

Education Analytics Service (EAS)

Non-State Actors in Basic Education:

Pakistan Case Study

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List of Acronyms

BECS	Basic Education Community Schools
FAS	Foundation Assisted Schools
IDA	International Development Assistance (World Bank Group)
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group (World Bank Group)
MET&SHE	Ministry of Education, Trainings and Standards in Higher Education
NEMIS	National Education Management Information System
PEIRA	Pakistan's Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority
PEC	Parent Education Committee
PEF	Punjab Education Foundation
PPP	Public Private Partnership
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

1 Introduction

Over the last two decades, sustained efforts by the international community have led to considerable growth in access to education for children across the globe, particularly in low income countries. Between 1990 and 2011, the World Bank reported an increase in the net enrolment rate in low-income countries from 55 percent to 80 percent, and an increase in the primary school completion rate from 46 percent to 68 percent (World Bank, 2014). These gains have been a result of increased investments by donors and domestic governments in the education sector, backed by more effective education policies. However, despite this positive trend, 60 million primary school children in developing countries remain out of school and many of those who attend school are not achieving the minimum standards in literacy and numeracy (Steer, 2015). In order to close this gap, UNESCO estimates that the cost of delivering good quality universal education from pre-school to junior secondary school by 2030 in low-income countries will be approximately \$10.6 billion, which is more than four times the current levels of commitments by international donors at \$2.3 billion (Steer, 2015).

The pressure will be predominantly on donors and domestic governments to fill the fiscal gap. However, there is a mix of non-state actors (including religious and charitable organisations, private foundations, and for-profit and not-for-profit providers) already active in the education sector who provide an additional source of finance in the education sector. The growth in private education providers over the last two decades is thought to have contributed to the increase in access to primary education in developing countries, where the percentage of students attending private primary schools has doubled from 11 to 22 percent (World Bank, 2014).

While the scale of private contribution to education and its impact is not clear, the growing presence of non-state actors in the education sector is becoming an important issue for donors and governments. Much debate centers on education as a human right, where education is seen as a public good and should be the responsibility of the state. The provision of private education raises concerns over issues of equity, quality and ownership. On the other hand, other commentators see the increasing role of non-state actors in education service delivery as an opportunity to increase access and quality through improved interactions between government and the private sector. Recent studies have shown that some countries have been successful in providing equitable access to quality education for all children (both in public and private schools) by increasing oversight and coordination with the private sector, underpinned by a strong regulatory environment (World Bank, 2014).

1.1 Typologies of state and non-state actors

Studies looking at the role of non-state actors in education is complicated by the complexity of interaction between public and private providers, including funding arrangements, oversight, ownership and management. For example, many non-state providers are publically funded, while some are not funded by the state but fall under the management of the government ministry of education. There are private schools that are not-for-profit and those that charge a fee. In addition, the provision of formal versus non-formal schooling further blurs the distinction between what is public and what is private. For example, both the

government and the private sector offer non-formal¹ schooling to children in rural and marginalized areas.

Given the lack of clarity around the role of state and non-state actors, Steer et al. (2015) offers a framework based on a continuum of provision and financing (Figure 1). Instead of classifying schools on an 'either/or' dichotomy, they found it more useful to identify the types of schools based on the varying degrees of relationship with the state and the financial incentive of the provider (for profit/not for profit). They therefore, propose eight different categories of schools based on a combination of three separate criteria: fee paying/non-fee paying; state/non-state financed; state/non-state provided. State provision is defined by the level of management and oversight by the state, from schools that are fully state-run (e.g. government school) to those that are partially-administered by the state (e.g. community schools). School financing varies according to the type of arrangement with the state, ranging from fully-funded schools to those that receive partial support in the form of subsidized teacher salaries, infrastructure or land. In recent years, there is a growing number of schools that are funded by the private sector, for example through impact bonds, philanthropic funds or private investments. These schools are further divided based on whether they are driven by social or financial gains.

This case study will refer to Steer's typology as a starting point in assessing role and impact of non-state providers in Pakistan.

