

Submission

Investment in the rights of the child in Pakistan

To the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights
By the Institute for Social Justice (ISJ) Pakistan¹(www.isj.org.pk)

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Introduction

This brief paper highlights the main challenges related to the mobilization, allocation and spending of resources for children. It also includes some other details. The paper is compiled on secondary sources that include reports by governments', non-governmental organizations and the media.

In 2009, the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its Concluding Observations and Recommendations against Pakistan's 3rd and 4th combined periodic report to the UNCRC welcomed Pakistan's pledge to increase allocation of resources for children especially in the field of health and education. The Committee however, had expressed serious concerns over extremely low budgetary allocations for children, which undermines Pakistan's "prospects of meeting its objectives to gradually raise allocations to education to 5 percent of GDP by 2010 and to increase annually the allocations to the health sector by 16 percent until satisfactory health services and prevention measures are accomplished".² The Committee also regretted over huge disparity in resource allocation, which served to hinder full and equal access to services and institutions to all children. In light of Article 4 of the UNCRC, the Committee recommended Pakistan to effectively increase budgetary allocations for all children with special considerations to refugee and internally displaced children, and children with disabilities. Moreover, the Committee asked Pakistan to initiate budget tracking from child-rights perspective with a view to monitor budget allocation for children. In addition to the above, the Committee urged Pakistan to strengthen the skills of district and/or local governments in preparation, planning and management of budgets that address the needs of children and families.³

The State of children in Pakistan

In Pakistan, children⁴ are about 48 percent of the total population⁵; however, these children are deprived of their most basic human rights like right to survival, education, health and protection, which are enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan and international treaties including the UNCRC to which Pakistan is a party⁶.

Pakistan stands third from the bottom among 193 countries in context of new born deaths⁷. Polio is still endemic in Pakistan. By October 2014, there were reported 187 highest cases of polio in Pakistan⁸. Pakistan is also behind in achieving its Education for All targets by year 2015⁹. Estimated 7 million children were not attending primary school in Pakistan including 60 percent of these were girls¹⁰. Pakistan was decreasing its spending on education that ranges between 2.6% to 2.3 % of GDP over the decade. Pakistan was ranked 113 out of 120 countries on the Education Development Index.¹¹ Child labour is on increase. ILO estimates that child labour in Pakistan has exceeded 12 million mark¹². Child sexual abuse is increasing every year. 1839 cases of cases of child sexual abuse were reported in 2008, 2012 in 2009 and 2595 cases in 2010¹³. In 2008-2009, 24,228 children from 10-14 years of age and 1,029,784 children between 15 to 19 years of age had been married¹⁴.

² OHCHR, Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009), *CRC/C/PAK/CO/3-4*; page 5-6

³ Ibid. page 5-6

⁴ Below 18 years of age

⁵ Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (2013), *The State of Pakistan's Children*; Islamabad; page 3

⁶ UNICEF (2012), *Situation Analysis of Children & Women in Pakistan*; page 14

⁷ Ibid. page 16

⁸ Stephanie March (2014), Polio cases in Pakistan expected to hit record high after continued militant attacks on vaccination teams in ABC News at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-10-03/polio-cases-in-pakistan-to-hit-record-high-officials/5787298>

⁹ Pakistan UPR Stakeholder Report: The state of children rights in Pakistan by the CRM Pakistan; page 3;

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (2013), *The State of Pakistan's Children*; Islamabad; page 66.

¹² Ibid. page 33

¹³ Pakistan UPR Stakeholder Report: The state of children rights in Pakistan by the CRM Pakistan; page 8

¹⁴ Ibid.

Pakistan falls into low human development ranks and its expenditure on health and education is lower than the poorest African countries which spend around 0.8 % of its GDP on health and 1.8% of its GDP on education¹⁵. Children are at higher risks of hunger and malnutrition. National Nutrition Survey 2011 reveals that 15.1% of under-five children are wasted, 43.6 % are stunted and 31.5% are underweight¹⁶. It also describes high percentage of anemia, 62.5%, that could solely be an alarming indication of weak child health status of the country¹⁷.

Above account of extreme child rights violations is greatly a result of Pakistan's failure to consider the Committees recommendations mainly those which are demanding for increasing budgetary allocations so that the relevant institutions could be established and other possible measures could be taken.

