Private Schooling - A Quality Puzzle

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Abstract

Primary school enrollment rates in Pakistan are lower than in other countries at the same level of economic development. The proportion of children reaching grade 5 is about half that in Sri Lanka and China and three-quarter that in India. Nationally, the gross primary school ratio is 74, and 101 for boys and 45 for girls. According to the National Education Policy 1992-2002, the target of literacy rate was set at 70 percent by the year 2002, which was achievable besides other measures, by inviting the private sector into education. Now, overall, private education accounts for about 10-12 percent of gross enrollments. The government of Pakistan has established a goal of universal primary enrollment by the year 2006. In the present study the quality characteristics of private schooling are discussed, i.e. qualitative aspects of schools, physical infrastructure of schools, teachers' qualification and salaries, and fee, dropout rate, and repletion rate of the students, etc.

Introduction

Education is considered to be the major form of investment in human capital and serves as a key input in human capital formation. It not only raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals but also improves the quality of life by increasing earnings. Getting more education not only ensures higher paying jobs but also creates awareness about health, hygiene and nutrition. There is evidence to suggest that it also leads to small family size and greater female labour force participation. The importance of education is reflected in the fundamental teachings of Islam, which places great emphasis on acquiring education for both males and females.

Moreover, primary education is a fundamental human right. It is an essential feature of economic development. There is no country which is economically developed and has a low primary school enrollment rate. In Pakistan the gross primary school ratio is 101 for males and 45 for females and the percentage of primary school entrants reaching grade 5 is 48. The comparable figures in India are 110, 90 and 62 in Sri Lanka 114,112 and 98

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[UNICEF 1999]. Alderman., Behrman., Ross and Sabot [1996] found that low school enrollment and achievement in Pakistan are caused by an insufficient number of schools.

The situation of education in Pakistan is generally unsatisfactory. Low enrollment rates at the primary level, wide disparities between regions and gender, lack of trained teachers, deficiency of proper teaching materials, and poor infrastructure of schools reflect the substandard state of education. In the rural areas, the situation is more distressing. The chronic neglect of the social sector in general, and of the education sector in particular is the primary reason for the sad way in which education has been ignored, that is the government barely spends $3 per capita on activities important for human care, compared with $130 spent by South Korea and Malaysia [Haq 1992:11]. Pakistan spends 2 percent of the central government expenditures on education, while Sri Lanka spends 10 percent and Bangladesh 11 percent [UNICEF 1999]. One of the reasons underlying the poor allocation for the social sector is the diversion of a huge chunk of budgetary resources to defense. Pakistan's military expenditures have historically been in excess of 6.5 percent of the GNP [UNDP 1995].

Access to primary schooling is widely accepted as a priority in the fight against poverty. Nevertheless, the government of Pakistan faces a daunting task in its efforts to expand the delivery of educational services due to rapidly expanding populations and tight government budgets. On the other hand, public educational expenditures are often used inefficiently, providing school buildings where they are unneeded, paying teachers who are unqualified or who do not perform, and providing school supplies that are inadequate and ill-timed.

Consequently, parents are responding to perceived inadequate public education by enrolling their children in private schools. As Kingdon [1996a] illustrates, the extent of this phenomenon in developing countries may be under-appreciated. Governments occasionally prohibit, often regulate, and frequently ignore private schooling. Thus data on the extent and distribution of such schooling is seldom collected by statistical agencies.

A principal reason for the reluctance of governments to recognise private education as contributing to its overall educational policy is a concern for equity, as equality of access to schooling may reduce earning inequality without the necessity of controversial asset or income transfers. It is not clear that poor households are able to pay enough to support the alternative of high-quality private schools. Conversely, private schools which can deliver services at fees sufficiently low to attract poor families may not

deliver services of adequate quality. Some contend that private schools which cater to the poor are exploiting low income, often illiterate, parents who are not capable of assessing if their children are learning or not.

