Barriers to the Provision of Adequate Physical Facilities in Primary Schools of District Kotli

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ABSTRACT: The research study deals with the causes of insufficient physical facilities at the primary school level in District Kotli. The objectives of this study were to assess the need for physical facilities in primary schools of District Kotli, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and to identify the causes of insufficient physical facilities at the primary school level. The study was delimited to girls' primary schools in Tehsil Kotli, AJ&K. All primary school teachers and head teachers constituted the population of the study. A sample of 105 teachers from girls' primary schools was selected for the study. A five-point Likert scale was developed by the researcher to collect data from the sample. The questionnaire consisted of 24 items related to the need for physical facilities and the causes of their insufficiency at the primary school level. Data were collected personally by the researcher and analyzed using simple percentages and mean scores. The study revealed that large rooms for big classes, boundary walls, toilet facilities, and water facilities were needed in schools. Lack of sincere leadership, insufficient knowledge about the need for physical facilities, poor auditing management, and lack of community participation were identified as main causes of insufficient facilities. Insufficient primary school physical facilities stem from limited budgets, inadequate space, poor policy implementation, lack of government and community involvement, weak leadership, low awareness of facility needs, and inadequate auditing and management. The study recommends that the government increase funding to provide essential facilities and teaching and learning aids.

KEYWORDS: Physical Facilities, Causes, Insufficient Physical Facilities, Primary Level

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Introduction

Physical facilities such as water supply, toilets, furniture, gyms, libraries, and medical stores impact students' performance and their achievement. Parents' criteria for choosing the right school are influenced by the facilities provided by the institution. The design and maintenance of physical facilities like buildings, laboratories, libraries, furniture, and equipment are imperative for an effective school organization and for better educational performance of students (Earthman, 2002).

Physical facilities are a fundamental factor contributing to academic achievement in the educational system. A recent systematic review confirmed a positive correlation between schools' physical environments and students' learning outcomes, including engagement and academic performance (Cheryan et al., 2014). Laboratories play a

vital role in the teaching and learning of science. Research indicates that the quality and availability of such facilities significantly influence learning motivation and outcomes. A study by Ajayi and Akinsanya (2021) found that campus physical facilities significantly influence both learning motivation and learning outcomes, suggesting that physical infrastructure serves as a foundational prerequisite for academic achievement. Supporting this, a meta-analysis by Gunter and Shao (2016) found a positive relationship between building condition quality and academic performance, with an effect size of 0.24.

Physical facilities in any educational system range from the school plant—including school buildings, classrooms, libraries, labs, and toilet facilities—to various other amenities that inspire students towards learning. According to the Education Production Function Theory, educational infrastructure is considered an input that most likely determines the output of the education system. However, research consistently shows that most physical facilities conducive to good learning appear insufficient in many public schools today. Studies in various contexts, including Ghana, reveal that many schools lack adequate educational infrastructure, with challenges escalating in rural and remote areas (Eze & Nwosu, 2023).

A review of past studies on the availability of physical facilities and equipment in developing countries presents concerning findings. Research indicates that many schools operate in old and dilapidated conditions, with classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and furniture in poor states of disrepair, contributing to weak academic performance (Eze & Nwosu, 2023). The condition of school buildings has been shown to correlate with student performance, with the magnitude of this correlation varying based on factors such as the type of facility measured, grade level, and subject area (Gunter & Shao, 2016).

The availability and use of physical facilities like labs, classrooms, and libraries create a conducive classroom learning environment. Research demonstrates that the physical environment predominantly influences students' perspectives when utilizing learning spaces, and emotional, social, and mental factors are stimulated through the physical environment (Oparaji, 2024). Studies have identified four domains of influential built environmental factors: structural facilities (air quality, thermal comfort, lighting), interior design (furniture design and layout), school facilities (supporting areas and quality of facilities), and architectural design (size, open space, and circulation) (Cheryan et al., 2014). When physical facilities are available, students tend to develop interest in learning, leading to excellence. School physical facilities are key tools to facilitate and stimulate learning programs. The poor performance of students can often be traced to a lack of these facilities (Eze & Nwosu, 2023).

Research has established that inadequate physical facilities adversely affect the learning environment and fail to provide the stimulating setting that could enhance effective teaching and educational outcomes. A significant correlation exists between the availability of educational infrastructure and performance outcomes across different geographical locations (Eze & Nwosu, 2023). The physical classroom environment impacts both academic achievement and mental well-being, with factors such as classroom lighting, libraries, class size, and technology use playing important roles (Earthman, 2002).

