

# STATUS OF EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

# 1

CHAPTER 1

*“The Constitution of Pakistan has placed the responsibility for basic education on the State.”*

Social Development in Pakistan, 2002-03



# STATUS OF EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

**T**he Constitution of Pakistan has placed the responsibility for basic education on the State. This obligation is reflected in the principles of policy in Article 37, which declares:

"The State shall:

- (a) Promote, with special care, the educational and economic interests of backward classes or areas.
- (b) Remove illiteracy and provide free and compulsory secondary education within minimum possible period."

Various governments have, over the years, formulated an assortment of policies and plans to fulfill the constitutional commitment of providing education to the people and removing inequalities. Success has been limited, though, with the result that the current state of education in Pakistan is deplorable. Education in Pakistan has suffered from a myriad of issues, as reflected by various educational indicators including low levels of public spending, literacy and enrolments, high levels of dropout from the schooling system, acute regional and gender inequalities, and inequities in the distribution of budgetary allocations to education.

Both demand and supply factors explain this state of affairs. On the demand side, poverty and illiteracy appear to be significant factors adversely affecting household decisions to send children to school. On the supply side, high population growth rates and lack of sufficient financial commitment has caused illiteracy to rise. There have been commendable efforts in the private and non-government sectors, but the scale of these efforts has not been sufficient to make a difference to the aggregate situation. Clearly, there is no alternative to public education, which is the focus of this Review.

## EDUCATION AND LITERACY: WHERE DOES PAKISTAN STAND?

**P**akistan has been placed at the 144<sup>th</sup> position out of 175 countries in terms of the Human Development Index. In other words, Pakistan ranks among the bottom 30 countries of the world. With respect to the Education Index, Pakistan ranks among the bottom 15 countries. By comparing selected educational indicators, **table 1.1** presents a reflection of Pakistan's poor educational performance in relation to other countries in the region.

Comparative data reveals that Pakistan is at the bottom of the ranking of countries in the region, with an adult illiteracy rate of 56 per cent, well above the average of 37 per cent for Sub-Saharan Africa and 44 per cent for South Asia. Net primary enrolment rate in Pakistan is at 46 per cent, the lowest in South Asia. Similarly, the combined enrolment rate for primary, secondary and tertiary education is 36 per cent, which is

*Net primary enrolment rate in Pakistan is at 46 per cent, the lowest in South Asia.*

**TABLE 1.1 WHERE DOES PAKISTAN STAND IN THE REGION?**

	Adult* Literacy Rate 2001	Primary Enrolment Rate (net) 1995-2001	Combined Enrolment Rate 2001	Public Expenditure on Education as %			
				GDP		Total Government Expenditure	
				1990	1998-2000	1990	1998-2000
Bangladesh	41	79	54	1.5	2.5	10.3	15.7
Bhutan	47	53	33	N.A	5.2	N.A	12.9
India	58	89	56	3.9	4.1	12.2	12.7
Iran	77	97	64	4.1	4.4	22.4	20.4
Maldives	97	99	79	4.0	3.9	10.0	11.2
Nepal	43	66	64	2.0	3.7	8.5	14.1
Pakistan	44	46	36	2.6	1.8	7.4	7.8
Sri Lanka	92	97	63	2.6	3.1	8.1	N.A

Sources: UNDP, Human Development Report (2003)  
UNDP, State of the World's Children (2003)

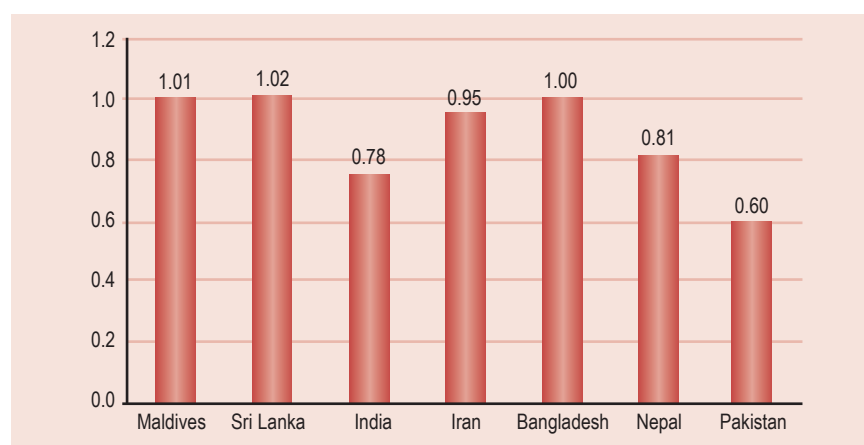
\*15 years and above

NA. Not available.

again well below the regional average of 54 per cent. Even Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal fare better than Pakistan in almost all key educational indicators.

In addition to comparing unfavourably in terms of aggregate indicators, Pakistan also registers substantial gender disparities. A simple measure of gender disparity is the ratio of female to male enrolment, i.e., the number of females for every male enrolled. As shown in **chart 1.1**, Pakistan has a ratio of 0.6, which is the lowest in the region and suggests a sizable bias in favour of males. In Nepal and India, the ratio is about 0.8, reflecting a relatively lower level of gender inequality. It is nearly 1.0 or higher in from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives, indicating complete gender equality in these countries.

