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**The State of Basic Education in
Pakistan: A Qualitative, Comparative
Institutional Analysis**

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Zainab Latif**

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The State of Basic Education in Pakistan: A Qualitative, Comparative Institutional Analysis¹

Shahrukh Rafi Khan, Sajid Kazmi and Zainab Latif

Abstract

The objective of the paper is to suggest ways to make government (by far the largest provider) rural primary schooling delivery more effective. We compared the institutional effectiveness of rural primary schooling delivery of the government with the NGO and private sectors. Our main findings are first that the NGO schools were the most successful and second, that “good management” is the key ingredient for sound schooling. Further, if meaningful “participation” is to be achieved in government schools, the power relations of administrators, teachers and parents have to be changed.

I. Introduction

The objective of this research was to suggest ways to make government (by far the largest provider) rural primary schooling delivery more effective. We compared the institutional effectiveness of rural primary schooling delivery of the government with the NGO and private sectors. We identified processes pushing for improvements in the NGO and private sectors and those resulting in obvious failures in the government sectors. Our focus was on operational lessons derived from the NGO and private sector delivery that could make the government sector more effective.

It is often stated that NGOs are more effective in the delivery of services than the government and, indeed, our field observations show that this was the case in the delivery of basic education. A critical research issue is whether the community participation induced or harnessed by development NGOs produces a higher quality product and sustainable service delivery at a competitive price or are there other forces at play.

Not much is known about rural private sector schooling. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this is a rapidly growing sector. Some assert that such schools cheat gullible rural folk with a smattering of English on the syllabus and the status symbols represented by private sector uniforms. Others swear by the dedication of private sector teachers. Either way, it was also time to more systematically assess the contribution of such schools, their potential for growth, the lessons derived from their practice and the social implications of their presence.

In section II, we describe our research design, sampling and research method. In section III, we describe the conceptual framework, in section IV, we presents qualitative results primarily based on field evaluations, in section V we present recommendations for public sector schooling reform and we end with a concluding section.

¹ Thanks are due to The Asia Foundation, Pakistan for supporting this research. Thanks are also due to Haris Gazdar for useful comments.

II. Research design, sampling and research method

Data for the study was collected through extensive fieldwork carried out in the Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, the NWFP and the Northern Areas between September and December 1999. To ensure that we were comparing the same level of schooling across NGO, private and government schools, many of the listed NGO schools were excluded since they ran informal schools while the government and private sector schools are mostly formal. Our initial focus was on NGOs that ran a multiple school program, since they were the more important players in the provision of NGO schooling.

We started with a Society for the Advancement of Education (SAHE) directory of NGOs involved in education.² We soon realized this was not exhaustive, since a number of organizations had not been included. To supplement the SAHE directory, we obtained a copy of the Dataline NGO directories (one each for the four provinces and the Capital) from the Trust for Volunteer Organizations (TVO).³ This directory had been compiled in 1991, and included NGOs that had registered by the late 1980s. Those that stated that they were involved in education were sent questionnaires to gauge their current status and involvement in education. This process was time consuming and the responses disappointing. However, we managed to complete this process for Balochistan, NWFP and Sindh.

The information sent back pertained mostly to the smaller NGOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). Since, we initially planned to include only the larger NGOs in the sample, we began a fresh to compile a list of larger NGOs, on the basis of the SAHE directory and the NGO grapevine. Our selection criterion was that the NGO be running formal primary schools (i.e. 5 years of schooling).

Initially, for financial and linguistic reasons, the study was to be restricted to the Punjab. It was thought that, as the largest province and with the largest number of NGO interventions, the institutional findings from this province would be, by and large, relevant for the rest of the country. After much searching, 50 NGO schools were selected from the Punjab. Because of the difficulty in finding formal schools, even smaller NGOs were included in the sample. Once in the field, we discovered that a substantial amount of the information reported was inaccurate, even though it had been given to us, in most cases, by the senior management of the organizations in question. The main problem was that many of the primary schools were not running classes I-V as we required.

Because we were not able to find 50 formal NGO schools in the Punjab, we had to expand the scope of the study to include the rest of the provinces. Much of the sampling work had to be carried out on the basis of information received on site, i.e. through various education-related professionals and communities. Substitutions were made when those schools originally in the sample could not be surveyed -- generally because the school did not run five classes, was closed due to Winter break, was non-existent or too far away from a private school to justify a comparison between the two.

The schools finally visited are listed in Appendix I, Table I-IV. As evident from this list, 7 out of the 43 schools finally included in the sample were those of NGOs operating only one school. For the multiple school NGOs on the list, we randomly selected about 30 percent of the schools in the Punjab. When the fieldwork in the Punjab was complete, we continued with random selection in the other Provinces to complete the target NGO selection. For the larger multi-school NGOs in the other provinces, the selection ranged from 22 percent to 55 percent. Once the NGO school was selected,

2 SAHE (1997).

3 TVO (1994).

we then visited the nearest government and private schools that ran classes up to class 5. Our objective in pursuing this method was to minimize location influences when comparing schools.⁴

The fieldwork involved a total of ten questionnaires, the details of which are attached as Appendix III. These included soliciting information from students, teachers, households and communities. We also administered tests to assess class III and class V student cognitive skills in mathematics and comprehension and also cognitive skills of class V teachers. Finally, meetings were held with the administrations in the sample areas, and their opinions on NGO interventions were gauged.

III. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework we used for viewing the vast and rich observations that emerged from the field reports is the “principal-agent model”.⁵ In the “principal-agent” context, the principal relies on the agent to execute the principal’s agenda. A good outcome is likely when the agent has appropriate incentives to carry out the agenda of the principal rather than carrying out an independent agenda. Thus the “principal agent” problem can be viewed as one of ensuring that there is agenda compatibility.

The principal-agent problem occurs in the theory of the firm when the interests of the stockowners and the interests of the hired managers do not coincide. The challenge is to structure incentives in a way so that the two interests are merged. Stock-options, as part of the pay or as a bonus for managers, could be a solution. Again, even if the owners and managers have unified objectives, the interests of the managers and those of the workers may deviate. One solution to the latter problem is to make the returns to workers tied to the profit of the firm. In this way, a harmony of interests may be achieved across the board by linking all remuneration to profits.

The consumers can be viewed as the co-principal, since the stock-holders, managers and workers share of profits are contingent on the consumers buying the good or service. This is particularly the case if there is competition in the market and the consumer has the option of buying from another firm if not satisfied with the product.

In the same way, in government schooling, the principal is the public that via a circular process has to ensure good public service. In a practical sense, the public mandate is entrusted to the ministry of education as the line agency of the provincial governments. Authority for management and enforcement devolves down the hierarchy to the district and assistant education officers (DEO/AEO) and the field supervisors who are entrusted to do the monitoring and enforcement. One could view the school administration, heads and teachers as agents for providing good schooling. The public’s only mechanism for enforcement is complaints (voice), if there is no alternative to public schooling (exit),⁶ or ultimately not voting for inefficient government.

Our findings show that the voice option has seriously weakened as the rich parents have abandoned public schools in favor of private or NGO schools. The remaining students are generally from the

4 About three-fourths (96 of the 129) of the schools were mixed, 18 were all girl and 15 were all boy schools.

5 For a concise description refer to Stiglitz (1998).

6 Hirschman, (1970).

lower income households and therefore the exit option is not a possibility for them either.⁷ Finally the electoral option is a weak and crude enforcement mechanism for several reasons. First, concerned ministry officials may remain completely unaffected by a change in government, particularly at the lower administrative level. Second, even if poor performance was signaled by the public, tenure and seniority based pay protects civil service employees, including teachers who do not perform well. Third, in practice, elections are an unlikely tool for such signaling. Voting behavior is complex and determined by many influences and, even if failure in social sector delivery plays a part in it, the message is likely to get lost.

In a principal agent framework, success would mean that the provincial and local governments internalize what the public interest is and deliver on it. Given the diffuse signals and weak enforcement mechanism referred to above, public spiritedness needs to be internalized by senior civil service officials independently such that they become the "principals." We discuss under what circumstances this might be possible in the government schooling reform section.

In private schools, the "principal" is the owner with reference to profit maximization. The "principal" is often also the school administrator or school head. As in the case of other goods and services purchased on the market, the parents could be viewed as co-principals. As long as there is competition, there is an identity of interests since good schooling is what parents want and that is also what will produce demand and high profits. The parents seeking alternative schooling for their children is the enforcement mechanism for good schooling. In the absence of competition, complaints (voice) are all parents can resort to and there is no guarantee that this will meet with a response.

