

**Navigating Educational Change: A SWOT Analysis of Punjab's Public Schools  
Reorganization Program (PSRP)**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The paper is about the Public Schools Reorganization Program (PSRP) proposed by the Government of Punjab, Pakistan, as a far-reaching educational reform agenda project, which attempts to increase efficiency, equity, and learning in government schools. In order to assess both internal and external factors of PSRP, the study uses the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to assess the overall impact and sustainability of the activities carried out by the organization. A mixed-method research design comprising qualitative and quantitative approaches was adopted, upon which 15 education administrators and head teachers were interviewed qualitatively, after which the survey was done on 300 teachers in 5 districts of Punjab qualitatively using a quantitative survey. They were analyzed using thematic analysis for the qualitative data and statistical analysis for the quantitative data. Results indicated that the administrative performance, accountability, and resource use had great strengths. Program effectiveness, however, was compromised by weaknesses of inconsistent implementation, lack of training in teachers, and involvement of the stakeholders. There were prospects of technological integration and community involvement, and compliance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On the other hand, the threats comprised political instabilities, economic constraints, and citizens' doubts towards government-initiated change. The paper concluded that even though PSRP had the promise of transformation in the education system of Punjab, its implementation requires a long-term policy commitment, a participatory approach, and active monitoring. The results are relevant to the discussion of evidence-based reform evaluation and have implications for policymakers and practitioners who may be involved in educational restructuring in developing situations.*

**Keywords:** SWOT Analysis, Public Schools Reorganization Program (PSRP), Educational Reform, Punjab, Primary Schools

**INTRODUCTION**

It is a well-known fact that education is globally recognized as a pillar of social progress, the development of human capital, and national growth. In Pakistan and especially Punjab, which is the most populated province in the country, education reform has been the most popular government policy in the last twenty years. Nevertheless, in spite of all efforts, the state education system still has to cope with such long-term problems as low enrollment, inefficient infrastructure, teacher turnover, and ineffective administration systems. The issues have required structural changes aimed at improving the quality of education, access, and the optimal use of resources.

One of the most ambitious efforts of the government to eliminate such systemic inefficiencies was the Public Schools Reorganization Program (PSRP) initiated by the Punjab School Education Department in 2018. The PSRP, which was modelled based on the previous Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PESRP), is designed to rationalize and group under-enrolled schools under government control into larger school complexes better equipped in terms of resources. This clustering model aims at enhancing the effectiveness of management, rationalization of teachers and enhancing learning outcomes throughout the province. The reform complies with the promises of Pakistan on Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) that promotes inclusive and equitable provision of quality education and lifelong learning to everyone (Lewis et al., 2021).

Nonetheless, the PSRP has received both positive and negative reception among educators, administrators and communities because of its noble intentions. Although proponents of the policy claim that consolidation leads to increased efficiency and quality, opponents point out the possible adverse effects of school merger, in particular, on the students who live in rural areas and women who have to travel further and have fewer opportunities to attend local schools (Aslam & Kingdon, 2011). Also, there is the fear that there is no proper consultation with the stakeholders, the teacher preparation gap, and the lack of local implementation strategies. All these aspects make the systematic and evidence-based assessment of the PSRP necessary.

The current paper is structured in terms of a SWOT analysis in order to take into consideration both the internal (strengths and weaknesses) and the external environment (opportunities and threats) of the PSRP. The SWOT approach, which is popular in the field of educational management and policy analysis, offers an analytical prism of strategic mechanisms that determine the success or failure of a program (Helms & Nixon, 2010).

### **Research Questions**

The following critical questions will be the focal point in this study: utilizing a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data:

- What are the main strong and weak aspects of PSRP among the stakeholders?
- What are the external opportunities and threats to the sustainability of the program?
- What effect have PSRP had on school management, teacher performance, and student learning outcomes?

This study is relevant to both policy and practice. It provided empirical information that allows the policy makers to refine reform design and implementation, helps the administrators to refine local management practices and is also used in scholarly discourse of the effectiveness of educational reforms in developing settings. Finally, the research produced practical recommendations to contribute to the sustainable and fair positive change in the Punjab education system of higher education.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Since the early 2000s, the sector of education in Punjab has gone through several reforming waves. The Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PESRP) was initiated in 2003 with the financial assistance of the World Bank, aimed at decentralizing the school management system, increasing teacher accountability, and improving the infrastructure (World Bank, 2016). PESRP recorded a slight improvement in the areas of enrollment, school infrastructures, but there were insufficient gains in the areas of quality, governance, and resource distribution (Qayyum et al., 2020).

