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Education policy borrowing in Pakistan: Public-private partnerships

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Chapter Two

Education Policy Borrowing in Pakistan – Public Private Partnerships

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Introduction

There is a growing realisation among scholars of an ‘emerging global education policy field’ which is a sort of supra-state space, where a broader consensus around preferred education policy priorities, is developing (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Educational reforms that are successful in one context and are subsequently replicated in other contexts – the so called ‘best practices’ – are also becoming part of this emerging global education policy field. These models of best practice are subsequently lent to countries that require assistance in reforming their education system. Generally, these reforms emerge in the developed countries and are lent to developing countries in a centre to periphery relationship (Altbach, 2008).

The emerging trends of global comparative indices, such as progress on EFA targets, MDG targets and performance related to international tests like PISA, have also strengthened the global education policy field by providing global comparisons, within which global standards for education are embedded (Spring, 2008). Countries throughout the developed and developing world are benchmarked against these standards and if a country does not display high scores on these standards, a call for reform is generated. These global comparisons create the need for ‘catch-up’ by developing countries, leading them to borrow tested education reform solutions from elsewhere.

The transfers of education policy do not only follow this very straight and direct route of policy borrowing. Roger Dale (1999) provides a good range of mechanisms through which policy influences transfer from one space to another – borrowing is one of them. It is however, not guaranteed that the reforms developed and tested in one context will also work out in another setting. These policy ideas, which travel across countries, are not simply taken up by the national policy actors, but become embedded within the national policy dynamics (Jones & Alexiadou, 2001). However, the negotiation between arrived and embedded policy depends on the negotiating power and capacity of the state – its sphere of authority (Ali, 2009). It is important to understand particular reforms, borrowed and implemented in specific contexts, to fully comprehend the phenomenon.

This chapter addresses education policy borrowing in Pakistan. It will first provide a brief context of education in Pakistan and deliberate on recent educational development. Later it will focus on a major education policy that has been borrowed from the so called global education policy field – that is the policy of public private partnership. Its emergence in the international context and arrival within the Pakistani education policy space will be discussed, followed by a view on its reception and outcome. The concluding section will provide a commentary on the overall outcome of the borrowed policies, their transformation - including policy negotiation - and the possibilities for becoming embedded policy within the current Pakistani education policy context.

Education policy context of Pakistan

Pakistan is located at a strategically important location within South Asia neighbouring China, India, Afghanistan and Iran. It came into existence in 1947 and was separated from East Pakistan (present day Bangladesh) in 1971. The current population is estimated to be around 177 million with an average growth rate of 2.07 % (Pakistan. Ministry of Finance, 2011). The PSLM 2010-11 shows that the literacy rate among population above 10 years old is 58% (M-69%; F-46%). The current net primary enrolment rate is 66% (M-71%; F-61%) (Pakistan. Federal Bureau of Statistics., 2011). As far as the system of education is considered, it is broadly categorised into public and private, within which there are further variations. There are 225,135 schools including both the public and private sector, offering education up to higher secondary level (Pakistan. Ministry of Education, 2008). The total numbers of students enrolled in these schools are 33,688,629. Despite these enormous figures, there are still around 7 million children in Pakistan who are out of school.

In terms of higher education, there are 129 universities including 72 public and 57 private, with an enrolment of 803, 507 students (Pakistan. Ministry of Education, 2008). Since 2001 the government has invested heavily in advancing the higher education sector, which has resulted in an increase in the number of universities, in enrolment, scholarships, graduates (from national and overseas institutions), research grants, and, importantly, the building of a research culture. The overall budget of Higher Education Commission (HEC) has been on the rise since 2001, though the development budget has been recently curtailed due to unsettling economic condition of the country (see table 1 below for a comparative view).

