

STUDENT FIRST!

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STUDENT FIRST!

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Dear Reader,

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Happy Reading!
School Choice Team

The second issue of Student First! revolves around the theme of 'Public Private Partnership (PPP) in Education'. The concept of PPP in education is not novel in the Indian school education sector. The grant-in-aid system born from the Woods Despatch of 1853 is the earliest PPP initiative in India. The system was a form of supply-side financing, in which grant-in-aid schools were set up by private parties, but supported by the state for a part of their expenses. This system did not create an incentive structure conducive to the delivery of quality education, since support usually took the form of block grants. These grants are utilised mainly for teachers' salaries and are not linked to quality parameters.

Subsequent proposals for PPPs put forward by the central and state governments have tried to address the problem of incentives. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is planning to set up 2500 schools on a PPP model to be run along the lines of Kendriya Vidyalayas. The states of Rajasthan and Punjab are also initiating PPP projects to deliver quality education to remote and unreached areas.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 presents a huge opportunity for PPPs. The financial capacity of the government to deliver on the RTE Act is uncertain. In an article in the Economic and Political Weekly [Vol 44(25)], Ravindra Dholakia and Pankaj Jain have shown that meeting the goal of universal schooling of all of India's children, given an education budget of below the generally recommended 6% of GDP, is not possible if all school education is through government schools, with all the teachers being paid salaries at levels recommended in the Sixth Pay Commission. The best alternative, therefore, is to pursue the goal of universal school coverage through alternative avenues such as PPP. Many studies have shown that private schools in India provide a reasonable quality of school education at almost 25-35% of the cost of government education. With additional financial support from the state, quality can be augmented in these schools, thereby delivering excellent education to disadvantaged groups. The RTE Act itself, through the 25% quota for economically weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in private schools has mainstreamed the idea of PPP into the national education policy.

As with any policy instrument the devil lies in the detail. The successful implementation of PPPs depends heavily on the capacity of the government to design, develop, and manage the complex contracting processes that underlie PPPs. Unless this capacity is developed and transparent systems adopted, PPPs may end up increasing rent seeking in an already inefficient system.

This issue carries the following sections:

- Centre Stage, feature article by Geeta Gandhi Kingdon is a policy overview of PPPs with a special focus on India.
- Offshore by Baela Raza Jamil is about the experience of Pakistan with PPPs.
- Veiwpoint by Janaki Rajan examines the issue of whether PPPs can contribute to Universal Elementary Education in India.
- Class Act carries an interview with Saumya Kanti, head of PPP initiatives at Educomp.
- In On the Spot, we ask three experts in education which areas of school education they think could public private partnerships create maximum impact.

For the Right to Education of Choice!



Parth J Shah
Editor-in-Chief

Public Private Partnerships

in Education: Some Policy Questions

Summary: A Public Private Partnership (PPP) makes it possible to disentangle funding from operation. One form of PPP in education is private operation of publicly funded education. While evidence is thin, a prominent recent study based on cross-country data suggests that private operation of schools with public funding raises student achievement levels, leading to efficiency gains. If it is accepted that primary education should always be publicly funded, and if the superior efficiency of this type of PPP in education is accepted or presumed, then some issues for policy are: (i) whether to give public funds **directly** to schools (supply-side financing) or **as vouchers** to parents (demand-side funding); (ii) to anticipate the potential **equity effects** of different ways of giving public funds for private operation; and (iii) to consider the **feasibility** of implementing educational PPPs in developing countries. Experimentation with alternative delivery modes, accompanied by rigorous evaluation of their respective efficiency and equity impacts, is desirable before scaling up interventions.