Assuming there is competition, and therefore an identity of parent and owner interests, good schooling depends, among other things, on how effectively the "principal" motivates the "agents" (teachers). Sound selection, good training and appropriate remuneration are among the tools that can be used for motivating teachers. However, fear of termination is an alternative tool for motivating teachers, and this is the one that we found was used more frequently.

The "principals" in one-off NGO schools may operate much like private sector schools. The individuals may be driven by a mission rather than a profit and this could be another source of motivation for the teachers as agents if they identify with the mission. In multi-school NGOs, the "principal" and the guardians of the mission and quality is the NGO. It is the larger organization rather than the school that plays the role of monitor and enforcer of standards. Teachers working conditions, training and motivation are all tools to turn them into effective agents. Sometimes, the NGOs also mobilize communities to become contributors and enforces of standards via informal channels or, more formally, via a parent-teacher association. In this case, the NGO effectively invites the community, in which the school is situated, to be a co-principal.

IV. Field reports evaluation

A. Criteria in assessing success

The criterion for assessing success included the performance of class 3 and class 5 students and class 5 teachers on comprehension and math tests, the state of discipline and confidence of students, motivation,

⁷ We constructed a wealth index based on durable goods and mode of transport possessed. By this criterion, 59 percent of the children of government schools came from the most deprived households while this was true for 38 percent of private and NGO schools. Again, while only 5 percent of the children from government schools came from the wealthiest households, this was true for 23 percent and 22 percent of private and NGO school children. Thus the household wealth profile of the NGO and private school children was virtually identical and much higher than that of government school children.

dedication, training and experience of teachers, whether students and/or teachers cheated in the tests, physical facilities of the school, availability of school supplies and the quality of school administration and management.

B. Comparative overview of success

The table below indicates the evaluation of the field team concerning the 43 sets of government, private and NGO schools across the country.⁸ As indicated in the sampling section, the NGO schools were selected first and the closest government and private schools subsequently selected for investigation. The table below indicates how many of the schools in the sample were viewed as successful or not successful by the field-teams based on the criteria described above.

Table 1: A comparative tally of the success and failure of government, private, and NGO schools

Type of school/ Evaluation	Successful	Not successful	In-between
Government	5	32	6
Private	19	17	7
NGO	31	8	4

Source: Survey field-team evaluation

The table clearly indicates that the NGO schools are the most likely to be successful followed by private schools. That only 5 out of 43 government schools were viewed as successful confirms what is now well known i.e. that the state of government basic education is abysmal and urgently in need of reform.

As mentioned earlier, one of the criteria of success was the performance of class 3 and class 5 students and class 5 teachers on comprehension and math tests. While we give more weight to the overall evaluation of the field-teams, it is nonetheless interesting to observe the results on the tests administered by the field-teams that are reported below in Table 2.

Table 2: Percentage marks on comprehension and math tests for teachers and class 3 and class 5 students by school type.

Type of Schools	Teacher Scores		Students Scores, Class 3		Student Scores, Class 5	
	Math	Comp.	Math	Comp.	Math	Comp.
NGO	5.9 (2.7)	24.5 (3.3)	2.6 (1.2)	10.1 (4.9)	4.9 (1.3)	16.7 (3.6)
Private	6.1 (3.0)	23.1 (5.3)	2.4 (1.2)	7.1 (3.7)	4.5 (1.7)	13.6 (4.4)
Govt.	5.3 (3.0)	23.2 (4.7)	1.5 (1.3)	4.2 (3.4)	3.8 (1.8)	10.1 (4.7)

Notes: Comprehension and math tests for students were developed using the syllabi of class 3 and class 5 of various textbook boards. Comprehension test for teachers was taken from an IFPRI project on education in rural Pakistan [Alderman et. al., (1995)], whereas a math test from the same project was adapted based on pre-tests.

Figures in parenthesis are standard deviations on mean scores for teachers and mean of class mean scores for students across all 43 schools. The maximum scores on teacher tests were 10 and 30 and on student tests 20 and 25 for math and comprehension respectively.

8 The fieldwork began on September 9, 1998 and continued until December 28, 1998.

Several points are evident from Table 2. First, children in NGO schools had the best mean performance in both subjects and both classes. Second, while teacher comprehension scores were highest for NGO teachers, teacher math scores were highest for private school teachers. The performance of government teachers was the poorest in both subjects but not by much in the case of comprehension tests. However, this still remains a poor showing since government teachers have similar education qualifications to NGO and private school teachers and much higher pre-service training. NGOs invest the most in in-service training.⁹ Third, on average, government school students had a much lower scale of academic achievement in class three and this remained true on an absolute level by class five. However, the relative gain in scores between class three and class five was much higher in government schools which is suggestive of the potential for improvement. Fourth, the variation in scores among students for government schools was generally the highest or close to the highest and it was the lowest or close to the lowest for NGO schools. Finally, the incidence of cheating among students and teachers was highest in government schools and lowest in NGO schools and so government school teacher and student scores are inflated.

In the sections that follow, we indicate what accounted for success and failure of the three different kinds of schools and what reform lessons are evident.

1. Government schools

Government basic education is by far the most important schooling for us to focus on. This is partly because of its much larger scale but, more so, because, with the onset of private and NGO schooling, the clients of government schooling are now the most poor and deprived students. Any successful program of human development must address the needs and entitlements of this class. This sub-section contains a general discussion of government schooling followed by a discussion of issues based on specific observations.

a. General discussion

The high failure rate of government schools is a serious cause of concern if we view “evening the odds” in a class based society as a fundamental state responsibility. The clients of government schools are generally poor and illiterate.¹⁰ The richer parents are abandoning government schools in droves. Between 1991 and 1996-97, the growth of enrollment in non-government schools was 61 percent for boys and 131 percent for girls.¹¹ The better off parents quite clearly indicated to us that government schools were incapable of providing a decent education. The poor parents were often aware of the poor standard of education being offered to their wards, but were unable to do much about this because of economic circumstances. Even then, we noticed that many relatively poor parents stretched themselves to provide a non-government education to their children either out of genuine concern for their children’s education, and sometimes because non-government education has also become a mark of status in rural society.¹² Often, it was the bright children that parents removed from government schools.

9 The mean years of education for government, private and NGO teachers were 12.9, 12.3 and 12.9 years, mean pre-service training 1.05, 0.4 and 0.5 years and mean in-service training was 0.54, 0.2 and 1.3 months respectively.

10 Eleven percent of the fathers and 27 percent of the mothers of government school students were illiterate compared to 5 percent and 5 percent for NGO schools and 16 percent and 18 percent respectively for private schools respectively. These numbers are way below the national average because they represent the responses of parents of school children. For the wealth index see fn. 7.

11 Government of Pakistan (1998, p. 23).

12 Non-government refers to both private and NGO schooling. In this regard, NGO could probably be improved upon as an acronym to suggest what they are rather than what they are not. Public Interest Organization (PIO) is gaining some currency in Pakistan.

This exodus of the richer children and the brighter poor children to non-government schools is accentuating the crisis of government education. The wealthier parents are the most likely to complain and play a principal's role to maintain standards. The brighter children are the most likely to raise the general level of the class. With these sources of countervailing pressure gone, rural public sector education will deteriorate further. Thus the children of poor parents often don't make it to school and, those that do, have little hope of getting very far in an increasingly competitive world.¹³

Concerned and interested parents of children in government schools were generally the exception rather than the rule. Thus teachers got away with educational murder. Not only did they wantonly neglect their duties, they also used the students to do their chores and bring gratuities. They also charged special illegal fees and run their own businesses on the side. Focus group meetings often showed illiterate and poor parents satisfied because they did not know any better. Often they seemed content that their children were in school and at other times they seemed to view the school as a convenient child sitting arrangement. However, even this service was not reliable, since many parents and communities complained that students came and went as they pleased and this was confirmed by field observation.

While government teachers were more highly paid than non-government teachers, some parents were under the impression that government teachers were very poorly paid and hence had no option but to run independent businesses on the side to supplement their meager income.¹⁴ Here it important to acknowledge that being paid more than private sector teachers does not constitute good pay.¹⁵

One issue that parents and the community dwelt on was whether or not the teachers were from the village. Teachers who did not reside in the village were often late and absent. However, they were less likely to be harsh to children of a particular *beradari* (clan) and more receptive to complaints from the parents about the schooling. Thus overall, they were viewed as more effective.

