

## **Functionalization of Closed Schools of Province of Sindh, Pakistan : A Reform Strategy**

**Wasim Qazi, M. H. Qazi, Khalid Jamil Rawat, Imran Qureshi,  
and Madiha Rehman**

### **Abstract**

Universalization of education has always been a challenge for the government of Pakistan, both at national and provincial levels. The Department of Education, Government of Sindh, has taken many initiatives to meet the basic requirements of the universalization of education in the province of Sindh. One such initiative was to gather information on the number of closed schools and to form a strategy to address the issue. The findings of the study reflect that there are 6034 schools which are dysfunctional. Out of a total of 6034 closed schools, each category of closed schools has to receive different strategic treatment. This paper presents a plan to be implemented in three phases for those schools which can be reclaimed. However, 1371 schools are ones which have been closed since 2001. For these schools it is suggested that this should be ignored.

### **Introduction**

Pakistan is an underdeveloped country. One of the reasons for this is its low literacy rate and poor educational facilities. The education sector faces many problems. All provincial governments have always given importance to the educational needs of the people. The government of Pakistan as well as the government of Sindh realize their obligation to improve educational standards and the availability of education to the common man. The National Education Policy of 1998-2010 (1998) states that by year 2010 the Government wants to raise gross enrollment at the primary level to 105%. The most vital problem hindering the universalization of basic education, faced by the Education Department, Government of Sindh is closed schools. Closed schools mean those schools that are dysfunctional and exist on paper only in the record of the

Sindh government. This issue has persisted for long in Sindh. According to National Education Census 2005 of Sindh 7,442 are found non-functional (NEC, 2006).

These schools are closed either because of the non-availability of teachers, or low or no enrollment, or non-availability of buildings, etc. The Government of Sindh wants to resolve all the problems (SDSP, 2007) and to initiate the process. Several attempts have been made to obtain accurate data on the exact number of closed schools and to take proper remedial measures for eliminating the non-functionality of these schools. Unfortunately, those attempts did not yield fruitful results. This issue has become a concern for all the policy makers, as it is a very perplexing situation and requires immediate treatment. To address the issue of closed schools, the need for a census was felt from all quarters for more informed policy formulation, decision-making, efficiency, effective reforms, and quality of education, and above all functionalization of closed schools.

The Reform Support Unit (RSU) of the Department of Education and Literacy, Government of Sindh, with the help of SEMIS, started work on this issue with the following objectives:

- a. Collating information on the exact number of closed schools in the province
- b. Finding reasons for the closure of schools in various districts of Sindh, and
- c. Developing recommendations on how reforms can be initiated for the purpose of making the schools functional.

The present paper is the analysis of the documents of two reports of the field surveys of SEMIS, conducted separately in the years 2004 and 2006. The purpose of this document analysis is the verification of available data on closed schools and in-depth analysis of the reasons contributing to the closure of these schools.

### **Methodology:**

To accomplish the aforesaid objectives of RSU, and to collect relevant data on this issue, the following strategy was adopted:

- a. Preparation of a comprehensive plan for verification of the closed schools and for eliciting the reasons of the closure of schools from the stakeholders, vis-à-