

Significance of Research

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Recent data shows that although enrollments in many developing countries, including Pakistan, have significantly improved in recent times, learning levels have remained poor. Furthermore, international aid organizations such as the World Bank expect learning levels to worsen, and within class learning disparities to widen, due to school closures resulting from the current COVID-19 pandemic. A key question then for policy makers is to improve learning outcomes and mitigate learning gaps within classrooms in a cost-effective and scalable manner.

This research project empirically tests the efficacy of a remediation program that provides extra class time to poor performing students from low-income communities in Pakistan and teaches them Math, English, and Urdu at a slower pace. The generous contributions from the American Institute of Pakistan Studies allowed me to collect and digitize the data used in this study from schools in Pakistan. Results from this study show that remediation classes had a positive, large, and statistically significant impact on the test scores for English and Math, but not for Urdu. These effect sizes are large, lying close to the 80th percentile of the distribution of the impacts of various interventions aimed at improving learning outcomes in developing countries (Evans and Yuan, 2020). Importantly, this project finds that the positive effects of remediation are consistent at the primary and secondary levels of education. This result is of significance since past studies on the effects of various interventions aimed at improving learning outcomes at secondary levels of education are sparse. This research is important for policy. Pakistan does worse than many other countries in terms of providing quality education to school-going children. It is also one of the few countries that were not able to meet their Millennium Development Goals. Given that the governments in developing countries in general, and Pakistan in particular, operate under strict budget constraints, remediation provides an attractive solution to mitigate learning gaps within classrooms.

Works Cited

Evans, David, and Fei Yuan. "How big are effect sizes in international education studies." *Center for Global Development, Working Paper 545* (2020).