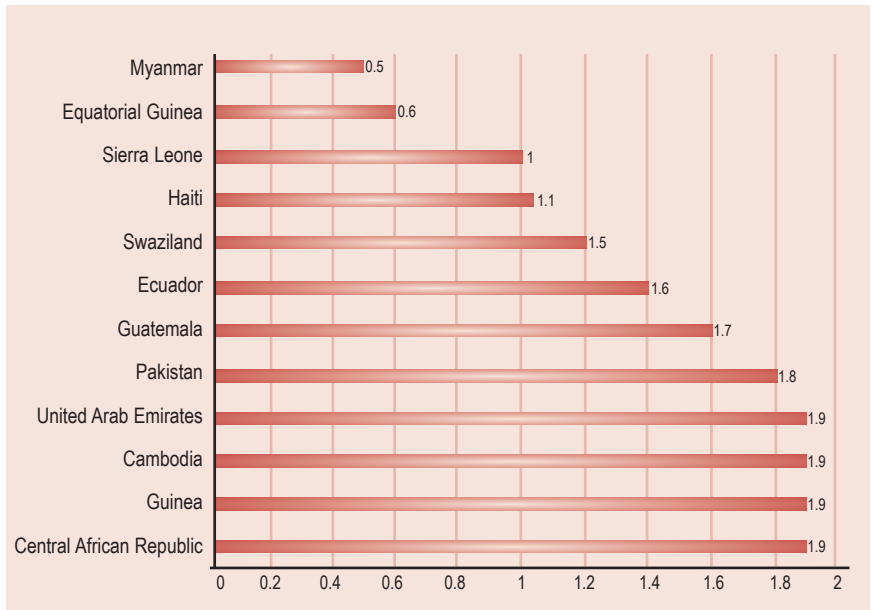
**CHART 1.1 RATIO OF FEMALE TO MALE COMBINED ENROLMENT RATES**



Source: UNDP, Human Development Report (2003)

CHART 1.2

## PERCENTAGES OF GDP SPENT ON EDUCATION



Source: UNDP, Human Development Report (2003)

The level of public spending is an important indicator of a government's commitment to the cause of education. The education sector in Pakistan has suffered from persistent and severe under investment by the government throughout the last half-century. As shown in table 1.1, public spending on education in Pakistan as a percentage of GDP is 1.8, which is the lowest in the region and has actually declined from 2.6 per cent in 1990. According to the UNDP, there are 12 countries in the world that spend less than 2 per cent of GDP on education, of which Pakistan is one (see chart 1.2). In terms of public expenditure on education as a percentage of total public spending, Pakistan ranks among the bottom five nations of the world. The share of public expenditure on education in Pakistan is posted at 7.8 per cent, placing the country just ahead of Greece, Jordan, Mongolia and Guinea-Bissau.

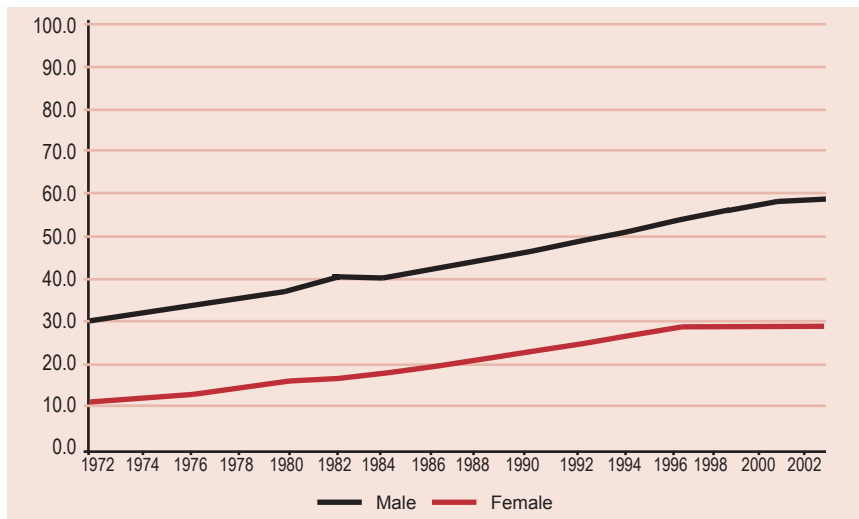
Although there is no evidence in the international literature of a strong and consistent correlation between public expenditure on education and enrolment rates, low public expenditure is a common feature of almost all low-enrolment countries. The negative impact of reducing public expenditure on access, equity and quality is however, well documented. For example, a common feature in newly industrializing countries is high public expenditure on education both as a proportion of GDP and of total public expenditure. It has also been suggested that government expenditure on education is strongly associated with indicators of entry into the first grade. It is therefore not surprising that Pakistan, with its declining public sector investment in education, should compare dismally with other countries in terms of its education and literacy indicators.

*Public spending on education in Pakistan as a percentage of GDP is 1.8, which is the lowest in the region.*

