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Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) as ‘anchor’ of educational reforms: lessons from Pakistan

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Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) as ‘anchor’ of educational reforms: lessons from Pakistan

Abstract

Starting from 2001 till last year, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) were viewed as the ‘anchor’ of Government of Pakistan education strategy to address the challenges of access, quality and equity. Investing in PPPs was not one of the strategies but the primary strategy. Government Non Formal Basic Education (NFBE) programme was the only additional mechanism explicitly aimed to address concerns around equity, which exist across gender, income, region, and rural-urban divide. The expectations from the partnerships were thus enormous. A number of dynamic PPP models indeed emerged. Yet, the Pakistan case mainly demonstrates not the advantages of PPPs (though they are there) but their limitations to become the primary vehicle for addressing fundamental challenges to provision of education to all. Most PPP programmes remain ad hoc, have little systemic impact in addressing the fundamental challenges of access, quality or equity, and because of often being reliant on NGOs or donor funds rather than the state resources face problems of financial sustainability. In an atmosphere where state officials have high distrust of the NGOs and the private sector and incentives for engaging in partnership are flawed, the PPPs have limited ability to address the fundamental challenges of meeting EFA goals rather ad hoc efforts can contribute to greater fragmentation of education planning and enhance regional disparities. As for the non-formal programme, aimed at ensuring equity, there are questions about its utility when in majority cases the students have no means to continue education beyond the non-formal cycle because of absence of secondary schools in the area or they exist only in the private market arguably increasing burden on the poor income families.

1. Introduction

Pakistan's education sector faces severe challenges of access and quality and progress towards meeting the EFA targets set at Dakar for 2015 remains slow. In education sector reform documents produced since 2001, the Government of Pakistan had viewed formation of public private partnerships (PPPs) as central to the reform process. In addition, government has been running a non-formal school programme to address challenges to equity. The newly launched Draft National Education Policy (2008), however, notes a shift: while retaining the idea of PPP, it puts the pressure back on the state to be the primary provider. This paper documents the dominant PPP models in Pakistan, notes their strengths and limitations, and then assesses their potential to act as the 'anchor' of education reforms in Pakistan. In doing so, the paper illustrates that the PPPs have failed to meet the goals of increasing 'voice and choice' by improving service delivery.

The paper argues that one reason for the failure is the exaggerated expectation from the NGO and private sector. The NGOs simply don't have the resources to pursue these models on a large scale and the private sector, even when a major provider, fails to serve the poorest communities thereby highlighting the need for central role of the state in ensuring education provision for all. The paper, however, maintains that the real challenge to PPP rests not in the technical limitations of the different PPP models or financial constraints of the private providers but in the flawed incentives of the state: the PPPs became the anchor of education reforms not because the political elite or the education bureaucracy genuinely wanted to partner with the private or non-profit sector but because showing commitment to this strategy, at least on paper, enabled the military government of General Musharraf, which in 2000 was badly in need of winning international approval, establish its development credentials. The result was that the state never made a genuine effort to forge a partnership with the private and non-profit sector despite paying lip service to it. The international development community thus has to be watchful of the incentives that make national governments accept popular development ideas.

1.1. The context: major challenges of access and quality¹

With a population of 160 million people, 33 per cent of which lives in poverty, Pakistan faces serious challenges in ensuring good quality education to all. Literacy rate is barely 50 per cent, with that for females being 35 per cent (World Bank 2008). 6.8 million primary school age children are out of school. Primary completion rate is 70 per cent for male and 53 per cent for females. The Primary Gender Parity Index (GER ratio) rests at 0.78 (World Bank 2008). The quality of education remains equally problematic. A study testing learning achievement of grade 5 students studying in both public and private schools of Pakistan across 8 district, where 2 district were included from each of the four provinces, shows that of the 1902 students (1155 urban and 747 rural) tested the scores were very poor. The mean per centage score in Maths, Urdu, and Science were 46, 57, 49 per cent respectively. The children from private schools did better but only marginally. The survey also showed inter-district variation where the students from Quetta and Ziarat, the districts from Balochistan, showed the lowest scores (Shami and Hussain 2006). Pakistan is unlikely to meet the MDGs and Education for All targets by 2015 (see Bano 2007, for detailed analysis). Similarly, surveys conducted between 2003-2007 under the Learning and Educational Achievement in Punjab Schools (LEAPS) show that children perform significantly below curricular standards for common subjects and concepts at their grade level. By the end of grade 3, barely fifty per cent of children had mastered the mathematics curriculum for class 1 (Andrabi 2008).

1.2. Equity: a major concern

The challenges to ensuring good quality education to all are compounded by the fact that disparities in access continue to be significant across the four provinces and across income, gender, and urban/rural divide. There are great disparities in access among the four provinces, plus there are high variations in rural-urban education indicators. A large proportion of the literate population is concentrated in the national and provincial capitals. The areas with low literacy are also backward in terms of economic development

¹ This paper builds on the background paper prepared for the Global Monitory Report 2008, providing a comprehensive account of the challenges and opportunities in meeting Education for All targets in Pakistan— section 1.2. on equity, in particular, draws heavily on it. In addition, it draws upon numerous interviews conducted with government officials within the Ministry of Education, Pakistan, and NGO representatives between August 2006-March 2008 as part of an ESRC Non-Governmental Public Action Programme exploring the nature of state-NSP interaction in provision of social services in Pakistan.

(Husain and Qasim 2005). Punjab being the most populated province hosts the largest number of state schools, while Balochistan hosts the smallest (see Table 1).

Table 1: Provincial level primary school and enrollment data

Provinces	No of state schools	Enrollment in state schools
Punjab	42736	4,759,510
Sindh	28,854	2,590,230
NWFP	18,712	2,391,909
Balochistan	7,866	452,403

Source: MoE 2006b.

Literacy rate is highest in Sindh at 56 per cent and lowest in Balochistan at 37 per cent. This inter-provincial difference is most pronounced in literacy rates among females: as opposed to a female literacy rate of 44 per cent in Punjab, in Balochistan the rate is only 19 per cent (see Table 2).

Table 2: Literacy rates (10 years and above) for Pakistan and Provinces 2004-05 (%)

Province	Total	Male	Female
Pakistan	53	65	40
Punjab	55	65	44
Sindh	56	68	41
NWFP	45	64	26
Balochistan	37	52	19

Source: MoF 2006b.

Further there is great variation in performance across the rural and urban areas within each province and across males and females. The Gross Enrolment rate (GER) is as high as 111 per cent in urban areas of Punjab while it is as low as 41 per cent in the rural areas of Balochistan (see Table 3).

Table 3: Gross enrolment rate at the primary level by province and region

Province/region	2001-02	2004-5
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Punjab	Male	Female	Male	Female
Urban	95	93	111	108
Rural	80	61	96	82
Sindh				
Urban	91	78	103	94
Rural	69	37	70	44
NWFP				
Urban	100	86	100	84
Rural	96	52	92	62
Balochistan				
Urban	98	75	101	86
Rural	73	38	79	41

Source: MoF 2006b.

