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Management for Sustainable Development Goals: Is Public-Private Partnership for Educational Development is Worthwhile in Sindh -Pakistan?

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Abstract:

This paper has been written in the background of proposed sustainable development conference to be held in September 2015 at UN headquarters with cooperation of the international community. It is new proposed set of comprehensive and universal sustainable development goals (SDGs). These seventeen goals are ambitious and an extension of eighth millennium development goals. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all is fourth proposed goal of SDGs. Public private partnership is worthwhile and direly needed to realize the transformative vision of the proposed sustainable development goals (SDGs) as concluded in the study.

Promoting Private Schools in Rural areas of the country is being implemented by national as well as provincial Education Foundations with collaboration of the World Bank. This is one of such initiative under Education Reform Program that aims to address both the challenges of school participation and student learning in poor, rural and unserved communities of the region. This study gives an understanding of public and private sector institutional arrangements for educational development in the region. This study also presents insights from the personal observation of the authors; a field survey conducted during empirical work and other reliable primary data set. The study explores the ideas that public sector institutions are mostly mismanaged and have lowest capacity to deliver according to the need of the hour particularly for rural unserved households. In order to impart quality education to underprivileged public private partnership can be enhanced up to colleges and university level for the educational/ socio economic development of the country. This initiative will also strengthen Government's efforts to impart compulsory and free education to each and every child of the province under article 25-A of Islamic republic of Pakistan.

Keywords: SEF, SERP, PPRS, PPP, MDGs, SDGs

1. Introduction

Public private partnerships (“PPPs”) is introduced in Sindh Pakistan in mid-nineties (1994-1995) through establishment of provincial education foundations an independent bodies for literacy thorough subsidies models in education which offer a set of powerful tools to faces major challenges in the areas of access, quality, and governance in education for improving both delivery and financing of Basic Education by entrepreneurs through per child subsidy model with cooperation of private sector .

It is the general observation in our country that public sector teacher’s performance is very low and their salaries are increasing from time to time in comparison of private sector schools. They are more interested in their associations, management affairs and not properly attending their duties timely in the schools even they are more qualified and most senior in the field due to their share in the number of schools and huge net work of public sector education. Keeping in view of the above the second mechanism is also referred to as the ‘Adopt a School’ model. The arrangement involves private actors voluntarily taking on both capital and human resource intensive responsibilities for the improvement of public schools. Beyond bearing operating costs of the schools, the State’s contribution is limit.

The government has again taken tireless efforts to initiate public private partnership unit in finance department through an act of Sindh Assembly in 2010 and extends it in other departments particularly in education department. The government has also taken some favorable steps to overcome the above discussed problems and also agreed to enhance per child subsidy model and this step has got appreciations widely among unserved communities to open more schools to accommodate out of schools children which is estimated more than 8 million in country and its 34 percent in Sindh province only. The majority of them are girls of rural areas.

In fact the numbers could be much more as the estimated population of Sindh for 2015 is believed to be near 48 million. This makes the eligible school going population around 12 million or so. Both public and private sector are probably catering to approximately 8 million children maximum at present; leaving behind a huge number of approximately 4 million or so children out of school.

More recently a third variety of partnerships are being fielded /piloted in Sindh -Pakistan, including vouchers private schools, state subsidization of low fee private schools, and private management of state schools.

The latter, Partnerships for Management (PfMs), are a model of partnership that involves the participation, input and contribution of private actors and organizations toward the infrastructural enhancement and upkeep, human resource development, and management of public Schools. The above referred model is great appreciation of parents and enrollment of that school are increased at least 24 percent after adoptions. The all programs of PPP model have followings main objectives to achieve targets Millennium Development Goals.

I. To establish public private partnerships for increasing access to and improving the quality of educational services provided to the children in marginalized areas of the of country with support of private sector.

II. To encourage Private Sector under Public Private Partnership for promotion of education and development, especially in underserved rural areas.

III. Improve access to educational facilities and extend free and flexible learning opportunities at grassroots level.

IV. Encourage gender equality and reducing gender disparity in education.

V. Enhancing quality of education and educational practices within classrooms thereby increasing student learning and achievement.

VI. Promoting long-term public-private partnerships through providing per child fee subsidy to private schools in order to create greater access to education in marginalized areas of the region.

2. Methodology

The study is an attempt share to compare the model with public schooling system, discuss its significance towards cost benefit analysis and its important role in the future. An evaluation and assessment exercise was carried out with last five years data set collected by the authors in the capacity of senior program manager PPP in reform support unit, and covered a set of key indicators for valid results. Empirical evidence, mostly provides in conclusion and policy recommendation section is based on monthly progress, monitoring and assessment reports and personal observations of the authors and their experience. The reports of TPV firm hired for independent studies and transparent and impartial verification on the subject is also included during analyses. The data is also depends on ASER and IDEA reports 2014 and 2015.

