Five Years of Education Reforms

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

Wins, losses and challenges for 2018-2023
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2013-2018
Five years of education reforms
KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA
Wins, losses and challenges for the future
2018-2023

by
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WHY PROVINCIAL PROFILES, AND WHAT THEY ENTAIL
1.1 Framing the debate in 2018

Pakistanis are scheduled to elect a new government later this year. The intensity and frequency of political debate is going to lead to full throttle election campaigns by all major political parties. An election presents a potent opportunity for the country to establish its priorities and create a framework to measure the performance of taxpayer-funded politicians and bureaucrats.

Democracy is inextricably tied to the idea of accountability. It empowers citizens, as clients under the social contract to hold elected leaders accountable against certain promises, commitments, and demands. The coming election debates in Pakistan will establish the parameters of expectations for governance and service-delivery in the country from 2018 to 2023. What should these expectations be in particularly integral domains, such as school education?

Despite significant strides in the right direction, the country’s education landscape entails very little that Pakistanis can be proud of. According to the most recent official national statistics, there are over 22 million children out of school, the majority of whom are girls. This estimate is alarming on its own. However, what is even more worrying is the quality of education that children who are enrolled in school receive. From the very limited data that government produces in terms of learning outcomes, it is clear that Pakistani children are not being equipped with the cognitive skills they need to succeed individually, for their families, for their communities, for their neighbourhoods, cities and villages, and for the country at large. Across the country and across both the private and the public domain, very little learning takes place in Pakistani schools.

The proposition in the previously published reports for Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab as well as for this document is simple. It is reasonable to expect universal enrolment. It is reasonable to expect high quality teaching in government schools. It is reasonable to expect that the products of the Pakistani education system can be empowered to change their own lives, change the lives of their families and communities, and change their country—all for the better. Since education is principally a service delivery area that is the domain of the provinces, these expectations must be framed for each province. This document represents such an effort for the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

1.2 Policy complexity and simple metrics

The provision of education is a political issue, as much as it is a technical one. But how does political contestation influence the quality of education that Pakistani children receive?

Politicians influence almost every aspect of education service delivery. They decide how much money is to be allocated to education, they decide what processes are to be followed in hiring teachers, they decide where schools are needed, of what level, and what kind. The decisions politicians take today are not binary: schools are being closed, and merged, new schools are being opened. Some of these schools are ordinary government schools, some are “superschools” some are being opened by non-government entities, some by religious
organisations, and some by profit-making entities. Schools are being handed over to non-profit organisations because governments cannot seem to fix them, and schools are being shut down where there are not enough students. Yet government itself acknowledges millions of out of school children, millions of dropouts and astoundingly poor learning outcomes.

1.3 Beyond competition between provinces

In this complex environment, simplicity is important but difficult to find. Alif Ailaan’s most recent District Education Rankings (DER) report was published in December 2017. The report’s primary purpose is to provoke debate about the provision of education using widely agreed metrics in infrastructure and education quality. The rankings highlight some long-standing trends in education, including

- The disproportionate provision of primary schools, compared to middle and high schools
- The retention crisis, as manifest in high levels of dropouts between primary and middle schools, informed by the relatively low supply of middle and beyond middle schools
- The imbalance in the supply of schools for boys versus the number of schools for girls at the primary, middle and high school levels

The DER also generated significant debate among political leaders, and provincial department representatives as they compare the performances of provinces relative to each other.

Channelling the DER, the objective of this document is to provide a deeper understanding of province specific successes, challenges and opportunities in education, and prompt a wider recognition of the disparities within rather than between provinces. This report seeks to identify reforms attempted during the current government’s terms in office, take stock of the overall situation in the province, using province-specific data, which in some cases is not available nationally, but only for specific provinces, highlight the changes needed to take advantage of opportunities created by reforms, and frame an agenda for the future.

1.4 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s unique challenge

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s schools have suffered both from neglect and from the concerted attacks on schools across various parts of the province. Education at large has been a domain for severe political contestation between ordinary Pakistanis and violent extremists—perhaps best symbolised by the attempt to assassinate young education activist Malala Yousafzai in 2012, and the savage attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar in 2014. Yet the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have consistently sought schools that offer a quality education to their children.

This demand for education has constantly been compromised by both historical neglect, and by the very specific circumstances in the province. No treatment of the context in which education is offered to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s children can be complete without taking into account the impact of migration. The province has been host to at least three million displaced people from Afghanistan since the 1980s, and has had to deal with the internal displacement of millions in various waves since 2005, including substantial movement.
within the province, from Swat, to Swabi, Mardan and the rest of the province in 2009, and from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), at various occasions, perhaps most significantly from North Waziristan to Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Hangu, Lakki Marwat, and Tank in 2014. There has also been a substantial migration out of Peshawar from among the elite and educated upper middle class, to other urban centres of the country, most notably Islamabad and Karachi—throughout the past decade and a half.

The costs of this displacement have been two fold. The first is the pressure under which the government’s education resources have been. This downward pressure has rarely, if ever, been acknowledged in terms of province-level policy instruments to deal with it. The second is the depletion of the stock of high end human resources in the province, which has, anecdotally, had an impact on the quality of teachers available to the province at large, and to elite private schools in particular. On the whole, education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and in FATA has suffered like few other places across Pakistan. Whilst this document does not cover FATA, there is virtual consensus that whatever crisis in education that exists across Pakistan, or in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is but a small sliver of the crisis that FATA’s children have endured. Despite all this, the people of both the province and FATA have consistently sought schools that offer a quality education to their children.

Governments since 2008 have sought to address the demand for education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through a series of reforms. The current government that took power in the province in 2013 has made substantial efforts to provide schools with key inputs, including improved school facilities and infrastructure, increased budgetary allocations, and a new generation of teachers recruited through a merit-based process.

An analysis of education sector indicators demonstrates significant movement in the right direction. This report recognises this and attempts to engage in a treatment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa given its unique context. This context is marked with significant progress towards improving education provision, as well as unique challenges that merit specifically tailored analysis taking stock of the gains, while identifying what needs to be done to adequately build on what has been achieved.