## TRENDS IN LITERACY RATES

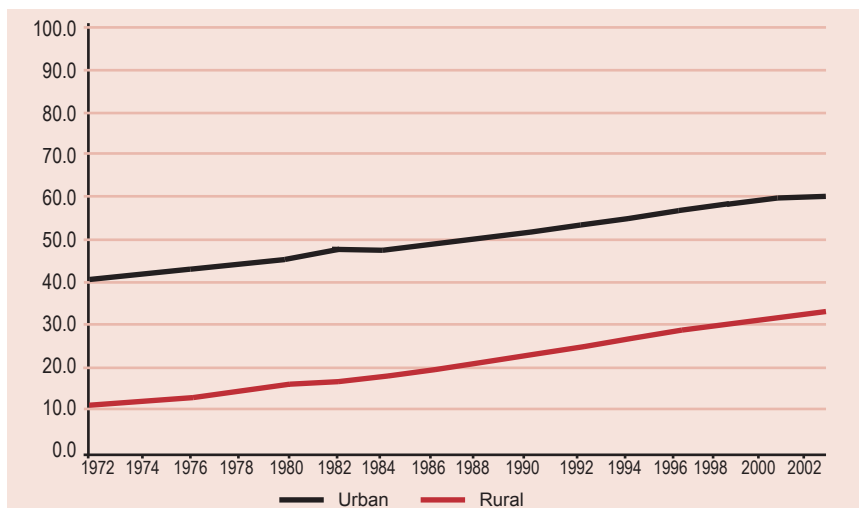
Adult literacy rates in Pakistan seem to be improving, but at a slow pace. During the last 30 years, the literacy rate has increased from 21 to 43 per cent – or less than 1 per cent per annum. Plotting the growth in literacy produces a rather flat curve for males and an even flatter curve for females (see chart 1.3). The same is true for urban and rural literacy growth rates (see chart 1.4). Substantial disparities exist between the

**CHART 1.3** TRENDS IN MALE AND FEMALE LITERACY RATES



Sources: Population Census Reports (1972, 1981 and 1998)  
Pakistan Integrated Household Survey (PIHS) (2002)

**CHART 1.4** TRENDS IN URBAN AND RURAL LITERACY RATES



Sources: Population Census Reports (1972, 1981 and 1998)  
PIHS (2002)

genders, both within regions on an urban-rural basis between and within the provinces. As indicated in **table 1.2**, literacy rates for males are almost twice as high as for females. According to estimates based on the primary data of the Pakistan Integrated Household Survey 2001-02, male and female literacy rates are 57 and 29 per cent, respectively.

**TABLE 1.2 TRENDS IN ADULT LITERACY RATES**

Year	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
1972	21	30	11	41	14
1981	26	36	15	53	17
1998	41	53	29	61	31
2002	43	57	29	63	34

**Sources:** Pakistan Census Reports (1972, 1981 and 1998)  
PIHS (2002)

Similar gaps also exist between urban and rural areas. While the urban literacy rate is 63 per cent, it is 34 per cent for rural areas. Between provinces, the literacy rate ranges from 32 per cent in Balochistan to 44 per cent in Punjab (**see table 1.3**). The lowest literacy rate at 7 per cent prevails



Computer class in a girls' college.

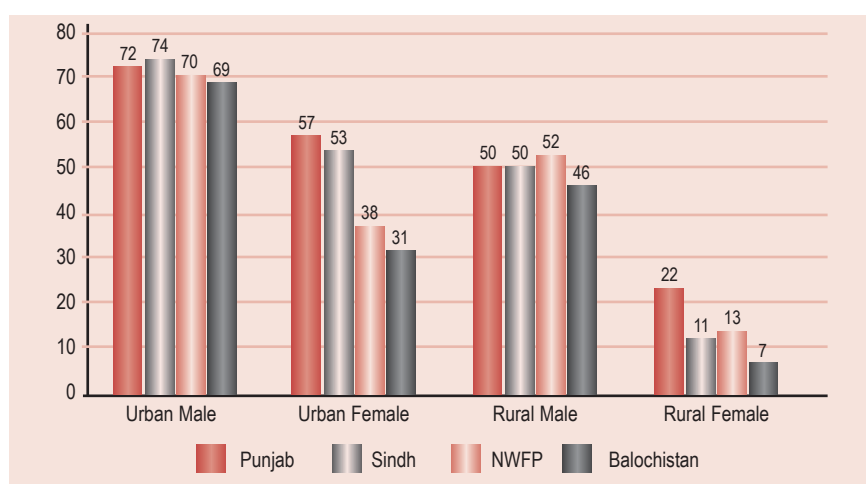
**TABLE 1.3 ADULT LITERACY RATES, 2001-02**

	Urban			Rural			Overall		
	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both
Pakistan	72	53	63	50	18	34	57	29	43
Punjab	72	57	64	50	22	35	57	32	44
Sindh	74	53	64	50	11	32	60	29	45
NWFP	70	38	54	52	13	31	55	17	35
Balochistan	69	31	51	46	7	28	50	12	32

Source: PIHS (2002)



among rural females in Balochistan, while the highest rate at 74 per cent is among urban males in Sindh. **Chart 1.5** presents the contrasts clearly.

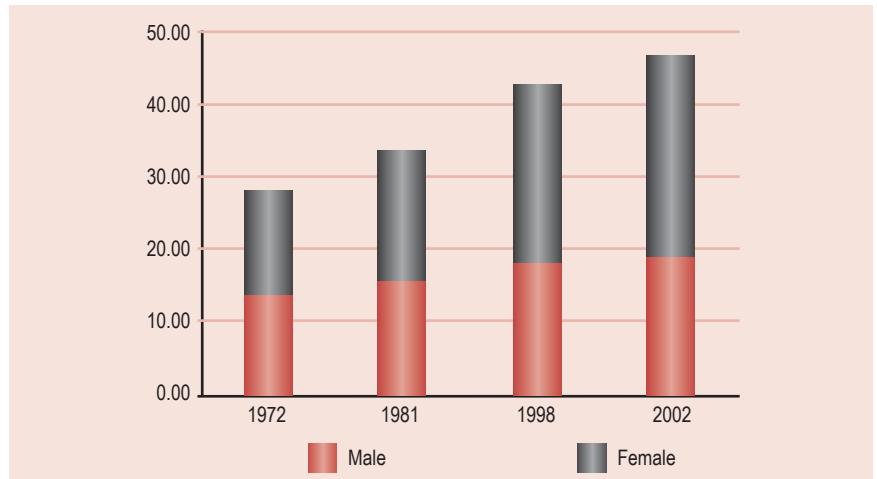
**CHART 1.5 DISPARITIES IN LITERACY RATES, 2001-02**