BY GEETA GANDHI KINGDON

Private schooling is growing in many developing countries, including among the poor. Part of the reason for this seems to be that public schools are performing poorly, with high teacher absence rates, lack of teaching activity and low pupil achievement levels (Chaudhury, et. al., 2006; PROBE, 1999; ASER, 2009). Yet, the spread of private schooling exacerbates social inequality since the poor are necessarily excluded when private schools are not publicly funded. If fee-charging private schools increasingly attract households, it suggests that parents perceive them to be operating with some competitive advantages relative to public schools. The nature of these advantages suggests how the private sector can be utilised to improve educational outcomes of children. The main avowed advantage of publicly funded but privately operated education is that it harnesses the expertise, energy and financial and management skills of the private sector to give better value for taxpayers' money. Proponents argue that PPPs provide a more flexible way of producing education, since they allow governments to overcome inflexible salary scales and other civil service restrictions

and increase transparency of government education spending by making the cost of education services more visible (LaRocque, 2005). Decentralised decision-making at the level of the school is thought to be more responsive to parents' needs and to foster local level accountability.

In recent years there has been increased discussion of the role of PPPs in education, as focus shifts from mere inputs-based to more incentives-based educational reforms. Figure 1 shows the different combinations of private and public operation and funding of education. The shaded cells are PPPs: cell D in the bottom right corner is public operation with private funding, e.g. fee charging public schools. The EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2004) finds that more than 100 countries have public primary schools that charge some form of fees. Cell A in the top left corner combines public funding with private operation. Examples of type 'A' PPP are voluntary aided schools in the UK, grant-in-aid schools in India, charter schools in the US and voucher schools in Colombia. Using PISA data from 35 countries, Woessmann (2005) studies the

distribution of countries into these four quadrants and investigates the relative effectiveness of the four school-types. His statistical analysis shows that – after controlling extensively for student background factors – public funding with private operation brings large gains in terms of maths achievement of students, while private funding with public operation leads to large losses in achievement. The pure private and pure public cases do not differ much from each other, in terms of their effects on student learning. These findings are summarized in Figure 2.

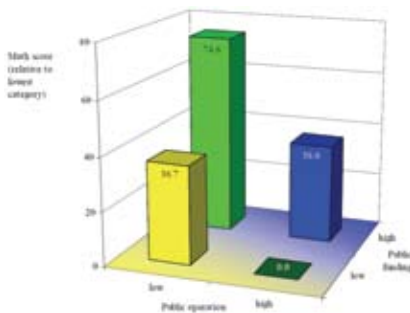
Woessmann's evidence is based only on a sample of 35 countries for which data were available at the level of the school on both who operates the school and who funds the school. Clearly this analysis needs to be broadened to include a much wider range of countries in order to be confident about the generalizability of his findings. Nevertheless, the results are interesting. If Woessmann's conclusion is generalizable, i.e. if private operation with public funding (type 'A' in Figure 1) brings efficiency benefits, then at least three policy questions arise.

Figure 1
Typology of school types

		Operation	
		Private	Public
Funding	Public	Voucher / aided schools (A)	Pure public (B)
	Private	Pure Private (C)	Govt. schools with fees (D)

Note: Grey shaded cells are Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). Cell 'A' divides into two types, depending on the way in which public funds are given for private operation of schools. Private schools receiving block or per-student public aid (variously known as Aided/Charter/Concession schools) are an example of 'supply side funding', while private schools funded by school vouchers given to families are an example of 'demand side funding'.

Figure 2
Student achievement in the four quadrants of public-private involvement



Source: Woessmann (2005)

First, how best to give public funds for privately produced education?

There are two major ways:

- supply-side financing, i.e. public money given directly to private schools, as a block or per-student grant; and
- demand-side financing, i.e.

public money given directly to families, as a voucher for each child. These two ways of giving public funds for private operation imply fundamentally different incentives for private schools (see Table 1). The question for policy is: which of these two ways of setting up the PPP gives the best incentives to schools and teachers? There is not much research on this issue. However, evidence for India suggests that supply-side funding has not produced good results – block grants to private schools with no incentives built into the grant structure led to poor student learning outcomes (Kingdon, 1996; 2008). Also, teachers of aided schools lobbied hard to be paid directly from the state government treasury (as public school teachers are paid), rather than continue to be paid locally by their private school managements, who received the government grant. Centralising education Acts in the early 1970s in response to this teacher pressure led to a massive loss of local level accountability of aided school teachers toward their private managers (Kingdon and Muzammil, 2003). Other forms of supply-side-funding of PPPs exist with arguably superior incentives for schools and teachers, for instance, concession schools in Colombia which receive per-student public funding (Barrera-Orioso, 2007). In this context it is good that the recent Right to Education Act of 2009 in India has legislated a per-student funding model for the new PPP it has set up in education whereby all private schools have to give 25% of their places to students from poor homes, and private schools are reimbursed for taking these pupils on a per-student basis.