Budgetary allocations for children

Since child specific investments are scattered under various programs for primary education, elementary education, and tertiary health care and social welfare sectors. Therefore, it requires extra attempts to dig out the data relevant on children.

Table 1 shows that the child specific expenditure has increased over the years with few exceptions, i.e., the expenditure has almost tripled in three years. Sindh province has been spending the most on children as compared to other federating units of Pakistan. Sindh has launched special initiatives like establishment of Daar-ul-Atfal (children home or orphanage), establishment of Maternal Child Health centers, anti-malaria program etc.

Overall situation of budgetary allocations is not very encouraging because children specific allocation has been as low as 0.45 percent (in case of the federal government) and did not go higher than 14.45 percent (in case of Sindh government). The average share of children in government budgets is around 6 percent but children form more than 48 percent of Pakistan's population.

		2013-14	2012-13	2011-12	2010-11
Federal	Total budget	3,985,000	3,478,354	3,109,732	2,620,335
	Children budget	26969	31928	13865	19998
	%age	0.68	0.92	0.45	0.76
Punjab	Total budget	1,210,213	831,583	854,897	797,738
	Children budget	76194	30955	38124	33842
	%age	6.30	3.72	4.46	4.24
Sindh	Total budget	703,560	591,227	568,649	394,873
	Children budget	101654	83907	48032	6769
	%age	14.45	14.19	8.45%	1.71
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Total budget	344,000	297,072	260,142	143,827
	Children budget	86600	9335	11833	9406
	%age	25.17	3.14	4.55	6.54
Balochistan	Total budget	179,056	167,776	175,090	115,716
	Children budget	14476	15241	16079	13094

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. Page 3

¹⁷ Ibid

	%age	8.08	9.08	9.18	11.32
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Source: Budget Analysis from a child rights perspective by Child Rights Movement (2013)

Child Specific Budget as a percentage of total GDP and GNP

Being 44th largest economy of the world, Pakistan has an estimated gross domestic product (GDP) (nominal) of Pak rupees 23 trillion and Gross National Product (GNP) of Pak rupees 48 trillion in 2013-14. Table 2 highlights the situation and provides comparison between children as percentage of population and children receiving as a percentage of GDP and GNP.

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
GNP (Nominal)	46,206,000	46,200,700	46,991,000	48,682,676
GDP (Nominal)	15,002,500	19,173,700	22,657,600	23,952,320
Budget allocation on Children	71714	115673	173489	305893
% age of GDP	0.48	0.60	0.77	1.28
% age of GNP	0.16	0.25	0.37	0.63
Total Population	177.1	180.71	184.35	188.035*
Children Population	86.57	88.33	90.11	91.91*

*Projected Figures (using 2% growth rate)
Source: Budget Analysis from a child rights perspective by Child Rights Movement (2013)

Table 2 gives an idea that children were receiving much less from the governments as compared to their number in total population. However, given this situation, there is some hope with the private sector as well as district and town governments which are also investing in children but not included in this analysis. It is believed that the overall spending on children may be higher than the total budgetary allocations given in tables 1, 2 and 3.

A major chunk of government resources go into non-development activities such as Defence takes up to 15 percent of the federal resources as compared to children who received 0.44 percent of the federal resources in 2013-14.¹⁸

The Role of Foreign Aid: In Table 3, the first column in each year has details about total children specific allocation in that year. The second and third columns have details of foreign aid component in absolute terms and percentage terms.

	2013-14			2012-13			2011-12			2010-11		
	Total	Foreign Aid	%age	Total	Foreign Aid	%age	Total	Foreign Aid	%age	Total	Foreign Aid	%age
Federal	26969	478	1.77	31928	132	0.41	13865	524	3.78	19998	0	0.00
Punjab	76194	0	0.00	33078	27	0.08	25864	0	0.00	22447	480	2.14
Sindh	101,654	3,900	3.84	83907	50	0.06	48032	0	0.00	6769	42	0.62
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	86600	10,800	12.47	9335	9,030	96.73	11833	3,064	25.89	9406	903	9.60

¹⁸ Budget Analysis from a child rights perspective by Child Rights Movement (2013)

Balochistan	14476	492	3.40	15241	290	1.90	16079	483	3.00	13094	1,368	10.45
Source: Budget Analysis from a child rights perspective by Child Rights Movement (2013)												

Foreign assistance is highest in KP province. An analysis of the budget books related to Public Sector Development Program of KP reveals that KP was receiving foreign assistance from a number of donors like UNDP, NORAD, DFID, GIZ, ADB, USAID etc. These donors had aim of eradicating extremism in KP provinces through different initiatives.