Table 1: Development and Non Development Expenditures on Higher Education (Rs. Billion)

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
Recurring	10.5	14.3	12.5	15.8	21.5	20.3
Development	10.9	14.4	15.4	16.4	11.3	9.2
Total	21.4	28.7	27.9	32.2	32.8	29.5

Source: Economic Survey of Pakistan 2010-11

The growth in the HEC budget matches an increase in the number of universities and graduates at higher education level. During 2005-2009, the higher education sector saw 400,000 graduates every year, which shows a 30% increase during this period (Pakistan. Ministry of Finance, 2011). Since 2002, HEC has sent around 4,313 candidates for M.Phil and PhD degrees abroad and another 8,873 students have been sponsored for the research degrees within the country. During 2010, some 750 doctoral degrees were awarded by Pakistani universities, which shows an enormous growth compared with the situation in 2000 (Pakistan. Ministry of Finance, 2011, HEC website various reports).

Since this chapter focuses upon policy borrowing in Pakistan and its effects on overall education policy, a brief historical understanding about the involvement of foreign assistance in Pakistan, is required. Foreign assistance comes in a number of forms: these include loans, grants and technical

expertise. It is an instrument which brings with it foreign innovations, reforms and ideas in the national policy space. The following table (see Table 2) shows the extent of external economic assistance to Pakistan over the years:

Table 2: Foreign economic assistance to Pakistan (\$ million)

Period	Committed Loans	Disbursed Loans	Committed Grants	Disbursed Grants	Total Commitment	Total Disbursed
	a	b	C	D	a+c	b+d
1951-1960	618	192	794	650	1412	842
1960-1965	1805	1232	1106	1162	2911	2394
1965-1970	2233	2324	704	719	2937	3043
1970-1978	6152	5096	815	634	6967	5730
1978-1983	5667	-	1566	-	7233	-
1983-1988	9130	5158	2777	2025	11907	7183
1988-1993	11736	9540	2177	2541	13913	12081
1993-1997*	9183	9214	928	1008	10111	10222

* Includes provisional data for year 1996-97

Source: Pakistan. Federal Bureau of Statistics. (1998). 50 years of Pakistan.

At present there are some 97 education development projects funded by external agencies in various parts of Pakistan with a good number of them (13) dealing with improving governance (Mujahid-Mukhtar, 2011). Other prominent areas receiving foreign assistance are Capacity Building (40); Elementary Education (22); Reconstruction (20) and Teachers' Training (16). Foreign assistance raises questions about external influence and policy borrowing. Ali and Tahir (2009) explain various global policy influences that are evident in education policies of Pakistan. In addition Ahsan (2005) points out that assistance to Pakistan is attached very much with the geo-strategic situation of the area where Pakistan is situated. The case of Afghanistan during 1980s and in 2000s provides a good example to support this assertion. For example aid for education in Pakistan is not simply to improve educational indicators, but a means to curtailing supposed extremism (Curtis, 2007).

For better contextual understanding, it is also important for readers to be aware of the current education reforms happening in the country. The National Education Policy 2009 (NEP 2009) was developed after a three year consultative process and can be accessed at the Ministry of Education's website (www.moe.gov.pk). Recently, in 2011 a constitutional amendment (18th Constitutional Amendment) was passed, which has brought significant changes in the education sector. The amendment made it compulsory that all children ages 5-16 receive free education. In addition,

responsibility for education has now been devolved from the federal to provincial governments. As a consequence of this, the federal Ministry of Education has been dissolved. Apart from these, some of the prominent education policy moves visible in the country include the promotion of privatisation and decentralisation; an emphasis on the achievement of EFA and MDG targets; and a focus on the improvement in governance system through measurement and new management practices. According to Carnoy's analysis (2006) these developments show an increased influence of globalisation on education, and also hint at the process of education policy borrowing in Pakistan (Ali & Tahir, 2009).

This section has outlined the structure of Pakistan's basic and higher education sectors and has aimed to demonstrate the reliance on foreign assistance in Pakistan, which provides the background to understand education policy borrowing. It has been argued that various educational reforms in Pakistan which have been tried out since 1990s are linked to the influences of globalisation (Ali & Tahir, 2009). The following part of this chapter will extend this discussion by focusing on a significant policy preference, that of public private partnerships. It will be seen that these have surfaced gradually in Pakistan and now hold a dominant space in the field of education policy-making and policy implementation.