3. Discussions and Results

In Sindh province the brief of public and private schools are given in table 1 with total numbers of schools and enrollment. The total numbers of government schools are 46724 with enrollment of 4227717 students 66percent of boys 34 percent are girls, but in rural areas girls are only 22 percent. The numbers of private schools are 12000 with enrollment of 242428612 but mostly are situated in urban centers Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur.

S No	Title	No. of Schools	No. of Students Enrolled
1	Public Schools	46724	4227717
2	Private Schools	12000	2428612
3	Total	58742	6656329

Table 1: No of Public & Private Schools in Sindh
Source; Semis 2014-15

When we analyzed the public private partnerships schools we found that mostly low cost private schools on subsidy model are operating by entrepreneurs and adopters are managing by Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) as shown in table 2 below. The main programs in the province is Integrated Education Learning, Program, Promoting Private Schools in rural Sindh (PPRS) and adopted schools program having up 0.4 million students.

Sindh Education Fund House for Sindh is also managing some 800 schools through voucher base schools in the region on public private partnership basis as shown in same table 2 with enrollment of up to 40000.

These schools are widely appreciated among unserved communities The purpose of establishing private schools was to improve access to quality schooling on cost effective basis with a particular focus on rural areas and girls. The experimental research conducted by IDES concluded that at initial stage of partnership up to 24 percent enrollment are increased in Sindh and Punjab province after model implementation due to provision of infrastructural facilities and posting of quality teachers in the institutions.

	Name of Program	Schools	Students	Teachers	Subsidies
1	Rural Based Community schools Project	250	23,332	500	500+Books and uniform
2	Adopted Schools Program	490	104,640	3843	Books and uniform only
3	Integrated Education Learning Program	1300	148,368	3680	450 +Books and uniform
4	Promoting Private Schools in Rural Sindh	666	94,940	1980	500+Books and uniform
5	Education Fund for Sindh(Voucher scheme)	500	86000	1766	400+600Books and 600 uniform
6	Higher secondary	266	38000	900	900+Books and uniform
7	Adopted under voucher scheme	13	800	68	350+Books and uniform
G. Total		3485	496080	12737	

*Table 2: No. of Public Private Partnerships Schools in Sindh
Data Source: Sindh Education Management Information System (Semis).*

3.1. Challenges in the PPP Program

The criteria of selection of feasible schools are big challenge for small scale entrepreneur. The basic criteria of the program are 1.5 kilometers radius of the area, 1600 square feet space and appointment of at least one female teacher in the school. The program linked with performance i.e., provision of quality education in unserved area with public appreciation and monitoring and quality assessment by third party.

Second minimum enrollment of any private schools must be 75 i.e. School operator may get minimum (75 x Rs. 350 =) Rs 26,650 per month. Estimated minimum expenses of that particular school was Rs. 8,000 in lieu of salaries of two teachers @ Rs. 3000/- per teacher and one support staff @ Rs. 2,000/-), and Rs. 4,000 in lieu of School operational expenses. Estimated balance of Rs. 14,650 was with the school operator to earn.

It was up to school operator's will, whether he/she wanted to consume the earning or save or invest in the schools. Third initial school set up cost was estimated around Rs. 100,000 to 250,000 for 2 room structure school depending upon the type of premises, land, furniture etc. Hence based on projected earning of the school operator for the 2 room/class structure school, payback period was between 8 months to 18 months provided all other factors like inflation, discount rate, rupee devaluation etc remain constant. Since fixation of cash subsidy period to current date various factors have changed significantly that have directly or indirectly created impact on the school operator's projected saving/earning thus created challenges for PPP program to achieve its goals as desired. The factors that have created economical and financial impact are assessed in details as follows:

3.1.1. Gap in Subsidies at National Level

In comparison of per child cost between Punjab public schools, Sindh public schools and PPP schools has a wide gap in subsidies. More Recently in the last budget session of the Punjab Government, the Finance Minister informed the assembly members that Government is spending Rs. 1,600/- per child per month in public schools. On the other hand, per child cost in public schools of Sindh Government is Rs. 2200/- per month. It has been observed on the other hand in PPP schools Rs.500/- per child per month subsidy of students. Gross difference between both Government public school models and partnership schools models are because of "economies of scale" factor i.e. the higher the enrollment in schools, the lower the per child cost of the model and efficient cost management basis.

3.1.2. Teachers' Turnover in the Field

The average turnover in last three years in public private partnership schools was around 38%. The main factors which have contributed to higher turnover were low salaries, migration of teacher due to marriages and change in economic activities on land professions or vocations. Despite highlighting the contractual requirement of retaining teachers, especially those who had received any type of training from provincial governments, it was communicated that due to low earning capacity school operators have been facing challenges to increase teachers' salaries to the market level to retain teachers accordingly.