Evidence on the impact of demand-side funding for PPPs (i.e. for school vouchers to parents) comes mainly from Chile, Colombia, New

Zealand, and the US. While the evidence is somewhat mixed, the weight of this evidence suggests that voucher funding for private schooling is generally associated with improved student outcomes. The most reliable evidence, based on state-of-the-art impact evaluation methodology, comes from Colombia. The Colombian government issued school vouchers on the basis of a lottery (due to insufficient funds for a voucher to all applicants). This provided ideal conditions for impact evaluation since lottery winners and losers were from similar home backgrounds, as the voucher was allocated randomly. Angrist et. al. (2002; 2006) find that vouchers – which increased parental choice and fostered competition between schools to attract vouchers – had beneficial effects on a range of student educational outcomes both in the short term (3 years) and the longer term (7 years).

A second policy question is: what are the equity effects of demand-side public funding for private education?

There is concern in the literature that vouchers may enable better off families to supplement the value of the voucher and thus send their children to the better private schools, but that poorer families may remain within public schools, some of which may be left with the poorest and least well performing students, i.e. vouchers may be detrimental to disadvantaged students (Ladd, 2002). Nechyba (2005) suggests that such equity concerns can be addressed by careful design of the voucher, e.g. by making the voucher amount inverse to family income, whereby the poorest families would receive the highest value vouchers. Even so, it remains a real possibility that private school could practice selection on the basis of pupils'

home backgrounds, in order to cream-skim the best students and maintain high quality peer-groups. Some people argue that such inequality can never be totally eliminated. In poor countries with ill-functioning public schools, better-off parents already ensure better teaching for their children anyway via private schooling or via private home tutoring i.e. it is suggested that mainly-public-school systems do not eliminate equity problems either, while at the same time often being less efficient.

The third question for policy concerns the feasibility of voucher PPP schemes in low income countries.

There are concerns about implementation of school choice schemes in the developing country context, such as:

(i) in rural areas of low income countries where supply of places is the major constraint, school choice schemes may be judged irrelevant since the possibility of there being a choice of schools for children to attend is remote;

(ii) weak regulatory systems to ensure schools' compliance with standards; (iii) difficulty of uneducated parents being able to make informed school choice; and

(iv) the scope for corruption in the presence of weak monitoring and high costs of verification. However, this discussion also draws attention to the potential for similar corruption and monitoring problems in supply-side-funded PPPs as well as public school systems, and highlights the need to strengthen administrative capacities of poor countries to introduce more efficient ways of producing publicly-funded education.

Given the lack of firm evidence, and given country specificities, the most apt policy prescription seems to be that governments considering PPPs should try out both supply-side per-student funding and demand-side voucher funding PPPs on a trial basis for a few years and rigorously evaluate the achievement and equity impacts of these before scaling-up the more effective and equitable policy interventions.

Table 1
Two ways of giving public funds for private operation

	Supply side financing	Demand side financing
Examples	Aided schools, India Concession schools, Colombia Charter Schools, US Voluntary Aided schools, UK	Voucher schools, Colombia Voucher schools, USA Voucher schools, Chile Voucher schools, New Zealand
Funding of school	By public sector	By public sector
Operation	By private sector	By private sector
Who receives the resource	The schools directly	Families, as a voucher
Is funding provided on a per pupil basis?	Not necessarily: Block grants in India Per student grant in UK, USA	Necessarily per student
Competition	Yes, if grant is per student Yes, if students have a choice of schools	Yes, since students/families have complete school choice

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In which areas of school education could public private partnerships create maximum impact?



