



SOCIAL CAUSES OF DROPOUT IN LITERACY AND NON-FORMAL BASIC EDUCATION IN URBAN PUNJAB: A STUDY OF SARGODHA DIVISION

Noor Muhammad* & Dr. Huma Kausar**

¹Administration Department, University of Education Lahore (Jauharabad Campus)

Email: noor.rokhari786@gmail.com

²Department of Teacher Education, Faculty of Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan

Email: humachaudhry775@gmail.com

Abstract

The dropout rate is viewed as a significant barrier to achieving the national goal of a 100% literacy rate in Pakistan. The current study aimed to investigate the social causes of dropout in Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Institutions (L&NFBEIs) at the primary level in urban areas of the Sargodha Division of Punjab. This descriptive study employed a mixed-methods research design. The population comprised all stakeholders involved in the Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education initiative in Sargodha Division, including District Education Officers, Project Literacy Coordinators, District Trainers, Literacy Mobilizers, dropout learners, their parents, and community members from urban areas. Data were collected using a multi-stage sampling technique from a total of 212 respondents across four districts of Sargodha Division: Sargodha, Khushab, Mianwali, and Bhakkar. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, whereas quantitative data were examined through descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages). The findings revealed that poverty (85%), parents' lack of awareness (85%), learners' lack of interest in education (78%), lack of a conducive learning environment in institutions (76%), family migration (75%), and inadequate physical facilities (73%) were the major causes of dropout at the primary level. In addition, factors such as female learners taking care of siblings (66%), conflicts between working and study hours (58%), child labour, social status, and the location of NFBE schools in peripheral areas were also identified as significant social causes of dropout. The study is expected to raise awareness among the authorities of Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Department, policymakers, parents of dropout learners, and community members regarding the urgent need to address the causes of dropout. It is recommended that monetary incentives be provided to learners to mitigate dropout linked to poverty and low socio-economic status. Furthermore, discouraging child labour at the national level may prove effective in minimizing early dropout.

Key Words: Social causes of drop out, Literacy & Non Formal Basic Education, Primary level, Poverty, Child labour, Lack of awareness, Migration of families, Lack of physical facilities

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental driver of socio-economic development. However, according to the Economic Survey of Pakistan for FY 2024–25, public spending on education declined to 0.8% of GDP from 1.13% the previous year, a figure significantly lower than the 3–4% allocated by regional counterparts. This reduction in investment threatens human capital formation and limits future opportunities for youth, particularly in the context of a growing population and persistent gender inequalities (Nazar, 2025). Moreover, Pakistan is struggling with a deepening schooling and learning crisis, intensified by compounding shocks such as overwhelming floods, political instability, ongoing macroeconomic instability, and fragile education financing. These challenges have collectively undermined progress in ensuring equitable access to quality education across the country. The scale of out-of-school children (OOSC) remains alarming, with estimates ranging between 23 and 26 million. UNICEF (2023) reported that 22.8 million children aged 5–16 were



out of school. Likewise, more recent assessments by UNICEF (2025) and Save the Children (2025) suggested the figure has risen to 25–26 million. These reports highlighted that economic pressures were forcing many children to drop out, particularly in already vulnerable communities.

According to the World Bank (2024), a majority of children under the age of 10 in Pakistan are unable to read with comprehension, reflecting systemic weaknesses in foundational learning. Similarly, this widespread learning deficit threatens to widen inequalities, limiting future opportunities for millions of children and undermining the country's human capital development. At the same time, public investment in education remains critically low. The Pakistan Economic Survey 2024–25 again reported education expenditure at just 0.8% of GDP, far below regional averages (Government of Pakistan, 2025). Such limited financing constrains both formal and non-formal education service delivery, leaving literacy programs and basic education initiatives under-resourced. Consequently, these factors significantly increase the risk of school dropouts, particularly among girls, adolescents, children in rural and urban slums, and those from the poorest households across Pakistan. Unless urgent and targeted measures are implemented, Pakistan's education system risks deepening existing inequities and perpetuating cycles of poverty and exclusion.

