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**Inter-Province Comparison of Private Sector in  
Primary Education**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of the study is to investigate the nature and extent of the contribution of private sector in the development of primary education in Pakistan. A main objective of the study is to prioritize the problems faced by the private sector in Primary Education.

The data was gathered from all provinces of Pakistan. Three districts from Punjab, two each from Sindh and Khyber PK and Baluchistan along with one town from each sample district. In Total 399 schools were, thus, selected as sample from all provinces.

Three questionnaires were designed to collect data from respondents. One was for the heads of private sample schools. They were asked to state the problems and give suggestions for the improvement of the system. Another was for the Directors of Primary Education from the public sector to have their opinions regarding their dealing with the private sector and suggest measures for improvement. Another questionnaire was prepared for structured interviews with the experts.

Data collected through questionnaires, interviews and formal discussions from sample places was tabulated, statistically analyzed and interpreted in the light of the objectives of the study. Suggestions obtained from respondents were analyzed and presented.

**Keywords:** Private Sector, Primary Education, Quality education, Inter Province.

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Inter-Province Comparison of Private Sector in Primary Education

## **1. Introduction**

Education is the right of every child and it is the responsibility of the State to provide educational facilities to each and every child. "Every one has the right to education", states the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), cited in the (Pakistan's) National Education Policy 1998-2010. This fundamental right has been recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 stressing that the child has a right to education and it is the duty of the State to ensure that Primary education is free and compulsory.

The National Education Policy 1998-2010 further indicates: "The ideology of Pakistan lays down two important obligations on the government. Firstly, education will be accessible to all citizens. Secondly, it shall enable them to prepare enlightened and civilized individuals committed to the cause of Islam; these two obligations are in accordance with the teachings of the Holy Quran, which recognize the provision of education as a right of the individual".

Being a signatory of the Universal Declaration of "Education for All" during the Jomtien World Conference on Education held in 1990, Pakistan is bound to obtain universal primary education.

### **1.1 Primary Education**

Primary education in Pakistan usually comprises from class 1 to class V. Early childhood education is a new concept that has been expanded in especially private sector. In public sector classes are still mostly start from class 1.

Importance of primary education has always been highlighted in every education policy and plan. Pakistan is struggling to achieve universal primary education since its creation. Providing education to the masses is the responsibility of the State. The State of Pakistan has religious obligation also for this provision. Islam has strongly stressed the need for education by making it the duty of every faithful man and woman to seek knowledge.

A strong role for education was recognized by the founding father of independent Pakistan, and UPE was established as a goal at the first National Education Conference in 1947. Unfortunately the goal of UPE, over the years has been repeated by a number of national policy papers, shifting the goal further into the future, and it is presently set for 2015.

There are many factors responsible for this failure. Political instability and military government are probably the most important of all. Population expansion, social taboos and various pressure groups are other factors that are also responsible.

Quality provided to the children at the level of primary education is also questionable. The low retention rate due to high dropout rate is a big question mark before the policy makers and planners of education. The great number of students who are still out of school is yet another problem.

In present circumstances the governments alone cannot provide educational services to the whole population because of their limited resources. The private sector therefore, has to be involved.

## 1.2 Private sector

Private Sector, according to the *Oxford Concise Dictionary*, is the part of a country's economy that consists of privately owned enterprises. The private schools, according to the same dictionary, is a school under the financial and managerial control of a private body or charitable trust accepting mostly fee-paying students. Private Sector has always played a significant role in providing educational facilities to a large number of pupils since independence.

At the time of creation of Pakistan in 1947, the private sector had a major share in providing education through schools at various levels. These private schools were run both by societies motivated by the cause of promoting education as well as by individuals making their living through education and teaching. Baqir (1998) has stated that, "The government owned 4 percent of primary schools, the private sector owned 43 percent of these schools and various local bodies ran rest of the schools".

This importance was well recognized soon after independence in the Education Conference held in Karachi. Mr. Fazal-ur-Rahman, education minister, said that, "It is significant that in all countries, which have developed national system of education, private initiatives have borne a major share of the cost involved".

## 2. Participation of Private Sector in Primary Education in Pakistan

This study was conducted to investigate the nature and extent of contribution of private sector in the development of primary education in Pakistan. It revealed some very interesting findings of private sector in the development of primary education in Pakistan.

As the study was envisioned to cover the entire nation, sample cities and towns were selected from all four provinces of Pakistan. Three districts from Punjab, two districts each from Sind, Khyber PK and Balochistan were selected as sample. Twenty towns from Punjab, ten towns each from Sindh and Khyber PK were selected as sample. Total 399 sample schools were selected as sample from all over Pakistan.

