



## Public and Private Teachers' Perspective on Privatization of Schools at Primary Level in Punjab

Sara Hamid<sup>1</sup>, Syed Mustansar Munir Bukhari<sup>2</sup>, Altaf Ghani<sup>3</sup> and Tanvir Kayani<sup>4</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined the situation concerning the privatization of schools in the province of Punjab, as well as the significance of government schools and the effects of privatization. A self-prepared questionnaire was used to gather teachers' opinions on school privatization. For this purpose, one thousand and thirty-two instructors from the School Education Department were selected for the study, conducted across thirty-six districts of Punjab. A quantitative research approach was used, with data analyzed through SPSS using an independent samples t-test, and further examined through frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The results revealed information on the perceived value of government schools and the potential effects of privatization. Significantly, government schools were found to play a vital role in the realm of education. Teachers suggested rationalizing teacher placement based on student-teacher ratios and emphasized the need for a well-informed policy. The results also indicated that only non-performing schools with fewer than 50 enrollments should be privatized, and that other privatization strategies should be reconsidered within the public-school reorganization program. By negotiating the details of education privatization and its effects on educational fairness and quality, this research offers valuable insights for stakeholders and policymakers.*

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Education Officer, School Education Department, Government of Punjab, Pakistan.

✉ [sarahamidaeo@gmail.com](mailto:sarahamidaeo@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Junior Special Education Teacher- VI, Department of Special Education, Punjab, Pakistan.

✉ [mustansar.munir@gmail.com](mailto:mustansar.munir@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Assistant Professor, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Punjab, Pakistan.

✉ [altafghani71@gmail.com](mailto:altafghani71@gmail.com) (Corresponding Author)

<sup>4</sup> Deputy Secretary, National Heritage and Culture Division, Pakistan.

✉ [m\\_a\\_tanvir@hotmail.com](mailto:m_a_tanvir@hotmail.com)

## 1 Introduction

In the present situation, governments everywhere have accepted the concept of privatizing education for the last thirty years, and several multilateral organizations have endorsed it as well. The commitment of these groups to privatization results from their orientation of their goals with market ideals and financial concerns. These have been the interests of strong multinational businesses that are encouraging privatization as well as the stances of several socialist governments and socially conscious NGOs on the privatization of education (Rizvi, 2016).

With a sizable and diversified population, the province of Punjab has traditionally relied on government schools to provide the educational demands of its local people (PEIMA, 2024). However, there has been a noticeable change in the educational environment recently, with a greater focus on privatization. Several concerns have been expressed concerning the effects of privatization on teachers, who are essential to the educational system, as a result of this trend, which has been fueled by several factors such as demands for more efficiency, promises of enhanced quality, and financial restrictions (Kanwal, Kamran, & Rafiq, 2023).

Recently, the Government of Punjab has decided to privatize public schools of the School Education Department and has named this program as “Public Schools Reorganization Programme”, which was initiated by Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. The procedure of privatization will be done in the form of three phases, in which more than thirteen thousand schools will be handed over to private owners. In the first phase, zero teachers (565 schools), single teachers (2536 schools), and two teachers with 50 or less than 50 students (2755 schools) have been nominated on the website of the Punjab Education Foundation. Then in the next phases, two teachers with 51-100 students (4466 schools) and two teachers with above 100 students (2916 schools) will be nominated and all will be privatized (PEIMA, 2024).

Punjabi government claims that privatization of these schools would result in yearly savings of one thousand five hundred million rupees. Just upper secondary schools will be run by the government. The choice is being sharply criticized by the academic community. It has also been decided to provide 150,000 teachers working in these government elementary schools a golden handshake; at the same time, 25 billion will be invested in public-private partnerships to run these same institutions. Only the government will run upper secondary and high schools. These schools might number as many as 5,000 (PEIMA, 2024).