The launch of PSRP in 2018 represented a change of strategy as a structural reorganization instead of the gradual changes. PSRP tried to eliminate inefficiencies in teacher allocation, resource duplication, and administration fragmentation by consolidating under-enrolled schools into single clusters (Government of Punjab, 2018). The same reforms have been applied to other countries around the world; examples include India, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and Kenya, the Free Primary Education (Oketch and Somerset, 2010), which is a wider international trend towards institutional consolidation as an efficiency and accountability-enhancing strategy.

The PSRP was projected to bring schools that are geographically near together into school complexes with one principal. The reform will see maximum utilization of resources, enhance administrative control and have fair teacher-student ratios. It focuses on efficiency by ensuring improved monitoring, integration of technology, and involvement of locals through School Management Committees (SMCs). Nevertheless, such factors as insufficient infrastructure, opposition of teachers, and poor training remain (Raza et al., 2021).

Although the policy aligns with international best practices (OECD, 2018; UNICEF, 2019), it faces contextual challenges rooted in Pakistan's socio-political and economic environment. SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) is a strategy planning instrument that has become very flexible in application across sectors, and education is not an exception (Pickton and Wright, 1998). SWOT is also useful in the field of educational reform to analyze in-house competencies and external forces that influence the implementation of the programs (Chermack, 2011). The framework also supports participatory evaluation by using the stakeholders to establish enablers and barriers to reform success.

In Pakistan, there are not many studies that have employed the SWOT to analyze the education policies. In their work, (Arif et al., 2022) conducted a SWOT analysis of the provided early childhood education programs when the systemic deficiencies of the provided resources and teacher training were detected. On the same note, (Wamalwa et al., 2019) in Kenya and Mukherjee and Das (2018) in India established the suitability of SWOT for the evaluation of school governance reforms. Using this method towards PSRP makes it possible to systematically comprehend the dynamics of its operation and the sustainability of its operations.

Educational change theories offer an introductory understanding of the operation of structural reforms such as PSRP. Systems Theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968) considers education to be a system that is connected in such a way that a change in one subsystem influences another; the clustering approach of PSRP is similar to this concept since it attempts to find consistency between administration, teaching and community participation. Organizational Theory (Burns & Stalker, 1961) (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998) accentuates the adaptive management structures that are applicable in local settings- an aspect which PSRP has suffered because of centralized decision making. According to the Model of Educational Change by (Fullan, 2007), capacity-building and involvement of the stakeholders are important to the success of the PSRP. The Equity-Focused Reform Models (Ladson-Billings, 2006) where the policymakers need to be reminded that the consolidation undertakings should not be used to marginalise the rural and female students. These theoretical foundations also explain why SWOT analysis is worth taking into consideration to be able to describe the intricate interaction of structural, social, and political forces to determine the outcomes of PSRP.

School consolidation policy has mixed evidence around the globe. In the US, (Howley et al., 2011) discovered that the merger usually saved money but also diminished the community and student involvement. It was reported in India by (Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2010) that school clustering initiatives were only successful when the local participation was considered important. In Pakistan, (Jamil, 2020) found that the barriers to the sustainability of reforms were administrative resistance and poor

governance. Taken together, these studies point to the duality of educational restructuring- it may bring efficiency, yet it may create social and operational tension because it is not contextually based.

Although the scale and importance of the PSRP are huge, there are limited empirical studies on the results of the program. The current government reports are more administrative development-oriented as opposed to the stakeholder perception or the impact of education. This gap restricts knowledge on the strengths, weaknesses and sustainability of the program. The current study fills this gap, as it uses a SWOT-based mixed-method that provides a comprehensive assessment of the teacher's attitudes, statistical data, and theoretical information.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The research design was an exploratory sequential mixed method design, which entailed both qualitative and quantitative research designs with the aim of having a comprehensive knowledge of the Public Schools Reorganization Program (PSRP). The qualitative mode investigated the experiences of the stakeholders and their perceptions through the interviews, and the quantitative mode quantified the rate of such opinions by a structured survey. The design allowed the researcher to triangulate information and confirm results through all types of data (Ishtiaq, 2019).

### **Population and Sampling**

The sample included teachers at the public primary schools, head teachers, and administrators of the selected districts in Punjab, Pakistan. It was based on the active participation of the five districts in PSRP and their geographical diversity; the five districts comprised Sargodha, Khushab, Mianwali, Bhakkar and Chiniot. A multi-stage stratified random sampling technique was applied so that different administrative regions and types of schools were represented. Quantitative sample was comprised of 320 teachers, and qualitative part entailed 15 people (12 females and 3 men) identified using purposive sampling according to their involvement in the PSRP. This combination made it possible to have depth (qualitative) and breadth (quantitative) of analysis.