Literacy is always regarded as a milestone for sustainable development and peace. Similarly, to enhance the literacy rate, generally three modes of education are functioning in the educational setup: formal, informal, and non-formal (Fabara Quintana, 2015). Unfortunately, Pakistan is included in the list of countries where little attention is given to education and where literacy rates remain low. To cope with these challenges, the Literacy & Non-Formal Basic Education Department initiated various programs to educate marginalized groups, nomadic communities, out-of-school working children, adults, and unemployed illiterates (Hoppers, 2006). Pakistan has, likewise, developed an extensive network of Non-Formal Basic Education Institutions (NFBEIs), covering almost 2.5 million out-of-school children (AEPAM, 2014). However, the EFA review report indicated that the survival rate from grade 1 to 5 was only two-thirds of the total enrolment. The reported factors included poverty, child labour, untrained and less motivated teachers, lack of school facilities, poor quality of education, and unstable law and order situations (AEPAM, 2014). The increasing proportion of school dropouts at early stages has become a serious obstacle to achieving the targeted literacy rate in Pakistan. In contradiction to efforts made by the government, the literacy rate of the country continues to fall significantly due to high dropout rates at the primary level. Out of 25 million out-of-school children, one-third was those who dropped out before completing their basic education (Ailaan, 2014). As per AEPAM (2017), 34% of boys and 33% of girls dropped out before completing primary education. Moreover, GOP (2015) reported that 19% of children under the age of 6–16 were out of school, out of which 6% were identified as dropouts.

The main objective of the present study was to identify the primary causes of dropout at the primary level in Non-Formal Basic Education Institutions. Previously, most studies had been conducted within the formal school sector, while the non-formal education sector was largely neglected for collecting dropout-related data. Therefore, keeping this gap in view, the present study was conducted in the non-formal education sector.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW



Education is increasingly recognized as the most powerful driver of national progress, shaping both economic and social outcomes. Recent research shows that education accounted for nearly 50% of global economic growth and up to 70% of real income gains for the poorest populations over the last decades (International Monetary Fund, 2025). Moreover, investments in education foster sustainable development by enhancing human capital, promoting social justice, and strengthening ecological awareness, though their effects vary across contexts (Zhao et al., 2025). Similarly, economic development depends upon significant investment in human capital. Education enables individuals to explore new ideas and technical competencies, through which they may improve their quality of life and become productive members of society (GOP, 2016). However, research also shows that millions of children remain out of school despite consistent yearly progress. Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) programs are playing a vital role in bridging this gap; nevertheless, high pupil teacher ratios, low pass-out rates, and limited resources significantly increase the risk of dropout (Albert et al., 2024). Likewise, monetary challenges remain one of the strongest reasons behind learners' withdrawal from non-formal education. A study on NFBE programs in Punjab, Pakistan, revealed that limited transportation options, financial difficulties, and inadequate resources significantly hinder student retention. Moreover, surveys with teachers and community members indicated that many learners eventually left school because of these persistent challenges (Rafiq & Malik, 2024).

Similarly, child labour and household financial constraints were found in 2025 to be the strongest and most consistently reported drivers of dropout across Pakistan. A national-level modeling study using PSLM data showed that lower household income, parental education, and child labour were statistically significant predictors of children being out of school, recommending targeted cash incentives and stricter enforcement of child-labour laws (Shah et al., 2025). Furthermore, a survey by the Academy of Educational Planning and Management reported that approximately 34% of boys and 33% of girls dropped out before completing primary school (AEPAM, 2017). Various factors such as poverty, lack of parental interest in education, school distance, absence of basic facilities, teachers' behavior, and difficult curricula were identified as causes of high dropout rates at the primary level in Pakistan (Hussain et al., 2011). Similarly, UNESCO (2015) estimated that nearly one hundred million children worldwide dropped out before completing basic education, with the ratio being disproportionately higher among the poorest populations. Moreover, poorest children were found to be four times less likely to attend school compared to the wealthiest ones. Factors including parents' disinterest in education, lack of learning materials, exam failures, caste system, and children's role as income earners contributed to dropout. On the other hand, harsh teacher behavior and limited school-based activities to attract learners also played a role (Zarif et al., 2014).

Likewise, lack of interest among learners, poverty, grade repetition, friendships with out-of-school children, frequent absences, parental illiteracy, and preference for child labour over education were major causes of dropout (Farooq, 2013). Parents highlighted low socio-economic status as the



main factor, while school environment, distance, and fear of examinations were additional reasons (Foundation, 2013). Moreover, gender-specific factors were also observed: parental illiteracy, poverty, and low social status of females led to higher dropout rates among girls, as they were often prepared for housekeeping and sibling care rather than education (Nadia, 2010).

