

Punjab's School Education Challenge **Outcomes and Policies**

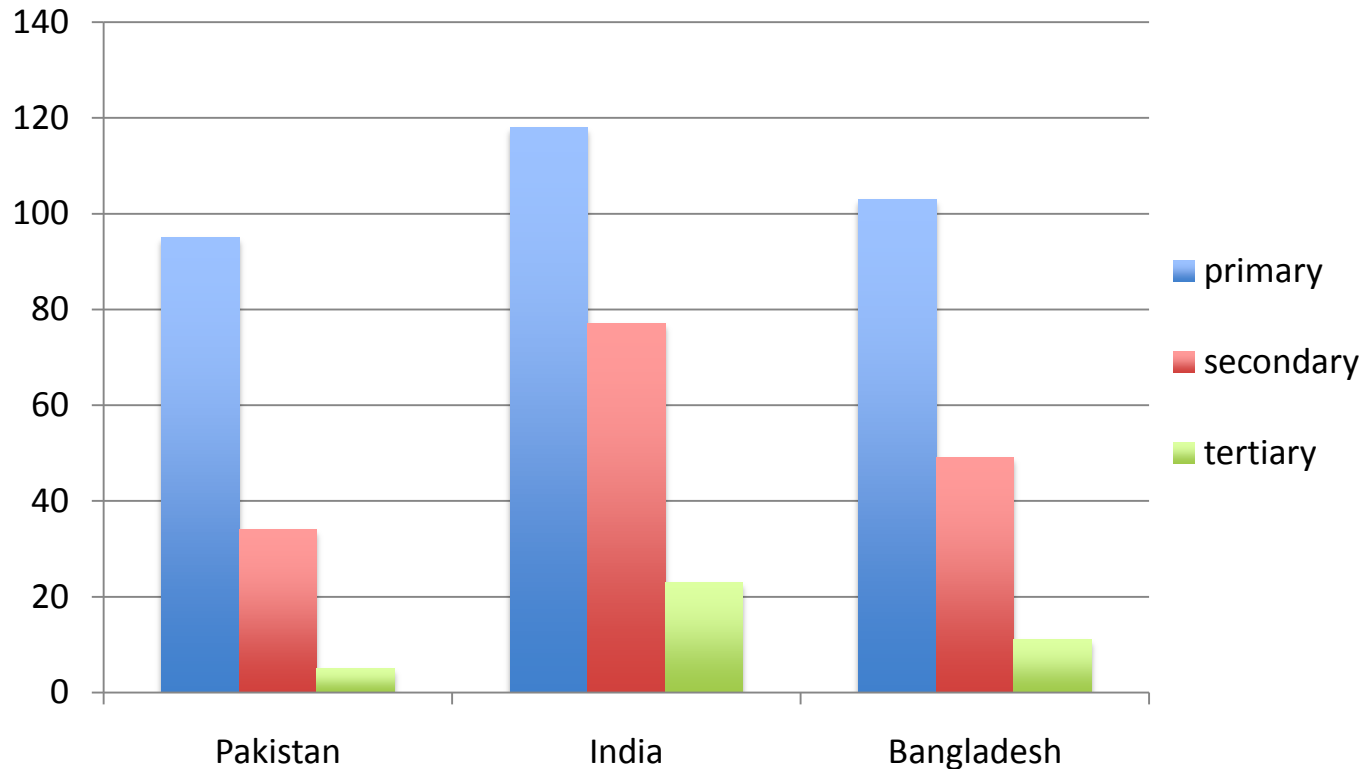
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Current Challenge

- This review looks at critical gaps in education outcomes and how past and on-going programs are addressing these challenges
- Pakistan **inherited an education system designed to serve the colonial administration.**
- Now country is at critical stage, important political/demographic transitions, with greater devolution and strengthened democracy, opportunity to build better system
- **Therefore need to articulate the purpose of education as a means for developing skills and talents of all citizens**
- **Education outcomes poor compared to other developing countries**