According to the National Commission on Education 1964, the objective of the commission was to equalise the opportunities for education and correct the growing imbalance between various types of education. For this purpose the government nationalised private schools, which literally ruined the excellent private educational institutions run by extremely dedicated foreign missionaries and Pakistani NGOs like Anjuman-e-Islam. The standard in privately run institutions was generally higher than in government institutions. Moreover, these institutions were self-financing and were in a very effective way supporting the inadequate government efforts in the field of education. By nationalisation the government bore the entire expenses of private schools so government expenditure on education doubled without any increase in capacity and substantial decline in quality of education in former private schools.

Because of official discouragement of the opening of private schools and the low level of expenditures on education during the 1970s, the growth rates of all educational indicators fell drastically. Negative growth rates were observed for both the number and enrollment in high schools. The period of the 1980s witnessed a rapid expansion in the education sector. Firstly, this was due to the fact that the number of institutions for females and number of female teachers both grew at rather high rates. Since the 1980s, enrolment at the primary level, especially for females has been greatly emphasised by each government. Secondly, total expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP was only 0.99 in 1960-61, the proportion was increasing, but slowly. There was a sharp increase in the proportion of expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP during 1983-88 and it reached 2.4 percent. The last but not least factor was private schooling, which again emerged after more than a decade.

Although the government is the main provider of education the private sector is also playing an important role. Private sector managed institutions, mainly schools, have grown rapidly in recent years, particularly in the big urban centers. In two studies[1] conducted in Karachi, Lahore and in five districts of the Punjab, 54 percent of children of primary school-going age (while 70 percent in Lahore) from 3500 low and middle-income

[1] Kardar, Shahid 1996 "Demand for Education among Low and Middle Households in Karachi" Systems (Private) Limited, October 1996; a study by the same author under the same title for Lahore and five districts of Punjab, September 1996.

households were enrolled in private schools. In the Punjab, more than 95 percent of these schools were charging a monthly fee of less than Rs.100 per month. This indicates the extent of the insufficiency of government schools to deliver the quality of services demanded by parents.

The growth of the private education system is a positive development. Though this is mainly an urban phenomenon, it is increasingly filling the gap in the public education system. It is estimated that, overall, private education now accounts for about 10-12 percent of gross enrollment [Bregman and Mohammad 1998:81]. According to independent estimates, Punjab's 80 percent school-going children attend government schools and the remaining 20 percent go to private schools. In the cities however, half the children go to private institutions[2]. Almost all these schools are profit-based, but parents are still willing to sacrifice a good deal of their meager incomes to get better educational quality in return. In these settings, head teachers, teachers, students and community are excited about the educational process and take schooling very seriously. Often this is not due to any positive support from the public education administration.

There are serious doubts about the quality of education in public sector schools. A survey[3] of private and public schools in which children of low-income households were enrolled, showed that private schools were imparting education of a higher standard. In a test comprising simple arithmetic and Urdu language questions, administered to around 6800 students, children attending private schools (charging a monthly fee of Rs.100 or less) performed significantly better than those enrolled in public sector schools. Overall, in 75 percent of private schools more than 75 percent students passed both tests, in contrast with 33 percent in the case of public sector schools. Similar results were obtained from a survey[4] of 302 schools in the Punjab. Overall, in 52 percent of the private schools, 75 percent students passed both tests whereas in government schools this percentage was less than half, at 21.5 percent. The difference between private and public schools was more striking among the best performing institutions in the two categories. In 29 percent of private schools, 90 percent of students passed both the tests, compared to 9 percent in the case of government schools.

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[2] The Daily "*The News International*" (Lahore) Sept. 7, 1999

[3] Kardar, Shahid "A Case of Schools in Lahore" Systems (Private) Limited, 1994-5

[4] Kardar, Shahid "Survey of Schools in Five Districts of Punjab" Systems (Private) Limited, 1997.

The conditions and quality of education of government schools has led many parents to reject them in favour of private schools which offer more relevant courses and above all teach English which enhances marketability. Furthermore, disillusionment with the examination system has led these schools to offer "O" and "A" level courses, which are accepted worldwide. Wright [1999:13] found that the rate of return to private schooling is not higher than the rate of return to public sector schooling. In terms of the school quality debate, the school quality does not have an impact on the rate of return to schooling.