VIJAY CHADDA
CEO,
Bharti Foundation

Public-private partnership is an effective way to ensure quality in education. The private partner can bring in management and technical expertise to increase efficiency and quality. Such a partnership also helps private players to bring in innovative solutions and be accountable for delivery of impact.

Bharti Foundation strongly believes in the PPP mode of implementation. The Satya Bharti Senior Secondary Schools are being planned under this model in collaboration with various state governments. Of this, five schools are already being set up in partnership with the Punjab government. While the government is providing partial financial support for infrastructural and operational expenditure, the Foundation is responsible for end-to-end management of the schools, including all academic and administrative processes. This ensures that a desired positive impact is made on the lives of students.



URMILA SARKAR
Chief, Education
UNICEF India
Country Office

Public-private partnership in school education can be important for innovation and scaling up models that work to improve equitable access to quality education under the Right to Education Act. This will be very important considering the integration of eight million out-of-school children into age appropriate classes and the recruitment of one million additional qualified teachers over the next five years. Such partnerships have also made significant contributions to government efforts in the capacity building of teachers and school management, as well as in enhancing the efficiency of the system through MIS (Management Information System) packages and the application of innovative technology in learning assessments. Public-private partnership also has a key role to play in ensuring that secondary school curriculum is matched to local labour market needs and that young people make a smooth transition from school to work.



SUDHANSHU JOSHI
President, ICICI
Centre for
Elementary Education

School education has transformational role instead of being focused on building a pool of human capital. Transformational exercise of education is carried out by teachers, curricular knowledge and pedagogic relations. This role of education begins with its vision and commitment for quality education for all children. Private players must direct efforts to the vision of school education inherent in public education system, with meaningful participation in curricular development processes to enable state to make it a part of wider social discourse, pedagogic reforms through participation in teacher education and building managerial and academic capacity of educational institutions towards their roles.

PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK

Winner of NASSCOM Foundation Social Innovation Honours 2010 for their exemplary work in the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in the areas of social transformation and development, Educomp Solutions has been ranked as the leader in Education & Training in the study India's Best Companies to Work For 2009 conducted by The Economic Times in collaboration with The Great Place to Work® Institute.

In a short span of 16 years, Educomp has grown phenomenally into a globally diversified education solutions provider, and today reaches out to over 26,000 schools and 15 million learners and educators to become the largest education company in India. They work closely with schools to implement innovative models, creating and delivering content to enhance student learning. Their applications and products have revolutionized the way information technology and the Internet are used to deliver new age learning to people. Educomp also has a track record of implementing large scale public-private-partnership projects across diverse areas such as education infrastructure, teacher training, and content development. Their current client base of projects is close to 14,000 schools including large projects with the governments of Assam, Karnataka, Orissa, Tripura, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh in India.

BY BAISHALI BOMJAN

Following is an excerpt from an interview with the head of PPP initiatives at Educomp, Soumya Kanti, President, Edureach, ICT Division of the company.



Q. What services does Educomp offer through PPP and how much is its revenue?

A. Educomp offers computer education and computer aided education in schools on PPP (BOOT) model. While Educomp makes the initial investments, the same is reimbursed by government departments in periodical instalments spread over the years. Educomp also builds and runs PPP model schools in partnership with governments. We are currently partnering with Punjab

government in building and running Adarsh schools.

About 30% of the revenues of Educomp come from providing computer aided education projects mostly under the BOOT Model.

Q. What have been the major challenges in implementing PPP in India?

A. With reference to providing ICT facilities in schools under PPP mode:

- The funds/resources allocated for the cause by the state governments

are limited when compared to the masses for which ICT has to be introduced.

- There are many regional languages in India and unless ICT content is in their respective regional languages, it is not well received, particularly so in schools up to secondary level. Thus, language becomes a barrier in promoting ICT to the advantage of all concerned.
- Students, teachers, and the community at large in remote areas are not aware of the immense potential of technology, and have low confidence to come out to benefit from ICT. One of the key components of success for ICT teaching-learning is the 'Teacher'. It is very difficult to get trained teachers in predominantly rural areas. Even when a trained person is available, s/he has limited exposure to methods of teaching ICT; taking the students to learn higher order thinking skills.