Lowest gross enrollments (2010) compared to India and Bangladesh

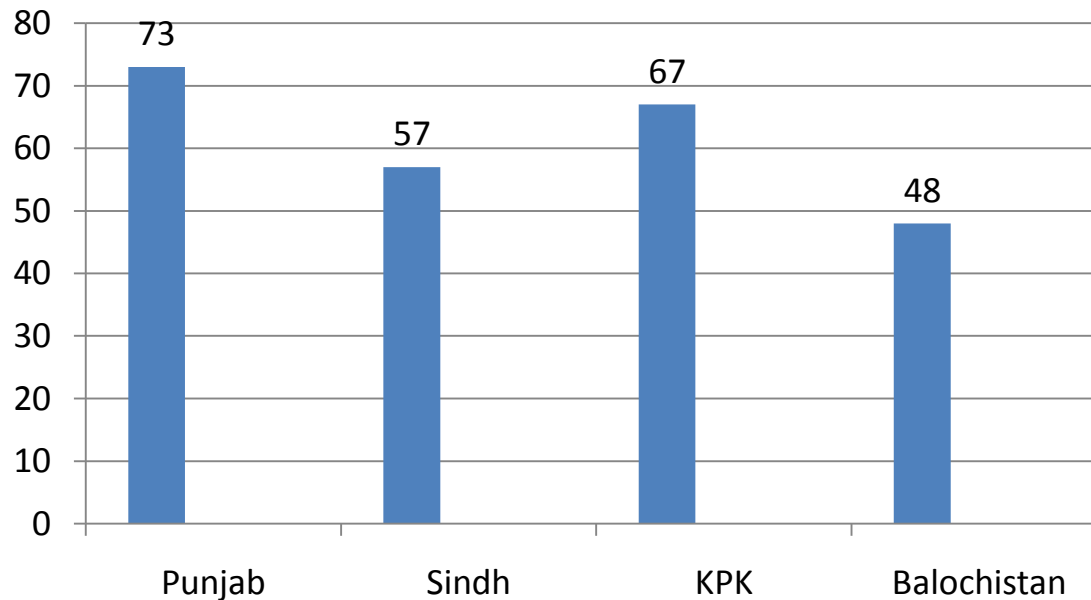


State of Education Punjab-critical gaps

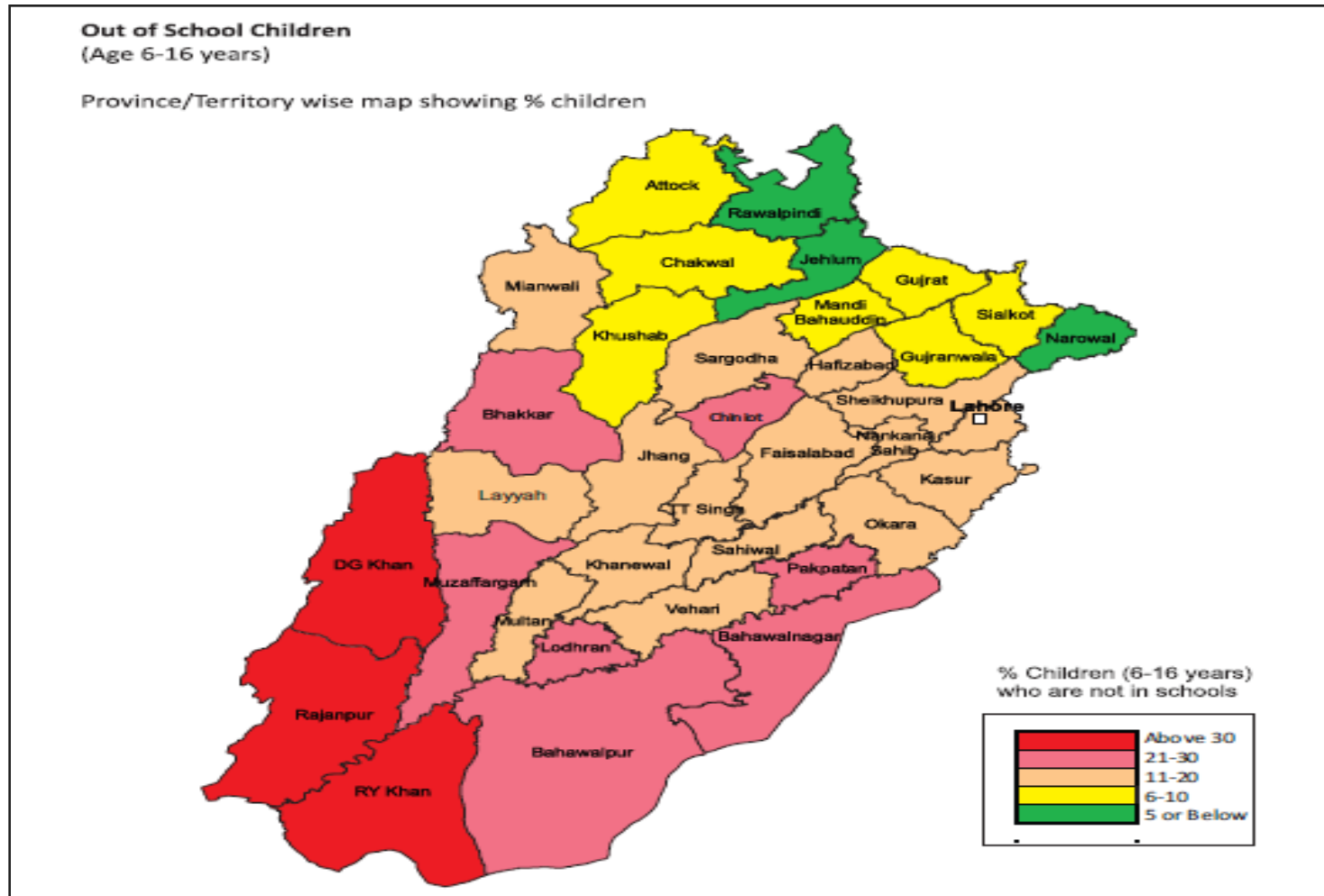
- Too many—up to a quarter—**children still out of school**
- Sharp **drop in enrollments after primary**
- Pull of education beyond primary is weak
- **Gender gaps**— girls' enrollments lag behind
- **Learning gaps**— assessments based on testing carried out in ASER, LEAPS, PECS data and other studies **show learning levels continue to be low**
- Gauge of a good system means access to high quality education for every child