### **Research Instruments**

Two primary instruments were developed. The semi-structured interview protocol was developed for the qualitative phase to explore teachers' and administrators' experiences, challenges, and recommendations related to PSRP. The Likert-Scale questionnaire was developed for the quantitative phase, consisting of 33 items distributed across five dimensions, including Strengths (8 items), Weaknesses (7 items), Opportunities (5 items), Threats (6 items), and Impacts (7 items). The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

### **Validity and Reliability**

Expert validity was ensured through a review by seven university faculty members specializing in education policy and management. Their feedback and suggestions were incorporated into the interview protocol and the questionnaire.

Clarity and relevance were tested in a pilot study with three teachers in the qualitative sample and 40 teachers in the quantitative sample. Cronbach's Alpha was used to establish reliability; thus, the coefficient of 0.816 for the overall tool fell within the acceptable range. However, Cronbach's Alpha values for strengths were found to be 0.801, followed by weaknesses 0.796, opportunities 0.842, threats

0.837, and impacts 0.786, respectively. was determined to be strong internal consistency (George and Mallery, 2019).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The data were gathered through online and face-to-face methods. The quantitative data were collected through a Google form and printed questionnaires, while interviews were conducted by the researcher to collect the qualitative data. Ethical issues like informed consent, confidentiality and voluntary participation were followed rigorously. It was observed that 20 responses were discarded due to incomplete information; therefore, 300 responses were selected for data analysis.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The themes were interpreted as qualitative data using the six-step model proposed by (Braun & Clarke, 2006) familiarization, coding, theme identification, reviewing, defining, and reporting. SPSS 27 was applied to analyze the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics consisted of means, frequencies, and standard deviations.

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The results of the SWOT analysis of PSRP demonstrated that there was a complicated interaction between the favorable institutional developments and the obstacle of structural issues. The findings are summarized in four segments as per SWOT.

### **Strengths**

Most of the respondents stated that PSRP increased school management and accountability. Key identified strengths include improved administrative efficiency for centralized leadership and streamlined decision-making, improved deployment of teachers to minimize unnecessary staffing in schools with low enrolment, infrastructural development to enhance the learning environments by new buildings that were renovated and enhanced by better facilities, and government support for implementation was reinforced by continual attention to policies and budgetary allocations.

The perceived strengths (mean score  $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 0.61$ ) were found to be high in the quantitative analysis, which indicated the overall positive sentiment. The interviews helped to support the idea that through administrative clustering, duplication of efforts was reduced, and monitoring was more efficient.

### **Weaknesses**

Irrespective of the improvements, PSRP was not effective due to several weaknesses, effective implementation (Regional differences gave way to unequal development in districts), poor training (According to teachers, workshops were too theoretical, urbanized and had no follow-up), lack of autonomy (School heads blamed the red tape of bureaucracy and too much central control), and poor dissemination (of updated policies and delayed feedback mechanisms) were identified by the participants.

The average score of weaknesses was not very high ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ). Having a look at qualitative responses, there was a lack of satisfaction with the red tape in the administration, as well as a lack of engagement with stakeholders.

### **Opportunities**

Stakeholders identified several potential areas, including technology integration (School Information System (SIS) has the potential to modernize the data management), public-private partnership



(cooperation with the NGOs and donor agencies might enhance funding and innovation), community involvement (SMCs are a source of participatory governance), and congruence with SDGs (The reform enables the congruence of Pakistan towards quality and fair education).

The average opportunity score ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 0.67$ ) demonstrates that the participants are optimistic. The digitization of school monitoring and performance tracking was the topic that teachers were particularly enthusiastic about.

### **Threats**

The threats that can destabilize the sustainability of PSRP, as pointed out by the respondents, include political instability (The instability in policies and changes of government threaten the continuity of programs), budgetary constraints (Education spending is less than 2% of GDP, which limits the scalability of the reform), cultural resistance (Rural communities tend to resist school merger particularly on the education of girls), and competition with the private schools (The fast development of the cheap private schools attracts students out of the state schools).

The average rating of threats ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 0.70$ ) is moderately concerning. The interview data indicated that there were fears that the reforms would be dragged without a steady funding source and bipartisan political support.