Source: PIHS (2002)

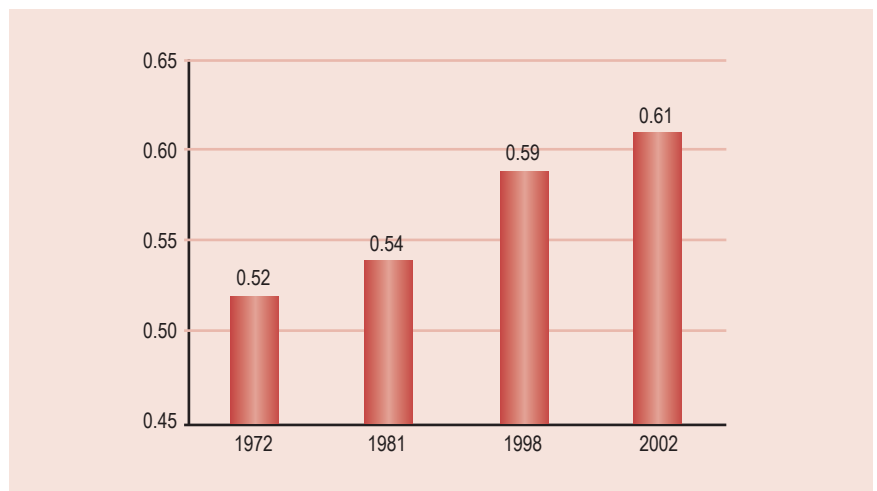
Given the fact that the literacy growth rate has been less than one-third the population growth rate, it is not surprising that the majority of Pakistan's population is illiterate. In fact, the number of illiterate people has increased from 28 million in 1972 to 46 million presently (**see chart 1.6**). Women constitute more than 60 per cent of this population, which is up from 52 per cent in 1972. It is alarming to note that the share of female illiterate adults has been increasing over the years (**see chart 1.7**).

The high incidence of illiteracy, especially among women, creates an adverse impact on the level of school enrolments and on the quality of human capital. This is on account of the fact that the education level of parents is known to influence the level of education attained by their children. Illiterate parents are less likely to send their children to school. Poverty also tends to be concentrated in households in which the head of the household is illiterate. Thus, children belonging to such households, trapped in illiteracy and poverty, tend to remain out of school and/or be pushed into child labour with all its attendant consequences.

*The number of illiterate people has increased from 28 million in 1972 to 46 million presently.*

**CHART 1.6 TRENDS IN STOCK OF ILLITERATE POPULATION**

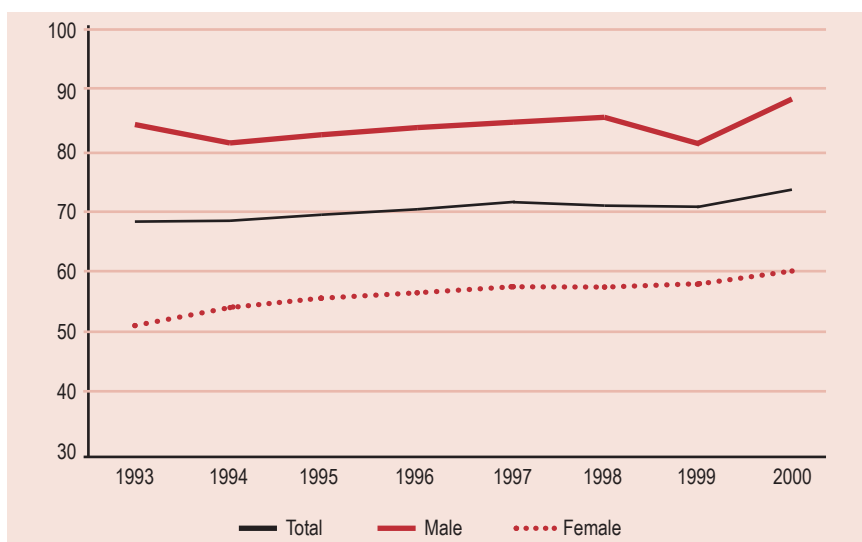
Sources: Population Census Reports (1972, 1981 and 1998)  
PIHS (2002)

**CHART 1.7 PROPORTION OF FEMALES IN ILLITERATE POPULATION**

Sources: Population Census Reports (1972, 1981 and 1998)  
PIHS (2002)

## TRENDS IN ENROLMENT RATES

**G**rowth in enrolment rates has also been stagnant, as reflected by the series of flat curves shown in **chart 1.8**. During the last decade, gross primary enrolment rates (GPER) have shown sluggish growth (**see table 1.4**). GPER increased by 5 percentage points – at less than 1 per cent per annum – from 69 per cent in 1993 to 74 per cent in 2000. Growth in primary enrolments declined during the 1990s when compared to the 1980s.