We identify challenges and enduring gaps whilst acknowledging meaningful progress that needs to quickly evolve and grow, in order to address the mammoth needs of the province.

Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017 has shown that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has moved up the index and now leads the provision of infrastructure at the primary level across all the provinces in Pakistan; however, at the middle school level Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is at the second spot after the Punjab. Similarly, on the education score and beyond primary readiness score index Khyber Pakhtunkhwa lags behind the Punjab, Islamabad Capital Territory and Gilgit-Baltistan. The reforms introduced during the current tenure have had some success in identifying closed schools, in recruiting teachers on the basis of merit and reducing teacher absenteeism in government schools through accountability mechanisms and in partially addressing the issue of better spending by popularising the role of PTCs. Yet, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continues to suffer from an education system that is unable to produce high learning outcomes among its students; especially in that of maths and science.

This document aims to contextualise the challenges faced in the provision of education across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and summarise successes in education reform over the last five years. In the coming five years, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa may have a generational opportunity to ensure that all children have access to high quality education. This document attempts to frame how this opportunity may be utilised.
Education reform in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
Periodically developed and published, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa education sector plans are umbrella documents designed to inform, steer and then oversee the government’s priorities and approach towards education sector reform in the province.

It is hence important to refer to the government’s priority areas and approaches outlined in the last two sector plans relevant to the last 5 years (2013-2018)

2.1 Education Sector Plan 2010-11 to 2015-16

The Education Sector Plan 2010-11 to 2015-16 was conceived to be a working document and a guideline for the preparation of the Annual Development Programme as well as a monitoring and evaluation tool to measure progress in the sector during the five year period. The targets set in this document were in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education for All (EFA) targets of 2015 as stated by the Elementary and Secondary Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, looking at the progress on the achieved targets, it is apparent that the plan was more ambitious and less practical given the scale of the challenge faced by the province especially right after the 18th constitutional amendment (which devolved education to the provinces) was passed.

The plan highlighted key strategic areas of focus which included:
- Increasing enrolment
- Improving quality
- Improving infrastructure
- Non-formal education and community schools
- Improved governance
- Private sector participation in education
- Financing education

2.2 Education Sector Plan 2015-16 to 2019-20

The Education Sector Plan 2015-16 to 2019-20 builds on the experience of the previous plan in two ways. First, it has adopted much of the foundational work that has already been done. This includes an extensive situational analysis of the education sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and working statistical model for inputs. Second, it identifies key obstacles over the past few years in delivering high quality education and employs lessons learnt from previous experiences to sharpen the focus of objectives. The government’s effort to transition from an exclusive focus on inputs delivery to ensuring inclusive access to education and institutional reform is very visible in how the document reads and the objectives and priorities it identifies.

The challenges identified in the education sector plan point to an approach aimed at addressing the lingering structural deficiencies in the education delivery apparatus of the state. While addressing structural inadequacies of the system may not yield visible output level changes in the immediate term, they are fundamental in ensuring a sustained pace of improvement in medium and long terms. The challenges outlined in the sector plan are listed below:
- Weaknesses in data and information management
- Weaknesses in budgeting and financial management
### Limited capacity to deliver across the department

- Politicisation of employees
- The geography and social fabric of the province

Accounting for the aforementioned challenges, the plan identifies the following priority areas of focus:

- Redevelop approach to selecting and training new teachers
- Redevelop teaching cadre employment rules
- Establish a sustainable approach to the provision of facilities
- Launch new benefits aimed at children most at risk
- Scale up partnerships with the private sector
- Launch a draw down fund for use in emergency situations
- Test and update population estimate for school age population
- Develop district officials’ management skills
- Account for inflation while setting education budget

### 2.3 Summarising the Education Sector Plan into four themes

For the purpose of this document, we have synthesised the main focus areas of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa education sector plan into four key themes around education that ought to be used as instruments to adequately capture the expanse of the education landscape. Since this report focuses on school education, we do not include an assessment of higher education or adult literacy programmes – though both represent important areas of investment for provincial governments.

#### 1. Better government schools – According to the NEMIS estimates, around 80% of all the schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are public schools. Similarly, around 75% of all the students enrolled at the primary to higher secondary levels in the province attend government schools. Therefore, the future of most of the children in the province continues to be at the mercy of the government school that they are, or could be attending. One of the major reform areas, possible in a short period of time, and to scale is more accessible, better quality government schools. Government schools continue to offer the clearest path for education reform which can change the lives of the children from the least privileged and most vulnerable households in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

#### 2. Better quality of education – The education challenge being faced by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the rest of Pakistan is not confined to the issue of access alone but rather to the availability of high quality learning. The province is facing a learning crisis as is demonstrated by the National Achievement Test 2016 scores conducted by NEAS; the children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa score below the national mean. Making sure that children receive the best possible education and are able to retain it in a way that benefits them academically and also in terms of developing cognitive skills for mobility later in life is arguably a much more complicated task than providing access.
3. Improved data regimes – Accurate, robust and timely data is a critical component of effective policymaking. Accurate and timely data not only facilitates evidence based policy interventions but also informs policy research that can steer policy making apparatuses in the right direction. With the formation of the Independent Monitoring Unit in the province, data driven monitoring of schools has been made possible. The School Management Information System is also being rolled out, phase-wise, for schools across the province. These initiatives offer unprecedented knowledge about the state of the education in the province tracking the schools, their infrastructure provisions, attendance rates and mobility of students across different schools.

4. More budget spent more effectively – Increases to the budget that do not translate into improved utilisation are practically an ineffective value to the resource. The district component of the education budget allocation since 2015 has been an important step in the direction of funds being available closer to the schools for better utilisation. However, the scale of the education challenge in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa calls for more resources to be allocated to the sector while ensuring that the money allocated is spent in the best manner possible.