Currently, the surprise visitor to a government school is likely to confront very poor facilities, very high student and teacher absenteeism, gossiping and disinterested teachers and an unrestrained student body running wild. In one case, all the teachers were absent and class five students were managing the school. Teachers blame the parents for a lack of interest and the parents blame the teachers for a lack of interest. There are elements of truth to both allegations. However, reform needs to start in the school and filter out to the home. An angry and accusing household or a disinterested household is not likely to be a very receptive one.

The power of teachers, among other factors, undermines public sector schooling. There are at least five sources of teacher power. First, the teachers as government servants have tenure and thus face little threat of losing their job if they perform poorly. Second, there is very little oversight by education officers so teachers feel secure in their neglect. Third, even if they are caught out, they find political authorities to bat for them. Fourth, even if they don't have political connections, they have a teacher's association

13 Government of Pakistan (1998, p. 33).

14 The mean monthly salary of government teachers was Rs. 3,567 (Rs. 1537 standard deviation). The mean monthly salary of private and NGO teachers was Rs. 1,800 (Rs. 2,379, sd) and Rs. 2,317 (Rs. 2,339) respectively.

15 The mean salary of government school teachers of Rs. 3,567 is about equal to the mean monthly salary of unskilled workers (using a straight average of the daily wage for the national and four provincial capitals and multiplying by 30) and less than half the monthly salary of skilled workers like masons and carpenters [Government of Pakistan, *Economic Survey 1998-99*, Statistical Supplement, (1999, p. 143)]. However, government teachers are entitled to benefits like a provident fund, health facilities and pension that are not accessible to daily wage-workers.

batting for them. Fifth, they face a very poor and uneducated constituency of parents, which provides no threat or countervailing power. Thus, under the current circumstances, public sector teachers are unlikely to be good “agents.”

b. Some notable specific practices or findings

i. Teachers and teacher practices: In one school, the field-team left and returned an hour later for some follow-up questions. While the school should still have been in session, in fact it had been locked, and the teachers were playing cricket. Parents in other schools also complained of teachers being more interested in cricket than in the children. Some instances of the lack of teacher awareness include the inability of a teacher to recall either the number or names of students in his classes. While this forgetfulness could be forgiven, drawing a complete blank on a maths test is less forgivable. Similarly, it was shocking to discover that the headmistress of a school in the Punjab was unaware of the capital city of the Province. It is not surprising then that class three students in one school were even unable to write their names. However, the fact that political appointments took place was obvious from the hiring of a retarded person as a teacher in one of the school’s visited.

Parents resented the wide practice of compelling students to take tuition at the same time as they wasted teaching time during school hours. Of course, only the relatively more prosperous parents could afford the tuition, so even within government schools, there was a social divide. Beatings were also observed to be a common practice, even in girls’ schools, as was compelling students to do chores. In one school, even the district education officer (DEO) borrowed children for his errands.

Parents also complained of the teacher’s being extractive. Students were pressured to bring gifts in kind and pay special fees. At other times, teachers demanded money for rent even if the government allocation covered rent. In one case, the parents pointed out that the teachers demanded Rs. 50 per annum as fees (without a receipt) while they knew the fees were only Rs. 27.

ii. School conditions and facilities: School facilities in general were abysmal. We note some observations here to reinforce the point. Children often sat on a mat and in one school they were found sitting on the wet floor while in many they were required to bring their own sack to sit on. In several cases, teachers’ aids, kits and charts were available but locked away in the head’s office. Stationary was chronically in short supply. The lack of electricity due to the non-payment of a bill was observed to be a problem in more than one school. Schools were crowded with student-teacher ratios of 50-60 per class and multi-grade teaching was quite common due to short staffing. Toilets were generally filthy and water often not in supply.

iii. Absenteeism and teacher disinterest: Absenteeism and the lack of interest were serious problem among both teachers and students. Up to two-thirds to fifty percent of the students were found to be absent on the day of the field-visit.¹⁶ In some schools, even though students were absent (forty percent in one case), teachers marked them present anyway. In other schools, teachers did not bother to mark the attendance register. In one school, fifty percent of the students did not bother to return after the recess. Even if the teachers were present, they were often found chatting while the students ran wild. In one school, only one out of the six teachers present was actually found teaching. In another school, a peon was found teaching classes and in another school, students were used to perform the duties

16 Student absenteeism was the only statistic where the data did not confirm the impression formed by field observation. The absentee rate, calculated as the total days absent as a percent of the total school days in the April to June 1999 period, was 9.9, 15.6 and 10.7 percent for NGO, private and government schools respectively. The higher absentee rate for private schools was a surprise.

of peons and *chowkidars* (guards). Many community interviews indicated that teachers never bothered giving homework.

iv. Quality: Perhaps there was no greater indictment of government schooling than the fact that the government teachers were enrolling their own children in private schools. Another perspective on this was often provided by parents who had actually attended a particular school themselves and hence felt very committed to it. Invariably, their recollections were a confirmation of declining standards and increasing teacher disinterest over time.

v. Management: There is little one could expect by way of good management given the disinterest of the head and other teachers. The head teacher in one case was running her own private school on the side and in another case ran a building material business. The head teachers routinely came late.

Some of the worst travesties included a school that was used as a gambling den where addicts hung out and another school in which the last DEO visit took place three years ago. In this regard, schools closer to district headquarters had better oversight. However, by the same token, the second shift in a double shift school went from bad to worse since they had less fear of being observed after regular hours.

2. Private schools

As indicated in Table 1, private schools presented the greatest contrast in performance. The worst ones were often run as a family business with rented buildings that were completely inadequate for schooling. These buildings were crowded, poorly ventilated, poorly lit, hot, short of even poor quality furniture, had dirty bathrooms, no clean drinking water and no play area.¹⁷ In one school, the children were found playing on the roof. Several of the schools practiced multi-grade teaching or otherwise had a distracting teaching environment. In one case, the teaching in the veranda was too close to the teaching in the courtyard and in another the converted warehouse produced too much echo. By contrast, some schools even had well stocked libraries that they encouraged students to use and computers that they utilized to provide instruction to the higher grades. One school even had a tuck-shop that operated on a self-service self-paying basis.

The teachers were often paid poorly, not trained and made to work hard.¹⁸ Several teachers complained about their poor pay. The turnover rate was stated to be high. The higher paid, much more laid back and tenured government teaching positions were obviously very attractive. A year or two of teaching in private schools was viewed as enough to establish credentials for a more secure government job.

Yet despite this, teachers were very often industrious, disciplined and motivated. The threat of job loss no doubt had something to do with this. Students were also generally disciplined, confident and well turned out, even if the performance on the tests was not good. Homework was in general regularly assigned and corrected, something the parents noted and greatly appreciated. Teachers in one school stayed several hours after school to both grade homework and prepare the next day class plans.

Parent teacher contact was much higher and the school administration much more responsive to parental concerns. However, except for an innovative “mother’s day” featuring student performances that was

17 We generated a physical quality index based on the availability of following: boundary wall, desks, chairs, taats (mats), indoor teaching, electricity, fans, drinking water, washrooms (both availability and quality) and library. Based on this, the quality score ranged from 0 to a maximum of 12. The mean score on this index for government, private and NGO schools was 5.2 (sd., 2.71), 9.0 (sd., 1.49) and 10.1(sd., 1.16) respectively.

18 See fns. 9 and 14.

devised by one school to get the mother's more involved, parent teacher contact was generally not institutionalized.¹⁹ But teachers in general made more effort to apprise parents of the child's performance. High absenteeism was the exception rather than the rule.

While fees were in general much higher than in government schools and too high for the poor, several schools ran scholarship programs for the able poor students and had concession based fee structures.²⁰ One school even had the rich parents contribute to the fees of the poor ones.

The curse of private tuition was still present with many of the richer parents buying this for their children, perhaps as a substitute to giving their own time, and many teachers supplemented their income with it.

Private schools were often able to get away with poor performance because relatively uneducated parents had only abysmal government schooling to compare private schooling with. Indeed, much of the discussion of focus group meetings with parents whose children were in NGO and private schools centered on the disastrous state of government schooling. Many put their children in the private school as much from a vague sense of doing best by their child as for the status symbol this has come to represent. Parents took great pride in Oxford University Press books on the syllabus – referred to as an “Oxford Syllabus.” More disturbing, poor parents sometimes judged quality by the fee they were paying. In a couple of community focus group meetings, parents suggested that government schooling should be abolished and subsidies provided to non-government schools to make them more affordable.²¹

The more educated parents were often more vocal, expected more and complained hard since they were paying what they perceived to be a high price. Thus they exercised their right as co-principals to demand standards. In some cases, even illiterate parents who were paying what they viewed as very high fees had high expectations and were vocal about what they perceived as an inadequate service.²² SMCs were largely irrelevant for private schools. Parents felt they were paying a good price and that is where their responsibility ended. In turn, they expected the school to deliver the education. This was true across the board in a majority of schools surveyed, but not surprisingly, was more the case with private sector schools. Several educated and discerning parents who had removed their children from government schools claimed that there was a noticeable improvement in the level their children had attained and the progress the children were making.