Public private partnerships (PPP)

The idea of public private partnership reflects the hybrid governance arrangements between various state and non-state actors over number of educational development initiatives across the globe (Robertson et al., 2012). It indicates the recent re-positioning of the state to ensure public services in a joined-up fashion. The processes of globalisation have led to what is referred to as a 'hollowed out state' or 'competition state' (Jessop, 2002), which alludes to the reduction of a state's absolute power over its affairs. Globalisation has affected the state from the top and bottom and it now has to negotiate its power with supra-national, as well as sub-national, actors and agencies (Scholte, 2000). As a result the sphere of authority of the nation state has been reshaped (Rosenau, 1999, 2000).

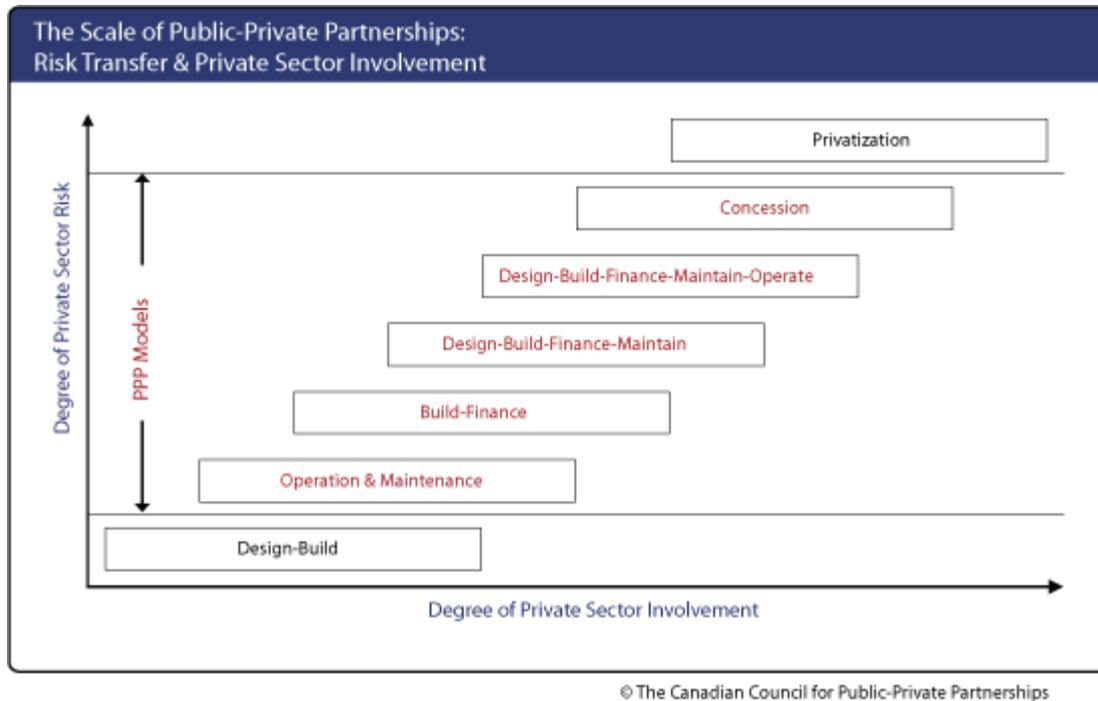
The World Bank titled its annual development report in 1997 as 'The State in a Changing World' and through that narrative, and others subsequently, contributed to the global movement of curtailing the state's scope and authority (World Bank, 1997). Due to this re-calibration, the state has gradually withdrawn from its absolute claim over provision of basic public services like education and health. It has allowed and at times encouraged, the involvement of private actors in the provision of basic public services, generating the idea of public private partnerships (PPP or 3Ps). Over the past decade many forms of public private partnerships have been practiced in a variety of sectors. The Canadian Council of Private Partnership defines PPP as follows:

'A cooperative venture between the public and private sectors, built on the expertise of each partner, that best meets clearly defined public needs through the appropriate allocation of resources, risks and rewards' (www.pppcouncil.ca)

The partnership results in a range of options, many of which are practiced in Pakistan. They are based on the degree of private sector involvement allowed, required and promoted at any one time.