In the following sections of this document, we attempt to highlight the positive steps taken to reform education provisions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and to frame the challenges that remain broadly within these four overarching thematic areas.
What changed for the better in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
3.1 Better government schools

As a matter of priority, the focus of reform by the government in the past five years has been to fix existing schools and their missing infrastructure before a bigger commitment towards building new schools can be put in place. There have been concerted efforts aimed at improving the state of schools in the province. During 2008-2013, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa saw damaging fallout from a dire security situation where schools were under attack. Despite these issues, radical improvements have been made in the coverage of physical facilities across schools and progress has been made in recruiting teachers, increasing attendance and instituting new development programs.

3.1.1 Improved Infrastructure and School Facilities

A substantial improvement in the provision of physical facilities in schools has taken place across the province over the last five years in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The improvement in the provision of basic facilities in primary schools has been especially dramatic over the last year.

Overall, based on Alif Ailaan’s composite school infrastructure assessment in its District Education Rankings 2017 report, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s overall score registered an increase from 66.18 to a remarkable 91.12 at the primary level between the years 2013 and 2016. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is at the top of the primary school infrastructure index across different provinces and territories and at the second spot in the middle school infrastructure index after the Punjab with a score of 89.25.

Under conditional grant schemes, missing facilities were identified across all the schools in the province. These facilities included additional classrooms, boundary walls, group latrines, water supplies, electrification and solar panels. During the past five years the government claims to have provided 83,000 missing facilities for around 24,000 schools. At their current projections, with the exception of additional classrooms, all missing facilities will be provided by the month of June of this year. The spending cap for each school is 3 million rupees. A total of 29.11 billion rupees have been spent so far in these schemes. The government has also spent Rs. 7 billion for the provision of furniture in schools since 2013.

In order to ensure that schools operate within sizable buildings, a policy decision has been taken where all new primary schools will have at least six rooms. For the 410 primary schools in progress under the new policy, 115 schools have been completed, potentially allowing for more than 200,000 additional students. 1,585 schools have been upgraded over the past five years (either have moved from being solely primary to middle or higher), with 843 new schools as well, and 480 nonfunctional schools were also revived in order to bettering the situation of the government schools in the province. The repair and reconstruction of militancy hit schools mainly in and around Peshawar was also completed for 700 out of 750 affected schools.

3.1.2 Area for play in schools and sports tournaments

Beyond filling missing facilities, the government has also concentrated on equipping the schools with an area for play to encourage healthier and active lifestyles. More than 5,000 schools (all High Secondary, High and Middle Schools) have been provided with sports kits since May...
What changed for the better in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

2013 with allocation of Rs 500 million and 180 sports grounds were developed.

In addition to this, this year the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa E&SE and Peshawar Zalmi Foundation (PZF) will begin a trophy competition league of eight regional teams of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In the first phase, the regional level tournament will be held from December 26 till 31 in Haripur district. The second phase of the school league will include all schools and districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that will participate and winners will be identified and trained by professional coaches and trainers.

3.1.3 Inclusion of technology and science initiative in schools

Before 2013, there were only 170 IT labs in high and higher schools across the province. Now this number has been increased to more than 1,340 IT labs. 100 interactive white boards have also been installed in schools in 14 Districts with a backup of solar panels.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ESED and Provincial IT Board are launching an early age programming course in the IT labs of KP government schools for class 7 to 9. The programme is in 60 government schools of 14 districts in the first phase. Under the programme, children will be taught fundamentals of information technology. The curriculum for this initiative is taken from early year MIT courseware teaching app development and C++ programming languages.
3.2 Improved learning outcomes

3.2.1 Improved Teaching

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa education department has sustained and deepened the concept of merit in the recruitment of teachers during the past few years by not just conducting the test through a third party, National Testing Service (NTS), but also school based recruitment of teachers to ensure rationalised deployment. Since 2013, around 40,000 teachers have been recruited through the NTS system and another 17,000 are currently being recruited.

In addition to the NTS testing, for the current cycle of recruitment drive, the requirement of teaching qualifications has been removed altogether. This has allowed for a large number of candidates to apply for the teaching positions making the hiring more competitive. Prior to this reform, recruitment prized professional qualifications which the government felt, through experience, did not actually add much value because of their spotty quality (such as the Primary Teacher Certificate, or Certified Teachers). For 17,000 vacancies, under the new system, it has attracted 700,000 applicants – making it 41 applicants for every position – with some very highly qualified persons applying. Moreover, a policy decision has also been made to recruit only female teachers for the vacant positions at the primary school levels.

To improve teacher training that this change has introduced, teachers now have to go through a mandatory six-month induction programme through a learning management system that is delivered on android tablets. This induction programme has an equity model in place that trains the teachers keeping in consideration the special needs of the students coming from different backgrounds, the most important of them all being the students having dyslexia. These teacher trainings are being regularised by the government using its own resources that presents a welcome and staggered series of trainings to teachers to improve their skill sets.

More than 65,000 teachers have been trained since 2013 with an allocation of Rs. 800 million for better student learning outcomes. Training sessions have been outsourced to multiple vendors and the government has an agreement in place with the British Council to train nearly 83,000 teachers of primary schools with a special focus on four subjects; english, mathematics, science and general knowledge.

3.2.2 Boards of intermediate and secondary education

There are eight matric and intermediate boards in the province operated by the government. Matric and intermediate assessments represent two critical dimensions in students’ academic journeys. Firstly, the assessment scores represent the culmination of school education – the output. At the same time, assessment scores indicate the input of talent being fed into the higher education
What changed for the better in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

system. Viewed from both angles, matric and intermediate board assessments are a critical component of the system.

There has been a consensus that the quality of assessments needs to be improved dramatically to ensure robust tracking and management of talent. The boards of intermediate and secondary education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa this year have tried to move away from the decades-old pattern of the examination papers that put exclusive focus on rote memorisation as opposed to gauging how well the students have internalised concepts. From 2018 onwards, the exam papers for both the matric as well as the intermediate classes will be set in order to assess the learning outcomes of the students in accordance with the spirit of the latest curriculum developed in 2006. Under the new paper setting, 50 percent will be comprehension, while application and knowledge would be 25 percent each. Now the paper makers will have to go through the content and develop questions by themselves instead of picking the questions from a set of selected questions given towards the end of each chapter in the textbooks. This will encourage both the students and the teachers to have an interactive learning experience in the classroom that can enable the students to focus on conceptual learning instead of rote learning.