The rates of transition from primary to middle also vary across provinces: during 2004-2005 the rate was 87.61 for Punjab, followed by 80.01 for Balochistan, 77.73 for NWFP and 65.98 for Sindh.

The access to education is also marked by income difference: the over all literacy rate among the poor is 28 per cent while that for the non-poor is 49 per cent. The net enrolment rate is 37 per cent for the poor as opposed to 59 per cent for the non-poor (World Bank 2002). The enrolments remain the lowest among the poorest quintile and dropouts highest among this group. This pattern persists across rural and urban regions of all provinces (World Bank 2002). This becomes all the more worrying viewed against the fact that 65 per cent of the population lives below 2 dollars a day (UNESCO 2006).

The per centage of literate household heads in non-poor households is 52 per cent compared with only 27 per cent in poor households (PRSP 2003). The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper notes that failure to reduce poverty is closely linked to the stagnant trend in school enrolment rates; education is therefore ‘a key component of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).’

The disparities in access on basis of gender are also wide (see Table 4). The female enrollment rates are lower than males and drop out rates among girls are higher (World Bank 2002).

Table 4: Gender gap in overall literacy, GER and NER at the primary level (%) 2004-5

Province	Gender gap in literacy (%)		Gender gap in NER at the primary level		Gender gap in GER at the primary level	
	2001-2	2004-5	2001-2	2004-5	2001-2	2001-4
Pakistan	26	25	8	8	22	17
Punjab	21	21	4	5	15	11
Sindh	29	27	12	11	25	19
NWFP	37	38	15	13	41	28
Balochistan	38	33	15	15	33	34

Source: MoF, 2006b.

These gender disparities are compounded not only due to poor supply of educational facilities but also due to cultural values and norms which make it difficult to access education for girls. For example, religious and cultural emphasis on ‘purdah’ makes parents reluctant to send girls to schools at a distance. However, the high turn out of girls in NGO run non-formal schools and recent World Bank sponsored stipend scheme suggest that the cultural values are not against female education per se, rather parents require institutional arrangement responding to their cultural requirements: for example, establishing schools close to home to ensure female security, providing female teachers to respect purdah (World Bank 2002; Sarwar 2006).

Against these challenges the government has failed to increase education facilities at the national level to meet the needs of all. The annual increase in the number of public primary schools is below the need: during 2005-6, only 1221 primary state schools were established (MoF 2006).

Table 5: No. of state schools at primary, middle and secondary level

Level	Institutions	Enrollment	Teachers
Primary	157,158	21,333,206	450,136
Middle	30,418	4,550,473	246,666
Secondary	16,590	1,880,021	282,113

Source: MoE, 2006b.

It has also failed to develop strategies to bridge the disparities on basis of income, region, and urban/rural divide. The White Paper, produced in 2007 after extensive deliberation among government, NGOs, donors and private sector educationists, to reform the education sector, acknowledges these challenges. In fact, it goes further and defines equity not just in terms of ensuring equal access but in terms of ‘fostering a bias free environment.’ ‘Equity in education, therefore, would take into consideration not only equal access to education of a particular standard, but the content of curriculum, instructional and evaluation materials and practices, different ways of learning and views of knowledge, and everyone having the opportunity to achieve,’ (MoE 2007). The problem with this, however, remains the same as with the education sector reform strategy developed in 2001: it fails to provide an action plan to attain these goals. The paper also notes the parallel systems of education and different medium of instruction as a challenge to equity, whereby there is a wide difference in employability of students from private English medium schools and those from state run or low-fee charging private Urdu medium schools.

2. The strategy

The Education Sector Reform programme developed in 2001, in consultation with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the devolution plan which were being developed at the same time, proposed the standard measures of increasing investment in education, increasing number of state schools, improving teacher training, etc (see Bano, 2007). In addition, admitting the enormity of the challenges and weak government capacity, it argued for making public private partnerships central to the reform program.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) argued: “Recognizing immense contribution of the private sector and NGOs in the social sectors, the Education Sector Reform is anchored in development of partnerships between the private sector, civil society organisations, and the public sector. Public-private partnerships are critical to

reaching the goals of access and quality at all levels of education creating possibilities for both voice and choice and improved service delivery” (p. 70, GoP 2003).

A document of the Ministry of Education echoed the same: ‘An anchor area of the Education Sector Reforms Action Plan 2001-2005 has been the promotion of public private partnerships to address access and quality targets at all levels of the education spectrum.’ (MoE 2004b: 2).

To attain this end, the Ministry pledged to create enabling environment for growth of PPPs and deregulate the education sector. References were made explicitly to NGOs and the private sector as potential partners. However, madrasas, religious seminaries, were not included in the list. Madrasas are estimated to constitute 1-3% of the total school enrollment in Pakistan (Andrabi et. al. 2005; Andrabi et. al. 2008). This appears to be a small number but given that the only main survey of NGOs in Pakistan notes 30 per cent of all registered voluntary organisations to be madrasas, while the per centage of NGOs involved in primary education provision is only 8.5 per cent, in terms of scale they are more significant players in Pakistan than the NGOs (Ghaus-Pasha et. al 2002). The reason for not viewing them as potential partners in the PPP models was because they were viewed more as in need of reform whereby the state aimed to introduce secular curriculum in their teaching content rather than viewing them as potential contributors to UPE goals. Starting from 2001, the government had allocated Rs. 5759.395 million to madrasa reform programme over five year period (MoF 2006b).

During 2006, the Ministry of Education initiated another major consultative process to assess progress since 2001, and develop plans for future reforms. A series of Green Papers was produced followed by a White Paper released in December 2006 and a revised edition produced in March 2007. The White Paper continued to note the potential of PPPs but placed greater emphasis on reforms within the state sector. It also critiqued the assumed potential of the private sector to address concerns around equity. This shift of emphasis back on the state is fully reflected in the newly launched Draft National Education Policy (2008), the reasons for which will be discussed in the last section. The next section documents the main PPP models in Pakistan.

3. Prominent PPP models in Pakistan

Since 2001, a number of PPP models have gained visibility within Pakistan. The following section documents the prominent models. It is important to note, however, that apart from the Adopt a School and non-formal school programmes, there are no independent evaluations available on effectiveness of the PPP programmes thus highlighting the need to treat claims of success cautiously. The section begins with documenting the four key PPP models promoted with the Pakistan Education Action Plan 2001-2005: Adopt a School Programme, concessions to private schools, Up-Gradation of Schools through Community Participation Project (CPP), and School Management Committees & Citizen Community Boards.