Following are some of the findings of that study. These findings can provide a base for inter-province comparison and can be useful for planners at national level.

### 2.1 School Management

This section comprises information that was collected in connection with the year of establishment, ownership of the institution and management of private schools.

**Table 1: Year of Establishment of Private Schools**

Province	Less than 5 years (1996-2000)	Less than 5 years (1991-95)	More than 5 years (1991-95)
Punjab	112	53	65

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Sindh	32	20	23
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	23	27	20
Balochistan	09	04	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Per-cent ratio</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>30</b>

The above table shows that private schools flourished rapidly than ever before. This trend was upset during the less than five years period from 1991-95, as only 26 percent of schools were established during this period while during the more than five years period from 1991-95 thirty percent schools were established during 1991-95. It is interesting to note that two governments run by political parties were dismissed during this period and an overall agitation culture prevailed in the country. So, it can be assumed that fewer people were interested in investing in new projects like the opening of new schools.

## 2.2 Ownership of Private Schools

**Table 2 Ownership of Private Schools**

Province	Own	Employee	Honorary
Punjab	196	33	01
Sindh	50	25	-
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	54	16	-
Balochistan	14	10	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>Percent ratio</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>-</b>

The owners ran 79 % percent sample private schools themselves. The people employed by the owners managed 21 percent of the sample institutions. It is a clear indication of the commercial element that exists in private sector. Government of Pakistan (2001) also confirms this as it shows that 81 percent private schools were self-owned in private sector. Interestingly a respondent from private sector itself had stated that a license is required to drive even a motorbike, but there is no restriction on opening a school. He proposed that a license must be made compulsory for the owners before declaring them eligible to open a school in which minimum educational qualification must be fixed.

## 2.3 Overall Management of Private Schools

Out of 399 sample schools, 266 schools were run by individuals, 40 schools by Board of Governors, 66 schools by NGO's and 66 schools were managed by associations. The proportion of schools managed by individuals is highly significant. The province wise situation is in the following table.

**Table 3 Management of Private School**

Province	Individual	BOG	NGO	Association
Punjab	180	19	06	25

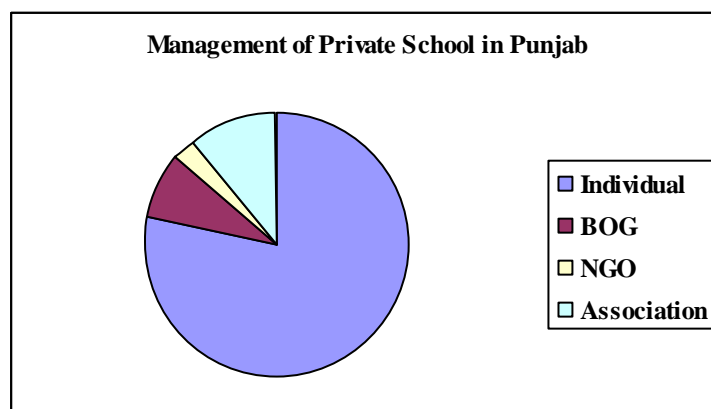
Sindh	27	08	05	35
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	54	08	03	05
Balochistan	05	05	13	01
<b>Total</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>Percent ratio</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>16</b>

The above table shows that individuals manage 67 % sample schools, associations manage 16 %, and BOG's manage 10 % whereas 7 % schools were managed by NGO's. Government of Pakistan (1998) has also supported this finding. It revealed that as contrast to public sector, private schools characterized by their decentralized management as majority of their owners run their schools themselves.

In Balochistan, most of the schools were managed by NGO's and Associations managed maximum number of schools in Sindh. In Punjab and Khyber PK, majority of private schools are run by individuals. According to the Government of Pakistan (2001), 34 % schools were managed by NGO's in Balochistan. It also supported the finding of the study. In a meeting the Director Elementary Education Balochistan, Mr. Muhammad Anwar, informed that no individual can get registration of school independently, unless he is associated with any industry, association or NGO. He further stated this factor prevents the private sector to run a school as a commercial project.