It has also been argued that the availability of school buildings and various facilities is imperative as they facilitate effective teaching and learning, consequently positively impacting students' educational performance. Research by Ajayi and Akinsanya (2021) demonstrated that physical facilities explain 70.8% of the variance in learning motivation and 62.4% of the variance in learning outcomes. In situations where students lack access to communal facilities like libraries, equipment, and adequate classroom space, these factors contribute to low student performance. Beyond protecting students from environmental elements, adequate space, seating, laboratory and internet facilities, and other physical facilities enhance the level of motivation and educational performance of students (Ajayi & Akinsanya, 2021).

Good physical facilities are one of the main factors in a school's educational quality. This is backed by research showing the correlation between a school's physical environment, which includes buildings, labs, libraries, and the availability of basic amenities like water and sanitation, and the academic performance and engagement of students. Science laboratories, in particular, are an effective teaching tool, being instrumental in the motivation and achievement of students.

Despite the recognized significance of physical facilities, the reality is far from the ideal, especially in developing areas where a large number of public schools, mostly in the countryside, are running their operations in dilapidated and undersized buildings. Such infrastructural deficiencies, from absence of proper toilets and availability of drinking water to deteriorated classrooms, contribute to a learning atmosphere that is not only unfriendly to teaching but also fails to arouse learner's curiosity.

While global statistics emphasize this major problem, there is a considerable dearth of really detailed and localized information on the condition of physical facilities at the primary school level in District Kotli, Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Factors influencing the provision and upkeep of facilities, such as funding, participation of the local community, and the level of government support, are specific to the region, thus necessitating focused research. The purpose of this study is to fill the critical knowledge gap by first determining the physical facilities that are not available at girls' primary schools in Kotli and then investigating the causes of their absence. This research will supply precise information about the extent of the problem, which can then be used by the policymakers, school management, and local community to come up with solutions and to argue for resources to make the learning environment equitable and effective for all students.

Statement of the Problem

Physical facilities include the whole school plant, such as buildings, classrooms, libraries, laboratories, toilet facilities, and other necessary materials and systems that make up the learning environment. The state of these facilities in public primary schools has become a major issue not only for students but also for parents and teachers since poor infrastructure negatively affects both the quality of education and the well-being of students. At the same time, it is girls' primary schools that seem to be the most affected when one looks at schools in District Kotli, yet the main reasons for this shortage still largely remain unexplored. As such the line between poor infrastructure and a lack of understanding cannot be drawn because the latter is due to almost any reason from financing through policies/leadership to community participation or lack of it. In light of such a conundrum this research will try to find out what leads to poor infrastructure in girls' primary schools of District Kotli and also delve into the ways which might help to solve this problem so that it could constitute a solid basis for further development of educational infrastructure and learning environment for girls in the region.

Objectives of the Study

Following were the objectives of the study:

1. To assess the need of physical facilities in primary school of the District Kotli.
2. To identify the causes of insufficient physical facilities primary school level in District Kotli

Review of the Related Literature

Physical infrastructure is a key factor in supporting education quality in Pakistan. Indeed, research records a strong association between academic achievement and availability of facilities. Parents' prioritization of different factors during school selection have been documented by the families' preference for new, well-maintained buildings and schools with attractive amenities altogether (Lloyd et al., 2009; Oparaji, 2024).

Properly equipped labs, classrooms and libraries are essential components of effective teaching and learning. Public secondary schools' campuses in Multan are significantly less equipped than the WHO standards, and the wide urban-rural disparities might be a major obstacle to improve the educational results (Naz et al., 2023). Findings from Sindh reveal that several features of classroom environment including physical infrastructure and instructional resources have strong positive associations with academic achievement (Dharejo et al., 2025). On the other hand, studies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have documented libraries, computer laboratories and science labs as statistically significant factors for student satisfactory achievement (Aziz et al., 2022).

Moreover, the lack of infrastructure creates a detrimental effect on results. Besides, Workers' Welfare Schools in Punjab are very limited and the problems include combating the high teacher-student ratio as well as the absence of physical educational facilities. Besides, the livening up and cleaning of the environment have to be considered as priority (Aziz et al., 2022). Madaris in Bahawalnagar are showing huge deficiency in ventilation, sanitation and electricity that not only hamper but also limit the productive learning environment. Most secondary school facilities are available and usable, however, increased opportunities for practical work in labs are seen as a major factor for better science results (Mustafa, 2025).

On the contrary, just laying down the equipment or facilities in the school is hardly sufficient. The research shows that if school resource input is going to waste, and maximizing student learning is not achieved, significant challenges will still be in store (Dahar, 2011).