3.1. Adopt a School Programme

Viewed to be a brainchild of Dr Anita Ghulam Ali, Director of the Sindh Education Foundation, the Adopt a School Programme has become the most popular PPP programme within education sector in Pakistan since 2001. The programme, however, had its inception during mid 1990s and by 2000 had already been experimented by some big NGOs. The programme implies that a non-state actor, NGO or for-profit, takes big responsibility to improve the status of a government school. The exact nature of adopters' engagement with the school varies enormously: some simply focus on improving the infrastructure while others are more concerned with improving the educational content. Even in the latter case there are variations, whereby some NGOs just focus on occasional teacher training sessions while others adopt a more interventionist approach and take over the entire school management including monitoring the day-to-day performance of teachers.

Examples of this variation rest in the approach of two big NGOs involved in adopt a school programme. Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA), which runs this programme in five different districts, focuses on improving the educational content through occasional teacher training sessions and weekly visits to the adopted schools. CARE, a Lahore based NGO, which has adopted over 350 schools, on the other hand closely regulates the educational process and the learning environment within these schools (Shah et al 2005). The principals and teachers are trained by CARE in line with a closely developed checklist and a team of coordinators, volunteers and personnel from the head office,

ensure that the training is actually put into practice. In addition, professional monitors are employed for the purpose of staff appraisal and training.

The model involves a diverse range of non-state providers: individual philanthropists, corporate philanthropists, and NGOs. The number of schools adopted by one adopter also varies enormously: some take up just one school, while organizations like Sindh Education Foundation, who help individual and corporate philanthropists and small NGOs adopt government schools, have over 150 schools in their portfolio. There are no national level figures of the total number of adopted government schools— adoptions are approved at the district government level— but a per centage of the total government schools, the number is miniscule. Some donor agencies have also invested in this programme. The USAID supported the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP), a national level NGO, to administer a programme of three-way partnership to adopt government schools. In this programme, a business concern is asked to provide financial support to a government school while a local NGO is made responsible for implementing the programme and mobilization of the community. USAID in turn finances PCP administrative costs and those of the NGO.

The extent to which the adopter involves the community in running the programme also varies. The Sindh Education Foundation, which started Adopt the School programme in Pakistan, emphasizes the need to involve the community in school monitoring and management so that they can monitor the teachers when the adopter withdraws. The officials at the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, a donor agency, which has supported NGOs to adopt government schools, have similarly found that when the community becomes active and takes the ownership of the programme then it is possible for the NGO to withdraw over time as the community itself starts to put pressure on the government to ensure continuity of the programme. Many adopters however lack the skill to mobilize the community to support the programme.

The challenges to the programme are many. Critics of the programme contend that the better run state schools rather than the poorly performing ones are being taken out of the state system as the private sector is not interested in taking over the worst cases².

² Based on interviews with heads of some leading education NGOs in Pakistan, which do not engage with Adopt a School Programme.

This allegedly is further weakening the state schooling system. This is also linked to the motives of the adopting party. Most corporations and multinationals are only motivated to support schools near their factory location as this wins them goodwill in the area and also benefits their employees. The support of the corporate sector thus cannot be relied upon as a reliable source of support across the country.

A study of adopt a school programme of 10 major NGOs notes that despite the emphasis on PPPs, there is a lot of suspicion about NGOs in minds of a majority of those working for the government, many regard NGOs at best as ‘fashionable’ and ‘trendy’, and at worst as international spy organizations (Rashid 2000). This tension is reflected in conflicting ideas about the role of the NGO in the programme: the government officials ideally want the adopter to bear the financial costs of reform and become a resource provider and facilitator of processes and programs rather than intervene within the education content like teacher training, lesson planning, checking teacher of student attendance. Adopters trying to improve the state of education are perceived as an intruder who has encroached on the authority of those who are directly concerned.

There is no systematic mechanism to introduce the programme to the teachers of the adopted government schools. The result is that teachers in the adopted schools are often highly insecure and unsure about their future and fear that the schools will be privatised resulting in loss of their jobs (Rashid 2000).

The most critical factor in determining the nature of partnership, however, remains the background of the adopting agency. It is very clear that bigger NGOs, corporations, and politically or economically influential adopters are able to get things done as they desire much more quickly compared with those adopters who have few connections in the government or the education department. Rashid (2000) notes, ‘A number of adopters found problems with the rather complicated hierarchical structure of the education department, yet at the same time Pakistan Navy faced much fewer problems with the same hierarchical structure.’ The ability of these influential adopters to gain approvals for the extensive interventions within the adopted schools often makes the teachers nervous. This makes the adopter too influential to be challenged even on genuine issues,

as the teachers in the adopted schools feel that any dissent could lead to them getting transferred elsewhere (Rashid 2000).

Thus, the access that an adopter is able to gain to the adopted school is contingent on its networks. The result is that very few small NGOs have been involved in adopt the school programme, when they are involved it is normally under the patronage of umbrella organizations like Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy or Sindh Education Foundation, which are powerful enough to gain access to the government authorities.

3.2. Concessions to private schools

The second PPP programme proposed in the education sector plans involved giving concessions to private schools which included allocating free land to schools, charging domestic rather than commercial rates for electricity and gas bills, tax exemptions on imports, and exemptions from income tax. There are no restrictions in terms of which type of private schools can access these facilities, as even the elite private schools are included. There is, however, a limit on the units of electricity and other utilities, allowed at concessional rates. There is no evidence if these incentives have directly impact the expansion of private schooling system in Pakistan. Interviews with the Ministry of Education suggest that the programme has not been applied in a systematic manner. Like the experience of adopters in case of adopt a school programme, it is up to the negotiating capacity of the individual school to win these concessions from the relevant authorities.

3.3. Afternoon School System: Up-Gradation of Schools through Community Participation Project (CPP)

The third programme conceived by the government in 2001, invites private sector or NGOs to commit to upgrading a regular government school and in turn gain the permission to use the school premises for running an afternoon school, either as a second elementary shift or a middle/high school session. The government provides the school building, furniture, libraries, labs and recognizes the regular status of afternoon students. The licensee is required to upgrade and improve the school facilities, pay all utility bills of morning and afternoon shifts in lieu of rent waiver, and manage the afternoon program over a five-year contract period. Cost savings to the government are

estimated to be Rs 1.5 to 2 million per up-gradation (MoE 2004b). The licensee may charge a fee for the afternoon school as per a pre-agreed schedule with subsidies for needy children.

These incentives have failed to attract either the NGOs or private sector. In a few cases, where the model was tried, the morning shift staff was reluctant to take on additional challenges presented by an afternoon shift, including the sharing of premises, required administrative work and teacher resources. An additional problem was the equitable allocation of electricity costs and monitoring of the program on the part of the government. There were reportedly disputes over settlement of bills as parties at times differed in their view on who has incurred certain electricity costs (Batley et al 2004).