The field team found cheating by students and even teachers (taking help from colleagues) much more prevalent in government and private schools. Private school teachers operating in a “for profit” environment probably felt under pressure to be able to show good results. The business motivation produced some positive results such as educational awareness campaigns. One school run by a group of friends started music classes, computer classes and street assemblies to attract parent attention and raise enrollments. This motivation could also induce negative behavior and one dissatisfied community alleged that the zero failure rate achieved by the school in grade exams resulted from the bribes given by the

19 Only 4 out of the 43 private schools had a PTA (parent teacher association) or SMC (school management committee) while this was the case for 29 government schools (mandatory) and 23 NGO schools (optional).

20 The mean fees monthly fee was Rs. 3 (sd., Rs. 4) for government schools, Rs. 108 (sd., Rs. 49) for private schools and Rs. 121 (sd., Rs. 73) for NGO schools.

21 While it may be difficult to justify subsidizing a commercial activity, the government could ensure that tax authorities do not harass private schools as seems to be happening according to press reports.

22 It was difficult to find a completely consistent pattern for parental involvement in schooling across the three types of schools. Sometimes, very educated parents were complaisant about very poor private sector schooling as though they had done the best by their children and need not worry further. While the poor and illiterate were generally unaware and disinterested, they sometimes complained vociferously about the poor service delivery of government schools.

school administration. In another school where test results were poor, the field-team observed that teachers were giving very high marks to the students in a cynical attempt to impress uneducated parents.

The bottom line in good performance was good management and, more often than not, this hinged on an exceptional and dedicated principal or administrator who exercised oversight and led by example. Such individuals were often concerned with infusing a high moral character in the children, something the community focus group was highly appreciative of. Staff that taught in schools that they had themselves attended, whether in the private or government sectors, often developed an emotional attachment and worked hard. One school reinforced such efforts by giving bonuses to devoted teachers.

3. NGO schools²³

NGO schooling was easily the most successful. However, not all NGO schools visited were a success. We classified NGO schools in our sample based on whether they were one-off NGO schools or part of a multi-school program with a support system. The latter often resulted in better management. Within these categories, we found schools that had a secular or a religious or ideological orientation. The ideological orientation was important in understanding NGO motivation and this distinguished the prominent multi-school NGO programs from the for profit private school in most cases.

NGO schools were viewed as private schools in the public perception and educating a child in an NGO school also represented a “status symbol.”²⁴ However, while those NGOs that charged a fee had higher fees (fn. 20), 77 percent of the NGOs reported charging no fee. Thus there was a real distinction between schools run for profit and those operating on a non-profit basis.

a. The one-off unsuccessful NGO schools

These schools had practices similar to the unsuccessful private schools. The schools were often in rented buildings that were crowded and totally inappropriate for schooling. The notorious practice of giving children tuition was witnessed in such NGO schools as in private schools.

For one school, the positive response elicited from the community of financially sound farmers again indicated how easy it sometimes is to fool parents. The latter were impressed with the small classes, discipline and extra-curricula activities. However, the focus group meeting revealed that the teachers solicited the assistance of shop-keepers near the school to keep an eye on students bunking classes.

b. The one-off successful NGO schools

There were several examples of successful one-off NGO schools where practices differed from those mentioned in sub-section a) above. The Anjuman-e-Asatasa only hired teachers that had earned an intermediate degree (A level or high school equivalent) as a minimum qualification and had been trained as teachers. Discipline was good and the students were well behaved and enthusiastic. The student-teacher rapport was notable and this was probably facilitated by the joint projects that they engaged in. The Soofi Foundation school stood out because of its highly equipped large building, impressive library and very qualified teachers. In both schools, the poor parents felt burdened by the fees and the very poor regretted being excluded.

23 For an account of NGO schooling in general refer to Baqir (1998) and for a specific example of community based schooling to Khan (1998).

24 The distinction between an NGO and private school is often nominal. The administrations of a number of private schools we visited stated that the schools had been created by an NGO merely for registration with the education authorities. These NGOs had no say or involvement in the functioning of the school and, in fact, in many cases, they ceased to exist as soon as the registration had been completed.

The Mithi Educational Society ran a successful school in Mithi, Tharparker catering mainly to a Hindu community. The NGO had to work very hard to convince the community to allow females to teach in the school. However, they were successful and managed to get together a team of qualified, well-trained and committed teachers. The proud parents felt that, as a result, their offspring were getting an education that would make them capable of even competing with students from Karachi.

The English Grammar School Swabi was impressive. The school building and classes were good and students were in clean uniforms and well disciplined. All students on the register were present on the day of the field visit. Another surprise for the field team was that the toilets even had soap and towels. Most of the teachers had earned a Masters' degree and were dedicated and competent. The team spirit observed among teachers was commendable and the student-teacher relations were friendly. The school provided free education to thirty students and had plans to start computer classes. The parents participated in school activities and the school administration was responsive to parents' suggestions. The parents were very satisfied and mentioned that their children seemed dull before they started attending this school. Due to the higher standard, the school often made children transferring in from government schools stay back in the same class.

The Sunshine Public School was partially funded by the Swabi Women's Welfare Organization and hence, compared to the private sector schools, charged more modest fees. While the rented apartment building was not completely adequate and the teachers were not trained, both students and teachers did very well in the tests. The teachers also tried to inculcate good habits like manners, punctuality and cleanliness. A surprise for one field-team member was witnessing a student carry a piece of torn paper to the dustbin. The parents attributed success to the oversight of the principal.

c. The badly managed multi-school NGO programs

One Anjuman (association) had adopted 13 primary schools at the time of the field visit, but most were new and only one of these had students in class five. The student-teacher rapport seemed good, but the community was quite negative about the casual attitude of the school administration. No one seemed aware of the role of the Anjuman in managing the school. One community member thought that the school was just a tax break for the owner of the nearby Fruit Farm. Parents thought the fee was too high for the product delivered, and some mentioned they would transfer their child, even if to a government school.

Five out of the six Hira schools, founded by the Anjuman-e-Asataza (Association of Teachers), in our sample were successful. The sixth was like the typical unsuccessful private sector school. The classrooms were narrow and dark and multi-grade teaching was being practiced. Students lacked discipline and the teachers seemed disinterested. Parents were not literate and seemed unable to discern what represented educational quality. The religious affiliation of the school was however a source of comfort for parents, and they therefore willingly sent their daughters to the school.

Two of the four schools run by an old and well-established NGO in Sindh province were no different from the shoddy private sector schools. In one of the two schools, the teacher training was poor and the students were found giving tuition. While there was a general body (twenty-six NGO and community members) to run the school, it made little difference to the school's functioning. In the other school, management by the NGO was very lax. No attendance register was maintained and teachers routinely came late. Four of the classes were being held in a veranda, which made concentration difficult for teachers and students. Class 3 students were unable to read the math. and comprehension tests in Sindhi, even though that was the medium of instruction. While ten percent of the students were supposed to be

allowed to attend free, students had dropped out because they could not afford the fee. The community had been mobilized and was fully involved, interested and active and represented on the PTA. They had contributed the land and towards the cost of the building and, despite the poor performance of the school, were willing to continue contributing.

d. The well managed multi-school religious NGO programs

There were two Asgharia Educational & Welfare Society (AEWS) Schools in the sample and it was clear that the NGO management was sound. The teachers were very professional and committed even though not highly qualified. The principal was also very dedicated and professional and trained teachers on his own accord. The fee structure was perceived by the community to be reasonable. They also appreciated the well-equipped computer lab. The Sunni households noted the sectarian (Shia) orientation of the schools (parents asked to sign release forms), but they were content with the education and satisfied with countering the sectarian influence via religious education at home. The NGO exercised good oversight, although excess demand had started resulting in over-crowding. Nonetheless, the parents noted the tremendous progress made by their children since they had been shifted to this school.

The five successful Hira schools run by the Tanzeem-e-Asatza, were individualized. There seemed to be no overarching organizational presence of the parent NGO performing the supervisory role. The teachers in some schools were not highly qualified but were dedicated and managed to infuse confidence in the students who were well dressed and well behaved. By contrast to the crowded rented buildings and poorly qualified teachers of some schools, others had spacious and well-equipped classes and highly qualified and hard working teachers.