Private schools are filling the gap left by the inadequate government schooling system. At present, there are 30,000 private schools, in which over a million children are enrolled [SPARC 1997:93]. The private schools are also filling the need for pre-school education, an area left largely neglected by the government. There is no official policy or programme concerning pre-school education although its benefits relating to lower dropout rates are quite established.

Private schools have better outcomes than government schools holding fixed measured home and school inputs into the human capital production process. This is consistent with the parents' revealed preference for private schools over government schools, even by low income households which face higher costs for private schooling [Alderman, Orazem and Paterno 1996:23]. The consensus from studies of the relative effectiveness of public versus private schools in developing countries is that the predicted performance of children in private schools is higher than predicted performance in government schools [Kingdon 1996b].

The per pupil instructional expenditures are a measure of teacher resources available to students. Instructional expenditures are primarily teacher salaries. Because salaries rise with teacher education and experience, the measure should reflect teacher quality. Higher expenditures per pupil can indicate both higher salaries per teacher and lower pupil-teacher ratio. Due to lower pupil-teacher ratio in private schools, the per-pupil expenditures are better here [Alderman, Orazem and Paterno 1996:9].

The private schools have a good implication for the enrollment rate. As instructional expenditure in private schools rise holding fees constant, the no-schooling option decreases. The effect is most pronounced for the poorer households. At the same time, increase in private school instructional expenditure causes a shift toward private schools. The effect is partly a move from the no school to private school option, but it is primarily a shift from government schools [Alderman, Orazem and Paterno 1996:21].

The good quality of education in private schools is evident from the fact that in low-income neighbourhoods of Lahore a 10 percent increase in household income causes a 1.2 percent increase in the enrollment rate in these schools (Alderman, Orazem, and Paterno 1996]. The reduction in the proportion of children enrolled in government schools and increased use of private schools clearly indicates the increasing demand for better quality education and disillusionment with government schools [SPARC 1997:86].

On the other hand, the major objection to these schools is that they take unfair advantage of parents in search of quality education for their children by charging them exorbitant fees, without delivering quality education.

Objective

The objective of the study is to analyse the quality of the private schools from four perspectives:

- Qualitative dimensions of school
- Physical structure of the school
- Teacher's perspective
- Student's perspective

Methodology and Survey

The universe of the study consisted of all the private schools in the country. To keep the study within manageable limits a sample approach has been adopted. The sample comprised private schools of Pakpattan city. The sample is selected purposely as the city is not as advanced as Karachi, Islamabad and Lahore, where national and some international chains of private educational institutions operate, and not so backward such as some cities in Balochistan and interior Sindh. Private schools in rural areas and *deeni madaris* were out of the scope of the study.

There are slightly more than 80 private schools in the city of Pakpattan, 60 private schools were surveyed. This includes all categories of schools regarding fees structure and medium of instruction.

Only those schools have been included in the survey which had been working for more than 2 years, because usually at the start of the school the number of students in the school are thin, which may cause a bias towards the calculation of ratios.

A comprehensive interview schedule was developed. The data analysed for the study was collected by interviewing the principals of the schools supported by staff members. The response rate was eighty percent (some participants hesitate to give information about their school, may be due to fear of the imposition of tax). The questionnaire is presented at the end of the paper.

Results and Discussion

Private schools provide employment to local male and female educated youth. It was observed that several students come from villages or from a distance while the public sector schools are present near their residences. It seemed to support the findings of Alderman, Orazem and Paterno [1996:19] that the households are very sensitive to school quality.

The social and economic set up of the city differ from the big cities such as Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, so no school of the national chain of private schools operates in the city. The reason is that there is no demand for such schools in the area or the people cannot afford such schools.

Qualitative Dimensions

Registered schools: 69 percent of the schools have been found registered. The condition of the unregistered schools reveals that they do not fulfill the requirements/conditions of registration.

Affiliated schools: Only 0.06 percent of the private schools have been found affiliated to board/district education committees. The ratio of affiliated schools is negligible, so a large majority of schools are not working under the rules and regulations of concerned boards/district education committees. As the affiliation of schools require some specifications concerning teachers' education, training, salaries, and building structure etc. the majority of the schools are ignoring these requirements.