Alongside the benefits, as perceived by various key players, there are also risks. In my view, the picture below describes it appropriately:

Figure 1: The Scale of Public Private Partnerships



The complexity of partnerships also alludes to the fact that the distinction between public and private itself is not very clear. Robertson *et al.* (2012) consider that although people have tried to distinguish between the two sectors and economists have stricter definitions, in reality it is hard to delineate a substantial boundary between public and private.

The realisation that the state could not meet the heavy social responsibilities of providing welfare entrusted to states after World War Two. That understanding grew enormously during the 1980s, particularly in the UK and USA under the leadership of British Prime Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher and American President Mr. Ronald Reagan. The growth in the activism of labour unions troubled these heads of states, leading them to institute the policies of increased centralisation and private involvement in state functions. The demise of the Soviet Union also served as a swift blow to the promise of state intervention and encouraged the belief in the suitability of a reliance on markets as better managers of future growth. This ideological push continued to grow across the globe in both developed and developing countries. The 1997 World Development Report by the World Bank sets out the following fundamental tasks for the state (World Bank, 1997, p. 4):

- Establishing a foundation of law
- Maintaining a nondistortionary policy environment, including macroeconomic stability

- Investing in basic social services and infrastructure
- Protecting the vulnerable
- Protecting the environment.

Most importantly for this examination, the report emphasised that the 'state need not be the sole provider' of infrastructure, social services and other goods and services (p. 4). Rather, the state should focus on regulating service provision, maintaining quality and equity.

Green (2005:6) sceptically notes that the moves to privatise education have been discursively understated by the usage of the term 'partnerships', as it sounds politically more appropriate. He lists several partnership initiatives which have been used by the UK Government in engagement with the private sector. These initiatives include:

- Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs)
- PPP's faces of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)
- Academies
- Independent specialist schools
- Former Education Action Zones (EAZs) and Excellence in Cities and Clusters (EiCs) programmes
- Private schools in partnership with state schools
- State schools run by private firms
- Historical links between schools and charities and the church
- Local education partnerships (LEPs)
- Interventions by the DfES into the work of LEAs forcing a range of 'partnerships'.

Green (2005: 6) further notes that this 'trend is global' and similar concepts are prevalent in many parts of the world, particularly the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, parts of Middle East, Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. In fact, as Savas (2000) argues, the term partnership is being used instead of privatization because of its positive connotations and general acceptability. The arrangements under public private partnership, however, represent programmes similar to those previously categorised as contract and privatisation.

The phenomenon of public private partnership or some form of privatisation, as some would argue, is also on rise in the developing countries, so it is important to understand the meaning of 'private' in this situation. There is a range of activity that is generally categorised as 'private'; on the one hand we see private schools running on commercial basis to earn profit, on the other hand we have

private schools which operate on a non-profit basis and with philanthropic intentions (Srivastava & Walford, 2007, p. 7). Sometimes the low cost private initiatives are in fact considered a means of providing mass education to even deprived communities (Tooley & Dixon, 2007, p. 15). Ball (2007, p. 122) asserts that 'partnerships are a major part of the project to reform and 'modernise' local governments and public bodies, by 'cultural re-engineering'. Partnerships are the new way for governments to introduce the private into the public sector and this has become the global discourse, building upon the back of neo-liberal ideology. While these arrangements have existed for quite some time in Pakistan, the thing which is uncomfortable at the moment, is the intention of the government to shift the responsibility of educational provision to parents and communities, despite it being constitutionally, the responsibility of the state (Farah & Rizvi, 2007).