The poor parents felt pinched by the fees that the school administration said was necessary to recover recurrent expenditures. In one school, poor students were allowed to attend free and the community contributed for scholarships for very poor deserving students. In another, an elaborate fee structure was adopted to accommodate the poor students. Some parents nonetheless complained about the high fees. Two of the three partners running one school, originally started as a “for profit” school, showed concern that the school was not recovering costs.

The parents across the board were very supportive of the religious orientation of the schools. In this regard, the schools could get away with poor delivery as indicated by one Hira School described in the last sub-section. Tameer-i-Millat (TM) is probably one of the best examples of such multi-school programs that consistently produce good results. The parents supported this orientation, the religious education and the efforts of the school to inculcate a moral outlook among the students.

TM schools were well managed with the NGO playing the role of a monitor and enforcer of standards. The schools buildings were purpose built and hence had all the facilities necessary for good schooling. Compared to government schools, this meant that they were well lit, properly ventilated, had appropriate furniture for the students and teachers and that the classes were of a comfortable size and not crowded. One comment about the students was that they were disciplined, self-confident and had a spark rare in rural schools. The teachers were motivated, aware, involved, knew the parents and put in a great deal of effort.

A systematic policy to curb absenteeism was observed. The students were admonished twice and, if this did not work, a letter was written to the parents to discuss the issue. Expulsion was maintained as the last option. There was regular testing of students to keep them involved and alert. Extra periods were observed after school to provide special assistance for weak students.

In some cases, a strong and involved SMC, composed of village notables, addressed parental concerns. These were educated individuals who gave adequate time to the school. Interestingly, the NGO did not seem to encourage collective action on the part of the community and, in one case, discouraged a fund raising effort by the community for the school building. It may be that this effort competed with what the NGO felt it was there to provide.

e. Other well managed multi-school NGO programs

The Pak Public School, Kharan, was one of a chain of over 15 schools run by Pakistan Public Welfare Society, Balochistan. It battled odds to deliver a good education. A hall in a rented building was divided into classes and so the noise level was very high. Nonetheless, the teachers were well paid, worked hard and performed well. The parents appreciated the good education. Although they found the fees high, but the government school alternative was not considered acceptable. They appreciated and participated actively in the functions organized by the school. The administration was responsive to the parents and welcomed their inputs for improvements.

Two Sindh Graduate Association (SGA) Roshan Tara schools were successful. They showed better performance among class 3 relative to class 5 students because the latter attained their earlier schooling elsewhere. SGA took pains with teacher training which was provided for two weeks twice a year. In the two successful schools, the community pointed to the dedication of the teachers as making a difference in both cases. In one school, the principal had spent her life in the education department and retired after a stint as a DEO. She had instituted a policy of turning back students arriving late. Parents resented the wastage of the fare but appreciated the discipline among the teachers and students. The other school was successful despite the description of the school by the field-team as “small, cramped, dingy, damp, dirty and rat infested.”

In assessing success, the importance of the exceptional individual shines through. This could be a dedicated principal or motivated administrator. However, even more important was good overall management. The Citizen’s Foundation (TCF) and the Aga Khan Educational Services (AKES) schools were outstanding in conditions where government and private schooling were disasters. The facilities and teacher training provided and the monitoring systems established delivered good schooling with great consistency.

TCF targeted the most deprived peri-urban and rural communities and hence the schools were built in very poor neighborhoods. One description of an imposing structure was that it was a “palace amidst huts” in an area that was “humming with flies and had people playing cards and board-games on the streets.” The purpose built schools, costing up to Rs. 25 lakhs, were fully equipped including art rooms for the junior section. The rooms were large and airy, had good furniture and all necessary charts and aids, including audio aids, were available and in use.

Free milk and cookies were provided several times a week, the frequency determined by how poor the community was. In one neighborhood, parents could not afford to feed the children before sending them to school. The fees were tailored to the income of the parents such that five percent of household income was charged. The school maintained all the relevant data concerning the students and the parents. Uniforms were provided free and books provided on credit on very easy terms.

Both the teachers and students were in uniform. The teachers were confident and treated well including being given a “pick-up and drop” service. However, in return, they were expected to work hard and prepare monthly and annual work-plans. Teachers attended monthly meetings to present performance

reports and problems were discussed with the NGO education specialist. They were provided three months of intensive teacher training and bi-annual refresher courses.

There was no formal PTA but a parent association (PA) was formed to contain high dropout rates and to encourage enrollments. The school administration was very responsive to the parents and kept them posted on the child's progress, but the PA has no formal role in school affairs. A limit on the student-teacher ratio was strictly observed and excess demand resulted in plans for building a new school. This excess demand, which arose once the school was established, was particularly commendable given that TCF schools were normally built in communities where at least the fathers saw little value to schooling and would have preferred the child to help them with their own work or otherwise supplement household income.

Like TCF schools, the three AKES schools in our sample in the Northern Areas had good facilities, science labs, well qualified and trained teachers, confident, hardworking and well behaved students. The school administration followed up the progress of the students with the parents, but also relied on very active VECs (village education committees). Thus students absent for more than six days were referred to the VECs which also assessed individual fees and paid the teachers' salaries. The overall monitoring and evaluation was retained by the AKES.

AKES schools proved that VECs can work.²⁵ The communities had been mobilized to take an interest in their children's schooling, had contributed land and labor for the school building and for on-going improvements like boundary walls, a science lab or an examination hall. They took an active on-going interest in school affairs and had the power to replace poor teachers in consultation with the NGO. In one case, an SMC blocked admission because, due to excess demand, the classes were getting overcrowded. In turn, it began consultations with the NGO to build more classrooms. It also permitted the school to use the premise for evening classes for a girl's college, since none was available for miles. Thus in all aspects, the parents performed the role of effective co-principals.

Several lessons are evident from the successful NGO schooling for the reform of public sector delivery in basic education.

V. Reforming government basic education

Not all government schools performed poorly as indicated in Table 1. In Appendix III, we present a case study of a very successful government school. However, the case study also explains the special circumstances of this success. We feel that with appropriate school reform, this should become the norm. Our concern is mainly with government schooling, which is all that the poorest now have recourse to. NGO schools seem to be doing well for the most part and, in any case, addressing problems in the NGO and private sectors pertains to regulation.

Given the very low base delivery of government schools, it was relatively easy for the NGO schools and private schools to win support from households and communities for the service they delivered. Providing effective competition and hence raising overall standards is another reason why reforming public sector education is so essential. The impact will be felt across the board and not just in public schools, since the public sector is the base standard bearer given its lower fees.

²⁵ For more details on AKES, see Karez and Mitchell (1999).

Based on field observations, we feel that successful reform of basic education has to tackle teacher power and parent disinterest head on. We suggest the following:

- a. Given the exodus of children away from government schools and the rapid pace of expansion of non-government schooling, the public sector should now focus on quality. Thus most new resources should be allocated to up-grading and providing adequate facilities to existing government schools. Government schools uniformly seemed to have the worst facilities. Sitting on the floor in a small multi-grade class, in the veranda or under a tree can be a deterrent to learning. Even when schools did have small classrooms, the space, lighting and ventilation were very inadequate.
- b. Even though public sector teacher's pay is higher than NGO and private sector schools, we suggest that the pay should be raised to attract a better quality teacher.
- c. The power of the teacher association should be confined to negotiating pay and perks. De facto tenure should be abolished and incompetent teachers weeded out by having them sit for qualifying tests.²⁶
- d. Teachers need to be assessed by enrollment rates, retention rates and the performance of their students on board exams. Principals are required to maintain such data, and it should be put to good use. We found it instructive that parent groups in all four provinces mentioned the key role of monitoring and the lack of it in government schools as being instrumental in their poor performance.
- e. Since enrollment and retention rates have much to do with the household and community, the teachers will have an incentive to work with households and communities. Instead of sabotaging the PTA, they will have an incentive to use it to mobilize the community and parents. The parents in turn should have a role in ensuring that the data collected is accurate.
- f. The most challenging part of schooling reform will be to ensuring the state plays its part as an effective "co-principal." Obviously, this issue is part of overall public sector reforms.²⁷ Our view is that parents can work effectively with government officials as "co-principals" if the power balance of government officials are also altered relative to the parents. If school officials are well paid local (rather than provincial) government officials, whose evaluation is done partly by the PTA and who are accessible to the PTA, effective monitoring and supervision becomes a possibility.