3.4. School Management Committees & Citizen Community Boards

As part of devolution plan implemented in 2002, Village Education and School Management Committees (SMCs) and School Councils were made legal entities. To train the SMCs in community mobilization, monitoring of school and maintaining records, the government entered in partnership with the NGOs as the latter was viewed to have more effective outreach to communities, more organized materials and effective communication skills. The formation of SMCs appears to have led to positive impact on improving the quality of education. Data from survey of District Managers in 114 districts shows that 67 per cent had SMC in schools in their areas whereas 31 per cent had Parent Teacher Associations. Almost 40 per cent also reported that these school councils were leading to improvement in enhancing enrolment in schools, generating resources for schools from community, ensuring teacher attendance, and improving the physical facilities (Shami and Hussain 2005).

In order to increase the flow of government funds to SMCs, under the Local Government Ordinance, these committees were also allowed to register themselves as Citizen Community Boards (CCBs). This makes them eligible for district development funds with 20 per cent counterpart funding from local communities. However, Shami and Hussain (2005) record that the SMC are failing to mobilize state development funds through establishing CCBs as often-large projects are awarded to CCBs on basis of political connections. An independent evaluation of CCBs in five districts of Punjab (Lahore, Hafizabad, Jhang, Faisalabad, Narowal) commissioned by the World Bank in

2006 further found that the informality and flexibility required to work with community groups is lacking in government (Khan 2006). Local governments are not equipped to deal at a micro-level with community needs and are governed by rules and procedures that do not allow flexibility. Processes of CCB registration and project execution are unclear to communities; they are complicated and lengthy. Rent-seeking commonly delays and discourages formation and survival of CCBs. Technical departments are required to subscribe to procedures and standards, not taking into account community capacities to implement or maintain projects. CCB members have little information about which department deals with their project type and are often frustrated that they need to make repeated visits to various offices. There is no technical or financial cap on CCB projects that adequately reflects community's ability to implement projects. Often large projects are awarded to CCBs for political reasons, which they are not able to execute or maintain. CCBs are driven by a few individuals and the concept of 'participation' is missing. Whereas the process is very political and has led to the distribution of political largesse by politicians making CCBs, districts where there is best practice in regard to CCBs are also clearly those with a strong political will and commitment to the CCB concept. Thus, the potential benefits of CCBs for promoting education targets have not been reaped due to institutional problems in functioning of the system.

3.5. Tawana Pakistan

Another programme that involves partnership between state and NGOs is Tawana Pakistan. Under this programme, the school is given a nutrition package for girls between ages of 5 and 12 years. An initiative of the Ministry of Women Development and Social Welfare and Special Education, the programme was implemented between 2002-2006 in 29 of the poorest districts of all provinces of Pakistan. The programme had multiple targets including improvement of nutrition of girls of early school going age, increasing and sustaining school enrolment, reducing gender gap in school enrolment, developing community participation and ownership and involving local NGOs and the private sector. There is no independent evaluation to confirm increase in enrolment due to this programme but by May 06, 2005, the programme had been initiated in about 4,000 schools in 29 districts.

In addition to these programmes conceived in 2001 as part of the Education Sector Reform Plan, some other programmes have emerged under the umbrella of Education Foundations especially Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) and Punjab Education Foundation (PEF). The Government of Pakistan has a three tiered governance structure: federal, provincial and district. The federal government is responsible for education policy and planning, the provincial government for delivery of education and actual management, and the district government for actual provision of service. The promotion of PPPs as a core education sector reform was adopted as a strategy in 2001 at the federal level with consultation of provincial level officials. The Foundations were in theory appointed as the main government agencies to implement the PPP agenda under the 2001 education strategy plan. They were thus responsible for implementing the four programmes mentioned within the Education Sector Reform Plan as well as introducing new ones. The Foundations have, however, varied in their emphasis in each province. These Foundations were established between 1990-1994 as semi-governmental organisations, linked to the Ministry of Education, to facilitate private sector participation in education. They are five in total: National Education Foundation (NEF), Sindh Education Foundation (SEF), Frontier Education Foundation (FEF), Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) and Balochistan Education Foundation (BEF). Each Foundation had a seed endowment from the government with the view that it would be able to mobilize additional resources from development agencies, grants made by Government and the Federal Government, income from investments made by the Foundation, donations and endowments, and revolving funds placed by the Government at the disposal of the Foundation.

After 2001, they were restructured and given greater autonomy to redefine their focus and develop innovative models to involve the private, profit and non-profit, sector. The Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) and the Sindh Education Foundation (SEF) are currently the most active. Both support multiple PPP programmes but have a key difference: most SEF programmes focus on working with NGOs while under World Bank advice, PEF is focused on promoting PPPs aimed mainly at private sector rather than NGOs. The reasons and implication of these differences for education planning and outcomes are discussed in the section 4. Before that a brief description is provided of their prominent programmes.

3.6. Programmes under Punjab Education Foundation

PEF has initiated four PPP programmes, funded by the Government of Punjab, which launched a Punjab Education Sector Reform programme with \$300 million from the World Bank's concessionary International Development Association. PEF budget has seen a nine fold increase in a passage of two years, increasing from Rs.400 million in 2005 to Rs.3.8 billion in 2007. The PEF shares World Bank's approach that the state should finance education for all children, but it should not necessarily provide the service as financing private providers can lead to cheaper and more efficient alternatives. The Foundation is thus experimenting with multiple programmes with the private sector.

3.6.1. Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) & Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS)

PEF runs two different but slightly overlapping PPP models: Education Voucher Scheme (EVS) and Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS). Under the scheme, the PEF gives each child in the age cohort of 4-17 a non-redeemable voucher valuing Rs.300 per month, which is paid directly to the school. The child's parents have the freedom to select the school of their choice from amongst the institutions that have been accredited by the PEF. The parents also have the option to enroll their child in a school charging a higher fee by topping up, paying the school over and above the Rs.300 that PEF disburses directly to the school. The Foundation itself only selects those schools charging maximum of Rs. 300/= per child and pays the full amount to the school even if the fee is less than Rs. 300/=³. The programme has so far focused on urban slums, employing the concept of self-targeting⁴— everyone in the area is eligible to avail the services— to reduce administrative costs (Malik 2007; 2008). This means that all children of the households in the selected locality qualify for the voucher.

Initiated in 2005, the project is still in initial stages and has 10 partner schools located within a radius of 2 kms from the target area to ensure easy access. Presently 10,000 vouchers are being distributed in selected urban slums in Lahore but its priority remains the Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS) (see below) as the voucher scheme costs PEF nine times more to administer than the FAS programme (Malik, 2007; PEF website). According to PEF, the administrative cost of running FAS is only 1.6 per cent of the

³ This is implied though not clearly stated in PEF documents.

⁴ Term used in Punjab Education Foundation's documents.

total cost of the programme, which means the voucher scheme costs more than 14.4 per cent in administrative cost (Malik 2007;2008).