**CHART 1.8 GROSS PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATES**

Sources: Provincial EMIS, NEMIS, Development Statistics and Education Statistics (various issues) SPDC Estimates

**TABLE 1.4 TRENDS IN GROSS PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATES (%)**

	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
<b>Total</b>									
Pakistan	69	69	70	71	72	72	71	74	74
Punjab	73	71	72	73	75	76	74	80	79
Sindh	65	69	69	70	65	65	67	64	62
NWFP	66	68	70	72	76	78	69	78	81
Balochistan	50	48	50	50	57	55	58	58	58
<b>Male</b>									
Pakistan	85	82	83	84	85	86	82	88	84
Punjab	83	79	81	82	84	85	82	90	86
Sindh	84	87	87	88	82	81	82	78	73
NWFP	95	89	91	92	96	105	90	105	100
Balochistan	73	66	67	65	69	66	67	67	65
<b>Female</b>									
Pakistan	52	55	56	57	58	58	58	60	63
Punjab	62	63	63	64	66	67	67	69	71
Sindh	45	49	49	51	47	48	50	48	50
NWFP	35	45	47	51	54	48	45	48	61
Balochistan	22	26	29	32	42	42	46	47	48

Sources: Provincial EMIS, NEMIS, Development Statistics and Education Statistics (various issues) SPDC Estimates

*Growth in enrolment rates has also been stagnant.*

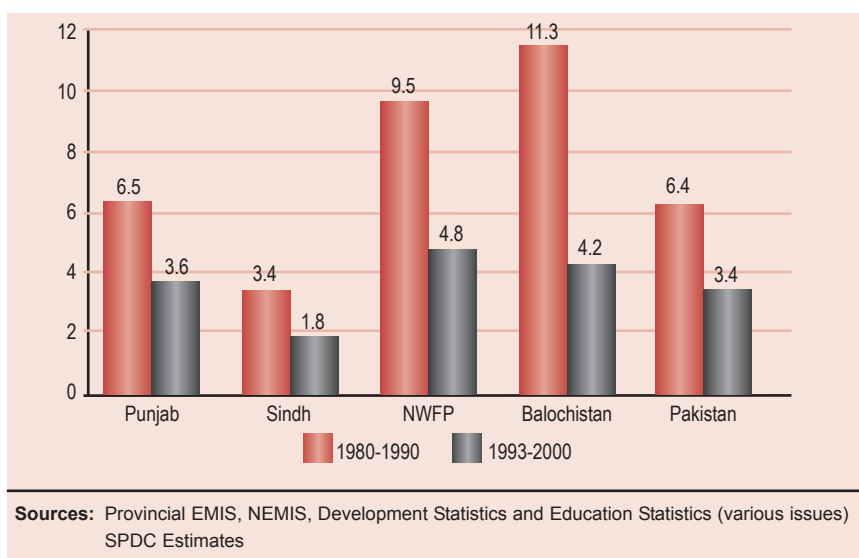
As shown in **table 1.5** and graphically presented in **chart 1.9**, the 1980s witnessed an annual growth rate of 6.4 per cent in primary enrolment against 3.4 per cent during 1993-2000. Deterioration in enrolment growth is observed in all provinces and for both sexes, the only exception being female enrolment in Balochistan. In the year 2000, GPER ranged from 58 per cent in Balochistan to 80 per cent in Punjab. Over the decade of the 1990s, the performance of Sindh has been the poorest among all provinces. GPER in Sindh rose from 65 per cent in 1993 to 70 per cent in 1996 and then declined to 64 per cent in the year 2000.

**TABLE 1.5 GROWTH IN GROSS PRIMARY ENROLMENT**

	1980-1990			1993-2000		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Punjab	6.5	5.9	7.6	3.6	3.5	3.8
Sindh	3.4	3.4	3.4	1.8	1.2	2.9
NWFP	9.5	8.9	12.2	4.8	3.9	7.1
Balochistan	11.3	11.5	10.2	4.2	1.2	13.1
Pakistan	6.4	6.0	7.2	3.4	2.9	4.3

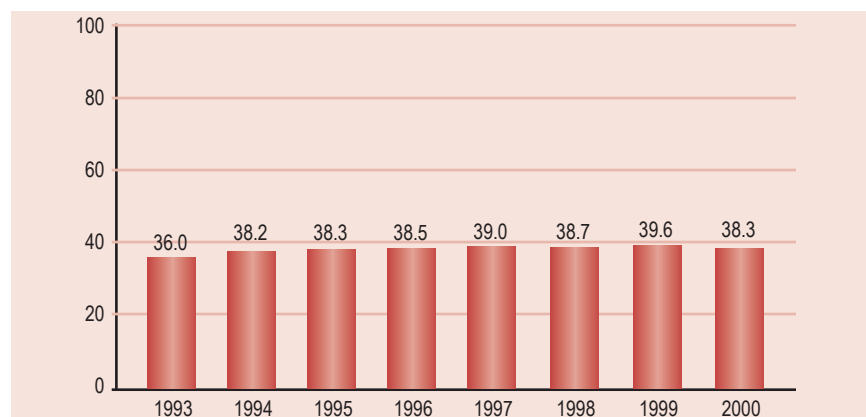
**Note:** Consistent data of primary enrolment is not readily available for the years 1991 and 1992  
**Sources:** Provincial EMIS, NEMIS, Development Statistics and Education Statistics (various issues) SPDC Estimates

**CHART 1.9 TRENDS IN GROSS PRIMARY ENROLMENT**



*Although the enrolment rate for girls has improved from 52 per cent in 1993 to 60 per cent in 2000, there appears to be no narrowing of the gender gap.*

Sizeable gender disparities continue to exist despite official claims about emphasis on increasing girls' enrolment. Although the enrolment rate for girls has improved from 52 per cent in 1993 to 60 per cent in 2000, there appears to be no narrowing of the gender gap. **Chart 1.10** illustrates the trend in the share of girls in total enrolment, which has remained almost stagnant at around 39 per cent. With regard to the performance of provinces in terms of girls' enrolment, Balochistan has made significant progress: GPER for girls increased from 22 per cent in

**CHART 1.10 TRENDS IN THE SHARE OF GIRLS' ENROLMENT (%)**

Sources: Provincial EMIS, NEMIS, Development Statistics and Education Statistics (various issues) SPDC Estimates

1993 to 47 per cent in 2002. NWFP also posted a sizeable increase from 35 per cent to 48 per cent during the same period. However, the gender gap still exists in all provinces, particularly in NWFP and Balochistan: in NWFP, for instance, there is a difference of 57 percentage points between the enrolment rates of boys and girls.