We feel that the reforms suggested above are among the minimum essential steps that are required to improve public sector schooling. However, without such steps, public sector schooling will remain a dead loss.

Concluding remarks

This study reported on the qualitative results of a comparative institutional analysis of government, private and NGO schools. Forty-three NGO schools engaging in formal primary schooling were first randomly selected and then the closest government and private schools were included in the sample. Three male / female field teams gathered information from the schools, teachers, households and the communities. In addition, tests were administered to class 3 and class 5 students and also to class 5 teachers. Based on field observation, the field-team wrote detailed field reports about the performance of the school. This report is based primarily on the field reports.

26 Table 2 reports the poor performance of government schoolteachers on math tests. Hoodbhoy (1998, pp. 8-9) also reports evidence on the poor performance of government schoolteachers on various tests.

27 World Bank (1999).

Our research showed that overall, the NGOs were the most successful in delivering good education. NGO schools had the best performance in math and comprehension tests. Also, the incidence of cheating in these schools was the lowest as were the absentee rates. NGO schools were rated the highest on our physical quality of school index and they also invested the most in in-service training for teachers. While those charging a fee had a higher average fee than government or private schools, 77 percent of NGOs reported charging none.

Our research also confirmed, what is now well known, that the state of public basic education is an unmitigated disaster. Only 5 out of the 43 government schools visited were successful. The schooling conditions were abysmal. There were poor facilities, lack of furniture, stationary, supplies and teacher's aids. Also, if usable rooms were available, they tended to be small, poorly lit, poorly ventilated and often without basic utilities. Poor teaching conditions and multi-grade teaching often proved to be a very distracting teaching environment. The student teacher ratio was very high and absenteeism among the students and teachers chronic. Teachers beat the students, exploited them via requiring gifts in kind and chores and sold tuition to the students after school while they wasted time gossiping in school. The fact that government school teachers sent their own children to private schools reveals the extent to which public education has deteriorated.

The government is and will continue to be the most important provider of basic education for a while yet. The reason for this is that they will increasingly cater to the poor majority that has neither "voice" or "exit" options. As the relatively more prosperous rural households continue to transfer their children to NGO and private schools, the rural poor will be left at the mercy of sub-standard schools that will deteriorate further.

The growth of enrollments in non-government schools increased by 131 percent for girls and 61 percent for boys between 1991 and 1995-96. The brighter poor children and the richer children are indicated as most likely to leave. This deprives government schools of both standard setters and countervailing power to declining standards. The brighter children set the standards and the richer parents have influence with teachers and the school administration. Thus with the exodus currently underway, there is no check to the decline in the quality of public schooling. The big public policy challenge is to arrest this rot and provide the rural poor children with a fair opportunity to compete.

Since public sector schooling sets the base standard for private and NGO schooling, this decline in quality means that the private sector has little to compete with. This is important since private schools do not have the good oversight of solid multi-school NGO programs and so competition is the only reliable mechanism to make them deliver. About half the private schools in the sample were not successful and an important part of the reason is that they have to beat a very low standard to be doing better.

Our research shows that dealing with teacher power and good management and oversight are the keys to public sector schooling success. Teacher power is rooted in tenure, lack of oversight, political protection, poor parents with little countervailing power and the strength of the teacher associations. Removing de facto tenure is necessary but good pay for solid teaching is also necessary. Also, the parents need to be involved as a "co-principal" in oversight via school management committees (SMCs).

SMCs can play an important role as indicated by the Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) schools. Given the general perception of parents across the board that education is the school's responsibility, one wondered if such committees could work. We found illiterate mothers hard at work at home and outside the home and fathers returning late from work or working away from the village. Thus it was

understandable that we found such an attitude among parents. However, it is clear that the hard work put in by AKES in mobilization communities turned the latter into an interested force to improve basic education.

The role of notables is a complex one. In some cases, their presence on the SMC is merely form. There have no personal stake in the school or any deep interest in education. However, as prominent members of the community, they have to be represented in all community matters. In some cases, their presence on SMCs merely allows them to appropriate resources that might become available. However, they are also situations in which they take a charitable interest in the school and contribute to it financially. In one case, a notable secretly paid the fees for some poor children. Thus, having them on the SMC amounts to involving a potential sponsor. Our view is that while the notables sometimes play a benign role, the potential for harm is great and relying on them to play the parents' role is not sensible.

For NGOs, community involvement is important but not the most fundamental ingredient in successful schooling. There were examples of NGO schools where the community seemed highly motivated, actively participated in PTCs (parent teacher committees), contributed financially and physically and yet students performed poorly on the tests. The contrast with The Citizen Foundation (TCF) schools is instructive where parental involvement was low (although they were apprised by the school of the child's progress), but the overall school management and administration and facilities were exemplary. The test results were also outstanding. The teachers were treated well, trained well and made to feel they were part of a team and a mission. Thus, for the NGO and private sectors, the key to good schooling is good management that can produce excellence in teaching and the other needed ingredients.

We found that when the multi-school NGO organization was not uniformly strong and effective, the role of a principal or key administrator could be key to making a difference. However, when the organization was strong like TCF or AKES, the results were uniformly good and not dependent on an exceptional individual, who if present represented a bonus. Good administration was also observed in some one-off NGO schools but obviously the economies of scale were not present.

The religious multi-school NGOs like Tameer-i-Millat were successful and also pose a challenge to liberal thinking as observed by Gazdar (1999). Judged by current standards, they deliver good education and also concern themselves with moral development of the students. These efforts were supported enthusiastically by the communities.

The physical condition of the school and facilities available are again not central and dedicated teachers were able to produce good results in one NGO school that was described as "crowded, dingy and rat-infested." However, there are limits to what good management and dedicated teachers can overcome. The level of distraction was so high in another school run by the same NGO, where four of the five classes were being held in a veranda, that neither teachers nor students could concentrate. This appeared to be generally true of multi-grade teaching also.

To sum up, for NGO schools, good management is the key to good performance as demonstrated by multi-school NGOs like TCF, AKES and TM. However, good management is possible for NGOs since parent organization as the "principal" is driven by a mission and exercises the supervision and oversight needed. The mission could be a dedication to the cause of education and what this represents for nation building or the motivation to construct society in a particular image as in the case of the religious NGOs. Further, AKES also demonstrated that community participation and collective action via a SMC and broader community interest and involvement can also be a force for good schooling.

For private schools, competition plays the role of the owner acting as the “principal” seeking good results, since that is related to the owner’s profit as long as there is competition. Here we need the public sector to provide the effective competition. In addition to this, the state needs to provide the necessary regulatory function and the parents need to provide the necessary “voice” to bring about changes and use “exit” as a last resort option.

It would be far fetched to expect government to play the part of a “principal” as in well-organized NGOs. However, the government may be able to deliver if parents as the concerned client can be turned into an effective “co-principal.” The point to keep in mind is the need for genuine empowerment of parents. This will only happen if the power balance is effectively shifted away from teachers and local government officials towards parents and if teachers and local government officials have adequate incentive to work with parents.

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Appendix I

Sampling NGO schools

Tables I-IV below give an indication of how closely we were able to follow our original sampling plan and detail the NGO school selection process.

Table I: Eligible, sampled and surveyed NGO schools in the Punjab

Sr. #	NGO	Total # of eli. schs.	# schs orig sampled	Report	Surveys conducted successfully (Phase I / II)
1	Tameer-e-Millat Foundation	12	5	Random, from list of schools obtained.	4 (I) + 2 (II)
2	Hira Taleemi Mansooba	29	10	Random, from list of locations dictated on the phone.	4 (I)
3	Sufi Foundation	1	1		1(I)
4	Anjuman Khudaam-e-Rasool Allah	1	1		1(I)
5	Awami Committee for Dev. (ACD)	10	4	Org. found to be existent only on paper – were not able to contact any of the members once on site	0
6	Baagh-e-Rahmat Trust	1	1	School was in urban area	0
7	Malik Maula Bakhsh Memorial Trust	71	29	Random, from list of schools obtained.	0
8	Roshni Foundation	1	0	CBO currently handling one ACD school	1 (I)
9	Shuaib Qadria Welfare Society	1	0	Used as on spot substitute in phase I	1 (I)
10	Qasim Bela Welfare Society	1	0	Used as on spot substitute in phase I	1 (I)
11	Anjuman-e-Hussain Secondary Association	1	0	Used as on spot substitute in phase I	1 (I)
12	Anjuman Farogh-e-Taleem	1	0	Used as on spot substitute in phase I	1 (I)
12	Mohd Yar Memorial Society	1	0	Used as substitute in phase II	1 (II)
	Total	135	50(I) +2(II)		14 (I) + 4 (II)

Notes: Eli. = eligible
 Sch. = school
 Orig. = original
 Sub. = substitute.