The sole need of the modern world is effective institutional functioning, and privatization is seen as the only way to achieve this. But it's also important to find out whether this method works for the community and instructors. In this study, the scholars therefore attempted to inspect the views of public and private instructors on privatization in Punjab. The significance of public schools and the effects of privatization on society and teachers were scrutinized in this paper. Moreover, the reform of public schools is another subject of this study. This study analyzed the importance of public schools and the impact of privatization on society and teachers. Furthermore, this research also investigates the reorganization of public schools. Followings were the objectives of the research; to determine the importance of public schools; to study the impacts of privatization on society; and to analyze the reorganization of public schools. The following hypotheses have been tested.

$H_0$ = Government schools are not providing better inclusive education and environment than private schools.

$H_1$ =Government schools are providing better inclusive education and environment than private schools.

Moreover, the study on the current Public Reorganization Program is missing in many researches and this study is expected to fill the abovementioned research gaps.

## 2 Literature Review

There are many different points of view and worries expressed by stakeholders in the complex discussion over the privatization of government schools. Both in the public and commercial sectors, teachers are essential in influencing the conversation around education and the execution of policies. The viewpoints, worries, and possible consequences of public and private instructors on the privatization of government schools are investigated in this study of the literature.

Coomans and de Wolf (2005) defined privatization as "handing over assets, management, duties, or operations that the state once held or performed for private parties." It happens when any government organization fails to operate effectively and the modern world believes that privatization is the only way to improve the existing state of institutions, particularly those in the education sector.

Along with other things, the Punjabi government has vigorously "encouraged" and "supported" the private sector by providing financial support to their educational institutions and land for campuses. It is critical in our day to stay current with economic issues, new technology, and modernization. Still, the private school sector has to be adequately supervised by the government since the price structure needs to be strictly controlled. Hogan and Thompson (2017) said that Pakistan could not afford to treat education like a business. Over the last 10 years, the provision of education has grown to be a lucrative business, especially since the liberal policies of the government allowed the private sector to build degree-granting universities. The appalling state of the public school system is the reason this business is growing throughout the country (Kanwal et al., 2023).

The majority of educational institutions, claims Hyder, Arshad, and Baig (2019), are commercial companies driven by the need for more money. Many of the colleges and universities are "housed" in very unsuitable locations. The faculty is of below-average caliber and sometimes overflowing with "visiting" members. The visiting professor cannot commit the necessary time or comprehend the demands of the students because of their other jobs and interests. The cost of private institutions is too much for the average individual to afford. The lower middle class cannot afford it, and under the current conditions, the impoverished cannot even consider obtaining an academic degree.

Teachers at public schools frequently voice concerns about government schools becoming privately owned. A significant apprehension is the possible degradation of fundamental principles in public education, like fairness and ease of access. Public educators worry that privatization will make inequality in education worse by favoring wealthy kids and ignoring underprivileged neighborhoods, according to Kanwal et al. (2023). Furthermore, because private companies might put profit before educational considerations, privatization could jeopardize the stability of teachers' jobs and autonomy (Santori, 2018).

Public school teachers expressed concerns about the commercialization of education under privatization, where children become consumers and schools function as companies, according to research by Mets (2015). They contend that this change may result in the marginalization of programs that are not profitable and the priority of courses that have a high economic return, constricting the curriculum and inhibiting creativity.

Studies revealing that privately operated schools lack transparency and oversight raise worries that this could compromise the quality and fairness of teaching (Rury, 2005). Teachers often emphasize in the classroom the need for democratic government. According to them, privatization can jeopardize public accountability and community participation in school decision-making (Grubb & Lazerson, 2007).

Private school teachers stress non-governmental groups' independence and freedom. Private teachers may have more flexibility in curriculum, instruction, and discipline (Lubienski

& Weitzel, 2018). This autonomy is supposed to provide a loving, student-centered learning environment. Private teachers provide varied views on public education commercialization. Many private teachers believe privatization will promote creativity and learning achievements by encouraging competition and choice (Chubb & Moe, 2011). Market-driven adjustments that reward efficiency and student needs may foster ongoing development; they argue.

One other justification for privatization is the assertion that more opportunities exist for parental engagement and accountability in private schools. Being free from the same bureaucratic frameworks as public schools, private schools may swiftly adapt to changing needs and parental preferences (Hoxby, 2003). This sort of response is supposed to boost parental happiness and involvement, which encourages a cooperative connection between families and teachers.