Level of school: The level of the schools to which they are offering education is presented in Table 1.

Table–1: Schools by Level

Level of School	Schools
Upto grade 5	11 Percent
Upto grade 8	80 Percent
Upto grade 10	9 Percent
Total	100

It is evident from the table that the majority of the private schools in the city work up to grade 8. The reasons may be:

- The schools upto grade 8 do not need affiliation
- The results of the schools upto grade 8 are made by the schools, so it is easy to show the high pass percentage of schools
- Due to dropout, there is less demand for schools after grade 8

Coeducation: The ratio of schools offering coeducation by grade is shown in Table 2.

Table-2: Schools Offering Co-education by Grade

Coeducation	Schools
Upto grade 5	100 Percent
Upto grade 7	90 Percent
Upto grade 10	3 Percent

Upto grade 5 coeducation is prevalent in private schools. This means the parents are ready to send their children to coeducational institutes at this level.

The official policy of segregated boys and girls public sector schools and the resultant dual administrative system contributes to inefficient use of resources. The policy on segregated schools causes significant inefficiencies in location where all children of school-going age could be accommodated in one school. In sharp contrast, the private sector provides co-education schooling facilities up to grade 5, a situation readily accepted by the parents. The segregation policy is costly to implement, it also runs contrary to general sentiments [Kardar 1998:57].

Experience of school: The percentage ratio of private schools by their experience/working age is shown in Table 3.

Table-3: Working Age of Schools

Working Experience	Schools
1-5 years	56.5 Percent
6-10 years	30 Percent
More than 10 years	13.5 Percent
Total	100

The table shows that more than half of the schools have been established within the last five years, so it is evident the trend of private schooling is increasing. It represents the increasing demand of private schools.

Time on task: The daily time on task is found 6 hours in the private schools that is equal to public sector schools. In the majority of the schools (62 percent) the annual time on task is 30 days (3 hours per day) more than public sector schools.

In Pakistan, taking into account all the formal vacations and holidays, the school year lasts on average only 6-7 months. The number of hours of instruction "time-on-task" for pupils at the level of basic education is less than 50 percent of that for Chinese and Japanese students, less than 75 percent of that for Korean and Taiwanese students [Bregman and Mohammad 1998:78-79].

The private schools under study offer more time on task as compared to public sector schools, as only 38 percent of private schools have summer vacations of 2 months, i.e. equivalent to the public sector schools, while the remaining have 1 month. So it is obvious that the time on task is higher than that of public sector schools.

The reason for more summer vacations in the public sector is given as the harsh weather conditions and scarce resistant facilities. The private schools have less summer vacation, whether they provide good weather resistant facilities or not. This needs further research.

Physical Structure of Schools:

Area of the schools: Some schools in the city are so congested that they have no place to gather the students at the daily commencement of the school. These schools do not even give recess to the students.

Physical Facilities: The ratio of the private schools providing different physical facilities is presented in Table 4.

Table-4: Schools Providing Different Physical Facilities

Physical Facility	Schools Offering
Purpose built building	3 percent
Provision of electricity	100 percent
Provision of toilet for students	100 percent
Provision of separate toilet for teachers	63 percent
Provision of boundary wall	100 percent
Provision of potable water	100 percent
Lawn used as playground	4 percent
Table tennis facility	1 percent
Volleyball ground	Nil
Badminton court	1 percent
Basketball court	Nil

In the private schools the electricity, toilet for students, boundary wall, and potable water are provided by 100 percent of the schools. The majority of them have separate toilets for teachers. But in the public sector schools 21 percent are without potable water, 74.5 percent are without electricity, 61.52 percent are without toilets, and 74 percent are without a boundary wall[5].

Although there are only 3 percent private schools working in purpose built buildings, all the schools work in safetywise satisfactory buildings. On the other hand in the district of Pakpattan 119 public sector schools work without buildings. In the province of Punjab 25 percent of the schools function in the buildings declared dangerous by the Building Department[6]. The figures boost the demand for private schools.