### **DISCUSSION**

The findings highlighted the two-sided nature of PSRP as a promising reform and a policy challenge. In line with other studies on the subject conducted at an international level (Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2011; Howley et al., 2011), the restructuring of schools in Punjab enhanced efficiency and accountability, yet also caused social opposition and logistical challenges.

The efficiency of the evidence-based planning and data-driven management is proven by the success of PSRP in rationalizing the deployment of teachers and upgrading the facilities (Helms & Nixon, 2010). The correspondence of SDG 4 and reform adds credibility to its global applicability.

The absence of systemic capacity-building in the education bureaucracy of Pakistan is manifested by the persistence of administrative rigidity and a lack of teacher capacity-building (Naviwala, 2016). The fact that teachers are not satisfied with the quality of training implies that professional development should be provided in the context of the constructivist approach, with the focus on pedagogical creativity and practical classroom competence (Fullan, 2007).

Potential areas are technology integration and participation governance. The monitoring and the allocation of resources could be improved with the help of improved use of the School Information System and platforms of digital training of teachers. Innovation and sustainability can be achieved through partnerships with NGOs and other private sectors, as suggested by UNESCO (2021).

Low education expenditure and political volatility are also major threats. In order to secure reforms against political interference, the setting up of bipartisan education agreements and independent monitoring organizations may help. Moreover, to overcome the socio-cultural resistance and especially in rural regions, culturally-focused communication and interaction with the local leaders is necessary (Shah et al., 2019).

When PSRP is compared to other similar international projects, it is important to note that local adaptation is crucial. The decentralized governance in India allowed consolidation reforms in schools to

work, whereas the centralized governance in PSRP has restricted the ownership of schools (Das et al., 2018). International experience can inform the changes in the future restructuring of education in Punjab.

## **CONCLUSION**

As can be seen in the SWOT analysis of PSRP, the reform has huge potential in the context of enhancing the situation in the area of public education in Punjab by providing administrative efficiency, equal distribution of resources, and responsibility among teachers. The discrepancies in implementation, lack of training and socio-political threats, however, hinder their full achievement. The results once again confirm that the balance between a top-down policy-making direction and bottom-up stakeholder involvement is the necessary criterion of sustainable educational reform.

The Public Schools Reorganization Program (PSRP) is not just an administrative program; it is rather a paradigm shift in the way public education is projected and presented in Punjab. The PSRP aims at transforming the schooling system by incorporating schools, differentiating resources, and creating accountability to co-exist and make the schooling system coherent and effective. However, the efficiency measures cannot be considered as the only metrics that contribute to evaluating the success of the reform, but its impact on enhancing equity, inclusivity, and sustainability in the quality of education is to be evaluated.

The SWOT analysis indicates that PSRP has been proven conceptually sound and remains aligned with the national education targets as well as international requirements such as SDG goals 4, yet political instability and the lack of stakeholder participation remain a bottleneck to its implementation. These reforms can not only be maintained by the presence of good policies but also a sense of a shared vision of change needs to be created and should permeate the whole system of education, including policy makers and administrators, teachers, parents and communities.

Lastly, PSRP may apply to the developing nations that may need education reforms amid social and political complexities. The ownership of reform should be local, contextually modified and monitored to make sure that the policy ideals translate into classroom outcomes. These findings of the study support that in the case of structural change being accompanied by human capacity, institutional trust and dedication to the learning equity, the actual educational change will prevail. The experience of Punjab with PSRP can thus be viewed as both a warning and a guide-example, as it demonstrates that reform without involvement will be brittle, but reform with involvement can result in long-term educational gains.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following were the recommendations of the study:

1. Institutionalize teacher development to implement continuous, needs-based professional training aligned with PSRP objectives.
2. Enhance monitoring and evaluation to strengthen the School Information System (SIS) for real-time feedback and data transparency.
3. Promote stakeholder participation to empower SMCs and local communities in planning, execution, and oversight.
4. Secure political sustainability of bipartisan education agreements needs to be put in place to ensure reforms are maintained over long-term periods.

5. Increasing funding for education spending should also be increased to at least 4 per cent of the GDP to cover infrastructure, staffing, and innovation.
6. Solve gender and equity inequalities to transport rural girls through the provision of transport facilities and localized schooling.
7. Conduct longitudinal studies for the evaluation of PSRP's impact on student learning outcomes.
8. Compare PSRP with similar programs in other provinces (e.g., Sindh or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).
9. Use multi-stakeholder analysis involving parents and students to have a wider perspective.
10. Get to know about digital transformation in the implementation of PSRP after 2025.

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