



Authentication of large-scale expansion of pre-primary education

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DESCRIPTION

International evidence indicates that investment in early childhood programmes may lead to significant economic benefits for countries and children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Despite rising pressure to invest in such programmes, many low and lower-middle-income nations have ignored pre-primary education. As a result, just one in every five children in low-income nations gets access to pre-primary education. Governments and donors have increased their commitment to pre-primary education in recent years. This commitment is mirrored in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal for Education, which contains an explicit target to achieve universal pre-primary education, with the goal of enhancing children's preparation for primary school admission. With the emphasis on expanding pre-primary education provision, evidence on whether such expansion reaches the most disadvantaged people, as well as its impact on school preparedness, particularly in low-income nations that are now the furthest away from meeting the Sustainable Development Goals objective. This emphasis is critical in light of previous findings from poor and lower-middle income countries indicating that the expansion of elementary schooling has resulted in expanding access gaps (Barneett, 1995).

Emerging data also suggests that pre-primary school participation is significantly uneven. However, little is known about how countrywide pre-primary education improvements affect access or later primary school learning outcomes. Given the government's recent policy reforms aimed at quickly boosting pre-primary education supply, it presents an essential case study for understanding the process of such a large-scale transformation within the setting of a low-income nation. As a consequence, the research contributes significantly to the current scholarly literature while also providing policy insights for the government and other low-income

countries on the relevance of fairness in the growth of pre-primary education provision (Goodman, 2005).

In order to increase young children's access to early childhood services, it approved a new national policy framework for early childhood care and Education. Over a 6-year period, the gross enrolment rate in pre-primary education climbed from 5% to 46% due to greater government participation. The policy reform's goal was to provide a cost-effective model of pre-primary education to enhance school readiness in terms of learning and grade progression for children, as well as to reach individuals from the most marginalised areas (Melhuish, 2008).

Given the substantial growth in pre-primary enrolment, we investigate whether this has been followed by a reduction in inequities in pre-primary access and an improvement in early learning outcomes in primary school, as predicted by policy change. First, we investigate the extent to which children from various backgrounds by region, gender, and age group participate in pre-primary education. Second, we examine the relationship between pre-primary involvement and reading skills in Grades 2 and 3 of primary school, concentrating on changes before and during the reform era, utilising regionally representative early grade reading testing data obtained from 5 areas in Ethiopia. This analysis is critical for determining if national and SDG policy objectives for children's school readiness are being met through large-scale expansion of pre-primary education, with a special emphasis on leaving no one behind. We finish by examining the policy implications of expanding pre-primary education in low and lower middle income countries in an equitable manner (Reynolds, 2011).

Educational Inequalities

It has made great progress toward universal primary education during the last two decades. Despite significant

rise in primary enrollment and a decrease of the gender gap, access inequities persist for children from low-income households, children with parents with lower levels of education, and children from rural or underdeveloped areas of the country. Some research also relates to children's elementary school learning outcomes that were already considerably below predicted levels. Children from disadvantaged situations, such as those with low home income, gender, or geographic location, are less likely to master the fundamentals. Notably, researchers discovered that regional variances in academic success are linked to differences in socioeconomic and school environmental characteristics. The second most populated country in Sub-Saharan Africa, and given the potential for huge within country disparities, it is critical to uncover regional variances in educational access within the country (Raudenbush, 1991).

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