3.2.3 Assessments at primary and middle level

In addition to the internal assessments that are conducted within the schools, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has recently made efforts to popularise the system of external assessments at the primary and middle level as well. This is important for the education department to gauge the learning outcomes of the students and in order to prepare policies accordingly. The department will conduct 5th & 8th class assessments in March 2018 in all government schools to assess learning outcomes of students to provide data points about the effectiveness of teaching. From next year onwards, students from all the private schools will also be participating in these mandatory assessments based on a question bank related to the Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) instead of rote memorisation.

3.3 Education Data and Statistics

3.3.1 Independent Monitoring Unit

In March 2013, the Independent Monitoring Unit was set up allowing for data driven monitoring of schools. Previously, the data on monitoring visits conducted by the monitoring officers was collected on paper and passed on to the department. This caused unnecessary delays and also increased the susceptibility of the data to human error. Now data collection happening with the help of cellular-data enabled tablets remit field information to a centralised repository within a matter of seconds.
The publically available online dashboard of IMU has limited yet important indicators such as teacher and student attendance and availability of physical facilities at the school level. This mechanism has helped policymakers and department principals to track performance through a wide range of indicators on a regular basis.

With this system in place, accountability has increased at all levels. Absenteeism decreased by 12-15% at the school level, and student attendance increased by 24%.

Around 300 teachers have been terminated due to absenteeism identified by the system, and a recovery of Rs. 200 million was made through IMU & Online Action Management system (OAMS) on account of the fines imposed on teachers. Up to 8,000 disciplinary action were taken against teachers through the OAMS has been implemented across the province for online actions against errant staff – the system automatically generates an action if inputs demonstrate actionable reprimands.

### 3.3.2 School Quality Management Initiative (SQMI)

The education department has launched the School Quality Management Initiative in schools across the province. The SQMI allows the Education Directorate to inspect the quality of teaching and learning processes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa schools with the use of technology that allows for scale. Based on a pilot, SQMI will be expanded all over Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

### 3.3.3 Student level data

For all high/higher secondary schools an allocation of Rs. 55 million has been earmarked for the development and rollout of a school level School Management Information System that will eventually be rolled out to all schools. Using this system, each school will be able to log details of every student enrolled, attending and dropped out, identified by a unique tagging number. Through this data, the education department will be in a position to track individual children, curb drop-outs and in the future look towards gaining insights into their learning.

### 3.3.4 District Performance Evaluation System (DPES)

Starting this year, provincial district rankings take place monthly on the basis of all the government schools in each district across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is based on various indicators including progress on ADP construction work, physical facilities, delivery of furniture, percentage student enrolment, percentage of students provided with textbooks and stipends, teaching and non teaching staff attendance, functional Parent Teacher Councils and learning outcomes at class 5 and class 10 level etc. The District Performance Evaluation System is expected to help the Education department keep track of the targets to be met on a regular basis both within a district as well as across the province; thereby timely highlighting the areas which are lagging behind and need special attention.
3.4 Increased and improved funding

According to the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, governments should spend at least 20% of their budgets for the betterment of the education systems each year. During the last five years, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the only province in Pakistan that has consistently allocated budgets much higher than this baseline by allocating amounts between 24% and 28% of the budget each year for the education sector.

From 2013-2014 till date the education budget has increased from Rs. 84.629 billion to Rs. 168.085 billion – an increase of about 61% - with 17% coming in the current fiscal year over the previous one. Budgetary allocation to education have also increased significantly over the past five years – from 2014 to 2018 there has been an increase in 43.08%. This is in line with the trend across all four provinces as a whole, which has seen cumulative countrywide spending on education double since 2013. However, in the overall picture of budgetary increases, the development component of the budget has shown a more mixed picture where the development component has both increased and decreased year on year.

Since 2015, more than half of the budget allocations for education are...
done through the district component. The increased allocation to the districts is a positive measure of increased devolution and autonomy to make the education system more responsive. However, the allocations under line transfers to districts need to be adequately reflected in the annual budget documents under specific budget heads to ensure robust tracking of expenditure.

### 3.4.1 School Specific Budgets

The education department has introduced school based budgeting to enable middle and primary schools at local level to prepare budgets and track expenditure incurred with first piloted in district Karak. The districts where this initiative will be operationalised during 2017-18 are Abbottabad, Bannu, Battagram,Charsadda, Chitral, Dera Ismail Khan, Nowshera and Swat. School based budgeting is based on education resource strategies that promote better planning and transparency at the school level. As the budgets are transferred directly to the school it helps aiming at a better utilisation of funds as well.
Key education challenges for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2018
4.1 The challenge of better spending

Since 2014, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s education budget has increased from Rs. 117.4 billion to Rs. 168 billion. While this increase has led to incremental improvements in physical infrastructure, teachers’ pay scales, and student enrolment, it is still insufficient to fully address these problems confronting the sector.

For example, the challenge of out of school children in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa across all three tiers of schooling, and the persistently high levels of student attrition due to a lack of schools or facilities cannot be met without adequate funding. Building more middle and high schools and ensuring that they are of good quality requires sustained political commitment for raising expenditure above its already high levels. More importantly, the manner in which funds are allocated and used, highlights the persistent public financial management challenge not only in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but across the country.

A dilapidated and dated regime of rules that are supposed to prevent abuse tend to often neither mitigate fiduciary risk, nor allow for quick spending on key areas. The result is the kind of utilisation figures that Pakistan has had. There is also a pressing need to ensure that allocated amounts are spent both comprehensively and efficiently to ensure that they do not lapse. It is also important to ensure that funds allocated for education and its related departments are not reallocated to other departments during the course of the fiscal year as was the case earlier this year. The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa made headlines in the news when it decided to seize Rs. 6 billion assets from the textbook boards. These reallocations of funds are expected to cause delays in the printing and provision of the textbooks to students in the government schools. Moreover, it is also expected to cause difficulty in meeting the regular operational and administrative expenditures of the textbook boards.