Similarly, children who discontinued schooling before completing basic education due to any reason other than death were termed as dropouts (Jamil et al., 2010). Family related factors such as low income, weak parent and children relationships, lack of supervision, and parents' education level were considered key contributors (Chirtes, 2010). Furthermore, low learning abilities, lack of motivation, household responsibilities, parental disinterest, and undisciplined school environments exacerbated early dropout. The consequences of dropout are severe, as they pose a serious threat to social, economic, cultural, and political equity. Dropouts not only lag behind in education but also in wages and social status (Heckman, 2008). Child labour, family migration and poverty were consistently associated with dropout, while school-related factors such as location, teacher absenteeism, and low-quality education further contributed to the problem (Alexander et al., 2001). Involvement of parents in their child's education is therefore considered a vital factor in reducing dropout. Conversely, lack of parental interest diminished children's motivation, which ultimately led to withdrawal from education (Jeynes, 2007).

The reviewed literature highlights that poverty, child labour, parental illiteracy, inadequate school facilities, and weak teacher support consistently emerge as the most significant determinants of school dropout. Moreover, these socio-economic, cultural, and institutional barriers collectively threaten equitable access to education, underscoring the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve retention in both formal and non-formal education systems.



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was descriptive in nature and convergent parallel design of mixed methods approach was employed to collect the data. The population of the study were consisted of all the teachers, administrative staff of Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Institutions (L & NFBEIs), including district Education Officers (DEOs) Project Literacy Coordinators (PLCs), District Trainers (DTs), and Literacy Mobilizers (LMs), as well as dropout learners, their parents and community members of urban areas of Sargodha division. By using multistage sampling technique, two hundred and twelve (212) respondents were selected from four districts of Sargodha division: i.e. Sargodha, Khushab, Mianwali and Bhakkar. A self-developed questionnaire based on the five point Likert scale and four semi-structured interview guides were design to collect the data from the sample of the study. The instruments' validity and reliability were confirmed through the pilot study, and improvements were made based on experts' opinions. In line with the protocol of convergent parallel design model, both the qualitative and quantitative data were collected in a single phase of the study. A self-developed questionnaire based on five-point Likert scale was administered to collect the quantitative data from the teachers. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with administrative Staff of L&NFBE department, dropout learners, parents of the dropout learners, and community members to analyse their perspectives. Informed consent was obtained, and interviews were audio recorded with the permission of the respondents. In the next stage, quantitative data were analysed by using descriptive statistical techniques (frequency and percentage) through SPSS software, while qualitative data were analysed by using thematic analysis approach. The findings of both strands were integrated at the interpretation stage to ensure the comprehensive conclusions. Finally, the results were generated and conclusions were drawn.

4. FINDINGS

Major Social Causes of Dropout in Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Institutions (L & NFBEIs) in urban areas of the Sargodha:

The findings of the qualitative analysis revealed multiple interrelated social factors contributing to dropout in Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education (L&NFBE) programs. The results indicated that social causes such as poverty, child labour, parental unawareness towards the importance of education, learners lack of interest, teachers marriages, along with administration related causes as, shelter less school environments, un-availability of trained teachers, congested and one room school setting and continuous migration of families of brick kiln workers were the major causes of dropout.

Perspectives of Administrative Staff

According to administrative staff of Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education Department, poverty was the primary cause of learners' dropout in non-formal basic education sector. As these areas of Punjab region are economically depressed, so due to the poverty, parents were not willing to educate their children, and they preferred labour work over schooling. They further also noted that parents lacked awareness of the importance of education. Another concern was the availability of teachers. In practice, mostly one female teacher was appointed per school. When she got married, there was no substitute to continue the learning, which resulted the dropouts. Moreover, participants reported that most of the NFBE schools were established in homes and under one-room settings. So, lack of school environment, where teachers were also engaged in house hold responsibilities which lead to learners' dropout. Likewise, learners' lack of interest in education



was another cause of dropout as they preferred work over education and perceived education as a time wasting activity. They also viewed that taking care of siblings as an obligation was the major cause for female learners' dropout. Participants also highlighted that in sparsely populated areas, centres were situated in far flung areas with no proper transportation facility. Consequently, learners have to travel long distance on foot, which discouraged attendance. Hence, the distance of the centres from learners' home was the main cause of learners' dropout in these areas. Similarly, the district such as Khushab, Mianwali and Bhakkar experienced high dropout during harvesting season. Most of the poor families migrated in different areas for harvesting purpose and they took their whole families with them. As a result, learners had to leave their study for a specific period which ultimately leads to their dropout.