In other provinces, foreign assistance in children specific projects is very nominal and comes in the range of 5 to 10 percent. A bulk of foreign assistance was being utilized in infrastructure projects like roads, canals and dams etc. but children were the least recipients of the foreign assistance.

Good practices

For the last five years there are witnessed child focused, health, education or social protection specific budgetary analysis by various agencies and organizations. Though, there are serious issues with these as far as advocacy is concerned but this is positive beginning in a right direction.

UNESCO in Pakistan has conducted situation analysis of education sector in Pakistan that also contains gaps analysis, and has proposed how much federal and provincial governments have to allocate in education sector for meeting MDGs. In 2013, Action Aid in Pakistan had also produced a paper on public financing of primary education in Pakistan. It estimates gaps and the future cost to meet the primary education goals/targets of MDG/EFA. It focuses on Sindh and Balochistan provinces. For the last four years, Save the Children in Pakistan in partnership with local NGOs and networks have been conducting budget analysis from a child rights perspectives that includes national, provincial and in some cases district levels analysis. PILDAT NGO has also been playing important role in budget reforms for many years.

Above mentioned (some of those not mentioned here) have created an environment of civil society's interests in budget making process and brining budget reforms in Pakistan.

Apart from civil society initiatives, the Standing Committee in the National Assembly of Pakistan has gained power of securitizing ministerial budget proposals before these become part of the federal budget.¹⁹

Challenges in investing for children

Issues in budget making process: The major problem is with Pakistan's budget making process²⁰ which is led by the executives or bureaucrats but estimates of expenditures and revenues are prepared by different departments, whereas policy priorities are set by the ministries or divisions. Budget proposals are drawn up by the departments led by their Finance department/division. The elected houses (such as national and provincial assemblies and senate) review the budget proposals, but hardly make any changes in it and approve it indifferently.

In this whole process as parliamentarians do not take part, so is the role of civil society. These do not try to access and attend parliamentary sessions, and provide their feedback,²¹ except a few articles in newspapers.

¹⁹ PILDAT (2013) Background Paper: Parliamentary Budget Reforms in Pakistan at http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/budget/ParliamentaryBudgetReformsinPakistan_Feb2013.pdf

²⁰ Starts with financial year on 1st July and ends on 30th June

²¹ Action Aid, et al; *Working Paper: Economic Literacy & Budget Analysis Group [ELBAG] Pakistan*

All parties in the parliament do not make organized attempts to be part of the budget debate. They do take part when budget the budget speech is made in the National Assembly, but before it details of the Budget Statement are kept undisclosed. Opposition parties including members of the party in the government have neither skills nor motivations to take part in the budget debates and provide alternatives to the house. In result of this, the budget process has become “ritualistic formality, during which parliamentarians use the budget debate to highlight constituency issues or matters of a general nature.”²²

Since budget documents are kept confidential, therefore, participation of civil society in the budget making process and during investment of budgets is extremely low or not possible. Under the PSDP, big projects “are initiated under political considerations without properly looking into the merits and demerits of such projects. In many cases projects are initiated without preparation of their feasibility reports”. Major decisions related to budgetary allocations and decisions on trade policy, investment, industry agriculture etc are made by the Cabinet. Though the parliament is the supreme body; even decisions taken by the parliament are also modified by the Cabinet. There is seen no involvement/participation of civil society organizations in the budget making process.²³

Transparency and public participation: Pakistan is amongst “those countries which provide some information about the budget cycle and process, which does not give room to have ‘an informed budget debate’, which implies that in Pakistan there is little budget transparency. The element of budget transparency also reflects from publishing specific budget documents at different stages of budget cycle which are Pre-Budget Statement, Executive Budget Proposal, Enacted Budget, Citizens Budget, In-Year Reports, Mid-Year Review, Year-End Report and Audit Report. Pakistan publishes the Pre-Budget Statement but that is used merely for internal use; the Executive Budget Proposal, Enacted Budget, In-Year Reports, Year-End Report and Audit Report are published and accessible to the public. Pakistan does not publish Citizens Budget and Mid-Year Review reports. Pakistan started publishing In-Year Reports, End-Year Report and Audit Reports in 2010.”

