

Emerging Private Education in Pakistan Administrative Kashmir and Determinants of Households Choice for Public versus Private Schooling

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Abstract

The number of private schools has been increased since decentralization of education in Pakistan as well as in Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) and a random sampling survey of 103 households of all income groups from district Kotli AJ&K Pakistan was made for analysis. With the help of ASER report 2011-2014 we observed that number of private schools has increased whereas number of public schools declined. Moreover we applied binary regression to find out the factor which affected the parent's decision towards the school choice for their children. We used household choice dichotomous dependent variable (type of school) whereas family characteristics, child characteristics and school characteristics as independent variables which are sub categorized into, father & mother education level, household per capita income, family size, child gender & education level, school cost, school medium of instruction , school distance from household and quality of education which has been observed as one of the most effective determinants of school choice in state of Azad Jammu & Kashmir rural.

Key words: Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Public & Private school, Household Choice

INTRODUCTION

Education is not only crucial to the overall development of an individual but also the society at large. It is pivotal element to gain the fundamental objectives of economic development and lays the foundation of a stronger nation. Thus education is an investment in human capital and it can have a great impact on all aspects of nation's growth including social, political and economical. Historically education has been finance and provided by the private sector and it became the domain of the government sector during the 20th century for reason of nation building, social integration, sharing a set of central values – all necessary to achieve social cohesion. Towards the end of the 20th century, governments are facing numerous constraints

in financing and providing educational services such as population growth and low efficiency in resource allocation (Shobhana).

Nevertheless, developing countries face a daunting task in their efforts to expand the delivery of educational services due to rapidly expanding populations and tight government budgets. Moreover public educational expenditures are often used inefficiently providing school buildings where they are unneeded, paying teachers that are unqualified or who do not perform, and providing school supplies that are inadequate and ill-timed. Increasingly, parents are responding to perceived inadequate public education by enrolling their children in private schools.

Consequently private primary school enrollments have increased dramatically during the few last decades in low-income countries including Pakistan. 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 (Andrabi, 2006; Monazza, 2006; Nasir, 1999).

In Pakistan 30 % school going children are enrolled in private schools (Ejaza 2012). Whereas when we look at education statistics of Pakistan administrative Kashmir 38 percent children are absorbed by private sector schools and trend to of private schooling is increasing gradually in rural areas (ASER 2014). Private school has specific characteristics. These schools are privately owned and managed by sole proprietors, Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's) or other forms of management. Mostly these schools are business oriented and owned by an individual entrepreneur. Formal private schools profit institutions, charge fee because they do not get any financial support neither from government or nor from any donor agencies. The private schools located in rural areas have very low fee structure and mostly owned by private personnel. A few of them are owned by welfare foundation and NGOs which also charge fee equaling or more than to other formal private schools but they provide comparatively quality education (Shabbir, 2014a).

Public schools have also explicit characteristics educating huge masses. These schools are single-gender without any of charge, providing free education. Currently 4202 primary public schools are located in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Among 298 schools (189 boys schools & 109 girls schools) are located in urban area. In urban area most of people prefer private schooling. A total number of 9589 primary teachers are appointed in these schools. Although government spending a large share of its recruiting budget but the schools facilities always remained as a question in public sectors schools. In AJK 41% schools are without buildings 87 % without electricity, 73% are without availability of drinking water and 82% are without boundary walls (Pakistan Education Statistics, 2011; Shabbir, 2014b).

Since then large gains have been made in provision of both the private and public schooling in both rural and urban in Pakistan. Nevertheless considerable gaps still occur essentially in decision making in Pak. administrative Kashmir even it is first attempt to find out the determinant of parent choice in AJ&K Pakistan. The decision about primary child schooling is mainly dependent upon their parent's choice. Parents decide about their children schools on the basis of various factors. The probable determining factors which shape a household decision to send a child to a private school or a public school varied to economic, parental and child characteristics.