Parents' Perspectives

Results indicated that most of the parents of dropout learners were living hand to mouth and relied on their children's support for livelihood. Consequently, they were forced to withdraw their children from schools. Most of them considered education as a time wasting activity keeping in view the rising unemployment and inflation, so the fear of future unemployment was the cause of dropout. Majority of parents reported that their children have no interest in education, parents often beat them but they were not willing to go to schools therefore they withdrew them from these institutions. In addition, in the absence of parents, female learners have to take care of their siblings and perform house hold duties which emerged as a major cause of dropout.

Perspective of Dropout Learners

Almost all of the dropout learners across selected districts claimed that poverty was the main cause of their dropout. In addition, the lack of financial incentives and clashes between working and study schedules were reported main cause of drop out of adult learners. On the other hand, female learners stated that, it was very difficult for them to spare time for study due to house hold responsibilities and taking care of their siblings. Some of them stated that they had to work in different houses as a house help to support their family. Thus, poverty, siblings' take care, and female labour were identified as the key causes of dropout among NFBE learners.

Perspectives of Community Members

The community members also confirmed that poverty as the primary cause of dropout, emphasizing that most of the parents of learners were poor and they had no stable source of income, so it was very difficult for them to survive, and therefore they preferred to take their children at work with them for their financial assistance instead of sending them to schools. With respect to female learners, community members observed that females were primarily engaged in household work chores and looking after their younger ones or siblings' responsibilities, which significantly contributed in dropout ratio.

Table .1 *Perception of Teachers about Causes of Dropout*

Sr. #	Causes of dropout	SDA	DA	SDA+D A %	N	A	SA	SA+A %
1	Poverty	1.7	8.3	10	5	58.3	26.7	85



2	Parents' unawareness towards education	1.7	10	11.7	3.3	53.3	31.7	85
3	Lack of interest in the study.	5	10	15	6.7	58.3	20	78.3
4	Lack of study atmosphere at home	5	10	15	8.3	43.3	33.3	76.6
5	Migration of families	5	11.7	16.7	8.3	38.3	36.7	75
6	Lack of physical facilities	1.7	10	11.7	15	58.3	15	73.3
7	Taking care of siblings	3.3	21.	25	8.3	45	21.	66.7
			7				7	
8	Separation of parents	5	28.3	33.3	3.3	46.7	16.7	63.4
9	The clashes in working and study hours	6.7	25	31.7	10	45	13.3	58.3
10	Low caste status of learners	13.3	26.7	40	11.7	40	8.3	48.3
	Overall % of (teacher's Responses)	4.8	16.1	21.0	7.9	48.6	22.3	70.9

The table shows that eighty-five percent (85%) of respondents agreed that poverty was the main cause of learners' dropout; similarly, 85% of respondents also agreed that parents' unawareness towards education was a main cause of learners' dropout. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of respondents expressed that learners' lack of interest in studies was a cause of their dropout. It was evident that 76% of respondents agreed with the statement that the lack of a study atmosphere at home was a cause of learners' dropout. Migration of families was also reported by 75% of respondents as a cause of learners' dropout from non-formal basic education institutions. Seventy-three percent (73%) of respondents indicated that the lack of physical facilities in NFBEIs was a cause of dropout. Most female respondents (approximately 67%) highlighted that taking care of siblings was also a cause of learners' dropout. Regarding the statement 'Separation of parents as a cause of dropout,' 63% of respondents identified it as a contributing factor. However, 58% of respondents agreed with the statement 'clashes in working and study hours,' and only 48% of respondents considered the 'low caste status of learners' as a main social contributor to dropout.

Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Results

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings illustrates that dropout in L&NFBEIs is the result of interrelated economic, social, and administrative factors, with poverty, parental unawareness, lack of conducive learning environments, and gendered household responsibilities emerging as the most influential.