Therefore, educational players from all over Pakistan must take action not only by funding the infrastructure but also two pronged using the infrastructure purposefully and equitably addressing the urban-rural disparities to reach international benchmarks.

Research Methodology

The researcher adopted a quantitative research method and collected data using a questionnaire. The study focused on girls' primary schools in Tehsil Kotli, District Kotli, Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The target population consisted of 105 teachers from public sector girls' primary schools in the Tehsil. A universal sampling technique was employed to collect data from all teachers in the sample.

A five-point Likert scale questionnaire i.e. Strongly Agreed (SA), Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Partially Agreed (PA), Disagreed (DA) and Strongly Disagreed (SDA) was developed to explore the causes of insufficient physical facilities at the girls' primary school level in District Kotli. The validity of the instrument was established by consulting two education experts from the University of Kotli (UOK). Reliability was checked using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a value of 0.85, considered acceptable.

The researcher personally collected data by distributing questionnaires among the teachers at girls' primary schools in Tehsil Kotli. The collected data were analyzed using percentages and mean scores, and the findings were interpreted and presented in tables.

Results

Need Analysis of Physical Facilities

Following is the analysis of data related to objective 1.

Table 1

Large Rooms are Needed for Big Classes in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	31	46	13	9	5	4.1

Table 1 reveals that 77 (31 SA + 46 A) teachers agreed with the statement that large rooms were needed for big classes in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.1) showed the agreement of respondent with the statement.

Table 2

Boundary Wall is Needed in the School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	48	37	15	4	1	4.42

Table 2 reveals that 85 (48 SA + 37 A) teachers agreed with the statement that boundary wall was needed in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.42) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 3

The School Requires to Have More Toilets

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	47	42	11	3	2	4.4

Table 3 reveals that 89 (47 SA + 42 A) teachers agreed with the statement that the schools required to have more toilets. Furthermore, mean score (4.44) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 4

Water Facility is Needed in the School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	78	14	5	5	3	4.74

Table 4 reveals that 92 (78 SA + 14 A) teachers agreed with the statement that water facility was needed in the school. Furthermore, mean score (4.74) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 5

Students' Chairs are Needed in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	35	60	5	5	0	4.4

Table 5 reveals that 95 (35 SA + 60 A) teachers agreed with the statement that students' chairs were needed in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.4) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 6

Students Desks are Needed in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	35	52	8	5	4	4.21

Table 6 reveals that 86 (35 SA + 52 A) teachers agreed with the statement that students' desks were needed in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.21) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 7

Teachers' Desks are Needed in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	75	15	2	9	4	4.63

Table 7 reveals that 90 (75SA + 15 A) teachers agreed with the statement that teachers' desks were needed in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.63) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 8

Multi-purpose Tables are Needed in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	35	52	13	4	1	4.31

Table 8 reveals that 87 (35SA + 52 A) teachers agreed with the statement that multi-purpose tables were needed in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.31) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 9

Space is Needed to Conduct Assembly in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	40	55	5	5	0	4.45

Table 9 reveals that 95 (40 SA + 55 A) teachers agreed with the statement that space was needed to conduct assembly in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.45) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 10

Separate Place is Needed for Co-Curricular Activities in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	47	39	17	2	0	4.46

Table 10 reveals that 86 (47 SA + 39 A) teachers agreed with the statement that separate place was needed for co-curricular activities in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.46) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 11

Playground is Needed for Games in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	49	39	11	3	3	4.43

Table 11 reveals that 88 (49 SA + 39 A) teachers agreed with the statement that playground was needed for games in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.43) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 12

Auditorium is Needed for Large Gatherings in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	73	16	4	9	3	4.72

Table 12 reveals that 89 (73SA + 16 A) teachers agreed with the statement that auditorium was needed for large gatherings in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.72) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 13

Proper Place for Library is Needed in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	49	38	2	16	0	4.35

Table 13 reveals that 87 (49SA + 38 A) teachers agreed with the statement that proper place for library was needed in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.35) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 14

Books related to Different Subjects are Required in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	39	51	8	5	2	4.35

Table 14 reveals that 90 (39 SA + 51 A) teachers agreed with the statement that books related to different subjects were needed in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.35) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 15

Up-to-Date and New Versions of Books of Different Authors are Needed

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	74	15	2	9	5	4.59

Table 15 reveals that 89 (74SA + 15 A) teachers agreed with the statement that up to date and new versions of books of different authors were needed in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.59) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 16

Proper Sitting Arrangement in Library is Needed

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	35	52	13	5	0	4.32

Table 16 reveals that 87 (35SA + 52 A) teachers agreed with the statement that proper sitting arrangement in library was needed in school. Furthermore, mean score (4.32) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Causes of Insufficient Physical Facilities

Following is the analysis of data related to objective 2.