Net Primary Enrolment Rate (NPER) is a more refined indicator of enrolment level as it reflects enrolment of the children of a specific age group (5 to 9 years). Trends in national and provincial NPER are illustrated in **table 1.6**. The situation in terms of NPER is even worse than in terms of gross enrolment rates. Not only are the levels of net enrolment

**TABLE 1.6 TRENDS IN NET PRIMARY ENROLMENT RATES (%)**

	1991	1995	1997	1999	2002
<b>Total</b>					
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>42</b>
Punjab	52	45	42	44	45
Sindh	38	45	45	41	40
NWFP	36	35	37	39	41
Balochistan	29	45	36	36	32
<b>Male</b>					
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>46</b>
Punjab	56	50	45	47	47
Sindh	43	50	51	47	46
NWFP	46	42	42	47	48
Balochistan	39	51	43	44	39
<b>Female</b>					
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>38</b>
Punjab	48	39	39	40	43
Sindh	33	39	39	35	34
NWFP	26	28	32	30	33
Balochistan	20	39	27	28	24

Source: PIHS (various issues)

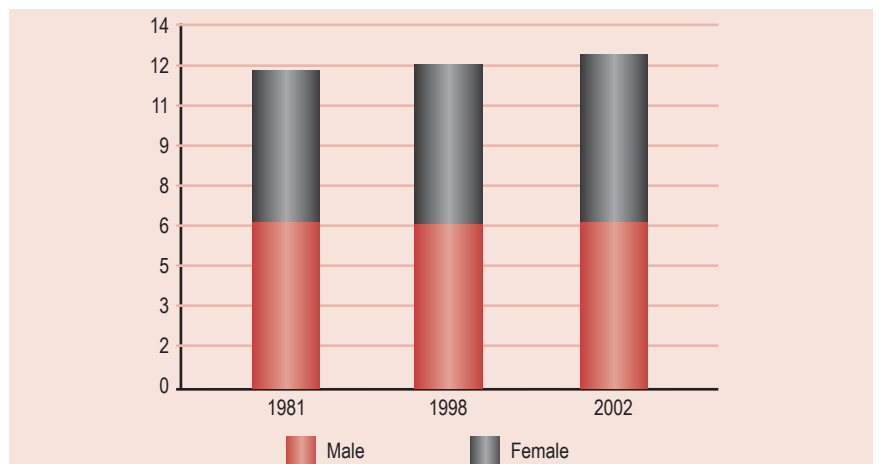


Schoolboys playing truant?

rates low but they also exhibit a declining trend over the years. National NPER declined from 44 per cent in 1995 to 42 per cent in 1997 and then remained stagnant until 2002. The current rate of NPER is even lower than it was in 1991. It is important to note that a substantial decline has taken place in Punjab, where NPER has dropped from 52 per cent to 45 per cent. Trends in gender-wise rates are no different. National NPER for boys has declined from 49 per cent in 1991 to 46 per cent in 2002, while that for girls has remained almost stagnant, varying between 37 and 38 per cent during this period.

Persistently low levels of primary enrolment have led to an increase in the population of out of school children in the 5-9 age group (see chart 1.11). According to estimates based on PIHS (2002) data, there are 13 million out of school children out of about 50 million children in this age group, over half of whom are girls. The share of girls in the total number

**CHART 1.11** NUMBER OF OUT OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AGED 5-9 (Million)



Sources: Population Census Reports (1981 and 1998)  
PIHS (2002)

*There are 13 million out of school children out of about 50 million children in this age group, over half of whom are girls.*

of school children has increased during the last two decades, rising from 49.4 per cent in 1981 to 50.9 per cent in 1998.

Gross and net secondary enrolment rates based on PIHS data are given in **table 1.7**, presenting a story similar to that of primary education. Overall, the net secondary enrolment rate in Pakistan is as low as 10 per cent. Gender disparity is observed at the net and gross enrolment levels as well. For instance, the female net secondary enrolment rate stands at 7 per cent, while that for males is 13 per cent. The same pattern is observed in gross enrolment rates. One reason for the pronounced difference in gross and net enrolment rates is the number of over aged children enrolled in secondary classes.



**TABLE 1.7 SECONDARY ENROLMENT RATE, 2002**

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Net Secondary Enrolment Rate</b>			
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>
Punjab	12	8	10
Sindh	12	7	10
NWFP	17	5	11
Balochistan	17	5	12
<b>Gross Secondary Enrolment Rate</b>			
<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>41</b>
Punjab	48	39	44
Sindh	44	29	37
NWFP	54	22	39
Balochistan	44	16	32
<b>Source: PIHS (2002)</b>			

## TRENDS IN DROPOUT RATES

**A**nother serious problem in education in Pakistan is the very high percentage of students who drop out before completing a particular cycle, e.g., primary or secondary. The dropout rate is defined as the percentage of students who drop out from school before reaching grade 5. High rates of dropouts not only result in reduced enrolments but also lead to internal inefficiency in the education system by increasing the unit cost of producing school graduates.