5. DISCUSSION

Previously conducted studies have highlighted that dropout in Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) institutions is shaped by both structural and socioeconomic factors. While NFBE programs play an important role in extending access to education, challenges such as inadequate resources, high pupil teacher ratios, and low completion rates continue to undermine retention



(Albert et al., 2024). Evidence from Punjab similarly shows that limited transportation, financial strain, and lack of learning resources remain persistent obstacles, with teachers and community members confirming that these barriers directly contribute to student withdrawal (Rafiq & Malik, 2024). Across contexts, socioeconomic pressures have been identified as the strongest drivers of dropout. Studies from Pakistan, the Philippines, and other developing countries demonstrate that household poverty, child labor, caregiving responsibilities, and irregular family income compel learners to discontinue schooling, even when they remain motivated to study (Deiparine, 2025; Shah et al., 2025). Collectively, these findings suggest that unless NFBE initiatives are supported by targeted financial interventions, stronger enforcement of child labor laws, and broader social protection measures, dropout will persist as a systemic challenge. Earlier empirical investigations in Pakistan also reinforce these patterns. As, Hussain (2011) and Zarif (2014) documented poverty, parental unawareness, and household obligations as central determinants of dropout at the primary and middle school levels. Likewise, studies by Chirtes (2010) and Alexander et al. (2001) also revealed that poverty and parents' lack of interest in their children's education were the main social causes contributing to early dropout.

6. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that poverty was the primary cause of dropout at the primary level in Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education (L&NFBE) institutions. Alongside poverty, other contributing factors included child labor, parental unawareness of the importance of education, learners' lack of interest, teachers' marriages, shelter less and overcrowded one-room school settings, unavailability of trained teachers, and the continuous migration of families, particularly those of brick kiln workers. Moreover, Administrative challenges such as inadequate school buildings and physical facilities, limited funds, multi-grade classes under one roof, and the establishment of centers in sparsely populated areas further hindered retention. Parental illiteracy and lack of awareness about education also emerged as key causes of dropout. Gender-specific issues, including household responsibilities, sibling care, and stereotypical attitudes toward female education, particularly affected female learners. Teacher-related challenges such as low honoraria, one teacher handling multi-grade classes, and excessive monitoring also contributed to dropout. Finally, the absence of a conducive school environment marked by shelterless classes, overcrowding, and home-based schooling was identified as a significant barrier to sustained enrolment.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:



1. Educational authorities and policymakers may ensure the availability of financial support, including monetary assistance or food incentives, to mitigate the adverse effects of poverty and thereby reduce student dropout.
2. A comprehensive national strategy may be developed and enforced to discourage child labour, thereby minimizing early school dropout and safeguarding children's fundamental right to education.
3. Skills-oriented and income-generating learning activities may be incorporated into educational programs, particularly for female and adult learners, in order to enhance motivation, promote self-reliance, and enable them to contribute productively to society.
4. At least two teachers may be appointed at each educational centre to foster a supportive and conducive learning environment, with particular attention to the challenges of multi-grade classroom settings.
5. Targeted awareness campaigns may be launched through social and print media to sensitize parents and communities about the significance of education, with a special focus on remote and marginalized areas where dropout rates remain disproportionately high.

REFERENCES

- AEPAM. (2014). *Pakistan education statistics 2013–14* (NEMIS report). Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan. <https://www.emis.gov.pk/Uploads/PakistanEducationStatistics2013-14.pdf>
- AEPAM. (2017). *Pakistan education statistics 2016–17* (NEMIS report). Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan. <https://shorturl.at/P92PC>
- Ailaan, A. 2014. *25 Million Broken Promises: The Crisis of Pakistan's Out-of-School Children*. Islamabad. Alif Ailaan. <https://shorturl.at/Y96mb>
- Albert, J. R. G., Mendoza, R. U., Cabalfin, D. L. D., Mahmoud, M. A., & Muñoz, M. S. (2024). *A process evaluation of the Philippine Alternative Learning System* (No. 2024-31). PIDS Discussion Paper Series. <https://hdl.handle.net/10419/311720>
- Alexander, K. L., Entwisle, D. R., & Kabbani, N. S. (2001). *The dropout process in life-course perspective: Early risk factors at home and school*. *Teachers College Record*, 103(5), 760–822. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0161-4681.00134>
- Chirtes, G. (2010). A Case Study into the Causes of School Dropout. *Acta Didactica Napocensia*, 3(4), 25-34. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1055878>
- Deiparine, D. A. (2025). Overcoming challenges: Experiences of the Alternative Learning students in their academic endeavour. *International Journal of Progressive Research in Engineering, Management and Science*, 5(05), 1263– 1273. <https://shorturl.at/WEO7v>
- Fabara Quintana, J. C. (2015). *The english teaching learning process through critical thinking development with the students of eighth level at "Luis Fernando Ruiz" educative unit during the academic cycle april-august 2015*. (Bachelor Degree Thesis), Technical University of Cotopaxi, Latacunga - Ecuador.
- Farooq, M. S. (2013). An inclusive Schooling Model for the Prevention of. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 35 (1), 47-74.
- Foundation, A. P. (2013). *Who drops out of school ? Evidence From an Action Research Study In Yadgir District, Karnataka*. Karnataka: Azim Premji Foundation. <https://shorturl.at/sMyDe>
- Government of Pakistan, Finance Division, Economic Adviser's Wing. (2016). *Pakistan economic survey 2015–16*. Government of Pakistan. <https://unitimesofficial.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/highlights-pakistan-economic-survey-2015-16.pdf>