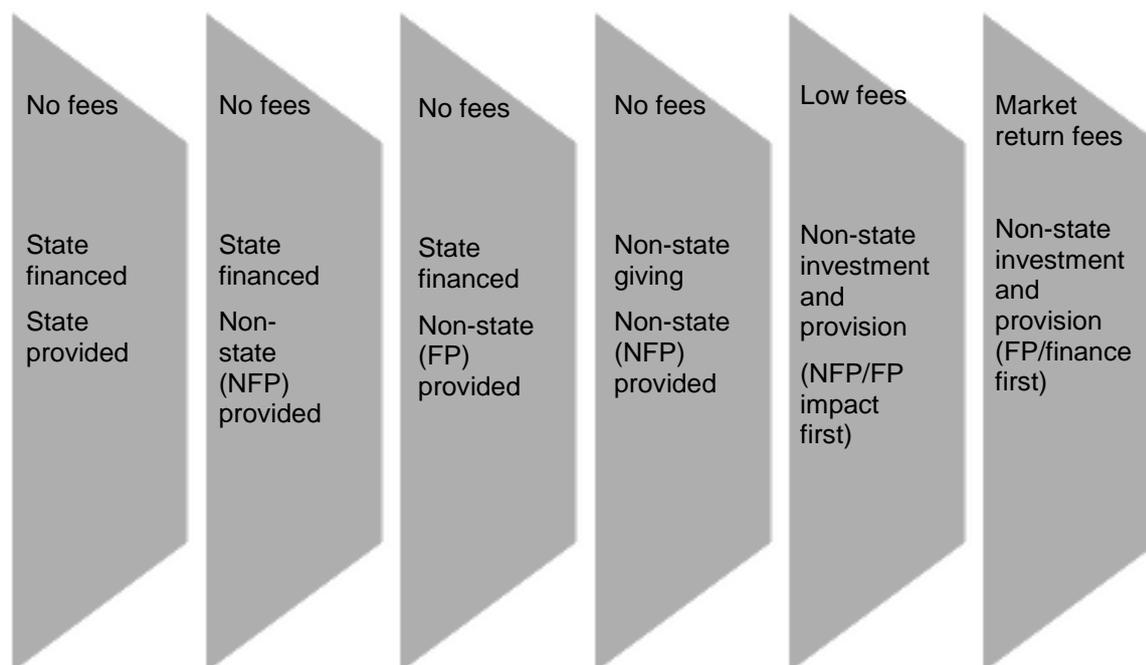


Figure 1: Steer's Typology of State and Non-state actors on a Continuum

Adapted from Steer et al., (2015)

¹ 'Formal education' refers to traditional schooling, often implemented by the government but can also be provided by non-state actors; 'non-formal' education is used to describe education activities (usually part-time) implemented by a range of providers including NGOs, community groups and faith-based organisations. Both formal and non-formal education programs can be funded by the state or from private sources.

2 Education Context in Pakistan

According to the Constitution (1973), primary education is both compulsory and free in Pakistan. However, this commitment has not translated into good educational outcomes in the country, with low attendance and retention rates. It is estimated that over one third of all primary school aged children are out of school, 60 per cent of whom are girls (MET&SHE, 2014, World Bank, 2015). In 2014, the total primary school² enrolment was 17.6 million, with 9.8 million (56 percent) boys and 7.7 million (44 percent) girls (MET&SHE, 2014). Only 66.8 percent survive till Grade V and 33.2 per cent drop out before completing primary school (MET&SHE, 2014). Those that make it to Middle School represent 6 million enrolled, with 57 per cent boys and 43 per cent girls (MET&SHE, 2014).

Quality indicators also provide an alarming picture of the education system in Pakistan. Learning assessments of Grade IV students in 127 districts across the country found that only 24 percent of students scored greater than the mean score in the Language test; 19 per cent in Mathematics; 33 per cent in Science; and 43 percent in Social Studies (MET&SHE, 2014). It was noted that these poor indicators were related to an overall shortage of well-trained and motivated teachers, a lack of appropriate learning materials and poor facilities (MET&SHE, 2014).

These poor outcomes have been the result of an education system that has suffered from decades of poor investment, high incidence of poverty, insecurity and natural disasters. Public expenditure on education has remained low, averaging around 2 percent GDP (MET&SHE, 2014). This is below other countries in the region and particularly low, relative to developing countries at a similar level of per capita income (Barrera-Osorio & Raju, 2011). Weak governance in the education sector has also been cited as a major constraint to effective delivery of educational services, where the lack of an effective accountability system has hampered the legitimate and efficient allocation of resources (Barrera-Osorio & Raju, 2011).