Article 25-A requires all 5-16 year olds to attend school

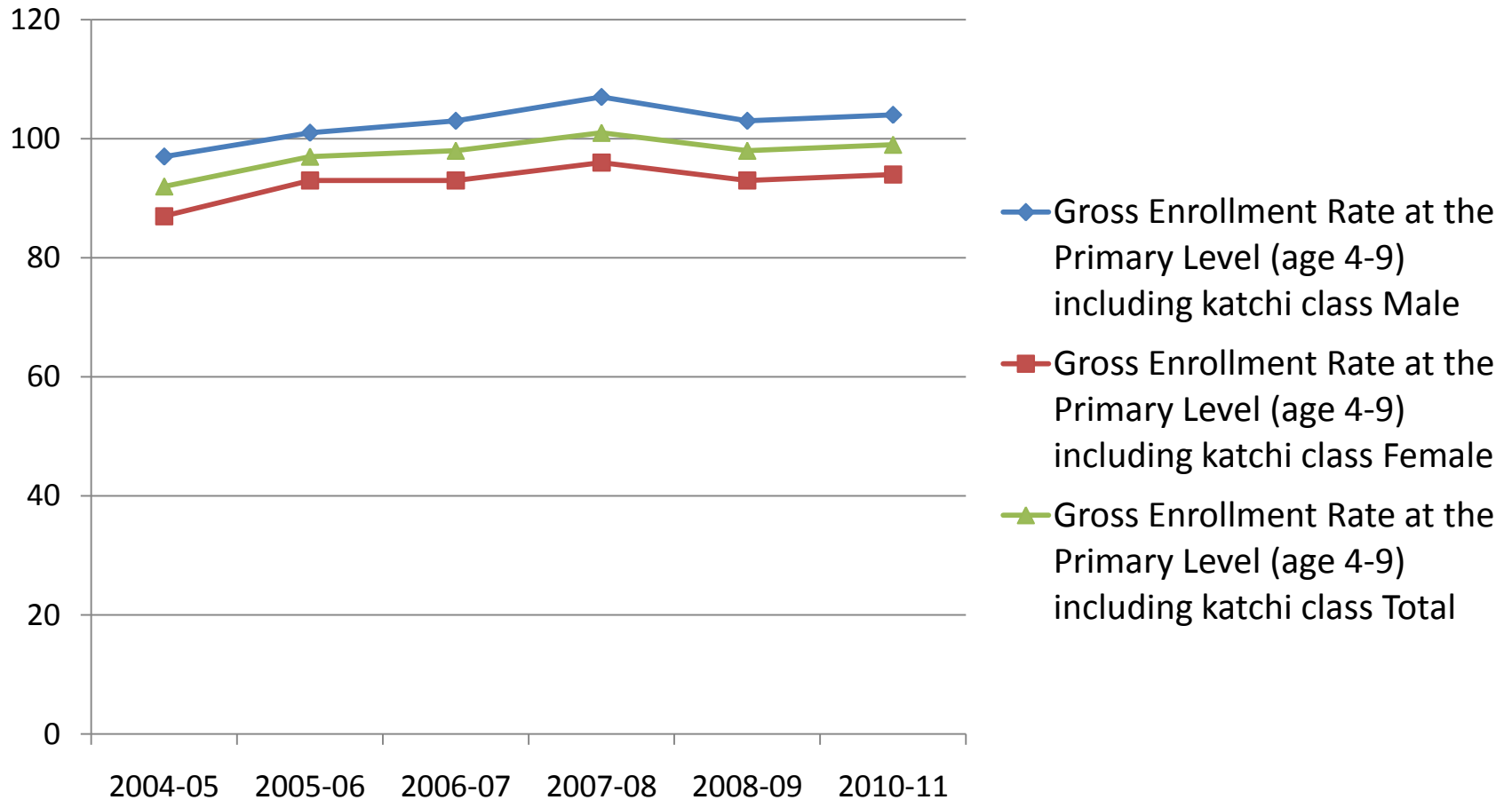
- 73% of Punjab's 5-16 year olds are in school (PSLM 2010-11)