Private schools are far behind in the provision of games and exercise facilities. Only 4 percent of the schools provide lawns which operate as play grounds while the remaining provide no play grounds or exercise facilities as the space in these schools is insufficient for play and exercise. On the other hand 74 percent public sector schools have proper playgrounds[7].

[5] The Daily "*The News International*" (Lahore) Feb 3, 2002.
[6] The Daily "*The News International*" (Lahore) Feb 3, 2002.
[7] The Daily "*The News International*" (Lahore) Feb 3, 2002.

As the private schools have smaller area generally to analyse the provision of facilities for physical fitness of students, only those game facilities have been included in the study which require comparatively less space, i.e. table tennis, volley ball, badminton and basket ball. But almost none of the private schools provide these games, except 1 percent of schools have table tennis and the same ratio for basketball. As private schools are growing rapidly, it shows the high demand for these schools. The figures about the provision of games and exercise facilities are not supportive of the demand of private schools by parents. It means the parents do not take into account these facilities or are unconscious about the advantages of games/physical exercise that results in good physical and ultimately mental health.

Teachers' Perspective: The qualification of teachers in the private schools is given in Table 5.

Table-5: Qualification of Teachers

Qualification	Teachers
Matric	10.4 percent
Matric. PTC	9.4 percent
FA/FSc	29.1 percent
FA. CT/FSc. CT	8.6 percent
BA/BSc	23.2 percent
BA. B.ed/BSc. B.ed	11.0 percent
MA/MSc	8.31 percent
MA. M.ed/MSc. M.ed	0.80 percent
Total	100

The quality of education is directly proportional to the qualification of the teachers. The results of the present study show that the majority of the teachers (29.1) are simple FA/FSc certificate holders. The results of the present study are supported by the results of the Statistical Bureau of Pakistan[8]. According to the Bureau a significant number of school teachers in private schools are under-qualified. The Bureau revealed that more than 35.34 percent primary school teachers in the private sector are matriculates and the same ratio of the teachers possess intermediate certificates and only 5.48 percent have master's degree. Similarly, private middle schools face the same plight where 28.27 percent have matriculation certificates and

[8] Cited in the Daily "*The News International*" (Lahore) April 12, 2001

intermediate certificate holders are 34.13 percent and master's degrees holders are 7.44 percent.

Trained Teachers: The percentage ratio of the trained teachers by their education level in the private schools is shown in Table 6.

Table-6: Trained Teachers by their Qualifications

Qualification of Teachers	Trained Teachers
Matric	36 percent
FA/FSc	20 percent
BA/BSc	23 percent
MA/MSc	8 percent

The training of the teachers is an important measure of the quality of teaching. In private schools the majority of the teachers is untrained. The finding matches the results of the Statistical Bureau of Pakistan[9] which states that more than two-thirds of the teachers at privately-run primary, middle and high schools in the country are raw and untrained. In the private primary schools 66.68 percent teachers are untrained. The ratio of the same kind of teachers in middle and high schools is 63.09 and 58.28 percent respectively.

Pay Structure of Teachers: The pay structure of the teachers in the private schools according to their qualification is shown in Table 7.

Table-7: Pay of Teachers by their Qualification

Qualification	Average pay/month (Rupees)
Middle	500
Matric/ Matric. PTC	680
FA/ FA. CT/FSc/FSc. CT	920
BA/ BA. B.ed/BSc/BSc. B.ed	1240
MA/ MA. M.ed/MSc/MSc.M.ed	2010

It is evident from the table that the teachers are severely under-paid in private schools. Meir [1991] found that if the teachers are under-paid

[9] Cited in the Daily "*The News International*" (Lahore) April 12, 2001.

they are not motivated[10]. Hayes [1987:141] described that at low pay or under-pay, it is little wonder the best talent does not enter the field of education. It means that the low pay of the teachers represents the low standard of education in private schools. Alderman, Orazem and Paterno [1996:9] narrates that salaries rise with teacher education and experience, so high salaries reflect teacher quality. It implies that the quality of education in private schools remains low. The low quality may be negated by the fact that, despite paying much lower salaries to teachers, the private sector schools have higher instructional salaries per pupil than public sector schools, partly due to a lower pupil teacher ratio. If the lower salaries are still considered to be a proxy of low quality of education, it is against the findings of Alderman, Orazem and Paterno [1996:23] that the parents have strong demand for private schools in response to better quality and learning opportunities offered by these schools.