Management and oversight of the education system is divided between the Ministry of Education at the Federal level, the Provincial Governments and the district government. In 2001, further decentralisation of the education system was enacted under the Devolution of Powers Ordinance to improve accountability at the local level by placing education management, finance, monitoring and supervision at the district level (Particip GmbH, 2010). In order to reduce the barriers to access and retention, some provinces have introduced policies for the delivery of free textbooks and stipends for girls.

3 Non-state Actors in Education

The government is the largest education provider in Pakistan. Currently, there are 146,185 government primary schools; 42,147 middle schools; and 29,874 secondary schools (MET&SHE, 2014). Data from the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) estimates that 75 percent are public sector schools, 10 percent are private schools and the remainder are equally divided between non-formal education institutions (13,094) and *Deeni Madrassas* (13,240) (MET&SHE, 2014). The private sector caters for about one third of primary school children (34 percent), followed by non-formal schools (14 percent) and *Deeni Madrassas* (10 percent) (MET&SHE, 2014).

² Primary school represents Grade 1-5; Middle school (Grade 6-8); Lower secondary (Grade 6-10); Senior secondary (Grade 11-12). Early Childhood Education (called Kachi) is recognised as part of the formal school system but these do not have budgetary provisions (MET&SHE, 2014)

NEMIS data does not consistently capture information relating to Public Private Partnership (PPP) programs which support a network of low-cost private schools across Pakistan. A recent stocktake of non-state actors identified two additional types of non-state providers of basic education. These include schools that are funded by provincial governments (with oversight from a semi-autonomous Provincial Education Foundation) and operated by the private sector such as Foundation Assisted Schools in Punjab province. Other schools are financed through donor assistance or International Development Assistance (IDA) loans, and are mostly run by the community with support from implementing NGO partners, such as Community Schools in Balochistan. There is a substantial body of evidence in the available literature assessing the effectiveness of these PPP schemes in Pakistan which warrant their inclusion in this case study.

Table 1 provides a breakdown of state and non-state schools and the number of children enrolled in each category at the primary level. However, these figures are only a representation based on the available data and should be interpreted cautiously. Table 2 classifies these six types of education service providers based on Steers typology.

Table 1: Number of non-state provided primary education institutions and students

	No. of Schools	No. of Students
Public Schools	146,185	17.6 million
Private Schools	17,093	4.8 million
Foundation Assisted Schools (Punjab province)	2,311	1.3 million
Community Schools (Balochistan province)	633	26,000
Non-formal Basic Education Schools	13,094	575,384
Deeni Madrassas	13,240	1.8 million
Total	192,556	26.1 million

Note: 1) Data for public, private, non-formal and Madrassas schools are derived from NEMIS (cited in MET&SHE, 2014).

2) The total figure does not represent all schools and enrolments in Pakistan, but a representation from the available data

Table 2: State and non-state providers in Pakistan based on Steer's typology

		Provision	
		State	Non-state
	State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Schools* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundation Assisted Schools Community Schools
	Non-state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-formal Basic Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Schools Deeni Madrassas

* Public Schools are not the focus of this case study and has not been included in the discussion

3.1 Private Schools

The number of private schools in Pakistan has increased more than ten times in the last two decades, largely in response to a demand for greater access and better quality in the face of poor government services (Carneiro et.al. 2016 and Barrera-Osorio & Raju, 2011). There is recognition by the Government of Pakistan of the important role the private sector plays in providing a better quality education compared to the public sector (MET&SHE, 2014). On this basis, the Government has initiated a number of public-private partnerships in education service delivery to promote better access and quality education for students across the country. These are known as 'aided' private schools and are discussed in the following section.

However, the majority of private schools in Pakistan are fully financed and managed by the private sector, and are known as 'unaided' private schools (Dahal & Nguyen, 2014). According to NEMIS data in 2012-13, there were 17,093 primary schools, 25,658 middle/lower secondary schools, and 17,696 high schools in the private sector (MET&SHE, 2014). At the primary level, private schools cater to approximately 4.8 million children (MET&SHE, 2014). These schools operate independently and are often highly unregulated as they receive little if any oversight from government authorities. One study highlights the Pakistani Government's poor oversight of the private sector which directly limits the state's ability to regulate them. For example, Humayun et al. (2013) point out that Pakistan's Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA) lacks a complete database of private schools (cited in Day Ashley et al., 2014). The same authors note that there is a lack of coordination of regulatory frameworks and enforcement of service standards, which they suggest has hindered private sector competition in some provinces (Day Ashley et al. 2014).