The FAS scheme is the flagship program of the PEF to encourage and promote access to, and improve the quality of, education by providing financial assistance Rs.300 per child per month, indexed to inflation, to private schools. It targets schools, which charge a maximum tuition fee of Rs.300 per month – to date the average fees in selected schools has been Rs.130 per month. The criteria for selection of the schools include school location (rural, urban slums), availability of physical infrastructure to accommodate the children, pupil-teacher ratio, and delivery of quality education. PEF conducts a Quality Assurance Test (QAT) twice a year to monitor quality. For continuation of partnership, it is mandatory for 2/3rd students of the partner school to score at least 40% marks in the QAT (PEF 2008).

The payments to the school are transmitted electronically to their respective bank accounts in advance at the beginning of the month. There are no independent evaluations of the programme available so far but the Foundation claims that the schools included in the programme have registered an increase in enrolment ranging between 55 per cent and 35 per cent. The Foundation also claims an improvement in the quality of education within the schools: the average marks of the students increased from 47.14 per cent in the QAT to 52.6 per cent in the second and 55.1 per cent in the third. Presently, 1107 educational institutions (with 392,000 Students) are being supported by the PEF under this programme. The programme currently focuses on seven districts of Punjab with lowest literacy rates and the highest proportion of out-of-school children in the province. In order to improve quality of education within schools, PEF has introduced a competitive system whereby the school performing best on the QAT in the district is given a cash reward of Rs.50,000. In addition, five teachers in all schools in which 90 per cent or more students score at least 40 per cent marks in the QAT are given Rs.10,000 each. The school is required to display its ranking in the district in the administered QAT on its notice board (PEF 2008).

For the Foundation, the two programme (EVS and the FAS) are making competing demands on its resources. The FAS has taken priority primarily because of its lower

administrative costs but the Foundation is continuing with the EVS despite its higher administrative cost because it puts the incentives in the hand of the child and the parents to ensure that the child gets good education. In case of the FAS programme because the incentive is being given directly to the school, it is up to the school management then to make the effort to mobilize more needy children to enrol. Thus, EVS allows for a more direct intervention within the target population than FAS.

3.6.2. Continuous Professional Development Program (CPDP)

The fourth programme of the Foundation attempts to improve the quality of education in low fee charging private schools, which cater to the needs of the poor and thus are not in a position to employ qualified and professionally trained teachers, particularly for sciences, mathematics and English. Under this programme, PEF provides opportunities for the continuous professional development of teachers in low cost private schools, especially those selected under the FAS programme, by supporting and organizing regular in-service teacher training workshops to improve teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical skills. PEF has certified thirty partner organisations, including education NGOs and teacher training institutes, to conduct these trainings. The training sessions are monitored and supervised by the PEF. To date 1,273 trainings have been conducted, benefiting 9,500 schools and 49,000 teachers. Each training program has a maximum number of forty participants to make a cluster, and each cluster includes five to eight different schools in the district (PEF 2008).

A related programme is that of 'Teaching in Clusters by Subject Specialists (TICSS)'. Under this programme, the Foundation recruits highly qualified academics at market salaries in the subjects of English, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics and Biology to teach in a cluster of three low-cost secondary schools in urban and rural areas, spending two days in each school. The PEF financed subject specialist works on the conceptual development and sound understanding of the subjects within the students. It also aims to build capacity of the regular teachers of these subjects in the beneficiary institutions. There are 120 Subject Specialists working in 360 schools in 24 districts of Punjab presently. The Foundation claims that approximately 50,000 students of grades 9 and 10 are the direct beneficiaries of this TICSS initiative (PEF 2008).

3.7. Sindh Education Foundation

As opposed to PEFs heavy engagement with the private sector, the Sindh Education Foundation remains mainly focused on NGOs in its PPP programmes. The Adopt a School remains its flagship programme. Having started in 1998, the programme now has 165 adopted schools out of a total of 28,854 government primary schools in the province. It tries to mobilize local philanthropists to contribute towards the adoption cost. The Foundation has had support of many donor agencies including Asian Development Bank, USAID, UNESCO, etc. for its various projects and activities. The Foundation is now attempting to extend this programme to low-fee charging private schools under the World Bank supported Public Education Sector Development Program in Sindh. The SEF model has focused extensively on community participation and introduction of School Management Committees (SMCs) in the adopted school has been a non-negotiable factor of this program. For SEF, adoption requires ‘nurturing’ of the school, not just by meeting its infrastructural needs, but going beyond and initiating a sustainable process of qualitative change. In addition to this programme, SEF is involved in numerous variations of non-formal programmes to address the issue of equity. These are discussed in the section below.

3.8. Strategies for ensuring equity

The Education Strategy Paper produced in 2001 as well as the White Paper produced in 2007 register serious concerns around equity but fail to suggest a concrete action plan to address these inequalities within education provision. Proposals to expand state schools have had little impact as the annual increase in the number of public primary schools is below the need: during 2005-6, only 1221 primary state schools were established (MoF 2006b). Even obvious measures like allocation of higher resources to provinces lagging behind though proposed have not been implemented. The funds across provinces are allocated through a National Finance Commission Award, which divides funds from the federal pool in accordance with a formula, largely based on the provincial shares of population. The provinces then, along with their own resources, allocate funds across various sectors, depending on their respective priorities. Thus, different provinces can end up allocating different percentage of their resources to education. Information regarding national and provincial budgets as well as budgets allocated to education sector during (1998/99-2002/03) shows that in Pakistan, slightly more than 7 per cent of the

national budget is spent on education. However, at the provincial level education gets an allocation between 20 per cent – 30 per cent, with Punjab allocating the highest proportion of funds to education, and Balochistan (the province with some of the lowest education indicators) allocating the lowest. Balochistan is also the only province that allocates less than half of its education budget to primary sector.

Under these circumstances, the only programme which has been actively pursued to meet the challenges of equity has been the non-formal basic schools programme—due to the flexibility inherent in these schools they are viewed to address multiple aspects of inequity as they can arguably be located at remote areas, they can attract more female students because of being located within the community, can help enroll poor children as they are flexible in timing. There has been a proliferation of such programmes in Pakistan since 1990s. The Ministry of Education runs a primary education program spread over three years and targets age group 10-14. Currently, the federal government is running 10,000 such schools across the country; in addition, the Punjab government runs another 7,000 such schools (MoE 2005). The government has announced a plan to establish 82,000 such schools across the country. (GoP & UNESCO 2005). There are no independent assessments of the performance of children in these schools but according to government's claims they have a 75 per cent pass rate in the government administrated fifth grade examinations (GoP & UNESCO 2005). At the end of this non-formal schooling programme, the children are made to take the government administered five grade exam after which they can enter a government or private school. Generally, smaller rather than bigger educational NGOs in Pakistan have been interested in running these schools.