Public private partnership in Pakistan

Defining private education in the Pakistani context touches upon various discourse and policy narratives. The Ministry of Education in Pakistan has noted these as being:

Sources of funding: public, private, commercial, community supported etc.

Specialisation: madrassa, technical and vocational

Quality: ordinary public schools, low cost private school, elite schools

Medium of instruction: Urdu medium, English medium, Mother tongue

(Aly, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2006)

When one considers public private partnerships in the Pakistani context, different stakeholders appear to hold a variety of understandings simultaneously. These partnerships arouse various emotions, some viewing them very negatively while others appreciate their contributions to education policy and the possibilities presented for implementation. If we try to classify schooling arrangements in Pakistan over a continuum, we would see on one end the fully public schools and on the other extreme fully autonomous private schools. The latter do not require to abide to a national curriculum or to the schooling calendar (Farah & Rizvi, 2007). In between there are various arrangements including the involvement of various stakeholders – the government, NGOs, CBOs, Communities, Philanthropists, religious seminaries etc. Farah and Rizvi (2007) point to at least three reasons which have led to the growth of partnerships in Pakistan, including the inability of the government to finance educational provisions to all; international pressure and policy recommendations by donor agencies and the rise of NGOs and CBOs since 1980s (around 45,000 in 2002 according to ADB estimates).

In fact, in order to locate the current position of the public private partnerships in the Pakistani education system, it would be useful to provide an historical analysis of past education policies concerning the issue of privatisation. This is to emphasise the importance of 'periodization' when analysing policy borrowing: according to Spreen (2004: 102) this helps us to understand the historical context within which the policy lands along with an outline of its various phases. For this purpose the following policy documents are considered:

- Pakistan Education Conference 1947
- Proceedings of Education Conference 1951 including Six-Year National Plan of Education Development 1951-57
- Commission on National Education, 1959
- Commission on Student Problems and Welfare, 1966
- The Education policy 1970
- The education policy 1972-1980
- National education policy and implementation plan 1979
- National Education policy 1992
- National Education policy 1998-2010
- Education Sector Reforms 2000-2005
- White Paper on Education in Pakistan, 2007
- National Education Policy 2009

There appear to be at least four phases of governmental policies towards the role of the private sector in education in Pakistan. The initial phase from 1947 until 1959 shows a relatively positive attitude on behalf of the government towards private education. It generally encouraged the role of the private sector and showed willingness to improve the situation to support growth in the private sector. However, the overall responsibility of provision of education was seen to be within the remit of the state. In the subsequent phase from 1966 until 1970 the role of private sector was seen as a problem rather than a source of enhancing quality or efficiency: hence the 1966 Commission Report outlined difficult issues with the private sector and the ways of handling them. Although the government refrained from stopping the work of private providers, it continued to highlight problems with them. In 1972, the government brought an end to earlier criticisms and nationalised all private schools, except religious education institutions. In this way the state took a very negative stance towards privatisation of education. Not only the creation and management of schools but also textbook production were invested in the functions of the state. The fourth phase emerged from a 1979 policy, which reversed the nationalisation and also encouraged private sector inclusion in education. The 1992 and 1998 education policies went even further and offered various incentives and tax exemptions for private entrepreneurs to establish private schools. A few examples from the 1992 Education Policy are presented below:

- The Government is looking forward to a richer participation of the private sector in education development. The incentives built into the Policy, and the Provincial and National Education Foundations, now in the making, should facilitate the growth of education in the private sector and, in particular, the rural areas

- Grants-in-aid and tax rebates shall be provided to private institutions.
- Companies with a paid-up capital of Rs. 100 million or more shall be required under the law to establish and run educational institutions up to secondary level with funds provided by them.