Unfortunately, most existing studies of public versus private schools do not include the choice of parents for public and private schools in AJ&K. Our previous studies have compared the public and private schools on basis of performance measures (Shabbir, 2014a 2014b, 2014c) but do not shed light parent decision about public and private schooling for their child. The present study determines the factors that affect house hold decision making about their child schooling in AJ&K and solicited respondent's perception about schooling in public and private sector.

Review of literature

Joseph L. Bast et al. (2004) examined how economic principles predict parents would do a better job choosing schools for their children and concluded that that parents can choose the best schools for their children is collaborated by economic theory and empirical research.

Andrabi, et al. (2002) investigated that private schools particularly at primary level have an important factor in elementary education of children. Rural-urban gap largely exists in private education. He concluded that private schools are not an urban elite phenomenon. They are affordable to middle and even low-income groups and (Alderman 2001) pointed out that poorest parents send their children to private schools in Pakistan rural.

Yasmeen et al. (2011) examine parent's choice of private versus public schooling of their children as an outcome of different family size parent's characteristics, child's characteristics and school characteristics and concluded that there is strong preference for private schools not only in the higher income class but economic class particularly in urban areas in Punjab province of Pakistan.

Nadeen & Arfan (1999) investigated family decision by using choice theoretic framework and concluded that household income , parental education are important factors in shaping household's decision for their children schooling in Pakistan.

Ejaz (2012) examined the household choice of private versus public sector schools as an outcome of child, household and school characteristics by using logit model. The study found that income of the household, education of the parents; English as medium of instruction in school and distance of public school from the household enhance the preference of private schooling.

Aram et al. (2008) conducted a study related to the socio – economic factors which affected the parent's decision towards the school choice for their children in Punjab province. Lower cost of schooling was the dominant factor to increase the enrolment in public schools. Further the study concluded that parent's education, and income was positively and strongly influenced the private school enrolment. In urban areas, parents enrolled their children in private school. The age of the child, distance from school, family size and cost of schooling were negatively related to private school enrolment.

METHODOLOGY

A random sampling survey of 103 households of all income groups from district Kotli AJ&K Pakistan was made in 2013. Household were chosen who sending their child either in public or private schools in rural areas. We applied binary regression to find out the determinants of school choice. We used household choice dichotomous dependent variable (type of school) whereas family characteristics, child characteristics and school characteristics as independent variables which are sub categorized into, father & mother education level, household per capita

income, family size, child gender & education level, school cost, school medium of instruction, school distance from household and quality of education. Variables have been explained in Table 1. Moreover Annual Status of Education Reports (ASER 2011-14) were also analyzed to find out the enrolment rate in public and private sector schools.

Table 1 Variables Explanation

Variable	Explanation
School choice	dichotomous dependent variable, type of school (public and/or private school) where private school = 1 and 0 otherwise
Child Gender	1 if child is male, 0 otherwise
Education level	Child's level of education in completed years
Family size	Number of family members in a household
Father education	Father's education in completed years of education
Mother education	Mother's completed years of education
Household per capita income	Monthly household per capita income in PKRs
Medium of instruction	1 if medium of instruction in school is English, 0 otherwise
Fee	Fee of the relevant school in PKRs
Distance	Distance of the relevant school from home to school (in KMs.)
Quality education	1 if school if school provide quality education, 0 otherwise

RESULTS

Emerging Private Schooling in AJK

Table: 2 Five Years Public And Private School Enrollment at Primary Level

Years	Total enrolled	Out of school	Public	Private	Madras	Others	Total
2011	89.7	10.3	65.5	32.9	1.4	0.2	100
2012	92.5	7.5	64.1	35.5	0.6	0.3	100
2013	94.8	5.2	61.4	37.4	1	0.2	100
2014	93.9	6.1	60.7	38.1	0.9	0.2	100

Source ASER Pakistan (2011-2014)

Table 2 shows the four years enrolment (2011 – 14) of public and private school in AJ&K Pakistan. The result presented in table indicates that trend of private schooling in AJ&K is increasing gradually from year to year whereas enrolment in public schools is declining.