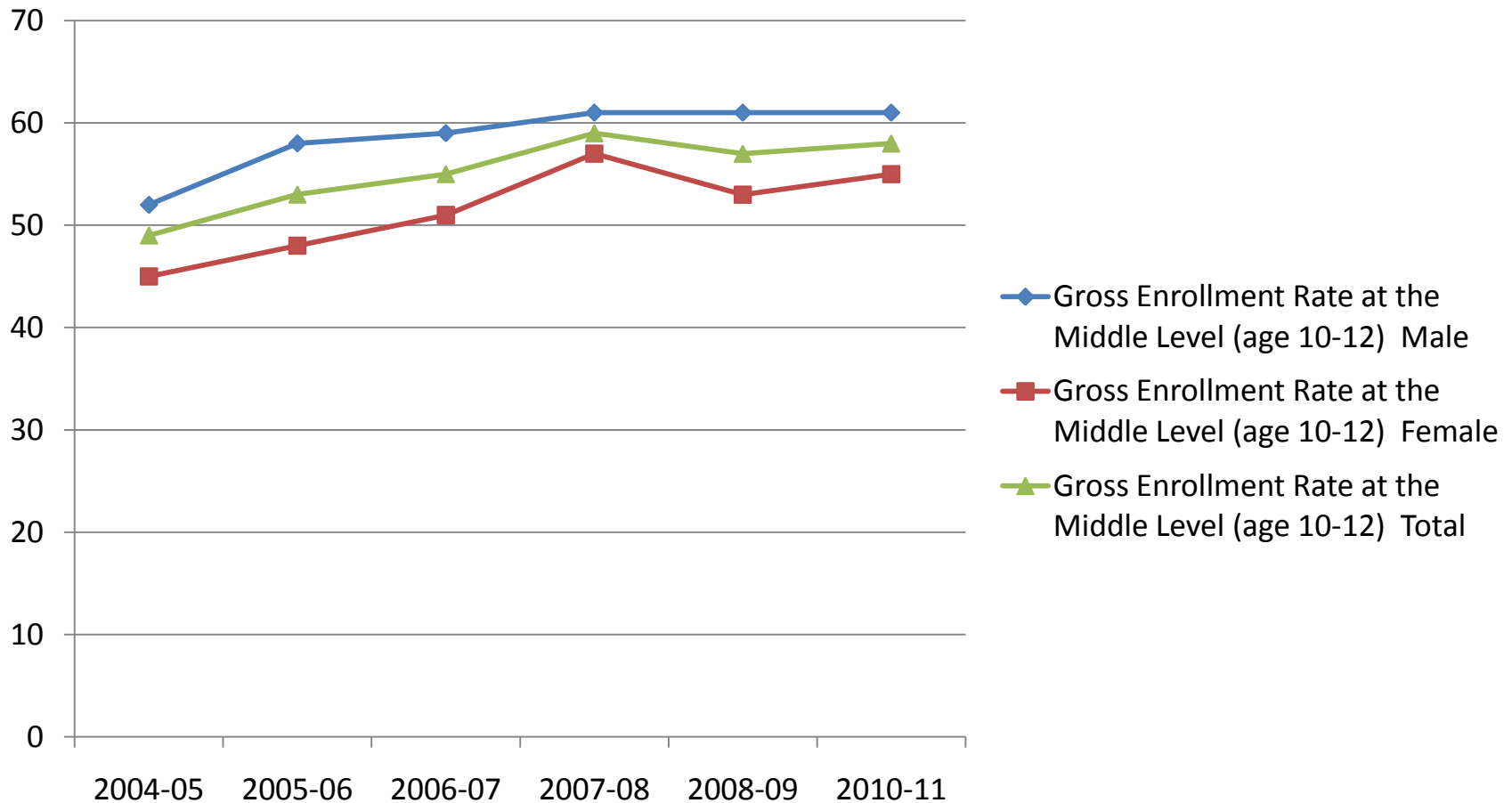
District-wide variation: Many more 6-16 year olds in Southern districts not in school