4.2 The challenge of better government schools

4.2.1 Out of School Children

According to the Pakistan Education Statistics 2015-2016, there are 2.5 million children out of school in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Out of these children, around 445,411 are those who should be attending primary school, and more than 2 million are those that are missing out on a middle, high or higher secondary school education.

Whilst the challenge of providing access to all children of primary school going age is yet to be resolved, the most significant test of the government’s resolve is to provide access to children between the ages of 10 and 16 years to middle, high, and higher secondary schools. However, there is a massive imbalance between the provision of primary and post primary schools across the province.

Girls are at a greater disadvantage with almost half of all the girls (51%) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa not attending the schools. This percentage of out of school rests at 23% for all the boys in the province. Even at the primary level, where of all
the boys in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa only 5% are out of school, more than a quarter of all the girls (26%) in the primary school age group are out of school.

In the absence of the complete operationalisation of the Private Schools Regulatory Authority, there is no definitive data to assess if the imbalance between school tiers is being addressed by the private sector provision. Even if it were, the question of equity would remain. People in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa living in the remote communities remain relatively isolated from the central areas such as Peshawar valley, and their capacity to fend for themselves in terms of a high quality education is certainly not comparable with wealthy residents of Islamabad, Lahore or Karachi.

4.2.2 Primary versus beyond primary schools

Currently, 9.76% and 8.13% of all schools are middle and high schools respectively. The gap is enormous considering that the right to education under article 25A of the constitution gives the right to education for all children from five to sixteen years of education. Currently, primary schools outnumber cumulative middle and high schools by a ratio of 4:1. The disparity in numbers means that students are forced to travel further from their homes to access schooling beyond the primary level. This has repeatedly been documented in education.

### Out of school children by age (in million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-16 years</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>4.10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Out of school children (percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary to Secondary (Class 1-12)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of Government Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
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<td>2014-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>22,822</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>22,624</td>
<td>22,411</td>
<td>22,411</td>
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</table>
4.2.3 Crisis of retention

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has seen slight progress in enrolment numbers at the primary level and a significant improvement at the high school levels if compared over the last five years. Between 2012 and 2017, enrolment in primary schools have increased by 4.54%, or an absolute number of 97,948 students. Similarly, for middle and high school it is 2.3% (17,309) and 26.96% (78,367) respectively. However, this increased enrolment at each respective tier is not accompanied by a similar rate of increase across all the levels of schooling. There is still a high rate of student attrition after primary schooling, with provincial retention rates – cumulative middle and high school enrolment expressed as a percentage of primary enrolment – at 41.09% as measured by Alif Ailaan’s District Education Rankings.

4.2.4 Crisis of girls’ education

In addition to the crisis of retention, of further concern is the continued gender gap in retention and enrolment at all three levels, which gains particular acuteness in middle and high school level.

In order to increase the retention of girls in the education system, incentives in the form of the Stipend to Girls has been
deployed, which is a Rs1.72 billion initiative to promote enrolment and retention in secondary government schools. Girls studying in classes 6 – 10 in government schools with 80% attendance are provided with stipends - Rs 2,400 per year for girls in 6 – 8 and Rs 6,000 per year for girls in 9 - 10. More than 4440,000 girls enrolled in classes 6 – 10 were provided with stipends under the Girls’ Stipend Programme (GSP) across 25 districts.

To reach out to remote districts, Girls Community Schools (GCS’) are funded in areas that do not have government primary schools. In 2010-13, 196 Schools for 13,651 girls were run which were then increased to 1,251 Schools for 43,220 girls in 2013-16: girls who were out of school across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were enrolled in these schools. So far, the ESEF has set up over 1,700 GCS’ with a total grant of Rs. 1.4 billion. 2,150 women living in rural communities who are now teachers of the GCS’. These schools provide education to over 99,000 students. Of these, more than 65% are girls.

In a national first, the Girls Cadet College in Mardan has been established at the cost of 3 billion rupees, the school has managed to attract girls from not just Khyber Pakhtunwa but across the country and will also serve as a destination for some of the government scholarship schemes in the province.

Despite these initiatives over the last few years, the gap between the enrolment numbers of girls with that of boys has remained almost constant each year. Therefore, this may be seen as an indication to provide a seamless mechanism to expand opportunities for females to retain in the system.

### 4.3 The challenge of improved learning outcomes

The challenge of improving learning outcomes of students enrolled in schools across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs emergent attention. Data on educational achievement is not as highly developed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as in Sindh or Punjab, although that is due to change from 2018 with the introduction of assessment at the 5th and 8th class level.

The scores achieved by children of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the tests conducted by NEAS are disappointingly low, indicating the distance that is yet to be covered in way of ensuring quality
education and learning. Students at both class 4 and class 8 levels in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa scored below the scaled mean score of 500 out of a total of 1000 in the National Achievement Test 2016. This indicates that children who do progress from the primary to the middle school tier are not being provided the environment to learn. In both class 4 and class 8 level, the gap between the ability to read and write is obvious by students achieving less than 455 scores in both Urdu and English writing exams which necessitates a refocusing of teaching.

Findings from NEAS provide an evidence that stagnating enrolment rates and low retention at higher tiers of school is linked to both lack of student achievement in class, as well as the wider perception of low quality of schooling. The value of attending government schools is only possible by improving the quality of instruction and raising overall levels of learning in the classroom.

4.3.1 Crisis of Seniority in Teaching

Accountability of agents hired as employees of the system is carried out in a linear fashion in the private sector. Parents who pay fees to have their children educated act as principals overseeing how well a teacher is performing, how often they attend school, how well the headmaster is managing the affairs.
of the schools etc. One of the major criticisms of government schooling is that government systems do not allow for any such effective accountability mechanism.