**Table 1.8** presents recent trends in dropout rates within public primary schools. The analysis reveals that dropout rates are not only alarmingly high, but have been increasing over time. At the national level, the overall dropout rate has increased steadily from 40 per cent in 1996-97 to 54 per cent in 1999-2000. Dropout rates are generally higher among girls and are increasing at a higher pace relative to boys. Currently, 51 per cent of boys and 59 per cent of girls leave school before reaching grade 5. The trend of increasing dropout rates is observed in all the provinces and for both sexes, with the only exception of Balochistan, where there has been a decline in male dropout rates from 52 per cent to 49 per cent.

*Dropout rates are generally higher among girls and are increasing at a higher pace relative to boys.*

**TABLE 1.8 TRENDS IN DROPOUT RATES WITHIN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan	Pakistan
<b>T o t a l</b>					
1996-97	40	45	27	48	40
1997-98	46	47	31	45	44
1998-99	54	45	31	45	48
1999-00	58	51	42	47	54
<b>M a l e</b>					
1996-97	41	46	26	52	41
1997-98	44	48	29	49	43
1998-99	53	47	28	50	48
1999-00	53	53	39	49	51
<b>F e m a l e</b>					
1996-97	38	42	29	30	38
1997-98	48	45	35	34	46
1998-99	54	41	37	27	49
1999-00	64	47	49	41	59

**Sources:** Provincial EMIS, NEMIS, Development Statistics and Education Statistics (various issues) SPDC Estimates

The dropout rate within public primary schooling clearly indicates inefficiency and the inability of public schools to retain children within the system. By comparison, private schools have performed better.

### AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

The availability of schools and teachers plays a vital role in the education system. **Table 1.9** reveals that at the national level, availability of public schools has worsened during the last decade. According to estimates, in 1992-93 one public school was available for 248 children in the 5-14 age group. This increased to 264 children in 1999-2000, indicating a relative decline in the availability of schools.

In addition to availability, access to schools is an important dimension of the quality of the education system. In rural areas, access has always been an issue, particularly for girls whose families generally do not allow them to attend school unless it is situated within or very near their village. According to PIHS (2002), only 66 per cent of villages had a school for girls within one kilometer of the village centre. Considerable variation exists among the provinces: rural areas of NWFP and Punjab register better accessibility rates of 84 and 80 per cent respectively, while Sindh and Balochistan suffer in comparison, with rates of 45 and 34 per cent. In other words, over half the girls in rural Sindh and two-thirds in

*In 1992-93 one public school was available for 248 children in the 5-14 age group. This increased to 264 children in 1999-2000, indicating a relative decline in the availability of schools.*

**TABLE 1.9** AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

	Population (5-14) per School		Population (5-14) per Teacher		Female Population (5-14) per Female Teacher		Ratio of Female to Male teachers	
	1992-93	1999-00	1992-93	1999-00	1992-93	1999-00	1992-93	1999-00
Punjab	270	334	74	65	158	161	0.71	0.75
Sindh	217	202	61	59	156	147	0.32	0.37
NWFP	241	225	64	78	186	182	0.34	0.34
Balochistan	211	184	106	83	638	363	0.12	0.58
Pakistan	248	264	70	66	168	165	0.47	0.53

Source: NEMIS (various issues)

rural Balochistan do not have a school facility within one kilometer of their village center.

The student population to teacher ratio, including the female student population to female teacher ratio, declined between 1993 and 2000; indicating a slight improvement. The role of female teachers in primary education is widely acknowledged and gains more importance owing to sociocultural factors in countries like Pakistan. However, the student-teacher ratio is substantially worse for female students and teachers as can be seen from the fact that the ratio of female to male teachers in public schools is quite low at 53 per cent. Further, while the student population to teacher ratio is 66, female student population to female teacher ratio is 165. However, there has been some improvement in all three ratios.



Will they go to school?

## BOX 1.1 PHYSICAL CONDITION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

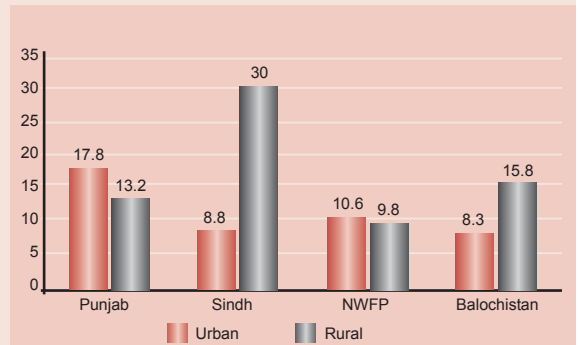
A review of the physical conditions of public schools shows that 16 per cent of them are without a building, 55 per cent without a boundary wall, 79 per cent without electricity, 44 per cent without water and 60 per cent without a latrine. There is, however, considerable variation between the provinces, between urban and rural areas and between boys' and girls' schools.

Province-wise, the most dismal situation appears to exist in Balochistan. Except for Sindh, where the percentage of schools without buildings is the highest at 30 per cent, Balochistan presents the worse case scenario in all other respects: 74 per cent of schools are without a boundary wall, 93 per cent are without electricity, 78 per cent are without water, and 83 per cent are without a latrine. The implication is that over three-fourths of schools in Balochistan are bereft of the most basic physical facilities and a meager 7 per cent have electricity. Balochistan is, however, relatively better endowed in the matter of school buildings.