While private schools have traditionally been established in urban areas to cater for the children of high income families, more private schools have now expanded into rural, marginalised areas thereby increasing access to education for more children, particularly girls. One study found that distance to school is a key factor in parents' decision for enrolling their children in school (Carneiro et al., 2016). Their model showed that this decision was particularly important for girls, where wealthier parents of girls were willing to pay more for a reduction in distance to school. However, other authors have observed that while private schools may have improved access in rural areas, inequalities continue to exist at the local level. Using Learning and Educational Achievement in Punjab Schools (LEAPS) data, one study found a strong correlation between private schools and the level of infrastructure and population size, where villages with private schools were nearly three times the size of villages with only government schools (cited in Day Ashley, 2014). The authors argue that because private schools operate on a model of financial viability, they are more likely to serve wealthier communities that are most able to afford them (cited in Day Ashley, 2014).

LEAPS data show that the average private school fee is \$13 a year, which is approximately 10 percent of per capita income (Carneiro et al., 2016). A study looking at a sample of private schools in Punjab province found that the cost of private schooling was not a barrier to enrolment, where increases in tuition fees did not affect school choice (Carneiro et al., 2016). Further, the study found that parents were more influenced by price for girls than boys, suggesting that the value of education was perceived higher for boys who were considered more likely to maximise the benefits of their education in the labor market (Carneiro et al., 2016). Carneiro et.al. findings seem to contradict other evidence that private school fees deter parents from enrolling their children in private schools, particularly in poorer households. In a 2013 study of primary and secondary schools in one province in Pakistan, Fennell (cited in Day Ashley et al., 2014) found that poverty was the overriding factor preventing children from accessing private schools. Another study reported that the private school enrolment rate was only 10 percent of students from the lowest economic quintile in Pakistan (Day Ashley et al., 2014).

Overall, private schools have better facilities than government schools including toilets and extra facilities such as gyms, libraries and computer labs (Carneiro et al., 2016). More than 80 percent of private schools in the sample from Punjab province report having permanent classrooms and almost all have a blackboard (Carneiro et al., 2016). Across several studies, teaching quality has also been shown to be better in private schools compared to public schools. This is despite the fact that teachers in public schools are more educated and experienced and are paid more, in some cases up to five times the salary of private school teachers (Dahal & Nguyen, 2014). Teachers in private schools are also more motivated and have lower rates of absenteeism than teachers in government system (Day Ashley et al., 2014). It is reported that the teacher absenteeism rate in public schools is 15 percent compared to 8 percent in private school (Barrera-Osorio & Raju, 2011). One proposed explanation is that teachers in private schools are more directly accountable to their employers than their state counterparts.

Private schools also seem to operate a stricter performance incentive system, where better performing teachers are retained while ineffective ones are fired (Day Ashley et al., 2014). This is in contrast to the public sector, which can be hampered by political and non-merit recruitment, flexible entry requirements, permanent jobs, and lack of school-level monitoring (Day Ashley et al., 2014). Evidence from a 2011 study in Punjab province suggests that the quality of teaching standards as reflected in teaching practice, had a more significant effect on learning outcomes than teacher qualifications and experience (Day Ashley et al., 2014). There is a lack data on student performance in private schools across the country, but a recent study in Punjab province found that students in private schools scored significantly higher, by about one standard deviation, than their government school counterparts (Carneiro et al., 2016).

3.2 Foundation Assisted Schools (Punjab Education Foundation)

Although most private schools in Pakistan operate independently of the government, more recent efforts by the government to engage the private sector in education service delivery has proven to be cost-effective and has increased student participation and learning outcomes. Various provincial governments have launched public private partnership schemes to promote private education by providing subsidies in the form of operational financing, vouchers to poor households and teacher training. For example, the Sindh provincial government started the Promoting the Private Schooling in Rural Sindh (PPRS) program in 2009 by supporting entrepreneurs in underserved communities to establish new private primary schools (Dahal & Nguyen, 2014).