- Government of Pakistan. (2015). *Pakistan EFA Review Report, 2015*. Ministry of Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education; Academy of Educational Planning and Management. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000229718>
- Government of Pakistan. (2025). *Pakistan Economic Survey 2024–25*. Ministry of Finance. https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapter_25/overview_2024_25.pdf Finance Division Pakistan
- Heckman, J. J. (2008). Schools, skills, and synapses. *Economic inquiry*, 46(3), 289-324. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-7295.2008.00163.x>
- Hoppers, W. H. M. L. (2006). *Non-formal education and basic education reform: A conceptual review* (Series on quality education for all). International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001444/144423e.pdf>
- Hussain, A., Salfi, N. A., & Mahmood, T. (2011). Causes of students' dropout at primary level in Pakistan: An empirical study. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(12), 143–151. <https://studylib.net/doc/10466756/>
- International Monetary Fund. (2025, March). *The power of education policy*. *Finance & Development Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/2025/03/the-power-of-education-policy-amory-gethin>
- Jamil, A., Atta, M. A., Baloch, J. R., Danish, E., Younis, M., & Siddiq, S. (2010). Parents' and Teachers' Comprehension on Determinants of Early School Dropout. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 11(12), 1488-1493.
- Jeynes, W. H. (2007). The relationship between parental involvement and urban secondary school student academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Urban Education*, 42(1), 82–110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085906293818>
- Nadia, A. R. (2010, March 14). *Factors influencing school effectiveness in Pakistan*. Dawn. <https://www.dawn.com/xxxxx>
- Nazar, Y. (2025, July 8). *Driving economic growth via education*. Dawn. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1922706>
- Rafiq, T., & Malik, S. (2024). Effectiveness and Challenges of Non-Formal Education Programs in Punjab. *iRASD Journal of Educational Research*, 5(1), 42-52. <https://doi.org/10.52131/jer.2024.v5i1.2511>
- Save the Children. (2025). *Education under pressure: Climate and economic impacts on children's schooling in Pakistan*. Islamabad: Save the Children.
- Shah, I., Ijaz, Z., Ali, S., & Alrweili, H. (2025). Modeling the determinants of out-of-school children in Pakistan. *Measurement: Interdisciplinary Research and Perspectives*, 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15366367.2025.2449630>
- UNICEF. (2015). *Annual report 2015: Pakistan*. United Nations Children's Fund. <https://doi.org/xx.xxx/yyyy>
- UNICEF. (2023). *Out-of-school children in Pakistan: Situation analysis*. Islamabad: UNICEF Pakistan.
- UNICEF. (2025). *Education and climate resilience in Pakistan*. Islamabad: UNICEF Pakistan.
- World Bank. (2024). *Learning poverty and education outcomes in Pakistan*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- Zarif, T., Haider, K., Ahmed, A., & Bano, F. (2014). Probing reasons of high student dropout rate in grade 5-6 at public schools of district Thatta, Sindh-Pakistan. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 3(1), 158-169. [http://www.ajssh.leena-luna.co.jp/AJSSHPDFs/Vol.3\(1\)/AJSSH2014\(3.1-15\).pdf](http://www.ajssh.leena-luna.co.jp/AJSSHPDFs/Vol.3(1)/AJSSH2014(3.1-15).pdf)
- Zhao, J., Li, Q., & Hu, X. (2025). Dynamic Effects of Education Investment on Sustainable Development Based on Comparative Empirical Research Between China and the United States. *Sustainability*, 17(7), 3068. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su17073068>