The education sector reforms under the Musharraf government between 2000-2006 favoured public private partnerships as a strategic choice for attaining educational goals committed under EFA and MDGs. The Education Sector Reform Plan (2001-2004) provided many incentives for the private sector to 'flourish' in the education sector (Pakistan. Ministry of Education, 2002, p.63). The incentives included tax exemption, exemption of custom duties for educational equipment import, provision of land or subsidized land, along with subsidised utilities. The ESR either initiated or strengthened the partnership programmes which included: Afternoon School System Up-Gradation of Schools through Community Participation Project (CPP); Adopt-a-School programme; IT programmes in government schools; Capacity building of School Management Committees (SMC); and Education Foundation Programmes.

The growth of private sector due to these policy initiatives has increased substantially. At present there are more than 30% education institutions in the private sector (Pakistan. Ministry of Education, 2006). The table below shows the overall strength of public and private institutions across the country at various levels. It is interesting to note that apart from primary and university education most other levels of education are dominated by the private sector.

Table 3: Number of Private and Public Educational Institutions by Level

Level of Institutions	Total	Public	%	Private	%
Pre-Primary	1,081	287	(26.5)	794	(73.5)
Mosque School	14,123	14,035	(99.4)	88	(0.6)
Primary	122,349	105,526	(86.2)	16,823	(13.8)
Middle	38,449	14,334	(37.3)	24,115	(62.7)
Secondary	25,090	10,550	(42.0)	14,540	(58.0)
British System	281	11	(3.9)	270	(96.1)
Inter. And Degree Colleges	1,882	1,025	(54.5)	857	(45.5)
General Universities	49	31	(63.3)	18	(36.7)
Technical / Professional	1,324	426	(32.2)	898	(67.8)
Vocational / Poly Technique	3,059	916	(29.9)	2,143	(70.1)
NFBE	4,831	2,008	(41.6)	2,823	(58.4)

Deeni Madaris	12,153	354	(2.9)	11,799	(97.1)
Others	3,120	2,241	(71.8)	879	(28.2)
Total	227,791	151,744	(66.6)	76,047	(33.4)

Source: National Education Census, 2005

The table below shows official educational expenditures on education over the years. The table also estimates the expenditures by private sector, which shows a considerable amount.

Table 4: Actual GDP and Expenditure on Education during last eight years

Year	GDP (mp) (Rs Million)	Pub Exp. On Edu. (Rs Million)	Pvt Exp. On Edu. (Rs Million)	Total Exp. On Edu. (Rs Million)	Pub EE as % of GDP	Total EE as % of GDP
1999-00	3,826,111	71,129.944	11,908.746	83,038.690	1.86	2.17
2000-01	4,162,654	75,887.064	16,709.797	92,596.861	1.82	2.22
2001-02	4,401,699	78,924.971	21,510.848	100,435.819	1.79	2.28
2002-03	4,822,842	89,827.384	26,311.898	116,139.282	1.86	2.41
2003-04	5,640,580	124,274.476	31,112.949	155,387.425	2.20	2.75
2004-05	6,581,103	139,968.001	35,914.000	175,882.001	2.13	2.67
2005-06	7,713,064	170,708.773	40,715.051	211,423.824	2.21	2.74
2006-07	8,706,917	211,778.919	45,516.102	257,295.021	2.43	2.96

(i) GDP (at market price) values at current Factor cost taken from Pakistan Economic Survey 2005-06 & 2006-07.

(ii) Private Sector Expenditure on Education projected on the basis of data contained in FBS Census of Private School 1999-2000 & MoE-NEC 2005-06.

Source: (Pakistan. Ministry of Education. Policy & Planning Wing, 2007, p. 21)

Table Two above shows the significant presence of the private sector in Pakistan's education system. However, these figures are not able to show the PPP arrangements and contribution. So, to make further sense of these initiatives, we should move to look at various models of PPP in education as they have existed in Pakistan. This will be followed by a critical evaluation to ascertain the extent to which PPP is a home-grown or imported policy and what results it has produced in achieving stated educational objectives in Pakistan.