For any education system to afford its students with the maximum opportunities to learn and excel, teachers are the most critical stakeholders. A key issue that must be tackled to produce a meritocracy within the teaching profession is whether teachers’ promotions should be based on seniority alone. The archaic manner of promoting teachers based solely on their years of service sucks the motivation out from among teachers who are recruited on merit and are looking for ways to climb the hierarchical ladder based on their good performance. Another consequence of the current promotion structure is that almost invariably, the most “junior” teachers are allocated to lower classes and as they become “senior” with years, they are moved to higher classes.

Any substantial improvements to the system of education, and to the quality of education imparted, requires teachers to be provided with more opportunities to grow based on their performance. Another important aspect of this component is ensuring that teachers are equipped with both subject specific skills as well as pedagogical standards. In order for the system to have a sustainable supply of skilled talent, the government needs to undertake some very foundational reforms to the teacher training centers such as Provincial Institute for Teacher Education (PITE) across the province to make them more effective nurseries of teachers.

4.3.2 Challenge of Content

Along with assessments and teachers, the content that is taught to students in schools is a critical component of quality. It is important to note that there is a clear distinction between curriculum and content. In Pakistan, conversations among non-governmental policy circles are often focused on curriculum. It should be noted that the curriculum is defined by basic standards and guidelines. The more pressing challenge for policymakers, and one that can be addressed on immediate footing is that of content. Content essentially means what the textbooks taught in school entail.

One issue that needs urgent attention is ascertaining whether the content published in textbooks does justice to existing curriculum standards and guidelines. The textbooks published by the government should be invaluable instruments at the service of teachers whose responsibility it is to make students learn and understand different topics for different subjects as per the curriculum standards. The first step in improving the quality of content taught to children is to issue contracts for textbooks on a competitive basis overseen by a technical committee formed by the government. This will be a critical first step towards allowing children and teachers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the access to modern and sophisticated instruments of learning that they deserve.

Secondly, the medium of instruction is closely linked to the delivery of the content. Both the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have shifted their medium of instruction to English. They have done this because of the preference that parents have anecdotally expressed in choosing private schools because of this difference, and a desire to have students to be competitive globally. Starting from class 1, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government introduced the content of the textbooks in English three years ago. Each subsequent year, the textbooks for the next class were translated and now the content being taught in government schools up to class 4 level is in English. However, for such a radical
change it is imperative to know of the efficacy of the policy. How have teachers coped with such a change, to what extent are they complying in instruction, and how has it affected pupils in learning is important to assess in such a system wide change.

4.4 Wide intra-provincial disparities

Among the key challenges faced by all provinces in Pakistan is that of coherence, consistency and integration across the various districts in the province. Intra-provincial or inter-district differences are substantial and they have the potential to reinforce socio-political grievances and other problems of both real and perceived distributional justice across the province. The devolution of education to the provinces under the 18th amendment was meant to ensure the provinces are autonomous in making financial and administrative decisions. It was also meant as a requisite structural shift for effective management of education at the district level by “empowered” provincial headquarters. This should have led to provincial machineries ensuring an adequate focus in the districts that required them the most. Quality education provision is among the most important equaliser in any society and hence it is critical for the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to examine the trends where some districts lag behind others across different indicators. It is imperative that the provinces have the intent, the plans and the resources to address these gaps. The following sub-sections provide rankings of districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa across a range of different metrics.

4.4.1 Primary school infrastructure score

Alif Ailaan’s District Education Rankings 2017 contain four indices for districts from all over the country. The primary school infrastructure index ranked all districts in the country based on cumulative scores on availability of satisfactory building, drinking water, electricity, boundary walls and toilets in schools. For this index, nine out of the top ten districts in the country are from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The table below shows all districts from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with provincial and national ranks for reference.
Key education challenges for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial Rank</th>
<th>National Rank</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Province/Territory</th>
<th>School Infrastructure Score</th>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Building Condition</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The focus of the government on fixing missing facilities at existing schools are showing results. So much so that the inequity found in the range of education ranking scores in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is not as wide as the range between the highest and lowest school infrastructure rankings in the other provinces. However, the districts of Kohistan, Torghar and Shangla require special focus by the government.
4.4.2 Middle School Infrastructure Score

Pakistan District Education Rankings 2017 also include an index for middle school infrastructure using the availability of the same indicators in middle schools to calculate district scores. The table below ranks all districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in addition to providing a column for national ranks for each district as a reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial Rank</th>
<th>National Rank</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Province/ Territory</th>
<th>School Infrastructure Score</th>
<th>Availability</th>
<th>Building Condition Satisfactory</th>
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<td>59</td>
<td>Shangla</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>84.93</td>
<td>79.71</td>
<td>65.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Mansehra</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>84.62</td>
<td>65.05</td>
<td>80.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Batagram</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>78.75</td>
<td>58.33</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Torghar</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Malakand and protected areas and Swabi are ranked at the top two spots in not just Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but also across the country as well. Batagram, Torghar and Kohistan are at the bottom three ranks in middle school infrastructure.

### 4.4.3 Education score

The education score index included in the district education rankings 2017 was comprised of measures for learning score, retention score and gender parity score. The learning score was calculated using findings from ASER 2016 report, whereas retention scores was calculated using the proportion of middle school enrolment as a proportion of primary school enrolment and high school enrolment as a proportion of middle school enrolment for each district. The gender parity score was calculated by taking out the proportion of girls and boys enrolment and retention between levels for girls and boys. The table below shows the scores and ranks for districts from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
### Provincial Rank National Rank District Province/Region Education Score Learning Score Retention Score Gender Parity Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial Rank</th>
<th>National Rank</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Province/Region</th>
<th>Education Score</th>
<th>Learning Score</th>
<th>Retention Score</th>
<th>Gender Parity Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Charsadda</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>55.95</td>
<td>46.48</td>
<td>40.99</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>Swat</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>47.61</td>
<td>34.92</td>
<td>76.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>Hangu</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>51.66</td>
<td>58.43</td>
<td>35.02</td>
<td>61.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>Karak</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>27.51</td>
<td>45.98</td>
<td>80.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>Lakki Marwat</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>50.91</td>
<td>42.13</td>
<td>46.56</td>
<td>64.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>99</td>
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<td>KP</td>
<td>50.56</td>
<td>27.81</td>
<td>41.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>Upper Dir</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>46.24</td>
<td>40.61</td>
<td>33.26</td>
<td>64.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Buner</td>
<td>KP</td>
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<td>29.54</td>
<td>36.38</td>
<td>64.89</td>
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<tr>
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<td>130</td>
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<td>KP</td>
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<td>42.08</td>
<td>32.21</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>KP</td>
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<td>49.51</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>35.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>Kohistan</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>20.67</td>
<td>11.47</td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>32.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The District Education Rankings demonstrate that there is considerable inequity within the province regarding schooling. The 25 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on a national level districts are ranked from being the 1st in the nation, to 141st. The education rankings in the province are from a high of 81.62 to a shockingly low 20.67 (with only 24% of districts having a score of above 60). Gender parity scores between districts exist from a high of 91.19 to a low of 32.67. Where a definitive problem exists across all districts is in retention, which is in the highest range to 55.36 to a low of 17.76.