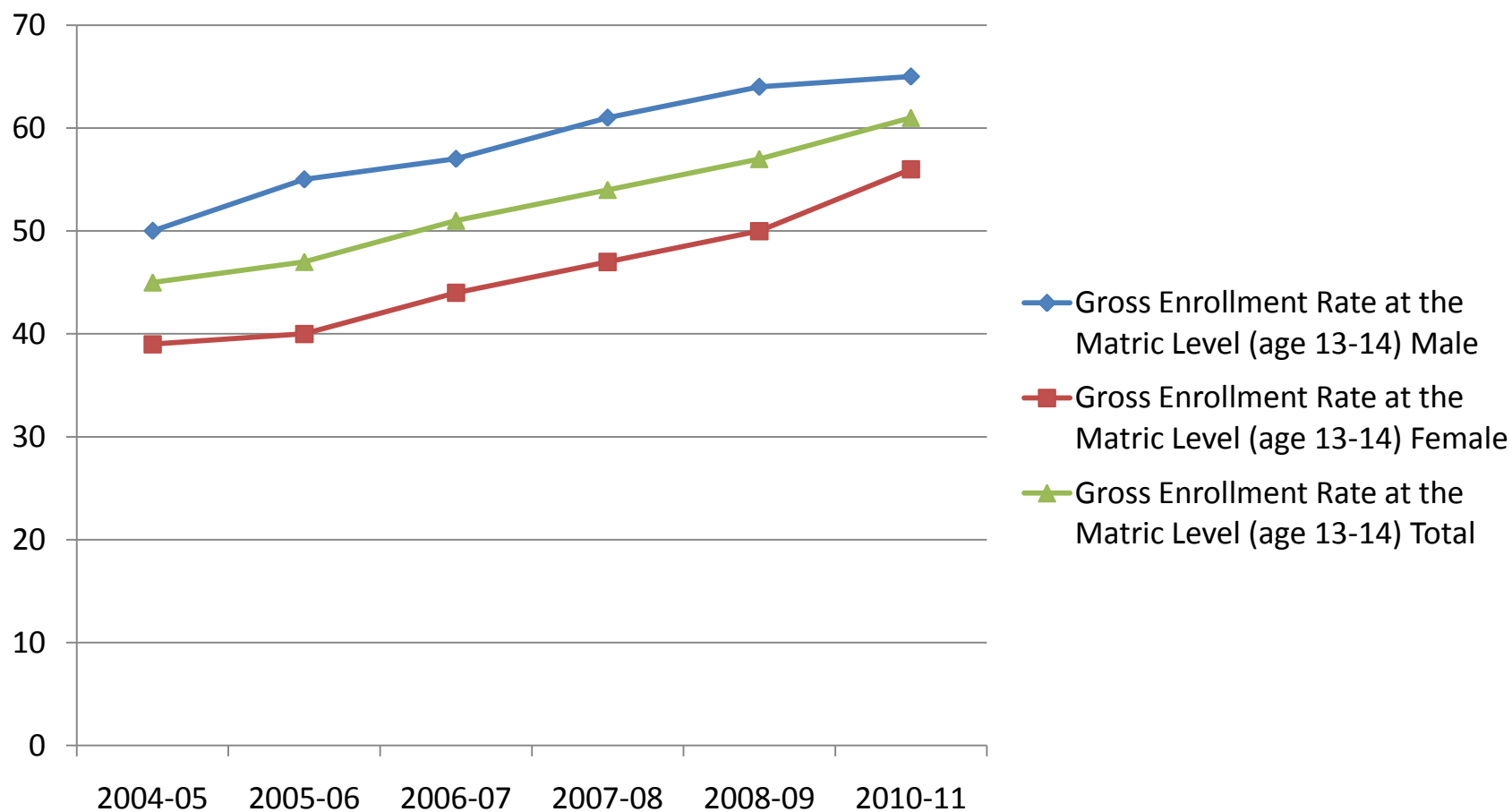
Gender gap in education over time - Primary Enrollments