Studies of the literature have demonstrated the value of government schools despite certain drawbacks such as inadequate budget and personnel. Since these schools offer an open atmosphere free from student prejudice, rural residents are optimistic about them. These contacts are essential in this setting since teachers are both community members and educators. Therefore, understanding the intricate relationships that exist between teachers, schools, and the community under privatization is necessary to create inclusive and long-lasting policies. All things considered; the assessment of the literature provides a thorough perspective on the complex consequences of educational privatization on educators. It aims to provide recommendations supported by facts that take into account the intricate dynamics of privatization in Punjab, with a focus on ensuring that the viewpoints and experiences of teachers continue to be crucial in shaping the future course of education.

### **3 Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Analysis of the viewpoints of public and private instructors on the privatization of Punjabi schools is the main goal of the study. This study's research design is survey research. The researchers employ a quantitative approach and a questionnaire to gather information regarding the relevance and growing views of privatization after the introduction of the public schools' reorganization program in Punjab, as well as a study of the importance of government schools and the impact of privatization.

#### **3.2 Population**

This research was connected to the situation investigation of the public and private teachers' perspectives about the privatization of schools in Punjab, thus both male and female teachers, from rural and urban regions, upper, high, secondary, elementary, and primary schools situated in all districts of Punjab were regarded as a population.

#### **3.3 Sample**

One thousand and thirty-three (1033) teachers and Assistant Education Officers employed in the School Education Department in Punjab were acquired as a sample of research.

#### **3.4 Instrumentation**

The researchers produced a self-made questionnaire based on the significance of public schools and the effects of privatization. The first of the four parts of the questionnaire dealt with the demographics of the responder. An expert validated the questionnaire.

### **4 Results**

Keeping in view the time saving and budget the data was gathered through Google Form. It was circulated to teachers through social media sources i.e., Facebook, and WhatsApp. Various statistical tools, such as mean, frequency distribution, standard deviation, t-test, and so on were applied. However, the outcomes were deciphered in the tables given below.

**Table 1**  
**Sample Description Concerning Demographics**

Sr. No.	Teachers	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>			
1	Male	299	29.0
2	Female	732	70.9
	Total	1032	100
<b>Age of Teachers</b>			
1	20-25 Years	57	5.5
2	26-30 Years	207	20.1
3	31-35 Years	324	31.4
4	36-40 Years	153	14.8
5	41-45 Years	102	9.9
6	46-50 Years	75	7.3
7	50-55 Years	96	9.3
8	56 & above	18	1.7
	Total	1032	100
<b>Designation</b>			
1	ESE/PST	702	68.0
2	SESE/EST	102	9.9
3	SSE/SST	66	6.4
4	AEO	105	10.2
5	Private Teacher	57	5.5
	Total	1032	100
<b>Qualification</b>			
1	Matric	12	1.2
2	Inter	42	4.1
3	BA/BSc	84	8.1
4	MA/MSc	630	61.0
5	M.Phil..	249	24.1
6	Ph.D...	15	1.5
	Total	1032	100
<b>Teaching Experience</b>			
1	1 to 5 years	99	9.6
2	6 to 10 years	492	47.7
3	11 to 15 years	177	17.2
4	16 to 20 years	66	6.4
5	21 to 25 years	69	6.7
6	26 to 30 years	81	7.8
7	Above	48	4.7
	Total	1032	100
<b>Name of Districts</b>			
1	Attock	6	0.6