Models of PPP in Education in Pakistan

The table below provides a snapshot of some prominent public private partnership programmes that have been launched in Pakistan, particularly since the 1990s. The programmes have mainly focused on addressing the access issue, particularly for deprived communities and segments of the population such as for girls. All of these partnerships involve various partners like government, NGO, private organisation and communities. The two most significant points as far as the focus of this chapter is concerned, are that most of these initiatives have been financially supported by international donor agencies, prominently the World Bank. Secondly, it is also evident that the supposed ownership of these initiatives ultimately lies in the private sector. Farah and Rizvi (2007) conclude that although these partnerships have yielded positive results they are 'often unequal and retain many aspects of hierarchical governance. Moreover, they are transitory (i.e. they are formed for a limited period) and are often intended to support a transition to privatization (i.e. towards the school being owned, financed and managed by private or community groups or individuals)' (p. 350).

Table 5: Models of PPP in Pakistan

PPP Programme	Dominant Focus	Partnership Between	Financial Support by	Supposed ownership after project
Community Support Programme, Balochistan, 1992	Increase Girls Enrolment	NGO, VEC and Govt	USAID and World Bank	Government with conditions
Adopt a School Programme, Sindh, 1998	Quality	Adopter (private or NGO), Govt	adopter and Govt	Adopter (private)
Fellowship School Programme, 1997- Balochistan, Sindh	Access	Govt, Community	World Bank through Govt – per child subsidy model	Community on private model
Social Action Programme (SAP) Community Schools, whole Pakistan, 1992	Access	Govt, Community	World Bank and Government of Pakistan	Community on private model
Coaching Centres – AKES, Northern Areas	Quality – post primary	Community, NGO	USAID	Community on private model
Promoting Private Schooling in Rural Sindh (PPRS), 2008	Access and Quality	SEF and Private entrepreneur	World Bank	Private

Integrated Education Learning Programme (IELP), Sindh, 2009	Quality	SEF and Private Schools	World Bank	Private
Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS), Punjab	Access and Quality	PEF and Private Schools		Private
Technical Training Centre Daharki, Sindh	Technical Education	Engro led private consortium and Govt	Engro led private consortium	Private
Technical Training Centre, Daultala, 1992	Technical Education	PPL	PPL	Government

Discussion: The Importance of PPP and is it baroque? Has it achieved what it claims or has it led to educational apartheid?

Understanding public private partnership in Pakistan from the lens of policy borrowing is a complex issue. It is indeed quite hard to determine precisely when and whether the policy was actually imported or if it emerged as a response to local needs. Indeed I tend to agree with Spreen (2004) who argued that ‘in this era of global circulation of ideas, movements, and people, it is difficult to pinpoint precisely when and how a concept arrives’ (p. 110). Nevertheless the historical developments of the idea within the Pakistani context as presented above, suggest that the idea of private involvement in public educational provisions have been operative in Pakistan since its inception. However, the idea had gone through significant transformation both in terms of its ideology and quantum. The official policy documents since 1990s started utilising and in fact promoting, public private partnerships to achieve the EFA commitments that government found hard to fulfil given its limited resources. Here, the idea of ‘magistracy of influence’ by Lawn and Lingard (2002, p. 292) is quite relevant to consider to see how the educational policy get shaped in the era of globalisation. Taking example from European education policy they argue that the interaction of national and international policy elites plays a significant role in shaping education policy ideas in any country. The magistracy of influence is ‘a policy elite that acts across borders, displays a similar habitus, have a feel for the same policy game and are, in a sense, bearers of an emergent European educational policy and policy space’ (p. 292). The shifts in policy in Pakistan towards privatisation after 1980s may have been a result of the magistracy operative in Pakistan, where bureaucrats, academics, consultants, donors, NGO representatives and politicians start to exchange ideas beyond formal channels and gradually building common discourse and consensual ideas like public private partnership.