In addition, many NGOs and the National and Provincial Education Foundations are implementing non-formal education programmes for working children. These programmes aim to provide flexible teaching hours. Sindh Education Foundation runs three different models under this programme: Sindh Education Fellowship Programme, Community Supported Schools Programme, and Home School Programme. Aimed especially at increasing female enrolment, the Fellowship Schools Program (FSP) is focused on creating ownership of girls' education within local communities through their complete involvement in the establishment, operation and management of primary schools. For effective and sustainable participation, Parent Education Committees

(PECs) have been formed in each Fellowship School. The Home Schools Programme also focuses on girls but is mainly located in far-flung areas of Sindh. It was started as a pilot program in 1996 to create a low cost yet effective and replicable quality education models in areas where even boys' schools do not exist and targets girls who have not had access to education. The Home Schools are established with collateral support from the community. According to SEF, 100 Home Schools presently cater to more than 4000 girls in the far-flung villages of Sindh.

Many other NGOs run similar programmes to bridge gender gaps in education. SAHE, another NGO, has been running a *Community Based School Program (CBSP) for Girls*. At present the program comprises 220 schools and teachers with an enrolment of 6340 girls in the 3 districts of Punjab. The program is spread over 6 years where 5.5 years are for regular schooling and 6 months for a pre-primary class, as it has proved effective in improving retention. SAHE uses a combination of government textbooks and those developed by the Oxford University Press. In addition, it tries to localize geography textbooks to the district concerned (Sarwar 2006).

Other NGOs have used non-formal education programmes to increase access to education for working children. Godh, an NGO, which has been running *Community Schools for Gypsy Children* since 2000 works on the notion of mobile schools which move with the community and focus on gypsy children in the age group of 4-18 years. The system utilizes internally developed material that caters to the requirements of older illiterate children but reverts to state curriculum in class 5 to facilitate mainstreaming. The schools generally operate on the principle of multi-grade teaching with one classroom and one teacher. Zindagi Trust, another NGO, addresses issues of functional literacy with a focus on English, Urdu and Math— these subjects are considered to be directly relevant to the working child's needs in routine communication and calculation. Its "Paid to learn" program maintains that any attempt to induct working children into schools needs to compensate for the income they will be expected to forgo during class time. The field officer of the Trust interacts with the employer of the child to negotiate a financial pact whereby the employer reduces the pay for the hours spent in the school and the Trust compensates the child to cover up for the loss in earning. The schools run for 3 hours, from 2-5pm, to adjust to peak working hours (Sarwar 2006). ANCE (Association of Network for Community Empowerment), another NGO, was formed in

1996 to provide basic education to working children. ANCE has 4 centers in Lahore, working for children involved in domestic and external labor who work in trades ranging from shoemaking, automobile, glass making to brick kilns. The centers are located in areas where such trades are concentrated. These centers run as non-formal schools. After class 5 the children are encouraged to mainstream however it is largely a matter of the parents' will. The programme also caters to disabled children (Sarwar 2007).

There are many other examples of NGOs involved in such innovative projects to improve access. However, the problem is that they have very small outreach. Even SEF, one of the biggest players in this field, runs a maximum of 100 such schools. Further, none of these programmes have been systematically evaluated for their impact on increasing access, improving quality or systematically addressing the issues of equity. A few academic papers on the effectiveness of NGO run non-formal education programmes, however, note many concerns mainly around sustainability. Most of these non-formal programmes fail to last beyond donor funded cycles. Some NGOs have tried to make these programmes sustainable by introducing a community saving model where community is encouraged to pay small fee even during the funded duration. The amount is deposited in the bank to provide some saving to cover the cost when the donor money runs out. It was also meant to inculcate the habit of paying for social services whereby the parents gradually become more willing to pay for education of their children. This means that the only way the NGO model could survive was by moving to private provision once the donor funding was over (Bano 2007b; Farah and Rizvi 2007). But, even this does not fully resolve the problem. Even if parents are willing to pay the fee to cover the teacher's salary, studies show that these school as unable to sustain themselves after the NGO withdraws due to high dependence on teacher training and monitoring provided by the NGO. Often relying on teachers with only a secondary or higher secondary qualifications, the NGO schools require extensive teacher training and monitoring (Bano 2007b).

The other serious challenge faced by these programmes is that of continuing the education to secondary level. There are not enough state middle schools to absorb children completing primary in the non-formal schools. There is a dramatic decrease in number of state schools from primary to middle and from middle to secondary (See Table 6). The NGOs themselves are often unable to upgrade their own schools to

middle or secondary due to lack of availability of qualified teachers in remote areas to teach middle and secondary levels. This low emphasis on middle and secondary educational institutions affects retention at primary level (Bano 2007b; Farah and Rizvi 2007).

Table 6: No. of state schools at primary, middle and secondary level

Level	Institutions	Enrollment	Teachers
Primary	157,158	21,333,206	450,136
Middle	30,418	4,550,473	246,666
Secondary	16,590	1,880,021	282,113

Source: MoF 2006b.

Given their small scale and limited ability to systematically address the issues of equity the expectations from them to help address the fundamental challenges faced within education sector are clearly unrealistic.

4. The real challenge: problem of incentives

A review of the PPP models discussed above and the preceding discussion on reliance on non-formal programmes to address challenges of equity show that they do promise innovative approaches but cannot realistically act as anchor of education sector reforms in countries facing serious challenges to meeting EFA targets. The question really is that why is it that despite being viewed as an anchor to education sector reforms, PPPs in Pakistan have show limited potential to address the fundamental challenges to meeting EFA targets? Are the PPP models not innovative enough or are they not being implemented properly? The answer to this rests partly in recognizing the limitations of the NGOs and the private sector but more importantly the explanation rests in the political economy of Pakistan's education sector where the government opted to support the notion of PPPs for very flawed incentives.

First of all, looking across the cases, it is very clear that the outreach of these programmes is very limited. Pakistan has a large number of NGOs with the sector estimated to have a strength of 45,000 in 2002 (PCP 2002) but only 8.5 per cent of all

registered NGOs are established to be working within the field of primary education (Ghaus-Pasha et. al 2002). Their number is steadily growing since 1980s with the rise of non-formal education model: a DFID funded study of education NGOs in Punjab shows that out of the 223 education organizations surveyed in Punjab, the majority (84 per cent) were established in 1980s and within southern Punjab, around 60 per cent were established in the 1990s (Zafar & Rashid 2003). Further, their influence within education ministry has also grown: a sign of NGO growing influence is that the government is increasingly contracting teacher training of government teachers to NGOs and allowing them to adopt government schools (Sarwar 2006). Also, as can be seen in the PPP models documented above, most are designed to involve NGOs rather than the private sector. Yet, their scale and influence remains insignificant when seen against the total number. Even the biggest NGOs dealing with adopt a school don't have more than 200 to 300 schools and the number of organizations capable of engagement at this level is not more than twenty in the country. As noted above, even Sindh Education Foundation, one of the biggest players in adopt a school programme, has only 165 adopted schools out of a total of 28,854 government primary schools in Sindh. The non-formal programmes being run by NGOs also remain very small. Again a player like Sindh Education Foundation does not run more than 100 schools under its School Fellowship Programme (SEF website). Since NGOs rely mainly on donor funds rather than the market, this has implications for the sustainability of the PPPs they establish.