2	Bahwalnaagar	39	3.8
3	Bahawallpur	30	2.9
4	Bhaakar	33	3.2
5	Chakwaal	102	9.9
6	Chinniot	03	0.3
7	Dera Ghazi Khan	03	0.3
8	Faisl Abad	06	0.6
9	Gujranwala	06	0.6
10	Gujraat	45	4.4
11	Hafizaabad	07	0.6
12	Jhaang	03	0.3
13	Jehluum	03	0.3
14	Kasur	06	0.6
15	Khanewal	24	2.3
16	Khoshab	03	0.3
17	Lahore.	48	4.7
18	Layyaah	06	0.6
19	Lodhraan	12	1.2
20	Maandi Bahuddin	8	0.8
21	Mianwali	03	0.3
22	Multaan	488	47.3
23	Muzafaargarh	08	0.8
24	Narowaal	06	0.6
25	Nankana--Sahib	11	1.1
26	Okara	03	0.3
27	Pakpataan	03	0.3
28	Rahim-Yar-Khan	24	2.3
29	Rajanpur	15	1.5
30	Rawaalpindi	03	0.3
31	Sahiwal	05	0.5
32	Sargodha	09	0.9
33	Shiekhopura	27	2.6
34	Sialkot	12	1.2
35	Toba-Tek-Singh	14	1.4
36	Vehaari	09	0.9
	Total	1032	100.0
<b>Area of Living</b>			
1	Rural Area	654	63.4
2	Urban Area	378	36.6
	Total	1032	100

Table 1 presents a description of the consequences of demographic factors. According to the frequency analysis, both males and females were part of the population, although their participation was not equal. Overall, all of the teachers at the Punjab School Education Department had a strong reply Since analyzing our data processing, the description of educators and officers based on gender revealed an incredibly huge figure of female participants, approximately 1033, with 732 female respected teachers constituting approximately 70.9 percent of the total population and 299 male teachers constituting approximately 29 percent of the entire population. However, when it comes to assignment categorization, a fruitful conclusion can be achieved because nearly all of the specialists

participated in expressing their views. ESEs/PSTs, SESEs/ESTs, SSEs/SSTs, and Assistant Education Officers have given their views. A significant number of participants were seniors in age. When we characterize the respondents' deviation on their locality in Punjab, we find an unusually large number of participants from Multan and Gujarat. On the other hand, when we compare the results on the base of the qualification most teachers are Masters and M.Phil. Similarly, when we analyze the teaching experiences, 492 teachers have experience of 6-10 Years, which is 47.7 percent of the total population. Furthermore, 654 out of 1033 teachers are living in rural areas, which is 63.4 percent of the total population.

**Table 2*****Frequency Distribution Table***

<b>Sr#</b>	<b>Statements of Questions</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
1	Government schools are providing better inclusive education than the private.	834(80.8)	87(8.4%)	60(5.81%)	4.04	1.75
2	Government teachers are more qualified and trained than the private teachers.	903(87.5%)	42(4.1%)	87(0.84%)	4.38	1.13
3	The monitoring and observations of government schools are better than private schools.	849(82.3%)	69(6.7%)	114(11.4%)	4.13	1.10
4	After the recruitment of teachers in the years 2016, 2017, and 2018, the situation of government schools has improved.	912(88.3%)	30(2.9%)	90(0.87%)	4.23	1.01
5	The safety and security measures of govt schools are better than private institutions.	753(72.9%)	117(11.3%)	162(15.6%)	3.84	1.14
6	Government schools focus both on children's psychological and social development.	816(79.1%)	105(10.2%)	111(10.7%)	4.01	1.03
7	Previously handed-over Govt. schools to PEIMA are running more effectively than before.	117(11.3%)	93(9.0%)	762(73.8%)	2.13	1.07
8	Privatization can bring a better inclusive environment in the schools.	132(12.7%)	192(18.6%)	708(68.6%)	2.10	1.04
9	Parents from lower-class families will pay fees after privatization.	111(10.7%)	99(9.6%)	822(79.6%)	2.00	.94
10	Parents of poor families will follow all the rules and will buy all the stationary and related things which will be asked by private schools.	162(15.6%)	66(6.4%)	804(77.9%)	1.93	1.16