Logistic Model of Household Choice for Public and Private Schooling

A logistic regression was performed to find out predictors that had influenced household decision making for their children whether to send in public or private school. School choice was taken as dependant variable whereas ten independent variables were use in this analysis including father & mother education level, household per capita income, family size, child gender & education level, school cost, school medium of instruction, school distance from household and quality of education.

The overall chi-square test for the logistic model was significant ($\chi^2 = 96.85$, $df = 10$, $P = .00$) which indicates that there were significant relationship between independent variables and school choice. The Omnibus test was carried out to measure how well a model performs. It gives significant result with $p=0.0000$ and demonstrates that we are 96.85% confident that the model is appropriate/significant.

To check the adequacy of the logistic regression model Hosmer and Lemeshow test was performed. The Hosmer and Lemeshow statistics indicates that $\chi^2 = 4.802$ with degree of freedom ($d.f$) = 8 and non significant with p -value = .778 which shows a well fitness of model. Hence we conclude that the model does not differ significantly from the observed data. Thus model is appropriate and is satisfactorily fit the data.

The Cox and Snell test, indicating the percentage of variance of the dependent variable explained equaled 60.9 %, while the Nagelkerke explained 81.15 % of the variance. Based on this analysis 91.1 % household who had choice for public schools were classified correctly, and 93.6 % of the household who had choice for private schools were classified correctly. Thus, 92.2 % of household in the sample were classified correctly based on the findings of this logistic regression.

By examining the table 3 it is revealed that there was significant difference found in nine predictors of schools choice except child gender.

Table 3: Logistic Model of Household Choice for Public and Private Schooling

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Child Gender	4.068	1.516	7.196	1	.097	58.421
Child Education level	-.826	.273	9.160	1	.002	.438
Father education	.110	.259	.182	1	.040	.895
Mother education	.171	.266	.415	1	.044	1.187
Household per capita income	.001	.000	9.691	1	.002	1.001
Family size	-.551	.457	1.455	1	.046	.576
Fee	-.662	.678	.953	1	.029	1.939
Distance	-.812	.369	4.839	1	.028	2.252
Quality of education	2.708	1.270	4.548	1	.033	14.995
Medium of instruction	2.475	1.474	2.820	1	.043	.084

DISCUSSIONS

In AJK Pakistan there are two main types of schools – government and private. Both kinds of schools are different in term of financing and regulation but similar in their educational structure. Purpose of this study was to find out emerging trend of private schooling and factors influencing household choice to choose schooling for their children in Pakistan administrative Kashmir rural areas. The emerging trend of private schooling at primary level indicates the better performance of private schools as compared to public school. Moreover our study demonstrates that parents are influenced by many factors of school choice when they choose school (public or private) for their children such as parents characteristics, children

characteristics and school characteristics which can be sub divided into as, child gender & education level, school medium of instruction, father & mother education level, household per capita income, family size, school cost, distance and quality of education. The predominant findings show that almost all these factors have significant influence on parent choice for public and private school except child gender.

The first predictor of household choice taken in this study was child gender. The gender disparities are also affecting on parents choice of schooling which has been explored by the previous studies (Afzal, 2013; Chaudhry, 2009). Our findings revealed that this factor is not affecting on parents choice for public and private schooling In AJ&K Pakistan. Our finding are not consonant with previous studies (Arif, 1999; Madeeha 2012) who pointed out that in Pakistan parents prefer private school for boys and low level education for girls. Our findings revealed that in AJK parents give less priority for child gender disparity in choosing school. Although private school are expensive and public schools are free but parent choose schooling without any gender discrimination in best favor of their child.