However, the most well-established and well-documented of these public private partnership (PPP) initiatives is the Foundation Assisted Schools (FAS) program funded and monitored by the Punjab Education Foundation (a semi-autonomous statutory body which is responsible for public private partnerships in education). The FAS program was established in 2005 in six districts of Punjab province. It is now present in all 36 districts of the province, with 2,311 partner schools (representing approximately 21 percent of all private schools in the province) serving 1.3 million children (PEF, 2014). Over half of all Foundation schools are rural (55 percent). The average school size is 351 students, mostly co-educational (83 percent) and at the middle level (59 percent).

Private schools under the FAS scheme receive a subsidy from the government (administered by the PEF) for student fees, which is approximately \$3.50 per student per month capped at 750 students (Barrera-Osorio & Raju, 2011). This amount is around half the estimated per student expenditure in the public school system (Barrera-Osorio & Raju, 2011). In order to qualify and remain in the program, schools must meet a number of specified criteria including minimum standards in staffing and infrastructure, be above a certain size and maintain their academic standards in annual student tests (where 67 percent of students taking the test must score at least 40 percent). There are also top-up

bonuses for teachers and schools that rank highest in average student scores on the tests (Dahal & Nguyen, 2014). Once admitted to the program, schools must not charge a fee and must promote free-schooling prominently on a signboard outside the school.

An analysis of the impact of the FAS program showed that over a two-year period, the program generated significant gains in school enrolment and inputs (approximately 40 percent) and student achievement (Barrera-Osorio & Raju, 2011). Their cost-effectiveness estimates also suggests that the program is one of the cheapest interventions in developing countries in terms of achieving enrolment gains (Barrera-Osorio & Raju, 2011). However, the authors cautioned that the increased enrolment may come from students transferring from other schools rather than targeted marginalised populations. They also found that increases in education inputs such as teachers, classrooms and blackboards did not necessarily result in better pupil-teacher ratios or pupil-classroom ratios. It was also interesting to note that they found no correlation between the group-based teacher incentive and student performance (Dahal & Nguyen, 2014). It was suggested that while the program was successful in providing incentives to raise basic quality standards, subsidies did not have an impact on continued improvement in already high-performing schools (Barrera-Osorio & Raju, 2011). While evidence from these studies provide a positive example of government interaction with the private sector to improve educational services to underserved populations, some observers question whether the success of the FAS program is a result of rigorous monitoring and oversight by international donors who have a stake in the program or the influence of the state in managing the PPP that has led to positive outcomes of the program (Day Ashley et al., 2014)

3.3 Community Schools (Balochistan Education Support Project)

In Balochistan province, the government initiated a public private partnership scheme called the Balochistan Education Support Project to establish community schools and private schools as a means to enhance access to quality primary education for rural poor communities across province. The program was administered by the Balochistan Education Foundation (BEF) through financing from the World Bank (\$21.6 million) and contributions from the Department of Education (\$3.3 million), mostly for teacher salaries (IEG, 2015). Ninety-one percent of the budget was allocated to the construction and operational costs of community schools, while less than 10 percent was directed to the establishment of private schools. While community schools were targeted in rural areas, private schools were established to promote greater access in urban and semi-urban areas. However, private schools were found to be unsustainable and were closed after four years of the project due a lack of private operators in the province (including NGO partners) and poor cost recovery by some implementing partners (IEG, 2015).

To be eligible, community schools must be able to enrol at least 20 students and not be in a two kilometre radius of any other girls school. Parent Education Committees (PEC) were responsible for management and supervision of the schools with support from Community School Implementation Partners (NGOs) who provided recruitment and training of PEC members, and monitoring of teacher and student attendance. The BEF was responsible for monitoring performance of the schools and the PEC. The Independent Completion Report noted that community involvement in the running of the school through the PEC had a beneficial impact on increasing the perceived value and demand for education in the community (IEG, 2015).