Haripur, Abbotabad and Mansehra are the top districts in the province whereas Upper Dir, Buner, Shangla, Torgar and Kohistan are at the bottom of the table. The challenge in the province is to prioritise the worst performing districts whose scores are significantly below those of the upper quintiles.

### 4.4.4 Beyond primary readiness score index

The beyond primary readiness index of the DER 2017 is meant to capture the imbalance between primary and above primary schools available to students as well as the infrastructural health of middle schools in each district.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provincial Rank</th>
<th>National Rank</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Province/Region</th>
<th>Beyond primary readiness score</th>
<th>Above-primary to primary ratio</th>
<th>School Infrastructure Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Malakand and Protected Area</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>62.67</td>
<td>26.96</td>
<td>98.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Swabi</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>61.73</td>
<td>26.01</td>
<td>97.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Nowshera</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>61.37</td>
<td>29.02</td>
<td>93.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Buner</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>61.28</td>
<td>29.14</td>
<td>93.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Haripur</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>61.17</td>
<td>30.32</td>
<td>92.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Kohat</td>
<td>KP</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Chitral</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>61.08</td>
<td>27.63</td>
<td>94.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Peshawar</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>60.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Charsadda</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>58.85</td>
<td>23.81</td>
<td>93.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Bannu</td>
<td>KP</td>
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<td>22.92</td>
<td>93.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Lower Dir</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>58.22</td>
<td>25.51</td>
<td>90.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Hangu</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>57.55</td>
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<td>91.76</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Swat</td>
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<td>57.47</td>
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<td>93.92</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Mardan</td>
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<td>57.45</td>
<td>27.53</td>
<td>87.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Lakki Marwat</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>57.25</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Dera Ismail Khan</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Karak</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>55.93</td>
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<td>55.71</td>
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<td>89.26</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>102</td>
<td>Kohistan</td>
<td>KP</td>
<td>38.74</td>
<td>14.15</td>
<td>63.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are two pieces of legislation in the province that can help frame a better future for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s children. The first is the Free and Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act meant to address the absence of universal enrolment, and it includes punitive measures for parents that fail to enrol their children. While this Act requires extensive investment in planning and allocation of financial resources, it does provide an essential fillip to the province’s struggle to ensure universal enrolment. The second is the already enacted Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Private Schools Regulatory Authority Act 2017. This Act can be an important instrument to expand enrolment and improve quality across all schools, but the government needs to exercise caution and ensure that it does not overregulate the system in terms of compromising the private system’s ability to continue to delivering quality education.

The intra-provincial statistics regarding the performance of districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa show a considerable lack of achievement in some districts, notably Battagram, Buner, Shangla, Kohistan, Torgarh and Upper Dir. Perhaps this will require the provincial government to treat them as special districts that are provided with attention that is substantially more than the general education sector plan. Such measures are inescapable if every child of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is to be provided an equal chance of getting a high-quality education.

The gains made since 2013 are not permanent, and without sustained efforts, a sharper focus and even stronger political will, these gains may suffer being erased. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s schools require a singular emphasis on improved learning outcomes—and this means a renewed commitment to measuring quality, a dramatic improvement in assessments, and the framing of public policy that is committed to the cognitive and non-cognitive skills of the children of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This section proposes a few key areas of attention that should guide the government’s reform efforts over the next five years.

### 5.1 Improved quantum, efficiency and governance of education spending

#### 5.1.1 Bringing out of school children to schools

The main thrust of reform between 2013 and 2018 has been to fix the existing school system rather than expanding it significantly. This consolidation of efforts makes sense in the first phase of the reform process which is to fix and upgrade what already exists. However, efforts to enroll children out of school need as big a concentrated push that can now be taken advantage of with the roll out of the EMIS and Out of School children survey. The government must focus on all means that will help dramatically increase enrolment in middle and high schools, especially for girls.

One key instrument that may serve government to achieve universal enrolment is the Elementary Education Foundation (EEF), and a rapid expansion of its role and capacity as was the case with the Sindh Education Foundation (with half a million children) and Punjab Education Foundation (with 2.5 million children), may serve to reach out to out of school children across the province, quickly and efficiently.
Given that the cohort of out of school children is bigger for post primary groups, it will be harder to get them into school given their unique and difficult circumstances. Therefore, the reform push must also include an expansion of accelerated literacy programmes and community based schools that the government is already running.

5.1.2 Provision of middle and high schools

The limited number of schools at the middle, high and higher secondary levels is a critical reason for dismal retention rates. Currently 82% of all schools are primary schools. If, and when, quality increases in concert with retention, students will hit a glass ceiling. Children will either be prevented from accessing middle and high school education because of an absence of schools, or their middle and high school education will be compromised by dramatically worsening student-teacher ratios (as enrolment rises to accommodate new entrants). The next half decade requires that the education system significantly expand on the provision of middle schools immediately, and high schools in the longer run. During this expansion phase, a particular emphasis needs to be on schools for girls, as well as transportation facilities and other measures to enable girls’ access to middle and high school, and to engender greater confidence among communities that their children—girls and boys—are safe and secure whilst going to, attending and coming home from school.