Q. What PPP initiatives are underway at Educomp and how will they be different from previous initiatives in India?

A. Educomp participates in building and running quality schools by investing initial capital expenditure and also a part of recurring expenditures. Educomp is a global ICT company and it is bringing the ICT revolution particularly in school education to the rural sector in India. It has computer education/computer-aided education programs running in over 15,000 government schools spread across 14 states under PPP (BOOT) Model. While Educomp makes upfront investment for hardware, software, and related services for schools, the same is recovered usually in quarterly payments from the department periodically against expected deliveries.

Q. With non-acceptability of for-profit education in India, will PPP attract enough people and investment?

A. Yes, it does. It does not deter the

private partner from investing for a better cause. There are many who are ready to invest in no profit/no loss opportunities apart from CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities.

Q. What area of education is most viable for a PPP approach and why?

A. Infrastructure, teacher training, and management of schools are three key areas where the government is keen on developing a PPP model. In fact under RMSA (Rastriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan) there are provisions for new schools to be established under PPP Model as well as of bringing improvement in the existing schools. In case of existing schools it is more of management and teacher training while in case of new schools all the areas with stress on Infrastructure development is seen. New schools with thrust on all the three areas are bound to give a greater percentage of planned outcomes.

Q. In the light of RTE Act and 25% quota do you see vouchers (demand side funding) as a viable PPP model to bring in more accountability in the functioning of schools in India?

A. It is still premature to talk of the impact of RTE Act with reference to 25% quota in private schools. It is still a beginning. Yes, the move may bring accountability.

Q. Are there some states that are more prepared for PPP ventures in education than others?

A. Yes, Punjab is very promising. They have started Adarsh Public schools in a big way. Educomp has already started construction of one of such school in Mohali. More schools are being allocated to Educomp besides some to Bharti Foundation.

Rajasthan too has submitted a tender for PPP schools and Madhya Pradesh is planning to start such schools.

Q. Which PPP model in India has been very successful in the education

sector?

A. As on date when we talk of PPP models in school education, we talk of existing government-aided schools. There is no alternative PPP model to compare its success. More schools will start once MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development) brings forth a policy framework and gives a go ahead for 3,500 schools to be built under the PPP model across the country.

Q. What are great examples of PPP in education especially in the developing world?

A. While Canada and Australia have PPP model in developing infrastructure in schools, UK has private financing schools and public schools under private management. Alternate education schools of New Zealand, providing vouchers in Chile, and contract schools in Latin America are some other examples of different models.

Q. What is needed to make PPP in education work?

A. Go beyond CSR. Be selective in choosing a good partner with expertise and proven record in the field. Once chosen, repose confidence and give enough room for them to grow and contribute to the society in bounty.

PPPs in Pakistan:

A Paradigm Shift from State to 'Blended' Education Options

BY BAE LA RAZA JAMIL

In April 2010, Pakistan finally declared education as a fundamental right for children aged 5-16 under Article 25-A of the 18th Amendment to the 1973 Constitution. This welcome development has brought into sharp relief for its 180 million population, the persistently low key performance indicators in education: literacy rate 57%, Primary Net Enrolment Rate (NER) 61%, Middle NER 19% and Secondary NER 12% (PSLMs 2008/9). In spite of promises, education expenditure has never exceeded 2.0% of GDP (NEP 2009). Whilst public sector performance continues to falter, the private sector is rapidly expanding to provide respite to households, often at an affordable cost, offering them pre-school and education opportunities at all levels with assured teachers' presence and relatively better students' learning outcomes (LEAPs 2007; ASER Pakistan 2010). Pakistan illustrates a powerful case study of a paradigm shift in education from a state owned and state managed schooling system which reached a high point in 1972 with nation-wide nationalization of education, to one which is increasingly becoming 'blended' across government and non state partners (NSPs). The paradigm shift is not just about

who owns, who finances and who manages schools, but, also about expanding partnerships.