Overall, the project generated some positive outcomes in the provision of community schools. At the end of the project, 633 community schools were supported, serving nearly 26,000 students (IEG, 2015). According to the annual school census data from 2013-14, it was estimated that overall enrolment in the province increased by 5 percent due to the presence of project-supported schools (IEG, 2015). Student attendance rates were maintained at 85 percent in community schools and the completion rate was 74 percent

(compared to 85 percent in private schools) (IEG, 2015). The gender breakdown showed that the enrolment rate for girls was higher in community schools (42 percent) compared to private schools (34 percent) and public schools (IEG, 2015).

Student learning achievements also appear to be higher in community schools than public schools. Data from a 2013 Early Grade Reading Assessment for a sample of Grade 5 students in public and community schools show that students in community schools scored higher in letter names and letter sounds than their public school counterparts (IEG, 2015). However, when comparing with baseline data, the project did not seem to have a significant impact on student learning outcomes. At the end of the project, there was an average 9.6 percent increase in language assessments and 16.17 percent increase in mathematics which meant the project targets were not met (IEG, 2015). This is not surprising given the low learning achievements of primary school students across the province. Results from a 2014 Early Grade Assessment found that only 5 percent of children in Grade 2 and only 6 percent in Grade 5 could correctly read a grade-appropriate paragraph (IEG, 2015). Similarly, only seven percent of children in Grade 2 and 13 percent in Grade 5 had the capacity to write a sentence in Urdu without a mistake (IEG, 2015).

There was also evidence of good collaboration between the government and implementing partners. For example, the provincial government showed political commitment to the project by making amendments to the Balochistan Education Foundation Act to allow greater autonomy to the BEF to administer the program. The Department of Finance facilitated regular transfers of teacher salaries to the PEC, the Department of Education provided free textbooks to students and offered teacher training to community school teachers, and gave formal recognition to community schools which provided opportunities for students to transfer into middle school in the public system (IEG, 2015).

However, the government failed to fulfil its legal obligation to provide recurrent costs for the running of the schools at the end of the project, which resulted in communities having to pay recurrent costs or reduce teacher's salaries to cover these costs (IEG, 2015). Due to the already low teacher salaries (estimated to be 30 percent less than the minimum wage), teacher retention in community schools remained low (IEG, 2015). However, the project reported high teacher attendance rates, which was 95 percent, compared to 94 percent in private schools.

Given the relative success of the community school model, the government has submitted an application for a follow-up Global Partnership for Education grant to target access for girls. However, the independent review notes that in order to maintain the momentum of the development gains from the project, the government is required to take greater ownership and financial responsibility, in particular, to support Parent Education Committees with their role in the management of community schools.

3.4 Non-formal Basic Education Schools

It is estimated that there are 2.5 million students enrolled in non-formal education institutions in Pakistan (MET&SHE, 2014). The Federal Government (under the management of MET&SHE) operates approximately 13,000 non-formal schools (called Basic Education Community Schools, BECS), which provide basic education opportunities to around 575,000 out-of-school children (MET&SHE, 2014). At the end of Grade 5, students from BEC schools are eligible to transfer into the formal education system if they pass the formal examination. These schools employ local teachers, who are mostly female (80 percent). Other providers of non-formal basic education include: the provincial government (for example, in Punjab); the National Commission for Human Development which established a network of 1,000 feeder schools for grade 1-3 students in rural areas; and the Allama Iqbal Open University with support from the Ministry of Education operates non-formal middle schools in selected areas of the country. The EFA National Review notes that non-formal education is a cost-

effective mechanism for expanding basic education access to out-of-school children, particularly in remote areas and where formal schooling is not available (MET&SHE, 2014).

3.5 Deeni Madrassas

Deeni Madrassas (religious schools) have an increasingly important role to play in the education sector in Pakistan. According to the latest NEMIS data, there are 13,240 Deeni Madrassas, serving approximately 1.8 million students, of which 61 percent are boys and 39 percent girls (MET&SHE, 2014). There are 58,000 teachers employed in these institutions, the majority of whom are male (78 percent). Deeni Madrassas are managed by five different WAFAQS (governing bodies). However, it is not evident in the available information what role they play. These madrassas typically operate in poor urban settlements as well as rural and remote regions, targeting marginalised communities (MET&SHE, 2014). They are run by local communities and often receive financial support through charity and donations. Children who attend Deeni Madrassas do not pay fees and are often provided with food, clothes and board (MET&SHE, 2014). The curriculum includes both formal subjects such as Urdu and English languages as well as mathematics and science, as well as religious subjects.