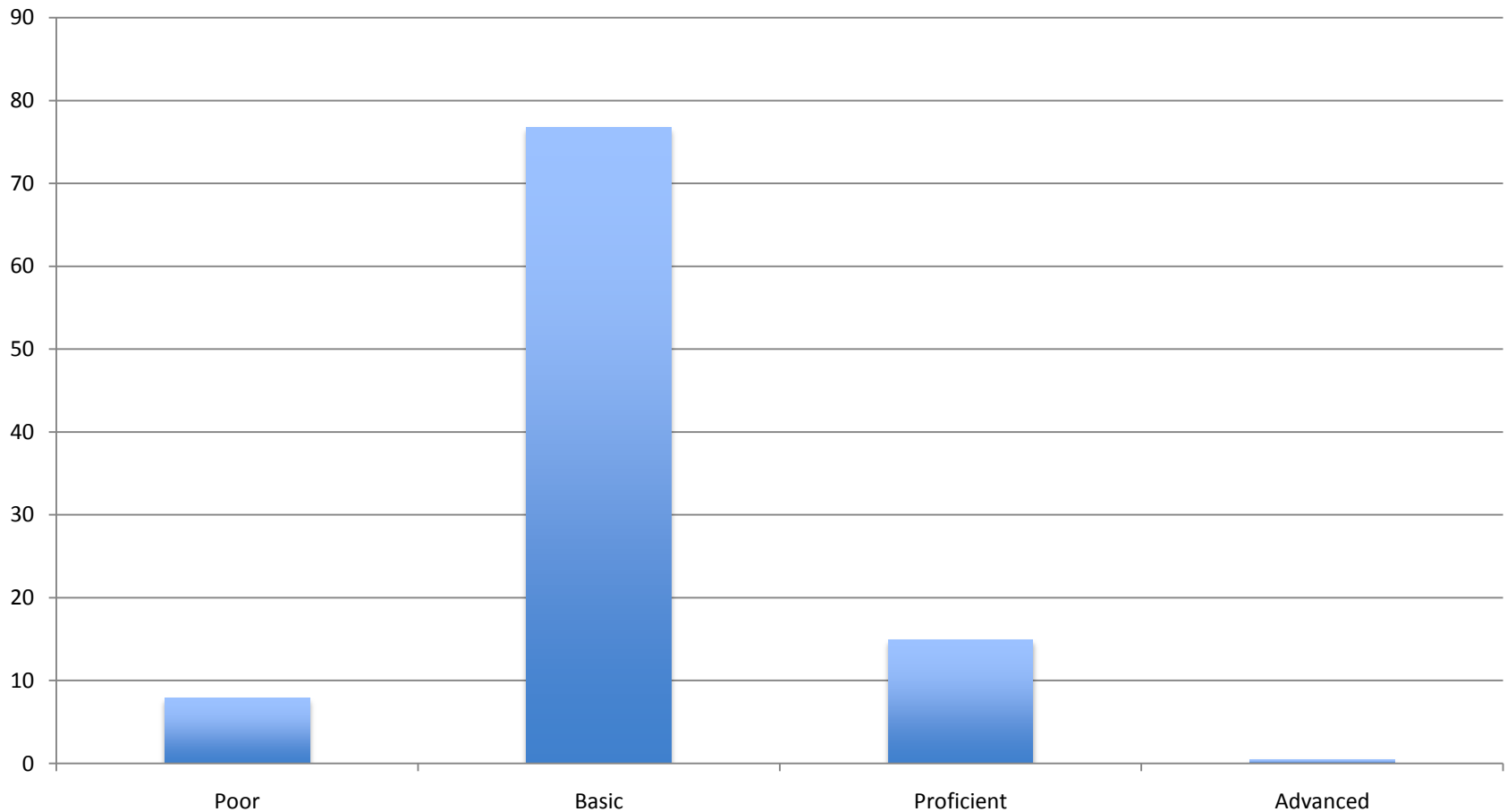
Gender gap-Middle school enrollments



Gender gap-secondary enrollments



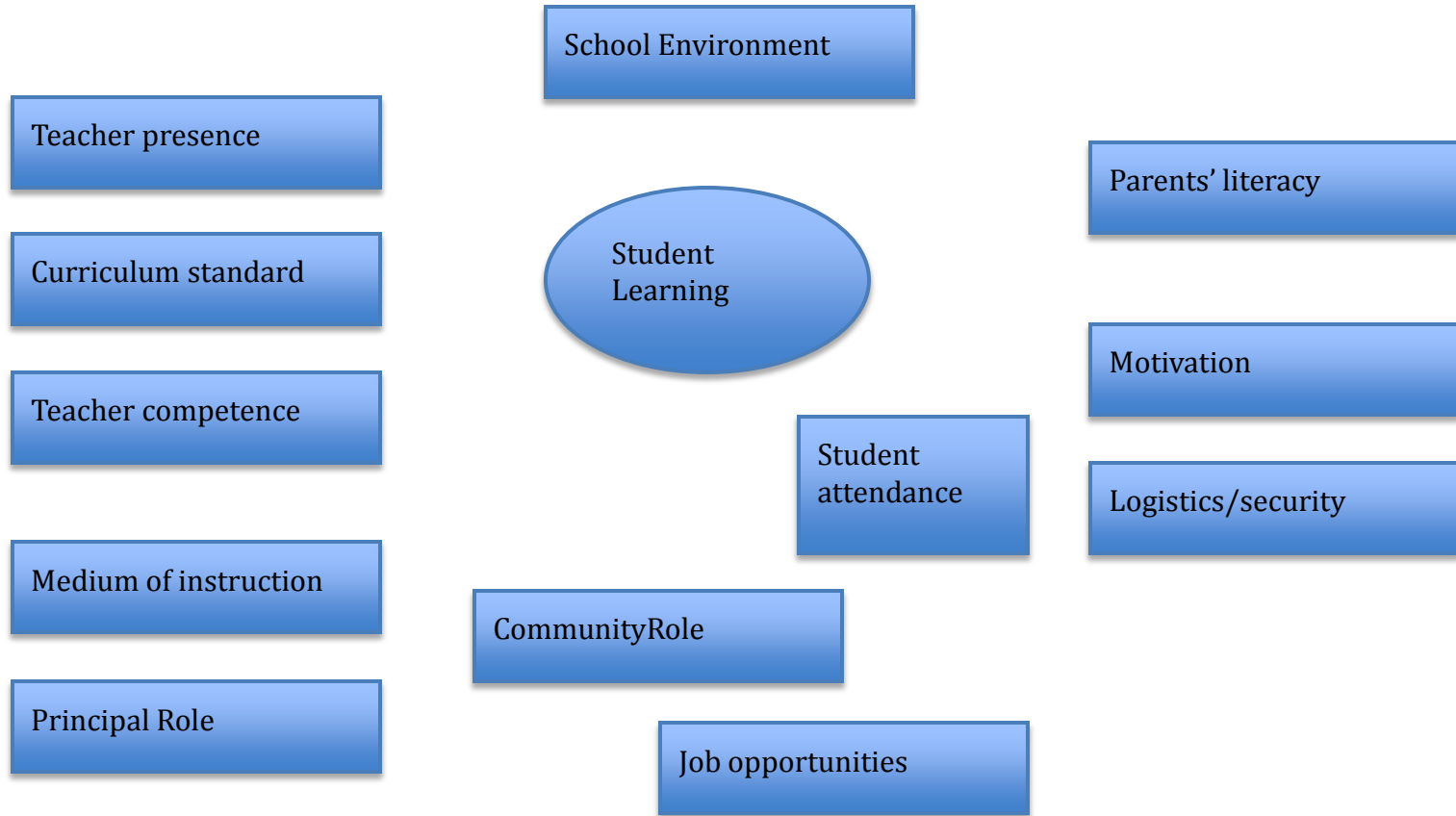
But even those in school have only “basic” level of proficiency in Math, Language and Social Studies



Framework for understanding Influences on student learning

- School and home influences, community efforts, innate talents determine student learning
- Policies to improve learning would address these supply and demand aspects of educational outcomes

Student Learning



Studies show importance of school level factors

- **What happens in schools can make a difference— school level factors matter** more in learning achievement than socio-economic background (LEAPS)
- Private school children perform better than those in public schools, but “between school effects explain largest component in test score variation” (Asim and Raju, 2011)
- “the gap between good and bad district is relatively smaller compared to the gap between good and bad school within any given district” (Andrabi et al, 2012)
- **Districts with high enrollments may not have better child learning results** (PEC, LEAPS data)
- Southern Punjab districts “amazingly” show better results (PEAS, 2012)— more probing of results and data needed

Demand factors influencing school enrollment and learning

- **Poverty** and **distance** important factors- therefore girls stipend program for poor families under PESRP influenced middle school enrollments
- Distance also an important factor in choosing private over public schooling (PERI school choice report, 2013, survey of representative 1000 hh about parents' perceptions on why they think the school they chose for their children was better than the other best alternative)
- **Quality of education** important reason for choosing school