Similarly, the School Voucher Scheme and the Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS) programmes reach out to only 10,000 and 50,000 students respectively (PEF 2008). Further, the continuation and expansion of the programmes involving the private sector is questionable given that they are being tried under a government which had taken an education sector reform loan from the World Bank and is thus following the Bank advice for the duration of the credit. The Draft National Education Policy 2008, however, recognizes the potential of these programmes not as the primary policy intervention but as an option in areas with low provision for state schooling: 'Where already a private school exists with additional admission space, the children shall be accommodated in it, through a voucher mechanism, and the public sector new school shall either be developed in a separate vicinity or for different levels. Similarly, private sector schools shall be provided permission on a need cum quality basis' (MoE 2008). The policy is yet to be put into practice though.

The potential of PPP models to address challenge of equity also remains limited. Programmes like adopt a school remain concentrated in the urban areas or remote areas with strong industrial base as it is difficult to find adopters in very poor or remote geographical settings. The non-formal programmes, on the other hand, often do operate in the remote areas where access to state schooling is limited and mostly focus on girls so they do contribute to reducing equity concerns. But, given their other limitations (discussed above) they cannot be expected to make a major difference. On top of this, the capacity of Education Foundations – the main state set mechanisms to the promote PPPs across the four provinces — to conceptualize and implement innovative PPP models varies dramatically across the provinces. Ironically the two provinces with lower education indicators, Balochistan and NWFP, also have less active Foundations. The difference is due to different funding flows, and different scale and quality of NSPs and private sector education providers in the given province. The decentralized approach of promoting PPPs through Education Foundations is in many ways further increasing regional inequalities given the marked difference in the resources at the disposal of these Foundations, and varying levels of technical capacity of their staff. Further, the fact that these PPP interventions are ad hoc where access is determined by the background of the NGO or the private provider, it means that many state schools don't get any PPP intervention while some get major additional funds. Such a policy in the long term is bound to increase inequalities within the state schooling system.

At the same time, the private sector on its own cannot be expected to address the challenges of equity. According to the findings of first round of the Learning and Educational Achievement in Punjab Schools (LEAPS) survey carried out in all the public and private schools offering primary level education in 112 villages of the province, between 2000-2005, the number of private schools in Punjab increased from 32,000 to 47,000 and by the end of 2005, one in every 3 enrolled children at the primary level was studying in a private school. The growth in the share of private sector within the education system in Pakistan, currently estimated to be 33 per cent, has been attributed to the poor quality of education in state schools combined with low fee among the private schools, where by the average fee in a private school in a village is as low as Rs 60 per month (Andrabi et. al. 2006). LEAPS survey further shows that children in private

schools report higher scores in all subjects (Urdu, English and Mathematics) partly because their teachers exert greater effort—a finding also supported by other studies (Das et. al. 2006; Aslam 2007).

LEAPS survey, however, also highlights the limitation of the private schools to address the issue of equity. The village surveys show that access to private schools is not universal rather private schools choose to locate in richer villages and richer settlements within villages, limiting access for poor households. This findings matches the national trend: private schools are expanding more rapidly in the more prosperous provinces of Punjab and NWFP than rural Sindh or Balochistan (between 1999-2001, the share of the private schools in the total increased from 15 to 30 per cent in Punjab and 4 to 17 per cent in NWFP but grew only from 16 to 21 per cent in Sindh and 4 to 6 per cent in Balochistan) (Andrabi et. al. 2006). The government school system, on the other hand, as LEAPS survey shows ensures equal access to schools for all. Since children who receive less attention and educational investment at home are also more likely to be enrolled in government schools, their reforms is critical to ensure quality education to poor segments of the society. The private schools also have a natural limitation to expansion in the rural population due to practical modalities of running private schools. Alderman et al (2003) based on their study of a rural and urban schools in Balochistan argue, in urban areas the schools have advantages like attracting good managers and teachers at relatively low cost and are particularly successful in attracting female teachers (Alderman et al 2003). As opposed to this in the rural areas it is much more difficult to find educated women which can become teachers and managers in private schools. Andrei, et al (2006) shows how existence of a government secondary school in the rural areas is an important prerequisite for the rise of private schools in the area as in the absence of a government secondary school there are unlikely to be sufficient number of secondary pass females in the area who can become teachers in private schools.

Apart from issues of access among the poor, the other limitation of private schools is that quality is only marginally better than the state schools. As a reviewer of the LEAPS report sums it: “ The only reason the private schools look so good is that the poorly performing public schools are so disastrous: if at some future date, children actually started demanding something more than the most rudimentary education, the semi-educated teachers in the private schools would actually find it hard to cope” (Andrabi

2008) – a concern also noted by others (Khan 2004). Over emphasis on private provision is likely to lead to access to very low quality schooling among the poor. Thus, there is limit to which private schools can be expected to address the challenges of access, quality or equity.

When these limitations of the NGOs and the private sector are studied against the motives of the state to engage in PPP, it becomes easy to understand why the emphasis on PPPs to increase people ‘voice and choice’ has failed. On paper, the Ministry of Education listed the following incentives for entering PPPs (MoE 2004b):

‘The government has officially recognized that the public sector on its own lacks all the necessary resources and expertise to effectively address and rectify low education indicators.’ PPPs offer:

1. ‘A less radical alternative to sometimes controversial and less desirable wholesale privatization
2. A more transparent and proactive manner of engaging the private sector for improving access and quality of education
3. Enhanced managerial performance, entrepreneurial spirit through capacity building inherent in the model
4. Access to proven leading edge technologies
5. Improved transparency through involvement of local community from design, implementation through to the operation
6. Support to local knowledge and employment generation at local levels’ (MoE 2004b).

In terms of role and responsibilities of the government, no many details were given for individual programmes. The overall role of the government was noted ‘to create an enabling environment for the growth of PPP enterprises by providing incentives and deregulating the sector. Examples of such actions include liberal grants of charter restructuring of the education foundation as autonomous bodies, development of multiple textbooks and accreditation of private examination boards’ (MoE 2004b).

It can be argued that this opening up was a natural progression from the Social Action Programme (SAP) implemented in 1990s, which was a first attempt at establishing a formal relationship between the state and NGOs in delivery of basic social services

across education, health and water and sanitation. Initiated in 1992 at a cost of \$7.7 billion, SAP became the main social sector reform initiative in Pakistan for the 1990s (SPDC 1997; 2000). Though the Government of Pakistan provided 76 per cent of the funds, the international donor community had a great say in shaping the project primarily because all the key multilateral and bi-lateral donors formed a consortium to pool their funds through this programme. It was made a condition within SAP design that a certain portion of social service delivery must be ensured through NGOs. SAP, unlike the current programmes, did not recognise the private for-profit sector as a partner (SPDC 1997; 2000). SAP was in general a failure but it is argued to have set the momentum for including greater NGO participation in government programmes in delivery of social services. As seen in the examples studied above there is, however, little evidence of a genuine opening up of the state towards NGOs and the private sector.