The table 5 above showing various models of PPP operating in Pakistan also demonstrates that since 1990 the donor agencies, and particularly the World Bank, have taken keen interest in supporting various PPP initiatives in Pakistan. Ali (2008) argues that the donor agencies in Pakistan enjoy a very influential position in determining national education policy based on their financial, as well as

knowledge resources. In fact, financial loans by the World Bank have been considered as an example of policy imposition as loans carry explicit policy conditional ties (Dale, 1999). In case of PPP in Pakistan it is visible that donor financing is quite instrumental in trying out various models of PPP, suggesting a policy push that need to be adopted by the government (see table 5, also table 2). There is also some research work, sponsored or supported by international organisations, which has built a discursive knowledge base, consistently demonstrating that the involvement of the private and non-governmental sector in education is a cost effective option (see for example Andrabi et al., 2008; ASER-Pakistan 2010, 2010; Aslam, 2007; Farah, 1996). In reading there various scholarly and policy texts, it has to be acknowledged that the record of government schools in Pakistan has remained dismal. Throughout the past decade and more, private schools have been considered providers of better quality education.

Looking simplistically, the policy of PPP has global traces and appears a borrowed policy for Pakistan under the aegis of international organisations. However, a critical scrutiny would reveal that PPP as a favoured international policy was introduced by Pakistani policy makers to address some local issues (perhaps under the influence of magistracy discussed earlier). For example, the subsequent policies in Pakistan have miserably failed to ensure access to all school going children. The government has also lacked resources for fulfilling these targets. The international favour for PPP perhaps provided an opportunity for the policy makers to address their deficiencies through this novel idea. The 1998 Education Policy asserts that 'the government alone could not carry the burden of the whole education process [and hence the] private enterprises will be encouraged to open education institutions, particularly in rural areas' (NEP 1998, p. 108). This is exactly what (Silova, 2004, p.75) refers to as 'adopting the language of new allies', whereby the local policy elites adopt the international discourse to their own objectives and the apparently international policy, may in fact be a choice preferred by the local policy elites. In fact the context of Pakistan within which the PPP policy arrived, is very different from the context where this policy originated – UK or USA. In Pakistan, until 1972, private schools were initially officially supported by the state through Grants-in-Aid programmes. Then all schools were nationalised and gradually de-nationalised. It has been noted in previous sections that the government also lacked resources to finance education even if it wished to do so. We also see the enormous growth of NGOs participating in the provision of social service provision. While PPP in UK or other developed countries is pre-dominantly concerned with quality, PPP in Pakistan has focused pre-dominantly on access. Given these contextual realities, PPP did not simply land in Pakistan. While PPP is part of a global education policy field, it interacts with local specificities, history and politics to become embedded in education policy (Ozga & Jones, 2006). In fact table 5 shows that the policy is being tried out through various projects so as to come up with a contextually relevant model of PPP in Pakistan.

The outcomes of PPP initiatives shared in table 5 above, show relatively positive outcomes particularly in terms of teachers' and students' attendance and time spent on tasks (Farah & Rizvi, 2007). In addition the LEAPS study (Andrabi et al., 2008) and ASER reports (ASER-Pakistan 2010, 2010) show that low cost private schools are providing a relatively better quality of education. These positive outcomes need to be scrutinised against various other concerns such as: Is PPP in Pakistan a move to the gradual privatisation of education? If so, who will the private/semi-private schools be answerable to – the public or owners? Will low cost private schools or PPP initiatives sustain better quality? What will be power relationship among various partners – private organisation,

government, donor, NGOs? These are often debated questions which arise in relation to the discussion on PPP and which are still without settled answers. Indeed the trend of privatisation in Pakistan has shown a substantial increase and current contribution of private sector stand at just over 33% (see table 3 above). It is also alarming that the government's decision to promote PPP is driven by financial concerns. Though Pakistan has remained in a difficult financial situation, the budgetary and political priorities of the government, suggest that education is a low priority area. Having this as a low priority has led to the un-regulated privatisation of the education sector, which has already created a situation some refer to as 'educational apartheid' (Rahman, 2004; Siddiqui, 2007). Education, rather than becoming a resource for promoting equality of opportunity in society itself, becomes a source of inequality, even for graduates. It is time for the government to think seriously about its PPP policy, and especially to consider how it can become advantageous for its citizens.

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