Interventions addressing critical gaps - Past and present programs

- SAP1 and SAPII (1993-2000) witnessed large investments in **school infrastructure provision**, but with little evaluation of results. **Considered largely unsuccessful** as complex monitoring system could not be implemented, frequent political changes during that period created opportunities for corruption
- Decentralization in 2001, 18th amendment in 2010 devolved education and health to the provinces
- Currently **Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PESRP) major program** in Punjab in primary and secondary education since 2003
- While more effort to measure student **learning results**– since 2003, bulk of spending continues to be invested in school infrastructure
- To improve learning, initiatives in **teacher performance pay and training**, increased funding to **School councils**, subsidies to private schools based on enrollments– **school voucher** program

Programs for making teachers more effective: Contract Teachers

- Example of past program where **problems of design and implementation not addressed**
- Experiment with contract teachers 2002-2007
- Evidence of learning gains from use of contract teachers (Bau& Das 2011), but policy was shelved in 2011 without evaluation
- Design and implementation issues such as frequent resignation due to site specific hiring and non-transfer option (Habib, 2010)
- **Practice of merit-based hiring** was retained

New interventions - CPD and teacher bonus programs under PESRP

- To improve **learning quality** the 1) **Continuous Professional Development Program (CPD)** started by the Directorate for Staff Development (DSD) in 2004 introduced in-service and professional development of primary teachers through mentoring and decentralized training at the cluster level
- **2) A group teacher bonus scheme** linked to schools with high student enrollment and achievement results
- CPD and teacher bonus schemes could have adverse effects if **teachers have to be absent** from classrooms because of **training** and bonus depends on “**teaching to the test**”
- Teacher training generally not found to raise student achievement
- Could **take focus away from student learning**
- Evaluations needed before large scale implementation

Trying to link teacher pay to performance

- Literature indicates tying teacher pay to student performance can improve student learning (e.g., Hanushek, 2013)
- **But knowing how to pay teachers for performance is difficult-- LEAPS study shows that in low-income private schools, salary was related to teacher competence.**
- **But in government schools, teacher competence is not related to teacher pay**
- Private schools can fire incompetent teachers
- In government schools, politically motivated hiring or transfers of teachers makes teaching non-serious
- More research to assess how salaries/bonus tied with performance

Interventions to improve learning-

Evaluation of report cards

- Punjab Examination Commission (PEC) **student learning assessment** introduced in Class 5 and 8 since 2003, mandatory since 2005 in all private and public schools
- Learning levels are generally low
- **Variation at the school level** considered important in explaining differences in student achievement ((Andrabi, Naseer and others, 2012- combining 2009 EMIS school input and PEC scores)
- Schools with **higher student-teacher ratios perform poorly**, though the effect is small
- Schools with **better educated and more experienced teachers** and **better facilities** such as blackboards and boundary walls also performed better
- More evaluation of **school level factors** affecting learning needed

School vouchers-Role of private education

- Foundation assisted schools introduced based on the success of private schooling
- In Pakistan, **private schools yield better results than govt. schools** indicating importance of **school level characteristics** such as **presence of teacher**, ability to **fire incompetent staff**, and less exposure to experiments and inconsistent policies
- Learning levels higher and schooling per child cheaper than regular government schools
- However monitoring and testing required for subsidy in Foundation Assisted Schools

Identifying critical policy gaps

- **Policy gap 1-** Address **disruptive classroom practices:** such as **multi-grade** classes, teachers tasks that **take time away from students**
- **Policy gap2-** **Greater role of headmaster** in creating conducive school environment
- **Policy gap 3-** **Clearer language policy in schools.** Can learn from experience of **other countries with multi-lingual backgrounds.** For instance, several East Asian countries where there is a demand for competence in English have effective bilingual language policies in school

Policy gap 4-Curriculum standard and how its taught

- National curriculum 2006 provides guidelines **content** has to be **relevant** and of a **high standard**, as well as **teaching it** appropriately is important
- For instance, studies for South Asia and Africa (including Pakistan) show that **covering too much material too quickly can have an adverse effect on cumulative student learning**, the result being that students do not master the basics despite several years of instruction(Pritchett and Beatty,2012)
- **Avoid “teaching to the test”** to score in assessments for political reasons

Policies to keep children in school

- **Policy gap 5: Efforts to improve quality need to be sustained beyond primary** and throughout school years
- **Policy gap 6:** Enrolling out of school children: **Poverty** and **distance** issues (especially for girls) need to be addressed along with parents' perception of value of education
- Addressing policy gaps related to **learning improvements** at the classroom level and **retention to higher grades** expected to help in motivating parents to make more effort to enroll children

Future opportunities

- **Student**-focused programs
- More research on **why some public/private schools are better than others**
- Avoid **too many policy changes** that can waste effect of past successful accumulated efforts
- Despite several interventions, results still poor, need to **evaluate interventions** with on-going revision and support of policies where needed