The demand for private schools may be due to the unavailability of public schools as the public sector schools are present at long distances and the private schools exist at comparatively near distances. The other factor which explains the high demand for private schools may be the marketing strategy of the private schools which only exists in these schools.

The notion that the performance of teachers is eroded by the low salaries is negated by the survey results of private schools. The teachers in private schools get barely one-third the average salary earned by public sector schools but produce better output of students proxied by high demand for private schools. This suggests that factors other than salaries are more important in determining the quality of education.

The schools give increments annually: Only 61.5 percent of private schools give annual increments to the teachers. Like the pay structure in private schools, the ratio of the schools giving annual increments to teachers represent exploitation of the teachers.

The pay structure and the increment figures lead to the teachers' casual behaviour. That is the reason experienced teachers are non-existent in private schools while the experience of teachers account for the quality of teaching.

Ratio of female to male teachers: The ratio of female to male teachers is 78.31 percent. The high female to male teachers' ratio represent two aspects, i.e. female teachers are usually willing to work at low pay, that

[10] Meir, U 1991 "Compulsory Education and Child Labor" pp.80 cited in Boyden, Jo 1994 "The Relationship between Education and Child Labor" *Innocenti Occasional Papers, CRS # 9 (September).* International Child Development Center, UNICEF, Florence

is the negative aspect and secondly female teachers are considered to be better school teachers especially up to grade 5. Moreover, Kim *et. al.* [1998a:12] found that female school teachers are critical to break the cultural barriers for girls' schooling.

The private schools provide employment to educated girls of the city, which have less chances to avail job opportunities outside the city owing to the social and cultural background.

Family members of the school owners teaching in school: On average 1.2 teachers per school are owners of the school. Male family members of the owners teaching in schools are 0.76 per school on average and female family members of the owners teaching in schools is 0.24 per school on average.

Student's Perspective:

Fee structure: The percentage ratio of private schools with different fee structures is shown in Table 8.

Table-8: Fee Structure of Schools

Fee/month	Schools
Up to Rs.200	69 Percent
Rs.201-400	24 Percent
Rs.401 and above	7 Percent
Total	100

The fee structure shows that the majority of the private schools charge a fee up to Rs.200 per month. It shows that the lower class of the community also sends its children to private schools. It has been noted that all the schools charging a fee less than Rs.200 are offering Urdu as the medium of instruction. So if English is considered as a quality measure and a factor to cause the high demand for private schools, then both aspects are negated. Factors such as private schools are more prevalent than public schools, and private schools adopt marketing strategies become dominant.

Students failed in the last examination: It is found that only 16 students out of more than 6500 students failed in the last year in all the private schools of the city, and only 2 percent schools have passed the students on merit basis.

The failure rate in the schools with respect to dropout rate of the students is a contradictory matter. Some studies argue that repetition is harmful as it hurts the child's self-perception, offers no academic benefits to the child and it costs parents and economies financially. Holmes [1989] concluded that, in subsequent school years after repetition, retained children were almost one-third of the standard deviation behind their matched counterparts on achievement measures. Reynolds [1992] compared retained and promoted children who had been matched on the basis of achievement test scores and teacher ratings prior to grade repetition, and found that repeaters performed eight months lower in reading and seven months lower in mathematics than the matched control group.

Some other studies argue that repetition does not harm self-image and does impose student achievement by allowing students who are ill prepared for the next grade to catch up academically and emotionally [Eisemon et.al. 1993 and Gomes-Neto and Hannushek 1994]. Gomes-Neto and Hanushek [1994] found that repetition enhances student achievement, while retained students are below average in performance before repetition, they move to above average after repetition.

King *et. al.* [1999:15] found that in Pakistan promotion has a larger effect on continuation. However merit-based promotions have a 12 times larger effect than that of promotion based on other factors.