The child education level is also a significant indicator influences household choice of public versus private schooling. There are few logical reasons. First private schools are easily available at primary level and located almost in all areas. The second reason is may be private schools are thought to be better in providing quality education or at least well than public schools. Parents want a strong education base of their children by choosing private schooling for their children. The third reasons may be the school cost which increases with education level of students. The educational level of the child results into increase in school fees. However, we have found that by increase in years of education of child the probability for the child to go to private schools declines. But it has been seen that enrolment in private school at secondary level increases as compared to middle level schools. An important aspect of the choice of the schools by the parents at secondary level is that students have to appear in examination hold by board of inter mediate & secondary education to get the result/ certificate that remains with the students for ever in the coming academic and professional years so the parents may prefer private schooling at secondary level to get better academic result of child at this stage.

The next indicator which affects household choice for public versus private school is parent's personnel characteristics which are critical in determining. We have found that educated parent prefer private schooling for their children which gives a positive perception of educated parents toward private sector schools. Further the educated parents have higher source of income and able to meet the private schooling expenditure. Household per capita income and family size are also determinants of parental school choice. We have found positive relation between house hold per capita incomes and choice for private schooling. The families who have reasonable source of income prefer private schooling. But family size has negative association with household choice for private schooling.

Further factors are associated with school characteristics. School medium of instruction is one of those significant indicators of household choice for schooling. In Pakistan, English is viewed mainly as the language for development at both the individual and national levels. Private schools offer 'quality' education to elite children in highly resourced classrooms through the medium of English in urban area. Although private schools located in rural area, are providing education, quality wise not equal to privately managed schools in urban but at least better than public sector schools where children studying in poorly resourced classrooms who have little or no exposure to English outside the 30–35-minute English class every day in school.

Proficiency in English is assumed to be required for joining different professions such as civil services, in armed forces, better paying jobs in private companies and NGOs. It is also medium of instruction in science education in colleges and universities. So parent prefer private schooling and our results revealed a positive association between the choice of private school and medium of instruction as English.

School cost is most important factor influence on the decision of schooling. We use school fee as the proxy of school cost excluding others educational expenditures such as expenditure on educational material and uniform and transportation. Our result revealed the reverse relationship between school cost and parental choice for private schooling that as the fee rises, the probability of enrolment in private schools falls. Our result is consonant with (Ejaz, 2012) who investigated that reverse relation between schools cost and enrolment.

School distance from the household is also significant factor of household choice for public and private schooling. Parent's willingness to send their children to school depends upon the school availability and accessibility. It is found that more the distance of public sector school from the household, it is more likely for the child to go to private school. The accessibility of public sector schools is much important for enhancing the school enrolment. There is general thinking that lower income group households send their children to public sector schools. But in case of absence of public school household choose private school whether they are willing for it or not.

The quality of education is also main determinant of parent choice for public and private school. Parents are likely to send their children to private school based on the academic performance of that school. Although the private school located in AJK rural areas are not providing the good quality education but the quality of private schools is perceived to be better than public schools. Mostly the students who enrolled in private schools performed better than public school students. Due to the better performance of students of private schools in different exams, parents consider them better than public schools students. There is positive association between quality of education and parent choice for private schools.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The above assessment enlightens the household choice of private versus public schooling. We have observed that there are many factors shape a household decision to send a child to a private school or a public school varied to economic, parental and child characteristics. Our results indicate that child gender & education level, father and mother education, English as medium of instruction in private schools, house hold per capita income, family size, school cost, quality and distance are significant factors influencing parent decision to choose private or public school for their child. Our results revealed the stronger preference for private schooling rather than public schooling quality of private schools is perceived to be better. The decision is combination of parent's awareness of importance of investing in their children education. Quality of educations in private schools is emerging the enrollment in private schools. The decline enrolment in public school is a question for quality of education in public schools. Private education is expensive and not accessible for poor household so poorer households are at a disadvantage in ensuring quality education for their children. Government should make efforts to improve quality of public schools for social equity reasons by providing better infrastructure with physical resources and immediately equipped with the contemporary facilities to make the learning environment conducive for children as well as providing regular and effective teacher's training. The government must be adopted as long-term policy for professional development of school teachers. There is need of special effort to improve quality

of public schools in remote areas of AJK. The dualism in the education system must be phased out and follow uniform pattern up to primary level by providing quality education in public sector schools.

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