The National Education Census 2005 (2006) commissioned by the Ministry of Education (MoE) was the first comprehensive data exercise that revealed powerful shifts in education as the basis for re-examining education provision and delivery. Out of 2,27,791 institutions, 33% were attributed to the private sector, a diaspora of non-state providers (NSPs) both secular and faith-based.

The groundswell of private sector expansion is mainly a response to the continuing problems of public sector service delivery. An earlier survey conducted in 1999 by the Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS 2000) had informed the MoE about strong evidence of private partners shouldering substantial burden of the Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target. The evidence became an opportunity for the MoE to not only acknowledge them as mainstream partners for achieving the challenging targets of access, equity and quality, but also strategically include them in all sub-sectors of education through public

private partnerships (PPPs). With such a widespread and growing presence of private sector, as early as 2001/2 the MoE began to articulate and formalize the theory, practice and incentives for PPPs through its mainstream education sector reforms action plan 2001/2-2005/6.

From innovations in PPPs pilots such as the 'adopt a school' program in the late 90s (SEF 1999; 2005, 2006 www.sef.org.pk), the policy build-up has been impressive at national and sub-national levels.

Institutionally the government has provided an impetus to PPPs through the creation of education foundations since the early 90s. Six Education Foundations have been established across Pakistan at provincial and national levels, as quasi government or parastatal bodies, with a basic mandate for PPPs including revival of grant-in-aid to non-elite private schools through various mechanisms. These have been created to finance partnerships to address EFA and MDG targets, clearly targeting the poor, girls and other excluded populations. The foundations were created in the '90s to replace the 146 year old colonial policy

enshrined in the 1854 Woods' Dispatch for providing grants-in-aid to the private sector for promoting education at the local level.

The Punjab Education Foundation (PEF) for example is currently supporting multiple PPPs:

- Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS): 1337 schools across Punjab, covering 600,000 students
- Continuous Professional Development Programme
- Cluster Based Trainings for Primary School Teachers
- School Leadership Development Programme
- Secondary Level Mentoring
- Teaching in Clusters by Subject Specialists
- New School Programme: 45 schools
- Education Voucher Scheme: 12,000 vouchers (demand side financing).

education foundations programs have expanded expeditiously in a targeted manner. However, there are concerns about continuity of schemes in times of political transitions, as the foundations are completely dependent upon government funds for endowment, recurrent and development costs.

The public sector has also contracted PPPs through semi autonomous bodies like the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD). These have been supported by seed money and endowments from the government for large outreach and presence across the country in the form of contracted services for capacity building, setting up of schools, literacy centers, feeder schools and vouchers for supporting access, quality and choices for the poor. Some have termed these set ups as 'deeply engaged in protected forms of PPPs' (Bano, 2008: p.29).

through the Community Partnership Programme (CPP). Whilst some of these still thrive, others have been undermined and reduced to a whimper such as CPP, due to rigid approaches of the public sector in spite of being the government's own crafted innovation, but often embedded in mistrust, undermining the essence and spirit of PPPs (Jamil, B. 2002).

All PPPs, whether public sector or civil society initiated have civil society as critical partners. Apart from government sponsored PPPs, civil society organizations continue to explore spaces for PPPs through their own innovations and resources, both on and off government school locations. These are self financed philanthropic PPPs which may or may not be sustainable or scalable, but certainly create innovative options for the government which are often rich in evidence on what works and why. CSOs have also successfully tapped corporate partners as part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) compliance requirements to fund their own work in education.



(Batool, M. 2010, PEF Presentation).