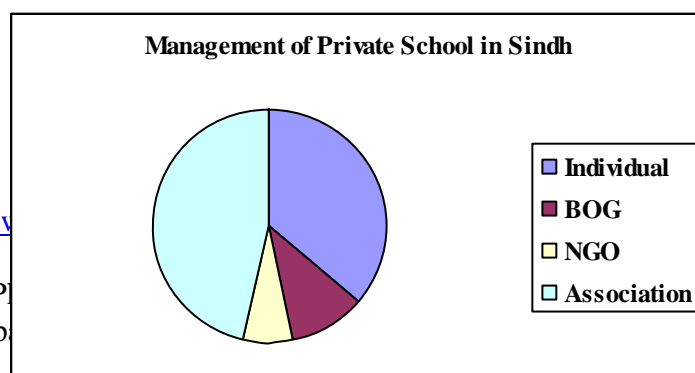
Province wise ratio of management of private schools is presented in the following figures.

**Figure: 1. Management of Private Schools in Punjab**



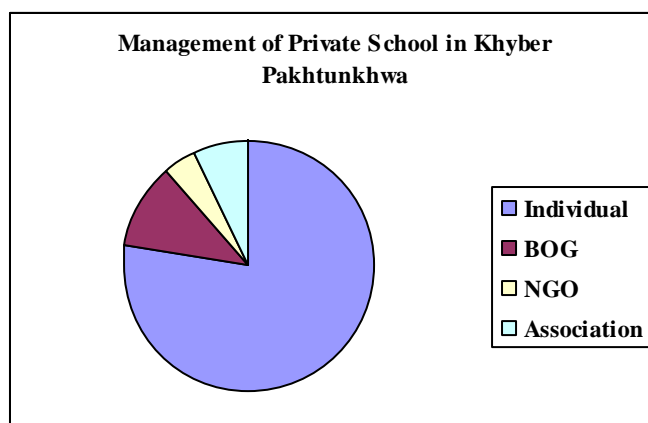
Above figure shows that maximum number of schools is run by individuals, followed by associations.

**Figure: 2. Management of Private Schools in Sindh**



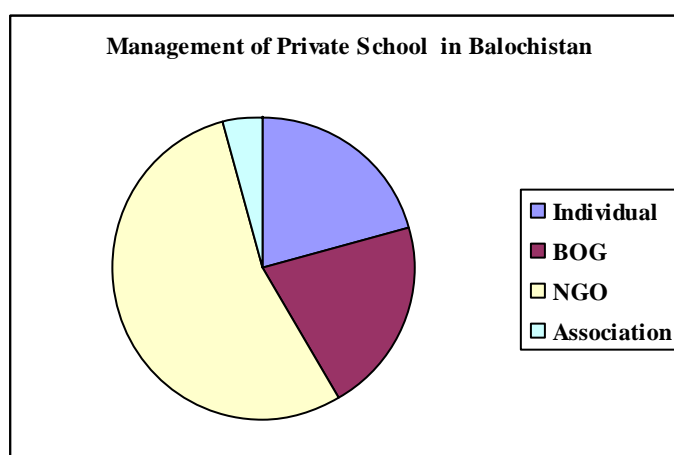
Above figure shows that maximum schools are run by the associations in Sindh.

**Figure: 3. Management of Private Schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**



The figure shows that maximum schools are run by individuals in Khyber PK. This pattern is same as in Punjab

**Figure: 4. Management of Private Schools in Balochistan**



Maximum number of private schools is managed by NGO's in Balochistan.

## 2.4 Relationship with the Government

It was observed that both the sectors keep themselves away from each other. The private sector reported a lot of complaints about the government officials. Out of total 399

respondents 76 % had contact with the government. Out of this, only 58 % reported the attitude of government officials helpful. The respondents charged the government officials with bribery, taking money, non-cooperative behavior, remaining absent from their offices and so on. Siddiqui (1999) also reported that there is mistrust, constant negative criticism, acrimony and fear of dealing with one another. It was also observed that 26 % private schools had no contact with the government.

On the other hand, government officials also reported some complaints about the private sector. They reported that private sector does not cooperate with the government officials. They do not provide even the necessary information. They said that the private schools frequently change their campus without informing the relevant education department.

## 2.5 Year-wise Enrollment of Students

There were total 78,387 students in 1999-2000 in sample schools. Out of this number there were 48,920 male students and 29,467 female students. Following table shows province-wise enrollment.

