schools so that the children with special needs could amicably study side by side with the normal students and thus grow in life as a normal human being through education.

PEF Continuous Professional Development Program (CPDP) has held meetings in Lahore, Multan and Rawalpindi to discuss the issue of inclusive education with the school partners. It has also designed and prepared training modules of head teachers while the two-day long pivot training plan has also been chalked out which will be introduced from March this year.

Further, 1991 students with special needs have been identified in 597 schools partnering under Foundation Assisted School (FAS) program situated in different districts of the province.

It is expected that the learning skills of all such children will be improved through formal schooling with the normal children.
Our Little Stars Shine Everywhere

PEF Communication Department is performing multitude of activities to sensitize general public as well as the stakeholders about vision and performance of the public private partnership based models of free education. Besides dealing with Print and Electronic Media for promotion of PEF image, various social media site are optimally utilized for the projection of Punjab Education Foundation.

It has also projected the efforts of PEF shining stars so that other students could emulate them and get positive inspirations.

It is important to note that the DFID has highlighted a PEF shining star namely Faryal Ali, hailing from Bhakkar, at its official website to showcase the good work of PEF.

It is hoped that this projection will attract more parents to send their children to PEF partner schools.

Faryal is one of nearly 650,000 girls attending low-cost private schools in Punjab and getting a free education through the Punjab Education Foundation (PEF), which is supported by UK aid from the Department for International Development.
Orientation Session Held
An orientation session for private schools partnering under evening program of Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) was held at PEF head office. Principals and owners of different partnering schools attended the briefing session.

On the occasion, participants were briefed about different aspects of the pilot project of giving free education to the child laborers and maidservants in the evening.

Under this project, such hapless children are provided free school education in the PEF partnering institutions in the evening so that they could change their life through education.

Annual Report get wider attraction in the Stakeholders
Meanwhile, PEF Finance Department also publishes Annual Report every year to give a detail of expenditure on different programs. This Annual Report is sent to different stakeholders for their information.

Audit Reports Term PEF as Transparent, Prudent
The Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) has been termed as the most transparent organization with full financial control mechanism in place by the audit reports of three different bodies for the financial year ending June 30, 2014. Finance Committee of the Board of Directors of Punjab Education Foundation has also approved the audit reports.

Three different types of audits, including governmental, external as well as internal audit by a reputed firm, are held every financial year. It is worthy to note that all the three audits have been held successfully for the financial year 2013-14 and the respective audit reports have termed PEF as most transparent and prudent organization.
SIS Training Workshop at Regional Office Multan for EVS Partners

A training workshop was held at PEF regional office Multan to train the EVS school partners in the southern region about using innovative student information system (SIS) software for electronically recording students’ data. PEF Deputy Director (IT) Muzaffar Iqbal briefed the participants about using this software. PEF Regional Director Multan Shafiq Ahmad also addressed the participants and talked about various measures taken for the provision of quality education to the students in partnering schools.
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