5.1.3 Expansion of school level budgeting

The current devolution of budgeting and expense tracking for both salary and non-salary level at the primary and middle school level needs to expand from its pilot phase and expansion in nine planned districts to all districts within the province. In combination with the EMIS, the potential to both assess school level efficiencies and those aggregated for both districts and the province will provide rich data about non-academic performance and give schools greater flexibility in deciding how to use and prioritise resources. Government must expand the space for schools to make determinations about the best use of resources allocated to them.

5.2 Learning outcomes in public and private schools

Increased enrolment and retention in the absence of learning merits scrutiny of education policy. Public sector investment in education need to be, at their core, about the skills that the system is imparting to children to deal with the future. As classrooms become better, more teachers are inducted and missing facilities are provided to more children in the classroom, it will be imperative that enrolment and retention lead to actual learning.

5.2.1 Primary assessment

Primary education is too important a base to be assessed insufficiently. Many experts believe that a grade 5 (Class V) assessment is too late a juncture at which to measure the skills primary schools should be imparting. The government must explore adequate responses to criticism of a grade 5 (Class V) assessment as being too late. Additionally, programmes currently being piloted and expanded by the government in areas like information technology and coding need to be assessed for learning outcomes if
gains from them are to be consolidated.

5.2.2 Supporting maths and science learning in schools

It is further proposed that going forward, learning outcomes in maths and science need to be given due importance. Existing data shows a low learning baseline in these two domains in addition to English and Urdu writing; a state of affairs which cannot be allowed to continue given the critical importance of these two subjects in developing human capital, and consequently, its link to the overall agenda of development.

Evidence also suggests that improvement in quality of learning in these two subjects, as well as of teaching, cannot only be linked to the teacher’s competence but also to environmental factors. Science fairs, festivals and melas, development of local content and delivery mechanisms that excite children in and outside school, and sustained fiscal support for maths and science needs to be institutionalised across the province through the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ESE department.

5.3 Developing a comprehensive and transparent data regime

The importance of analysis and use of data for evidence-based policy and decision making cannot be neglected. In order to do that efficiently, disaggregated data for better targeting of specific groups and directing of resources in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is important. The current IMU data is partially publically available, some data cannot be easily accessed or downloaded for further analysis. The media in the province have used the IMU significantly in their reporting, and used it as means of spot checking data with the actual condition of schools. However, the need for the IMU to be more transparent is significant if it is to serve not just as a means of accountability for schools to the government, but also as a means for accountability of the government to its people. Furthermore, data from the current 5th and 8th class board examinations need to be similarly made available in a detailed fashion online so it can truly serve as a health check on the status of the education department’s performance and initiatives. Similarly, the out of school census conducted by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government needs to be made public as soon as possible with a commitment on the periodic regularisation of the same.

5.4 Improved human resource management

5.4.1 Effective means of teachers’ recruitment and trainings

The current type of large scale recruitment being conducted by the education department through NTS is an organisational response to the need to hire large number of teachers in a fashion that reduces the amount of “human discretion” in hiring. It seems to have largely succeeded in making the process and transparent and above board, however, the department needs to consider if this will always be the best form of recruitment. The absence of other means like presentations or writing ability, to assess potential teachers, need to be incorporated so that there is a multidimensional evaluation of
potential teachers outside of just a written test and their educational background.

More than 40,000 teachers have been recruited through NTS merit-based recruitment processes in the province so far and another 17,000 are being recruited on need basis at the school level. Taking into account the population growth in addition to the current trends of increasing enrolment numbers, the number of teachers required in the system is around 60,000.

Moreover, the teachers training system in the province is orthodox and the new pilots were attempted only in few districts whereas the actual ambition of the government should be to create a specialised body with a mandate, board, budgets and ambitious targets to put in place a teachers training model that can address the needs of the future of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

5.4.2 Accountability, career planning and management for teachers

The current data regime implemented through the IMU and its OAMS is holding teachers accountable for absenteeism and service violations fairly effectively with some good results. However, teachers have not been dismissed or significantly penalised for being poor or delivering low quality teaching. Creating information systems have helped tackle some endemic problems of ghost schools, ghost teachers, meddling in recruitment – but the primary measure of accountability: quality teaching, needs to be further strengthened in a fashion that sifts the worst of the teaching force who compromise child learning. Both the SQMI and 5th and 8th class exams need to be able to ultimately inform the performance management of individual teachers, and the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa needs to legislate to create cover for what could be a contentious form of improvement in the system.

**Merit based recruitment needs to be followed up with lifelong career planning and management.** The challenges linked to the career paths of the current as well as the newly recruited teachers, need to be addressed at the sectoral level. In addition to that, special focus needs to be given to formulating effective policies in order to retain the talent thus gathered through the competitive recruitment processes.

5.4.3 Aligning the management structures with the current educational needs

At the districts level, a correct evaluation of the working of management structures at district and local level vis a vis local government systems should be made with a view to ensure the following three aspects of the district structures: attract quality human resources, should be able to ward off any local level political influence in teachers’ management and should have an adequate capacity to initiate schemes and resource them.

At the provincial level, in addition to the information coming in from the districts the government needs to examine how the management structures at the provincial level can service the 21st century educational needs of the province and explore whether there is any way of professionalizing them over time.

5.5 Focus on children with special needs

It is further proposed that going forward, learning The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has already created a programme for mainstreaming teaching for dyslexic students (in a study of
15 government schools an estimated 7.8% were thought to be dyslexic) – however there needs to be a much broader push for the inclusion of children with disabilities into regular schools and incorporate special needs education within the content of existing teacher training and induction programmes. Article 25A has been increasingly discussed nationally as education is now seen with more urgency than has previously been done over the past several decades. However persons with special needs are held back because of their invisibility on account of the lack of accessible places, and that is especially true of children and schools. This needs to change. An important step moving forward is to bring the children with special needs under the ambit of the education department. Currently, there is a lack of ownership based on the fact that they are under the social welfare department which also poses a challenge of capacity.