Low failure rate is a significant factor, which makes the private schools attractive for parents and students. Many children are discouraged by grade repetition and as success at government sector schools is not guaranteed it result in demand for private schools. Families may be bitterly disappointed by repetition phenomenon and they cannot afford repeating grades by the children, so they prefer private schools.

The repetition rates are high in public sector schools as compared to private sector schools. Bregman and Mohammad [1998:73] narrated that repetition rates are less accurate in private sector schools because at primary and secondary level they depend heavily on assessment by untrained teachers, otherwise the failure rates are probably high.

Medium of instruction and fee structure: The percentage ratio of the private schools by medium of instruction and the fee structure is shown in Table 9.

Table-9: Schools by Medium of Instruction and Fee Structure

Medium of Instruction	Fee/month	Schools
Urdu	Up to Rs.200	90 Percent
Urdu and English	Rs.201-400	5 Percent
English	Rs.401 and above	5 Percent
Total		100

The majority of schools charge fees less than Rs.200, and this means the demand for such schools is high in poor households. The notion confirms the findings of Alderman, Orazem and Paterno [1996:19] that private schools are the dominant choice even for poor households.

As concerns the medium of instruction and learning of English as a measure of quality of education and an incentive for the demand of private schools by parents, the majority of the schools are Urdu medium though they charge lower fees. That is they do not offer quality education in this sense.

Only 5 percent of the schools offer English as the medium of instruction to students, while they charge fees more than Rs.400 per month. If the offering of "O" and "A" level are assumed to be good standard of education, none of the schools offer "O" or "A" level courses including those which charge fees of Rs.400 or more per month.

Schools offering computer education: In the private schools 23 percent offer computer education. Computer education is considered as a quality symbol of the schools, even a status symbol. If it is considered as a quality measure, private schools are forward in this aspect as compared to public sector schools. As a status symbol, private schools are using it as marketing strategy because parents and even children are more attracted to the subject.

Pupil-teacher ratio: The pupil-teacher ratio for grade 1-10 is found to be 23.57, as approximately all the teachers teach all the grades and so it is difficult to calculate pupil-teacher ratio separately for grades 1-5, 6-8 and 9-10. But as the number of students decreases as the level of grade increases, the pupil-teacher ratio decreases.

The quality of education can be estimated by pupil-teacher ratio [Malik and Nazli 1999:371]. The pupil-teacher ratio in Pakistan is quite high, i.e. 43 at grade 5 level, and 19 at grade 10. The pupil-teacher ratio raises the utility in

private schools but lowers it in public sector schools. The difference in parental response across the school types is in all likelihood related to the lower average pupil-teacher ratio in private schools than in public sector schools.

Dropout rate: The dropout rate in private schools at different grades is represented in Table 10.

Table-10: Dropout Rate of Students by Grade

Grade	Dropout Rate
Grade 1-5	30.32
Grade 6-8	27
Grade 9-10	13

By the assumption that private school goers do not change the option of public/private schools, and remain in private schools, the dropout rate up to grade 5 is calculated as 30.32 percent, i.e. out of the total students who get admission in grade 1, 30.32 percent do not reach grade 5. The figure may be biased due to the recognition of the fact that 56 percent of private schools have been opened in the last five years so the number of students up to grade 5 at the aggregate level for all the schools is high.

The dropout rate is another measure of the quality of education [Malik and Nazli 1999:371]. Pakistan faces a severe problem of extremely high dropout rates at the grade 5 level as compared to other countries. Only 48 percent of the enrolled students in Pakistan complete grade 5.

Pass percentage in the Board examination: The quality of education in private schools cannot be measured in terms of pass percentage in the board examination. The fact is that in order to maintain the 100 percent result in matric and middle examination, the schools mischievously keep the students in the previous class or make them appear as private students. In this way the school result remains 100 percent. So the failure rate in private schools is negligible even in the Board examination.