4 Policy Considerations

Given the poor state of the education system in Pakistan, as evidenced by low enrolment and retention rates and poor student learning outcomes, there is a role for private sector intervention in the delivery of education services. Due to the failings of the public system, the demand for private schools has increased, resulting in a dramatic growth in non-state provision of education over the last two decades. Recognising the potential of private schools to improve education outcomes, the Government of Pakistan has embarked on a series of public private partnerships to improve education access and quality across the country. Observations from this case study suggest that private sector³ involvement in education delivery has had a positive impact in student attendance and retention rates in Pakistan. However, there are certain conditions that support these outcomes as outlined below.

Public Private Partnerships are an effective vehicle for expanding education access and improving basic standards in education. The use of public private partnerships, where the government subsidises the cost of schooling to private operators, has increased the overall enrolment rate in targeted provinces, including a higher percentage of girls attending school. Students from Foundation schools and community schools also score higher in basic competencies compared to those in public schools. Due to the stringent eligibility criteria for becoming and remaining a Foundation School, the program has in effect, raised the minimal standards for teaching and learning across all program schools.

Strong government engagement is important in the effectiveness of public private partnerships. The level of government involvement is variable depending on their capacity to monitor PPP programs and schools. Provincial Education Foundations (which are semi-autonomous) have proven to be a successful model for managing public private partnerships and oversight of Foundation schools. Similarly, strong government-community collaboration in the Balochistan program has resulted in payment of teacher salaries through the Department of Finance, adoption of the formal curriculum and distribution of government textbooks managed by the Department of Education, and formal recognition of community schools which provided opportunities for students to transition into state middle school.

³ The discussion in this section classifies the private sector as all aided and unaided private schools, Foundation schools and community schools.

Private schools are more cost-effective. Various studies have shown that the per student cost in private schools are lower than that in public schools. Private schools operate using a model of financial viability and are therefore, run more efficiently. It is suggested that private schools have stricter accountability mechanisms compared to government schools, which is typically plagued with non-merit based recruitment and retention, permanent jobs and lack of school level monitoring. Aided private schools (e.g. Foundation Schools) which receive a government subsidy, are also more cost effective than state schools.

Private schools have better learning facilities, teaching quality and learning outcomes. It was found that private schools had better quality inputs such as learning facilities. While teachers in private schools and community schools are paid less than teachers in public schools, teaching quality (including teaching practice, low teacher absenteeism and high teacher retention rates) was found to be better. These indicators were reported to correlate with higher student learning outcomes, where private school students consistently score higher than their public school counterparts in learning assessment tasks.

Private schools promote greater access for girls. The presence of private schools in some areas has increased girls participation in education. This was evident in private schools, Foundation schools and community schools. Parents who can afford it placed a higher value on distance to schools and will enrol their girls in private schools if it is closer than public schools. However, experience from the Balochistan program suggests that better targeting of girls in the project design was required to ensure a greater proportion of girls had access to community schools.

The cost of private schooling is a barrier for low income families. Unaided private schools are still only available to those who can afford them and remain out of reach for most families from the lowest economic quintile. Therefore, aided private schools and community schools seem to be most effective model in reducing inequalities in educational access.

Strong community involvement is key to sustainability. Community schools in Balochistan province have continued to operate at the end of the program with little or no government support. Communities have raised money to cover the running costs of schools and supplement teacher salaries. It was also found that community involvement through the Parent Education Committee had an impact on increasing the perceived value of education and a demand for it.

5 Conclusion

This case study has shown that engagement with non-state actors in the provision of education services can be effective in improving access and education standards in the face of poor government services. Although unaided private schools have a significant share of primary enrolments, they are mostly accessed by those who can afford to pay the fees. Currently, the government seems to have little oversight of the private sector which limits their ability to regulate them. On the other hand, the establishment of public-private partnerships through government subsidies have had a positive impact in reducing the barriers to a free and quality education, benefiting those in poor rural areas. The success of these PPP schemes is the result of strong government engagement with the private sector through the establishment of Provincial Education Foundations. These bodies have the responsibility for setting quality standards and oversight of performance at the school level, which has improved student attendance and retention rates, student performance and teaching standards.

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