Each one of the above is mobilised through calls for PPPs and advertised expressions of interest (EOI). These are accountability and performance based. Risks are shared across partners as are resources. The

Government initiatives since the late 90s include school/institution-based PPP programs in the form of adopt a school, setting up of IT laboratories in government schools and colleges, upgrading of government schools from primary to middle, middle to secondary and secondary to higher secondary level

The government and private partners are also conscious that successful PPPs implementation requires: (1) political commitment; (2) an enabling policy and legal framework; (3) human skills/capacity for competencies (at both public and private side); (4) the ability and willingness to fulfill financial contracts; and (5) the willingness to work together by all stakeholders. PPPs are thus rigorous result based enterprises with complimentary roles for public and private partners. Will such conditions crowd out the smaller CSOs and pure philanthropic initiatives that are shy of formal mechanisms but may serve the cause of equity, access and quality in education at local levels? Is PPP a cover up for eventual privatisation? How can the classic asymmetry

between for profit and public good be reconciled? These questions are raised continuously in the PPPs discourse (Jamil & Hassan 2010; Bano 2008).

In spite of Pakistan presenting a rich experience of partnerships for EFA and MDGs which are documented as international best practices (Patrinos 2009, Budding et. al 2009, LaRoque 2008), many critics suggest that this is abrogation of state responsibilities for a public

good to contracted 'partners' (Bano 2008; Renwick 2004). The latter may or may not deliver quality education options, creating further confusion, particularly for the bewildered vulnerable households whose best ally may be the public sector. The government must invest adequately its scarce resources in access at all levels without compromising quality (Renwick 2004).

The jury is out on PPPs in Pakistan as it is in other parts of the world with

insufficient studies measuring impact and value addition (Woessman 2005; Kingdon 2007). The public sector in Pakistan is definitely seeking an overhaul plagued by consistently low levels of learning (NEAS 2004, 2007, 2008; ASER Pakistan 2008) and obligated to 50% of the population categorised as poor and vulnerable, desperately seek learning with outcomes for enhanced entitlements.

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PPPs in UEE:

Telling it like it is!

BY JANAKI RAJAN

As the song goes, let us start at the very beginning, a very good place to start. ABC....Every child in India has a fundamental right to education from 6-14 years of age. Fundamental Rights are the responsibility of the State and its arms—legislative, legal, and administrative. Period.

The administrative arm, can scramble, get in partners, of which PPP (Public Private Partnership) is the current mantra, which is fine. But the responsibility squarely remains with the State's many arms. Period.

In the competing contestations for power and resources, PPP has had a febrile playground in the arena of UEE (Universal Elementary Education), and many avatars have gained space if not credence. In emerging India, with around 300 million middle class eager to fly away to be counted among the advanced nations, however economically failing, UEE is fresh ground of potential market capitalia. And as with all markets, it's all about opportunities, none about responsibilities. That still rests with the State.

Quick bird scan of PPP, read CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)

efforts of the last ten years: entry into IT sector, MDM (Mid Day Meals). Very profitable on each count. Private Schools another lucrative deal, soon saturated.

UEE, however is more a challenge for private partners. How can profit be generated from intangibles like quality education from the marginalized, especially when government is not willing to finance it adequately even at break even point, let alone potential for surplus to be creamed by PPP?

That's not to say private partners are not willing, nor are they welcome in UEE. If they wish to 'enter' into the UEE 'sector', they need to do some R&D (research and development) and market analysis. Create a template to provide UEE to fulfill RTE laws. At prices that the government resources earmark for each child per year, no private partner has ever demonstrated this as yet. Not surprising. It cannot be done at current outlay.

What PPP in India is currently doing, is being a cynical parasite: sensing huge funding in absolute terms, private partners draw away the resources with 'sexy' programmes—IT, MDM, even value education!

None of it can fulfill RTE.

I wish to isolate and address one effort, the voucher system for special mention. By now it is abundantly clear to all those involved, that 'voucher' schools are hard put to compete with even the so called 'non-functional' governmental schools.

Private players are known to see the light of realities, cut back, rethink, re-invent. And so they should in the UEE education arena. They cannot replace government schools. They can enrich them, however. Join hands with them, not syringe out government resources. Instead, pump in resources, without expectations of return, to make every child realize their potential.

And private sector will benefit infinitely, from the young people of this endeavor joining the private sector and infinitely enriching and enriching it.



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