Conclusion

The average level of education of the teachers of private schools is far lower than the public sector schools. The majority of the schools operate in houses and the space available to the students is inadequate. Even though parents prefer private schools, the reasons may be as follows:

- The parents are enamoured by the quality of education in private schools.
- The marketing strategy of private schools in stronger, so they attract more students.
- Despite the lower level of education of teachers in private schools, parents are satisfied, which means that the teachers are hardworking or strictly monitored.
- The schools economically exploit teachers.
- Private schools have untrained teachers, which causes the standard of education to slide.
- The working days are more in private schools as compared to government schools.
- Teaching of English in private schools is better as compared to public schools.

As concerns the provision of quality education by private schools to the poor community, the schools are playing a negligible role. The higher fee charging schools provide comparatively better education facilities.

At the aggregate level private schooling is contributing a great deal to the public. The private schooling sector saves a considerable amount of government expenditures. Moreover, they provide job opportunities to the youth of the city, especially girls.

More research is needed to assess the quality of the private schools.

Recommendations

Registration and affiliation of all private schools is recommended to boost the quality of education.

To keep the students physically fit, it is necessary to provide sports facilities to the students. The provision of this facility must be part of the conditions of registration or affiliation of schools.

Monitoring of the functioning of schools, pay structure of teachers, qualification of teachers, etc. by the education department is recommended. The parent teacher associations may also do the monitoring.

The examination system of the private schools needs to be improved and promotion should be based on merit.

As the dropout rate is also high in private schools, some general measures like parent teacher associations, ameliorating of financial problems of parents, extra classes to decrease failure rate and community participation are needed.

Private schools which offer good quality of education may be selected to be subsidised by the government to provide quality education to poor parents, as Kim *et. al.* [1998b] have suggested that subsidisation may boost the enrolment rate at the aggregate level.

Training of teachers is necessary for high quality education, so the private schooling sector or the public sector should provide training facilities for private sector teachers.

Questionnaire

1. Name of school .....
2. How long the school has been working .....
3. Level of school .....
4. Medium of Instruction .....
5. Registered Y/N
6. Affiliated Y/N
7. Co-education Y/N if yes up to grade .....
8. Is the schooling offering A or O level Y/N
9. Daily duration of school .....
10. Duration of daily break .....
11. Duration of summer vacation .....
12. Duration of winter vacation .....
13. Is the school has following physical facilities:

a) Purpose built building Y/N

b) Electricity Y/N

c) Toilet for students Y/N

d) Separate toilet for teachers Y/N

e) Boundary wall Y/N

f) Drinking water Y/N

g) Lawn for playing games Y/N

h) Table tennis facility Y/N

i) Volley ball ground Y/N

j) Badminton court Y/N

k) Basket ball court Y/N

14. Number of teachers in the school .....= Male .....+ Female .....

15. Number of family members of the owner of the school who are teaching in the school .....=Male .....+ Female. .....

16. Qualification of Teachers. Number of teachers having qualification:

a) Middle .....

b) Matric .....

c) Matric PTC. .....

d) FA/FSc .....

e) FA/FSc.CT. .....

f) BA/BSc. .....

g) BA/BSc. B.ed. .....

h) MA/MSc. .....

i) MA./MSc. M.ed. .....

17. Pay Structure of Teachers. Teachers receiving pay according to their qualification

a) Middle. .....

b) Matric./Matric PTC. .....

c) FA/FSc./FA. CT./FSc. CT. .....

d) BA./BSc./BA. B.ed./BSc. B.ed. .....

e) MA./MSc./MA. M.ed./MSc. M.ed. .....

f) Is school giving annual increments to teachers. Y/N

18. Fee structure of the school

a) Fee up to grade 5. .....

b) Fee for grade 6-8. .....

c) Fee for grade 9-10. .....

19. Students failed in the last year. .....

20. Does the school pass the students on merit Y/N

21. Total number of students in the school .....

22. Students in class:

a) Play group. .....

b) Prep. .....

c) Nursery. .....

d) Grade I. .....

e) Grade II. .....

f) Grade III. .....

g) Grade IV. .....

h) Grade V. .....

i) Grade VI. .....

j) Grade VII. .....

k) Grade VIII. .....

l) Grade IX. .....

m) Grade X. ....

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