Table 17

Lack of Budget

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	49	38	2	16	0	4.35

Table 17 reveals that 87 (49SA + 38 A) teachers agreed with the statement that there was a lack of budget in school which is a cause of insufficient physical facilities primary school level. Furthermore, mean score (4.35) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 18

Lack of Space in School

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	47	38	17	2	1	4.43

Table 18 reveals that 85 (47SA + 38 A) teachers agreed with the statement that there was a lack of space in school which is a cause of insufficient physical facilities primary school level. Furthermore, mean score (4.43) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 19

Lack of Implementation of Educational Policies

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	48	41	1	3	2	4.45

Table 19 reveals that 89 (48 SA + 41 A) teachers agreed with the statement that there was a lack of implementation of educational policies which is a cause of insufficient physical facilities primary school level. Furthermore, mean score (4.45) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 20

Lack of Government Interest in the Education Department

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	73	15	2	9	6	4.49

Table 20 reveals that 88 (73 SA + 15 A) teachers agreed with the statement that there was lack of government interest in education department which is a cause of insufficient physical facilities primary school level. Furthermore, mean score (4.49) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 21

Lack of Community Participation

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	49	38	2	16	0	4.35

Table 21 reveals that 87 (49 SA + 38 A) teachers agreed with the statement that there was a lack of community participation which is a cause of insufficient physical facilities primary school level. Furthermore, mean score (4.35) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 22

Lack of Sincere Leadership in Schools

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	38	52	8	5	2	4.34

Table 22 reveals that 90 (35SA &51 A) teachers agreed with the statement that lack of sincere leadership in schools was a cause of insufficient physical facilities primary school level. Furthermore, mean score (4.34) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 23

Lack of Knowledge about Need of Physical Facilities

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	73	18	2	9	3	4.64

Table 23 reveals that 91 (73 SA +14 A) teachers agreed with the statement that lack of knowledge about need of physical facilities was a cause of insufficient physical facilities primary school level. Furthermore, mean score (4.64) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Table 24

Lack of Auditing Management

Sample	N	SA	A	PA	DA	SDA	Mean
Primary Level Teachers	105	33	52	11	9	0	4.24

Table 24 reveals that 89 (33 SA + 52 A) teachers agreed with the statement that lack of auditing management was a cause of insufficient physical facilities primary school level. Furthermore, mean score (4.24) showed the agreement of respondents with the statement.

Conclusions

On the basis of results, following conclusions are drawn:

1. Basic infrastructure and facilities, especially drinking water and a place for large meetings like an auditorium, are by far the most critical physical necessities of the school system as far as primary teachers are concerned. That is the consensus of teachers at the primary level.
2. Although the provision of all facilities is regarded as indispensable, certain teacher-focused resources such as comfortable desks are given very high importance. This indicates that teachers experience an acute and specific need for the right kind of furniture to carry out their administrative and preparatory work effectively.
3. Besides the main building, there is quite a visible and strong wish for materials that support the actual teaching process. Availability of opened books and learning materials are considered top requirements for normal day-to-day functioning.
4. On the other hand, financial shortage is still the first and primary reason identified for not having these facilities. Furthermore, a lack of interest and support from educational authorities is perceived as the root cause of this problem.
5. According to teachers, besides money, system failures are the cause of the absence of facilities as they believe that decision makers' ignorance about real needs and non-compliance with educational policies lead to the major shortcomings problem.
6. Although financial and systemic matters top the list, other aspects such as lack of physical space for school development and not enough involvement of the local community are also considered as important factors leading to the lack of physical facilities in primary education.

Recommendations

On the basis of conclusions, following recommendations are drawn:

1. It is crucial for the government and education departments to recognize the necessity and allocate specific funds for basic infrastructure. The most urgent task is making reliable clean water available and building halls or auditoriums suitable for school assemblies and large gatherings in each primary school.
2. Those responsible for policymaking and school management can make sure that the budgetary allocations cover the purchase of basic furniture, with a specific emphasis on providing teachers with proper desks and students with enough chairs to have a comfortable learning and working environment.
3. A strong system must be put in place to follow up on the carrying out of educational policies so that the requirements for physical facilities of schools which are communicated at the school level do not only stay on paper but are also turned into a set of well-defined actions and responsibilities with deadlines.
4. By promoting increased community involvement and carrying out detailed evaluations of the available space, school management committees and local authorities may effectively work to close the divide between government assistance and the actual conditions by planning in a resourceful manner and making use of the existing ones for essential facilities like playgrounds and libraries.

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