By October 10, 1998, we had completed fieldwork in 14 villages of the Punjab referred to in the Table above as phase I. We found that the most substantial section of our sample -- the 29 schools

being run by the MMBT -- were non-formal. At this stage we realized that sampling 50 schools would require extending the fieldwork to the rest of the provinces of the country.

A rough estimate for a provincial breakdown for these 50 schools that we decided on was as follows:

Punjab	18
Sindh	15
NWFP	10
Balochistan	5

Thus under phase II of the fieldwork, we visited 4 more schools in the Punjab as indicated in Table I. After that, we had to search for NGO schools in Sindh, Balochistan and the NWFP. For this, we were able to make use of the questionnaires that had been sent back to us as a result of the mailed survey based on the TVO Dataline Directory (1994). Again, a vast majority of the returned questionnaires for all three provinces (and the Capital) indicated that the NGOs involved in education were mostly running non-formal schools. Also, most of these NGOs were running an average of two or three schools. The plan of sampling only NGOs running large networks of schools thus had to be dropped.

The sample selected for Sindh is reported in Table II below:

Table II: Eligible, sampled and surveyed schools in Sindh

Sr. #	NGO	Total # of eli schs	# schs orig sampled	Report	Surveys conducted successfully (Orig / Sub)
1	Thardeep Rural Dev. Prog.	2	2	One selected NGO school was too far from a private school	1 (Orig)
2	Sindh Graduates Association	9	5	Random selection from list obtained	3 (Orig) + 2 (Nearest Sub)
3	Sindh Education Foundation: Nowa Prabath: Naz Old Boys Association	10	5	All schools turned out to be non-formal	0
4	The Citizen's Foundation	22	7	Some schools didn't have class 5	3 (Orig) + 4 (Out of 16 eli: random Sub)
5	Ahle Bait	2	0	On-spot information	2 (Sub)
	Total	45	19		7 (Orig.) + 8 (Sub.)

Notes: As in Table I

The sample selected for Balochistan is reported in Table III below:

Table III: Eligible, sampled and surveyed schools in Balochistan

Sr. #	NGO	Total # of eli schs	# schs orig sampled	Report	Surveys conducted successfully (Orig / Sub)
1	Helper's Association of Pakistan	3	1	Random selection from list obtained	1(Orig.)
2	Tanzeem Idarah Bahali e Mutasireen	4	3	1 unsafe area 1 closed for winter	1 (Orig.)
3	Pak. Public Welfare Society	15	0	7 closed for winter 5 too far	1 (Sub.)
4	Tanzeem Welfare Society	1	1	No class 5	0
4	Balochistan Rural Support Programme	2	2	1 handed over to govt. 1 too far	0
	Total	27	9		2 (Orig.) + 1 (Sub.)

Notes: As in Table I.

Fieldwork began in Balochistan on November 27, 1999. This meant that schools which were in the Winter Zone had started to close down for the winter break, which in some areas is eight weeks long. Also, because of the vast size of the province and the scarce roads and other infrastructure, travel was difficult.

The sample selected for NWFP is reported in Table IV below:

Table IV: Eligible, sampled and surveyed schools in NWFP

Sr. #	NGO	Total # of eli schs	# schs orig sampled	Report	Surveys conducted successfully (Orig / Sub)
1	Chinnai Welfare Organization	3	3	Organization found to be non-existent	0
2	Swabi Women's Welfare Society	2	2		2 (orig)
3	Swabi Education & Environmental Development Society	3	1	Schools found to be functioning as private, for-profit enterprises	0
4	Aga Khan Educational Service, Gilgit	23	5	1: no nearby pvt.. sch. 3: closed for winter 1 completed	1 (orig) 2 (out of 18; random sub)
5	Hira Taleemi Mansooba	4	0	On spot information	2 (nearest sub)
	Total	35	11		3 (orig) + 4 (sub)

Notes: As in Table I.

Appendix II

Field Work Instruments

A. ***Student Math Tests***

This test was formulated by as an amalgamation of the math syllabi of classes 3 and 5, in consultation with other such tests previously formulated. The challenge was to make it a reasonable test for both classes so that it was not too easy for class 5 or too difficult for class 3. The test was in Urdu, and comprised a total of 10 sums. All students in class 3 and 5 were asked to attempt it.

B. ***Student Urdu / Sindhi Tests***

This test was also formulated in consultation with the syllabi other previously formulated tests. The purpose of the test was to ascertain student comprehension. It was again devised to be accessible for students of classes 3 and 5. It comprised two paragraphs and questions based on them. The test included multiple choice, fill in the blank and short answer questions. Every student in class 3 and 5 was tested.

C. ***Teacher Math Tests***

This questionnaire was based on a Matric (“O” or junior high equivalent) syllabus. All class 5 teachers were asked to attempt the test.

D. ***Teacher Urdu / Sindhi Tests***

This was a comprehension test of multiple choice questions based on a lengthy passage. There were a total of 30 questions. Teachers were given an average of 45 minutes to attempt the paper. All language (Urdu or Sindhi) teachers of class 5 were asked to attempt it.

E. ***Household (student respondents)***

This questionnaire was put to all students of class 5. It involved questions relating to family background and household interest in the child’s schooling.

F. ***Household (parent respondents)***

This was administered to the available parent of up to about 15 percent of randomly selected students in class 5 (with a minimum of 5 students). This attempted to gauge their interest in education, their knowledge about a school management committee / parent teacher association and their satisfaction with the school. We also used the household visit to generate an index of household wealth.

G. ***School facility***

This questionnaire was a detailed assimilation of information relating to the school and teachers. It dealt with questions such as teachers’ training, salaries and absenteeism, number of students enrolled, methods taken to curb student absenteeism, source of funds and problems faced while working in the community.

H. School management committee

This questionnaire was put to a group of as many members of the school management committee / parent teacher association (if either existed) as possible. The objective was to understand the functioning / non-functioning of such committees and their impact, if any, in improving the quality of schooling.

I. Community

This was put to groups of people belonging to areas surrounding the school. The objective of this questionnaire was to gauge the degree of community involvement with the school and to explore community perceptions about the school and how it functioned.

J. Drop-outs

This questionnaire (F) was administered to the parents of students who had dropped out (who had enrolled in class 5 but left the school) and who, had not enrolled in any other school. It was based on the Household part 2 questionnaire described above, and in addition attempted to find out the reasons for the student having left this particular school.

Appendix III

Case Studies

Case study #1:

Good NGO school

School Type	:	NGO
School Name	:	Agha Khan Golden Jubilee School, Danyore, Gilgit
Field team	:	Yasmin Khattak & Shahbaz Bokhari
Date	:	23-12-98

This was the biggest middle girls' school in the area. The school had seven hundred students enrolled and twenty teachers.

Was the schooling successful?

Yes, very successful

School factors

The school building was fully equipped with requisite teaching facilities. The school also had a science laboratory which other schools in the area also made use of. All the teachers of the schools are well qualified and experienced. Most of the teachers received training from reputable teaching training centers, and they were well acquainted with modern teaching methods. Both the math and Urdu teachers performed well in the tests.

The performance of class five students on the tests was outstanding. Twenty five percent of the students secured one hundred percents marks in the Urdu test. It was evident that the administration gave proper attention to student confidence building.

Household factors

The students socio-economic background was diverse and the parents of all the students were satisfied with the school's performance. Most of the families mentioned that they could not give time to their children's education at home but nonetheless the children were hardworking and managed on their own. The parents appreciated the school administration's efforts to keep them informed about their children's education.

Community factors

The community had full confidence in the school. They actively participate in school's activities. The school was built on land donated by the community. Two years after the establishment of the school, the school administration requested more land for a school laboratory and an examination hall and the community once again contributed the land. Although the material cost was provided by the NGO, the community contributed the labor costs.

The school had a strong school management committee (SMC), the members of which were selected by the community. We were informed that the SMC had the power to remove a teacher or principal in consultation with the NGO. The SMC also handled absenteeism among students and if any student remained absent from school for more than six days, they school administration referred the case to the

SMC. At the time of the field visit, the school was facing a congestion problem due to excess demand. With SMC concurrence, admissions were closed and the SMC was planning to approach the NGO's head office for more classrooms.