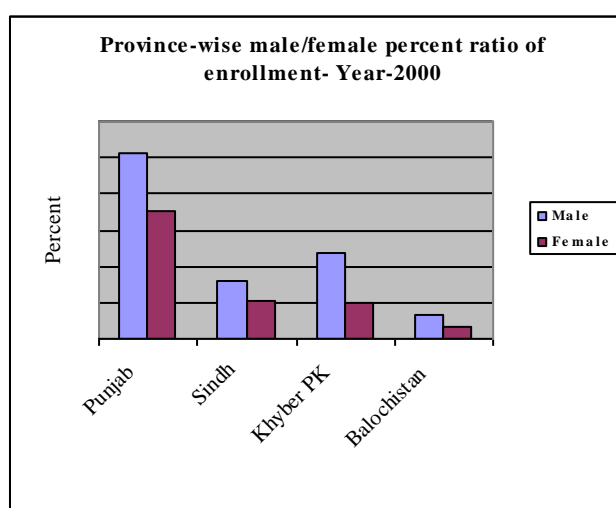
**Table 4: Province Enrollment of Private Primary Schools- year 2000**

	Male	Female	Total
<b>Province</b>			
Punjab	25,733	17,548	43,281
Sindh	8,072	5,288	13,360
Khyber PK	11,841	5,081	16, 922
Balochistan	3,274	1,550	4,824

Overall more boys were enrolled in private sector than girls. Government of Pakistan (2001) also favors this finding as it revealed that 57 % of total enrollment was boys. Akbar (1998) also confirms this finding by stating that there were 56 % male students in Rawalpindi city.

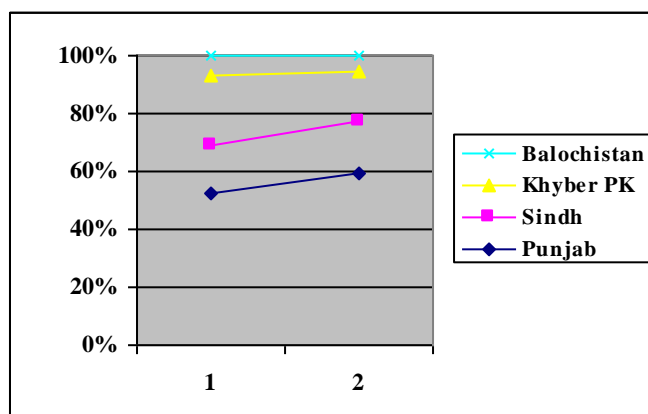
The following graph shows Province-wise male/female percent ratio of enrollment.

**Figure.5: Province-wise male/female percent ratio of enrollment- Year-2000**



Government of Pakistan (2001) also favors this as it has shown that the ratio between enrolment of boys and girls was not same in all provinces. Following figure shows province-wise increase/decrease that again is not uniform in all parts of Pakistan.

**Figure 6 Province-wise male/female percent ratio of enrollment- Year 1999-2000**



### 3. Problems of Private Sector

A questionnaire was delivered to the Heads of private primary schools. Only 54 % responses were received in response. Following problems were presented.

#### a. Attitude of the government

The respondents reported a number of problems like bribery, harassment, non-cooperative and rude behavior of government officials. They also stated that time and again AEO's/DEO's call them for minor issues while they remain absent from their seats resulting wastage of time. However, respondents from Balochistan reported that Government of Balochistan is cooperating with the private sector.



#### **b. Registration/Affiliation Process**

Registration process is laborious and non-cooperative and teasing behavior of government officials make it more difficult. Unnecessary documentation, too much paper work and lot of formalities causes delay in registration process and make it a tiring activity.

#### **c. Taxes**

Private sector reported that they have to bear burden of heavy taxes levied by the government and suggested that taxes should be reduced.

#### **d. Policies for the private sector**

The government should include private sector in policy making decisions regarding education. Sudden changes in policies during academic session are not communicated timely causing lot of problems.

#### **e. Examination**

Private sector opened that they are facing lot of difficulties in obtaining and examination forms as concerning government officials do not cooperate. Examination centers are made far from schools of the students and they usually are sub-standard, they reported further.

### **4. Conclusion**

The government alone cannot provide educational facilities to the entire population of the country. We have a long history of private sector providing educational facilities. Nationalization of educational institutions had caused a great set back to the entire private sector. However, the decision was soon reverted back and private sector was allowed to open new institutions. This resulted in vast expansion of private sector in all parts of the country, especially in urban areas.

The contribution of private sector at all levels cannot be ignored. It is providing better educational facilities at all levels. This is evident from the fact that parents are willing to bear high expenses of private sector rather than sending their children in public sector.

Both the private and public sectors keep themselves away from each other. It is required that both sectors should be investigated and maximum cooperation should be sought between them. Private sector has some genuine problems that need consideration from the government. The private sector is also required to cooperate with the government.

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