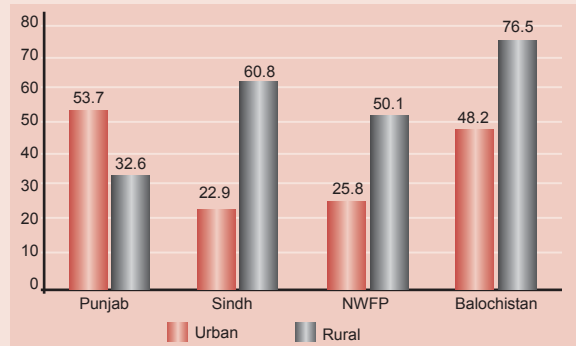
Urban Punjab also does not manage very well in some respects. The largest percentage of schools in urban areas that are without a building, without a boundary wall and without electricity are in Punjab, with the respective percentages being 18, 54 and 84. It, however, fares well with respect to availability of water. On the whole, rural Punjab fares well in all respects, except availability of a latrine, compared to other provinces.

Urban Sindh fares particularly well in schools without a building, with the percentage being as low as 9 per cent. The percentages for schools without boundary walls, without electricity, and without a latrine are also the lowest for urban Sindh. Rural Sindh does not perform as well. About 30 per cent of schools are without a building, the highest in rural Pakistan. Rural Sindh only fares worse than Balochistan with respect to schools without a boundary wall, without

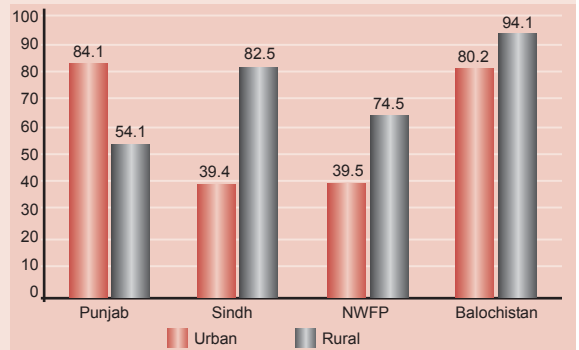
### PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHOUT A BUILDING



### PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHOUT A BOUNDARY WALL



### PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHOUT ELECTRICITY



electricity and without water.

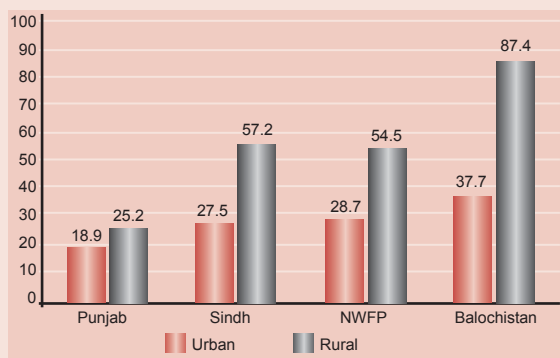
NWFP presents the best state of affairs in the country. With respect to schools without buildings, with only about 10 per cent of schools are bereft of a building. The percentages

are more or less the same in urban and rural areas. The situation in urban NWFP is more or less similar to urban Sindh with regard to schools without electricity and water. Rural NWFP's worst statistic

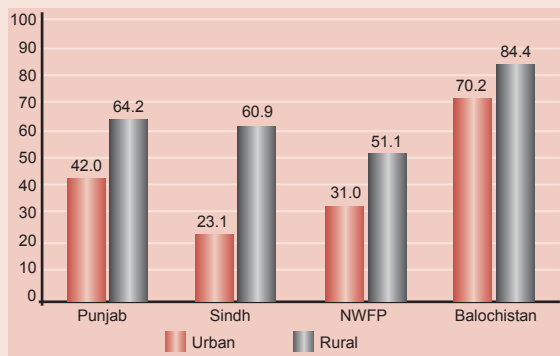
**BOX 1.1 (Contd.) PHYSICAL CONDITION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

relates to about 75 per cent of schools being without electricity.

Gender-wise, the physical condition of girls' schools appears to be significantly better than that of boys' schools, barring a few exceptions: schools without a boundary wall in urban Balochistan and schools without electricity in urban Punjab and urban NWFP. The best statistic relates to NWFP, where less than 2 per cent of rural girls' schools and less than 3 per cent of urban girls' schools are without a building. The three worst statistics relate to Balochistan, where 91 per cent of rural girls' schools and 79 per cent of urban girls' schools are without electricity, and to Punjab, where 87 per cent of urban girls' schools are without electricity. A somewhat disturbing situation is that between one-fifth and one-quarter of girls' schools in urban areas are without water or a latrine. The situation is worse in rural areas, where about 40 per cent of girls' schools are bereft of these two basic facilities.

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHOUT WATER**

Source: NEMIS (2001)

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHOUT A LATRINE**

The previous discussion suggests that the educational performance of Pakistan is far from being satisfactory. In terms of education indicators, Pakistan does not compare favourably with other countries of the region, and even with many countries that have relatively low levels of human development. Low levels of public spending, lack of access to education facilities, low levels of literacy and enrolment, and high dropout rates characterize the education sector in Pakistan. Substantial disparities exist among the provinces, regions (both urban and rural) and genders. Furthermore, the physical condition of schools in the public sector adds to the already dismal qualitative situation of education in the country (see **box 1.1**). As mentioned earlier, governments have, over the years, formulated various policies and plans, which have so far not been successful in achieving the desired objectives.