The community's willingness to allow an optimum utilization of the school building was commendable. There is no girls' college in the area, and so the community had allowed a private college to hold evening classes after school hours.

Case study #2:**Poor NGO school**

School Type	:	NGO
School Name	:	Not cited to maintain confidentiality
Field team	:	Sajid Kazmi & Saadia Almas
Date	:	29-09-1998

This school was started about seven years ago by the present principal who, with the help of some interested people, formed an NGO.

Was Schooling Successful?

No

School factors

The teacher's performance was abysmal (zero marks in math). The poor results of both the classes reflected poor teacher performance. Moreover, the school had not much space to accommodate even a very low number of students. Class 1, 5 and 6 were housed in one room and only one teacher was teaching these three classes. Late fee payment was a big problem here. There were a number of students who had not paid their dues for over a year.

Household factors

The parents of all the students were farmers and almost all of them were financially sound. They viewed education to be responsibility of the school authorities. In general there seemed content with their children's performance. Perhaps some quietly protested by not paying the fee!

Community factors

According to the parents present in the community meeting, the school was doing well on a number of counts. According to them, small class sizes and discipline were plus points. Given the large population in the village, an alternative interpretation of small class sizes was also possible. Notwithstanding the parent's view of discipline, students bunked classes, and the school administration had asked the shopkeepers around the school to keep an eye on the students who bunked classes and inform teachers about them. The parents also viewed the extra curricular activities organized by the school as a mark of success. The school had a Village Education Committee (VEC) comprising of parents, teachers and notables of the village.

Case study #3:

Good private school

School Type : Private
School Name : Mehran Model School, Pano Akil, Distt. Sukker
Filed team : Sajid Kazmi & Rehana Shahani Baloch
Date : 30-10-98

Although, a cooperative society was formed for Mehran Model School, it operates as a for profit school. The cooperative committee was formed in 1980, and almost half of the members of the had passed away and had not been replaced. This school had more than 2,600 students enrolled and 132 teachers. This was a higher secondary school with separate school and college sections.

Was schooling successful?

Yes

School factors

Students secured good marks on both tests in both classes. Although the teachers helped a few students, yet they were capable anyway. In response to a complaint from the field team, the principal explained that it was a language issue since the math test was not in the Sindhi language. The school was co-education, but hanging curtains in the classrooms separated girls and boy's classes. Discipline seemed good and even the teachers wore uniforms. Besides delivering good education, the school administration emphasized character building. One example of such training was that outside every school there was a self-service tuck shop that ran on the honor system. The school had well equipped labs and a very rich library. The large number of teachers ensured a good teacher student ratio for quality education.

Households factors

Since the fee was not very high as compared to the other private schools, it was affordable for average income families. The households visited were not very affluent. They were very satisfied with the performance of their children. They appreciated the school's emphasis on moral values. They also felt that there was no preferential treatment for the students from rich families. During school hours, eatables from outside the school were not allowed to avoid poor students feeling inferior.

Community factors

The community was all praise for the school. Even the administration of the nearby NGO school we visited felt that this school was delivering quality education. The community felt that the principal's education background had much to do with this success. While there was no special concession for poor students, the school administration persuaded affluent people to finance the education of the students from the poor families. The community rated the school discipline very highly. They were of the view that discipline was a must to ensure quality education.

Case study #4:**Poor private school**

School Type	:	Private
School Name	:	Not cited to maintain confidentiality
Field team	:	Yasmin Khattak & Shahbaz Bokhari
Date	:	18-12-98

The school was established in 1988 but had a total of 70 students enrolled in all the classes.

Was the schooling successful?

No

School factors

Although the school had its own building, it was physically in very poor condition. There were only three small classes that barely had the capacity of accommodating a maximum of fifteen students. However, thirty students were stuffed in these rooms and three classes were being held in each classroom. The students of both class three and class five performed very poorly in both the tests. The teacher could not attempt the math test and barely got 40 percent marks in the Urdu test. The teachers were neither well qualified nor well trained.

Household factors

Most of the students belonged to well off families. The fathers were educated but the mothers were mostly illiterate. During the household visits, the mothers indicated satisfaction with the school, but the fathers viewed the school's educational standard to be poor. They did however express satisfaction with the attention paid by the school administration to discipline, and some indicated this to their reason for opting for a private school.

Community factors

The community revealed in a focus group meeting that it was not satisfied with the performance of the school. They felt that while private schools generally perform better than government schools, this school was an exception. They revealed that the administration of this school bribed the examination authorities to pass all their students in class five to show a "perfect" result. Once again, good discipline was highlighted as the singular achievement of this private school.

Case study #5:

Good government school

School Type	:	Government
School Name	:	Govt. Primary School, Qadir Pur Rawan, District Multan
Field team	:	Rahat Almas & Shahbaz Bokhari
Date	:	30-09-98

This school was established as a primary school in 1885, given the status of middle school in 1906 and finally upgraded to a high school in 1956. The high school was shifted to another building and the original building remained as the primary school. The primary school had eight hundred students enrolled and twenty-three teachers.

Was the schooling successful?

Yes, very successful

School factors

Although the school had nine rooms, these were insufficient to accommodate the large student body. Each class had three or four sections (twenty-two in all). Class five had one hundred and fifty students with four sections. Eight classes were held in the verandas and eight classes were using the examination hall of the adjacent high school. Although there was a lack of classrooms, the student performance was outstanding.

The teaching staff seemed very hardworking and dedicated to their responsibilities. Most of the teachers were educated in the same school and an emotional attachment was evident. Teachers had the responsibility for a given section from class one all the way until class five. Most of students obtained over eighty percent marks in both tests. Before we handed out the questionnaires, a lecture against cheating was delivered by the teacher.

Apart from the dedication of the teachers, another reason for the good performance was the high standard of education in the associated village high school. Admission to class six was by examination and the competition was tough. The teachers of the primary school viewed getting their students admitted a matter of honor.

Household factors

The parents were unanimous in viewing this school as delivering a good education and also as an exception among government schools. Many of them were ex-students of this school and proud to send their children to it. They pointed out that students come to this school from a distance of up to fifteen kilometers. The parents also claimed to be giving due attention to their children's homework in view of the high expectations of the teachers.

Community factors

The education department trained the School Management Committee (SMC) members. Parents were given proper representation in the committee. To enable a long tenure on the committee, parents of children in the early classes were given preference. All the committee members were old students of the head master and this was one reason why they actively worked for the management of

the school. The SMC members spent some time informing us of cases of corruption in the education department.

The community as a whole also seemed interested and active. They made contributions on request and as a result the school had electricity. In general, the community was of the view that with the exception of schools such as this one, government schools should be handed over to the private sector.

Case study # 6:

Poor government school

School Type : Government
School Name : Not cited to preserve confidentiality
Field team : Sajid Kazmi and & Rehana Shahani Baloch
Date : 21-11-98

This school ran multiple shifts and we visited the second shift since the premise was used as a secondary section in the morning shift.

Was schooling successful?

No

School factors

There were no teachers in the school when we first arrived at the school. The teachers were supposed to arrive at 12:30 p.m., but came at 2:00 p.m. The students were playing in the playground when we arrived. Shortly after, the senior students got all the students assembled in the playground and held the assembly, recited prayers and sang the national anthem. It seemed as if that this was their routine and the students confirmed that it was indeed the case. The students' results in both classes and for both tests were very poor. They had very poor test taking abilities, lacked confidence and seemed at a complete loss. There were three teachers and five classes. Teachers complained that they were short of teaching staff. They told us that this was a Sindhi school and they were not provided a Sindhi teacher. While the building was new, it was poorly maintained and already in bad condition.

Household factors

The households were clearly very poor. They told us that they could not afford to send their children to private schools or they would do so. They were of the view that the private schools were delivering quality education because there was a proper monitoring system. They felt their children seemed dull and held the teachers responsible for this sorry state of affairs. They informed us that the headmaster took no interest in administering the school.

Community factors

The community was very unhappy with the school. The teachers routinely came late and paid no attention to the students. They didn't bother about the students wearing uniforms or remaining absent for long periods. They complained about the lack of a proper monitoring system. We were informed that that since second shift teachers had absolutely no chance of being caught out for neglect of duty because government offices closed at 2:00 p.m., and this school started at 1:00 p.m.. Thus the teachers took full advantage of this lack of oversight. Most shocking, we were informed that the school was being used as gambling den and addicts remained in the school throughout the day. The teachers played cards during school hours while students made noise or quarreled among themselves. As a result, the students were compelled to take private tuition from the teachers.

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