3.1.3. Challenges of the Schools' Entrepreneurs

The conditions of school vis-à-vis infrastructural requirements and class room environment have been given due importance in the PPP schools. For that government has been sharing ESM framework with the schools' entrepreneurs on regular basis. However, it has been noticed that certain conditions may have cost implications which also need continuous financial investment from the school entrepreneur. For instance students seating arrangement of 5 square feet per child requires average room size of 225 square feet room for a class of 40-student. Most of the PPP schools have been hired on rental basis and average room size is between 120 square feet to 180 square feet in the hired premises. Further normally hired premises have 3 to 4-room available space. Therefore schools, that have enrollment exceeding 100 children, are facing challenges to accommodate children as per contract condition. Similarly provision of adequate toilet facility and maintaining strict cleanliness requires financial implication especially for those areas, where water facility is rarely available.

3.1.4. Public Private Partnership benefits and issue of Students' Retention

It is a fact that like public schools, retention of students in higher grades is becoming challenging for school operators. There could be various factors that may have contributed to students drop out at higher grades like migration, household income, girls' education and

child labour, poverty etc. However lower enrollment in higher grades may discourage school operators to compensate teachers' of higher grade with market based salary.

For instance, in certain schools, let us say in grade 5, only 20 students have been getting per child cash subsidy @ Rs. 500 equals Rs. 10,000 per month. In this case the school operator may not be able to pay all Rs.10, 000 to the teacher due to his/her investment made in furniture, classroom establishment, etc of grade 5 classes.

3.1.5. Performance of Partnerships Schools V/S Public schools Performance

Another side it is the evidence of specific group study that currently low cost private schools are charging minimum student fee of Rs. 1000 to Rs. 2000 per month for primary section and Rs. 1500 to Rs. 3000 per student fee for middle section and Rs 3000 to 5000 fee from secondary students in the country.

Theses Private schools have been offering teachers' salaries from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 8000 for primary section and Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000 for middle section and 16000 to 20000 to High school teachers.

It is also observed that in public sector schools primary school teachers newly recruited in schools is getting minimum of 20,000 salary, senior middle school teachers earning is 25000 to 40000 and high school teachers minimum salary is 45000 and maximum more than 80000.

The performance comparison between public and private schools teachers are prepared by ASER last year is shown in figure 1 below and the reason of low performance are commonly known are teachers absenteeism due to poor monitoring and accountability system of the provincials government.

The corruption of their supervisor and others officers at district level in over all the country, teachers union influence on local educational management, political ill will of the statesman, enrollments of high-up's child in expensive schools i.e. city schools, bacon house schools, cadet colleges and others Cambridge schooling system which decreases their interest in governments schools to improve further.

Despite more than twice salaries of public schools teachers in comparison of low cost private schools and partnerships schools their performance is very low as mentioned in figure 1 in details.

The economic efficacy and efficiency of partnerships schools is also varies than public schools. Every more investment in public schools is converted sharply into sunk cost and is less fruitful for people of the region.

Figure 1 is self explanatory in this regards and shows alarming situation in results of three subjects tested by ASER in its survey in the field. The performance of private sector is more than 100% better in result of mother language arithmetic and English.