Pakistan is weak and poor in public budgeting at federal, provincial and district levels. The executives which include the Federal Ministry of Finance, Federal Government Cabinet, Provincial Governments’ Cabinets, Finance and Planning Departments, do not formally engaged with the public during the budget making process. These executives do not share the budget and the process of formulating and executing it to the public. In the budget making, neither feedback from the public is gathered nor any mechanism in this regard. Hardly the Ministry of Finance or legislative committee holds public hearings on the individual budgets of central government administrative units (i.e. ministries, departments and agencies).²⁴

Child specific budget headings: In 2000, the Chart of Accounts and New Accounting Model issued by the Auditor General of Pakistan which do not have ‘children related expenditure’ as a separate accounting entity. Therefore, children specific expenses are not counted. This thing enables civil society to dig out and analyze child specific budgetary allocations. But this analysis is only possible by thorough sieving of the budget documents of the federal and provincial governments. Many child rights specific initiatives remain disconnected from the mainstream and hardly known to the public.²⁵

<http://pdi.org.pk/reports/Working%20Paper,%20Economic%20Literacy%20and%20Budget%20Analyses%20Group%20Pa.pdf>

²² PILDAT (2013) Background Paper: Parliamentary Budget Reforms in Pakistan at http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/budget/ParliamentaryBudgetReformsinPakistan_Feb2013.pdf

²³ Action Aid, et al; *Working Paper: Economic Literacy & Budget Analysis Group [ELBAG] Pakistan*

<http://pdi.org.pk/reports/Working%20Paper,%20Economic%20Literacy%20and%20Budget%20Analyses%20Group%20Pa.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.isj.org.pk/pakistan-and-open-budget-survey-2012-by-the-obp/>

²⁵ Budget Analysis from a child rights perspective by Child Rights Movement (2013)

Pakistan and the Committee: Pakistan has hardly given any considerations to the Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendations when budgets were/are prepared. By and large it is believed that there is no return from children if governments invest in them. Generally, children are neither priority area for political parties (mainly those which come in power) nor considered as a unit of allocation in the state/government's budgeting system. Therefore, children are not a sector of development in the Public Sector Development Program (PDSP) or a unit of expenditure in the current budget. It is only through a thorough sieving of the budget books and PSDP documents that one is able to find some child specific interventions by governments and departments.

Other challenges

Every year, there goes an unspent budget but governments do not spend on construction of schools, basic health units and children hospitals. In addition to that, in order to calculate per child focused budget, there are no exact figures of children between 5 to 18 years so to calculate this all the children under the age of 18 years are taken. Since after 1998, there is no demographic survey, which could help to know exact number of children of different age groups.

There are many areas in which usually budgets are one-liner such as probation and jails departments cannot differentiate/divide money spent on children and adults; this situation does not help to know or assess the exact situation/allocation for children and how much more needed for the future to meet minimum standards of care and protection of children in these places. There is the same dilemma when we talk about orphanages, children/babies with women prisoners, child protection centers. Budgets for these places are usually part of the one-liner-budget of their relevant departments.

Though there is serious issue of low budgetary allocations but there is lack of effective and strong advocacy on the issue; though for producing budgetary analysis has become a permanent feature but it requires a permanent program of engagement with government officials and parliamentarians. Every year, many NGOs and INGOs in Pakistan fulfill their formalities of conducting budget analysis from child rights, health, education or social protection perspective; but there is hardly an advocacy for increasing budgetary allocations for children; every year activity based initiatives are taken by NGOs-INGOs. These usually print reports and organize only consultations, and wait for the next so that these could retake the same exercise.

Not only the government but private firms, NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies are pouring money in children in different fields (such health, education and social protection) and at different levels, i.e. federal, provincial and district. But these details have never been made part of budget analysis reports, since these are not available to public. Therefore, this has remained a dilemma with the government and civil society that they have never been able to provide exact details of investment on children in different sections.

These analyses have only focused on budgetary allocations but there have not been efforts for budget tracking, to see if these allocations were utilized or not. Most of the budget analyses do not address or cover the issue of financial gaps in different sections within education, health, social protection.

Recommendation

Pakistan should respect and own recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child which are related to budgetary allocations.