11	The infrastructure of the government schools will become much better after privatization.	207(20%)	45(4.4%)	780(75.5%)	2.01	1.25
12	The workload of teachers will decrease after privatization.	123(11.9%)	84(8.1%)	825(79.9%)	1.90	1.06
13	The quality of education will be improved after privatization.	162(15.6%)	135(13.1%)	735(71.2%)	2.18	1.06
14	The job opportunity after privatization will be a great opportunity (8000 per month salary & not a government job) for unemployed graduates.	126(12.2%)	132(12.8%)	774(75%)	2.02	1.04
15	Private schools focus better on the co-curricular activities of students.	135(13%)	108(10.5%)	789(76.4%)	1.94	1.10
16	The jobs of govt. teachers will be affected by privatization	186(18%)	129(12.5%)	717(69.4%)	2.20	1.12
17	Private schools will provide hygiene and a clean environment."	843(81.6%)	69(6.7%)	120(11.6%)	4.04	1.06
18	Students from rural areas will be badly affected by the privatization of schools.	582(56.3%)	210(20.3%)	240(23.2%)	2.52	1.13
19	All the nonperforming schools like schools with less than 50 enrolments should be privatized	831(80.5%)	54(5.2%)	147(14.2%)	4.06	1.20
20	Schools that have zero or single or two teachers with high enrolments should be provided sufficient public staff and should not be privatized as they are good-performing schools	651(63%)	132(12.8%)	249(24.1%)	2.50	1.08
21	Teachers should be rationalized to high-performing schools as per STR	912(88.3%)	60(5.8%)	60(0.58%)	4.29	0.87
22	The formula of zero or single or two teachers' school privatization, is not the solution for the betterment of the education system.	687(66.5%)	135(13.1%)	210(20.3%)	3.57	1.22



**Table 3*****Respondents' Opinion concerning Gender (Independent Sample t-test)***

Gender	N	M	S.D.	Df	T	Sig.
Male	299	24.2007	5.56835	1029	-1.811	.026
Female	732	24.8361	4.91547			

\* $P < .05$  Level of Significance

Table 3 shows the observed data for males (N=299, M=24.2007, S.D.=5.56835) and females (N=732, M=24.8361, S.D.=4.91547) with t-statistics (t (1029) = -1.811,  $P < 0.05 = .026$ ), indicating a significant difference in the views of male and female surveys on the analysis of *government schools are providing better inclusive education and environment*. Furthermore, it shows that the mean difference between male and female repliers is -0.63540, which is significant. Results of the t-test i.e.,  $P = 0.026$  at  $\alpha = 0.05$  confirms the statistically significant difference between the opinions of male and female teachers. So, the null hypothesis has been rejected, and the alternative has been accepted.

#### 4.1 Discussion

Teachers in the public and private sectors have different opinions and concerns over the privatization of government schools. Concerns regarding accountability, equity, and the degradation of democratic ideals under privatization are frequently voiced by public educators. Private educators, on the other hand, place a strong emphasis on the possible advantages of parental choice, creativity, and competition in the classroom. Legislators must take into account the opinions of educators in both fields as they struggle with the challenges of educational reform. Moreover, the research supports the findings of Rizvi (2016), Hyder et al. (2019), and Kanwal et al. (2023), who found more inclusive and successful educational system might be possible if the real concerns of public educators are taken care of while also utilizing the potential benefits espoused by private educators.

## 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

Using the five-point Likert scale, this research sought to understand the teachers' viewpoint on the privatization of schools in Punjab. This survey includes basic, elementary, and secondary school instructors to examine their important opinions on the privatization of public schools. By analyzing the data as per frequencies, according to 85% of evaluations, government schools are contributing significantly to the department and having a good effect which shows that government schools have great importance. Seventy-five percent of respondents said privatization was not a good idea, it can bring negative impacts, especially for poor people. For better results, eighty percent of respondents believe that underperforming schools with less than fifty pupils should be privatized. Little disagreement suggests that this is not a significant value to take into account. Moreover, about 89% of teachers said that rather than privatizing the schools, instructors should be rationalized to top-performing schools according to STR. So, the government should again analyze the policy regarding the reorganization program of government schools which can bring better and quality education.

The government should concentrate on non-performing schools with low enrollment; if all other measures are ineffective, privatization should be the final resort. Similarly, only non-performing schools which have less than 50 enrolments should be privatized, and the zero, single, and two-teacher schools' formula has to be carefully examined once again before being privatized. Furthermore, teachers should also be rationalized to the high enrollment schools using the Student Teacher Ratio. Finally, as public schools are government assets where pupils are treated equally and without prejudice, it is also recommended that the government raise the level of these institutions.

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