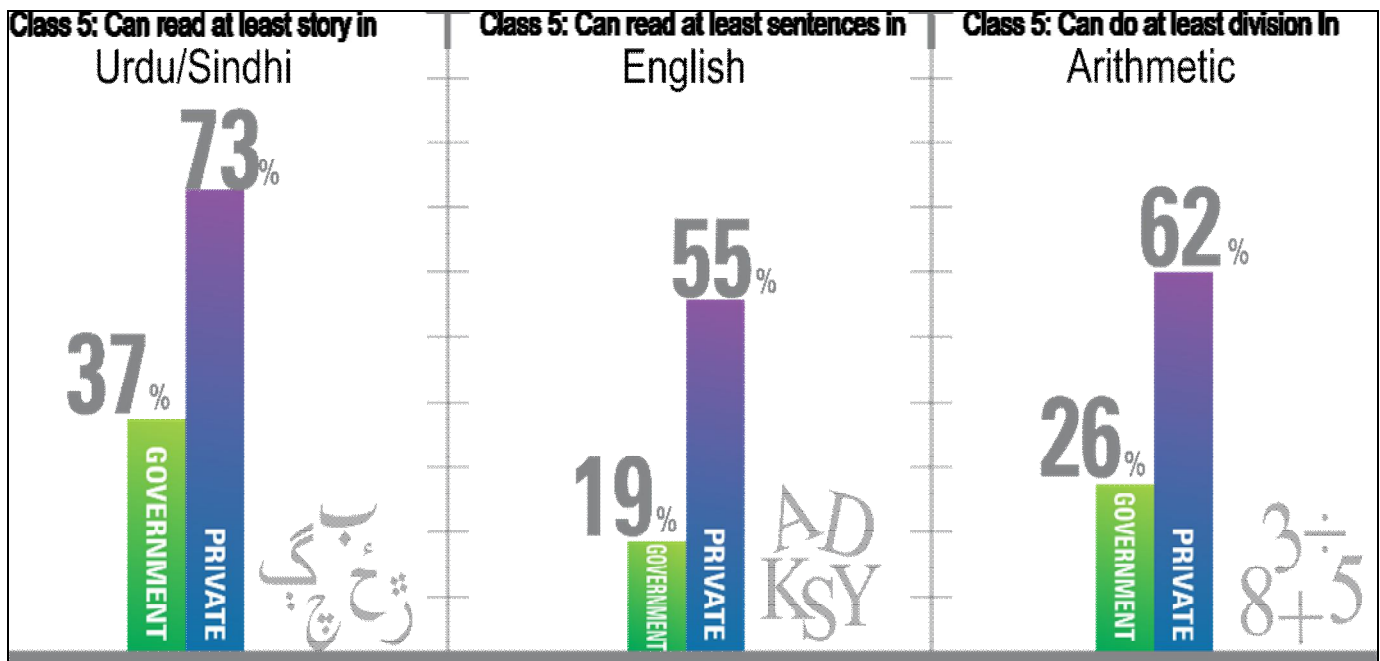


Figure 1: Performance Survey of Class V Public V/S Private Schools Students

Source: Annual Status of Education Report (Aser) 2014

4. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The PPP model for educational development in the region has much significant to deliver among unserved communities and up to 5 million students with 13000 teachers are getting benefits in 3500 schools with greater challenges in the field which needs to resolves. But there is need of huge investment to accommodate up to 2 million out of schools street children on urgent basis during implementation of first phase of SDGs by enhancing the model up to 5000 new schools with 25000 more teachers and at least 1000 per child per month subsidy.

On the basis of above mentioned contextual analysis, it is evident that public private partnership model is more vibrant and cost beneficial in comparative study of public schools and there is a need of its extension at national level. There is also need of per child cash subsidy revision on urgent basis while keeping program cost effectiveness at all level and in entire country. This cost comprises students' text books, copies, students' assessment, training & development, school bags & material cost. Variable cost indirectly related to schools development also needs to increase at large. The EMIS development & maintenance, monitoring & evaluation, schools inspection, and program field visits cost, and program management cost may also increased. This cost also comprises human resource, program advocacy & marketing, operating cost, and fixed assets cost.

The success story of the program suggests that it may enhance up to colleges and university level in the country due to its cost effectiveness and quality of education. The success story of the program also suggests that it should be linked with industries and technical education level in the country due to its cost effecters and quality of technical education through subsidies given to industrial to produce skilled labour for overseas employments.

The high level of capacity for implementing the PPPs Regulation/Framework and monitoring & accountability systems for appropriate outcome or performance measures is very necessary per need of the hour.

In 2013 Government has taken a bold step to promulgated compulsory education ordinance / law but still it is on papers only and no any serious efforts are taken to implement the law in letter and spirit. Only the introducing the law is not sufficient to bring 6 million children in schools and where is the space the only answer in this regard is to strengthen public private partnership in education sector at large to achieve the targets of MDG sand also SDGs to fulfill the international development agenda in local context and also to development of our own society through education and literacy of masses at large particularly in rural/unserved areas.

In this regard in province up to 5000 thousands closed schools are available in the data and cause embracement of the government's efforts. 500 building are empty and 2000 thousands buildings are partially used by public sector educational authorities. Private sector is ready and aims to utilize these closed/dysfunctional, abandoned government schools with improvement in infrastructure, provisions of qualified teachers, and per child subsidy of Rs. 500 per child for enrolling marginalized children in mostly remote as well as peripheral areas.

In view of above it is proposed that for the noble cause of educational development and socio economic welfare in the region and to fulfill the commitment of MDGS and SDGs with international community dysfunctional /closed, abounadant and thinly enrolled government schools may be utilize with cooperation of private sectors.

This act regarding these closed/dys functional government schools will be break through and this initiative will strengthen Government's efforts to impart compulsory and free quality education to each and every child of the province under article 25-A.

Finally in order to materialize the public private partnership in the education sector there is dire need for management through human resources. The development of skilled human resources can better bring this issue to be resolved more effectively and efficiently in the education sector positively.

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