The government's main emphasis remained on viewing the NGOs and the private sector as the source of mobilizing financial resources rather than an a partner who should actively contribute in the design, delivery and monitoring of the state education facilities. The ESR Action Plan 2001-2005 stated: 'the private sector and civil society organization are not only encouraged to mobilize financial resources but also join in designing, executing and monitoring education activities.' Thus, highlighting that even on paper, the primarily role of NGOs and the private sector was viewed to be that of financial providers. This attitude has been clear across the PPP programme especially in the case of Adopt a school, where it has been repeatedly noted that the adopter has been told by government officials to provide the financial resources and not intervene too much in shaping the educational content.

This unwillingness to genuinely collaborate and share authority with the NGOs and the private sector has also been visible in the difficulties faced by smaller NGOs and private providers to gain permission to engage with these PPP programme. As seen in PPP models discussed above, whether it is adopt the school programme or the provision of special concessions to private schools, the ability to negotiate access depends on the adopter's or the private school's individual background. It is the influential political or social networks or strong economic background of the adopter or the school that enables it to negotiate access and determine the extent of intervention (Rashid 2000).

The state has not developed any institutional mechanisms to facilitate formation of such partnerships.

The government's lack of commitment to the idea of partnership has also been visible in the fact that though PPPs were argued to be the anchor of educational reforms, the responsibility for promoting them rested with Education Foundations, which are semi-autonomous organisations, rather than a cell within the Ministry of Education itself. Further, the fact that the Foundations do not run coordinated programmes rather each is very independent means that there is simply no one focal point in the system which coordinates the PPPs. Rather many Para-state institutions like the Foundations have been given the mandate to run various versions of these PPP programmes. These organisations include: Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, National Commission for Human Development, Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment, Rural Support Programmes, and the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD).

In addition, there is widespread distrust of the NGO sector with the government officials (Bano 2005). This is also visible in the differing level of emphasis placed on PPPs in the 2001 policy documents written when the minister and her advisors were from NGOs, and were very popular with officials within major donor agencies like World Bank, and the White Paper, which was written by a team led by an ex-bureaucrat. The former made PPPs anchor of the reform, the latter proposed reducing them to one of the strategies. In the Draft National Education Policy 2008, which is based on the White Paper, the emphasis is brought back to the state. The policy argues for increasing government financial commitment to education from 2.3 of the GDP to 7 per cent by 2015. PPP are mentioned but with a different focus; the emphasis in the current policy remains on bridging the gap in the education provided in the public and private schools and the Deeni madrasas (MoE 2008). The 2008 Education Policy notes the need for creating enabling environment to engage the private sector to contribute towards the development of education but also maintains that a system of checks and balances for private sector shall be formed to oversee the issues of fees, school standards, pays of teachers, etc.

The reason government engaged in the whole discourse of PPPs was, as discussed above, partly to do with financial incentives but the primary motive was linked to the political incentives of the regime of the time. In 2000, the education strategy paper was being designed by a military led government which had toppled the elected government in late 1999. Keen to gain international legitimacy, it was quick to adopt the development language, appoint NGO leaders to ministerial and advisory positions, and start a major process of development reforms initiating the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, designing of the Devolution Plan and Education Sector Reform Strategy simultaneously. The international development agencies, which were otherwise reluctant to engage with a military government, seeing these efforts afoot did not take long to drop their reservations. All international development agencies and bilateral donors became an active partner in this process of policy formation and writing of the strategy documents. All donors at this time were supporting the idea of PPPs given that forging partnerships for development is one of the eight MDGs.

The influence of the international development institutions is promoting the idea of PPPs is also very obvious in these documents as many of these strategy documents frame PPPs within the Millennium Development Goal No. 8 (Forming Partnerships in Development) (GoP 2003). At the time of writing the education strategy paper in 2001 all key donors in the education sector – World Bank, Asian Development Bank, DFID, and USAID, the United Nation agencies, the Japanese Government, Norwegian Agency of Development Cooperation (NORAD), and European Union (EU) (MoE 2004b)—actively supported the idea of PPPs. The World Bank and the USAID pledged to support the Education Foundations and invest in programmes involving the private sectors like voucher scheme and stipends for girls. DFID, UNICEF and Norad supported community participation and formation of PPPs through all their core programs and pledged to work through the Foundations. Norad proposed a six year \$22 million program for promoting quality education, particularly among girls. It proposed to partner with the National Education Foundation to develop a \$6.5 million project to assist establishment of 350 community schools in FATA through PPPs. Out of its \$81 million allocation to education over six years, the European Commission allocated \$45 million to Sindh Education Foundation to implement the Education Sector Reforms and promote PPPs in all 16 districts of Sindh (MoE 2004b).

The military government found adoption of PPP language a convenient way to please the development community and the NGOs at the same time reducing the pressure on itself to be held accountable for providing basic social services to all. Thus, it turned out to be a win-win position for the military led government where by adopting the right language it gained international legitimacy and financial support but in practice never had to open up the system to allow genuine public participation in running of state institutions. The result is that PPPs remained isolated projects within the education sector in Pakistan rather than leading to a genuine forging of energies of the state, NGOs, and the private sector and as the Musharraf government became stronger and support of the western governments became contingent on bigger issues like the ‘war on terror’ than routine policies around education, many of the NGO advisors were dropped and the draft National Education Policy 2008, which was written by people from within the government system, also reduced the emphasis on PPPs⁵.

This is a pessimistic outlook but this is supported by the study, which aimed to identify potential drivers of change within Pakistan. Noting serious challenges to initiation of pro-poor changes with Pakistan, the study identified the following challenges to reform: ‘one, the time horizon for enduring pro-poor policy change is far longer than is typically embodied in aid planning cycles; two, structural continuities serve as critical impediments to change (such as the pattern of land distribution and gender relations) and these are relatively impervious to short term institutional and policy innovation, but might evolve more gradually over a longer time frame; three, a high level of unpredictability and volatility in politics is shaped to a significant degree by external influences,’ (Nadvi and Robinson. 2004).

PPP models that fail to address these structural problems and focus on innovative models supported primarily through outside donor aid flow, thus cannot be expected to make a fundamental contribution to addressing the issues of access, quality or equity. The international development community thus has to be conscious of the political economic incentives that make governments in developing countries accept their ideas. Good ideas and technically sound development models can fail to deliver if the state

⁵ Here it is not being argued that the bureaucrats writing the policy held any malice against the NGOs or the private sector. In fact, they argued for the shift back to the state due to clear limitations of the PPP models as noted in this paper. However, the point is made here to illustrate that the idea of PPPs never found genuine support within the bureaucrats or the political elite. It was only picked because it suited the ruling government at a particular point in time to strengthen its relations with international donor agencies.

does not have the right incentives to adopt them.

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