

## **ROLE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS (PPP) IN EDUCATION.**

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### **Abstract:**

*In India, Public-Private Partnership (PPP) practice has been adopted in all the major sectors, i.e., social and commercial infrastructure, energy, communication, transport and water sanitation. It is no longer confined to the development of roads, airports and railways and so on but has also been expanded to the human development sectors particularly education and health. The expansion of PPP Model in education sector will be a step forward towards the achievement of improved learning outcomes. Since the implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE), Act 2009 in India which provides for free and compulsory education to every child till the completion of elementary education, the quality of education has been decreased.*

*However, doubts linger regarding PPPs potentially exacerbating educational inequalities, challenging competition, and privatizing the sector. Clear policies and safeguards are imperative to address these concerns. In sum, this research underscores the transformative potential of PPPs in realizing the Right to Education, while advocating for greater awareness, policy refinement, and equitable outcomes to ensure quality education for all in India.*

*Though, the Act was enacted to provide equitable education of good quality but teaching and learning have fallen further. This paper presents the concept of Public-Private Partnership and also evaluates its progress in school education in India*

### **Keywords:**

*Education, Privatization, Partnership, India's Education Landscape, Quality Education Access.*

### **Introduction**

Education is essential for the allround development of individuals as well as of

society. It generates employment and income for the impoverished masses. It also improves health and reduces poverty for the development of individuals. Moreover, it contributes towards technology advancement and innovation, and produces skilful human resource for the overall development of the society. Education is a basic human right recognized under Article 21A of the Constitution of India. Thus, the government has an obligation for ensuring the availability of affordable education for every child. The enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act in the year 2009 was a step to ensure free education for all children from 6 to 14 years of age. The RTE Act has resulted into the increased enrolment of children into the schools throughout the Country. Unfortunately, it hampered the quality of education imparted in the schools. Conceptual Framework of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Generally, PPP is not a privatization.

While higher education is considered a 'public good,' relying solely on market forces or community initiatives may not ensure social equity and efficiency. In this context, governments are collaborating with private entities to deliver education services, aiming to overcome the limitations of both public and private education. PPPs create a framework for government involvement with non-government organizations, both profit and non-profit, in delivering education services while ensuring quality, transparency, and accountability. In India, the twelfth five-year plan introduced the Right to Education, ensuring quality education for children aged 6-14, regardless of their background. PPPs play a significant role in funding public schools through vouchers, stipends, subsidies, and grants, even in countries where privatization is

restricted. This approach extends beyond traditional sectors, now encompassing education, including elementary education, health, and poverty reduction activities. There is a difference between PPP and privatization. When the absolute responsibility of an asset or enterprise is permanently transferred to private sector, it is called as privatization. On the other hand, the ownership of the asset in Public-Private Partnership is continued to be maintained by the public sector which is also engaged in partnership with a private sector. Basically, a contractual arrangement between public and private sector is known as PPP.

**To understand PPPs in the context of the Indian education ecosystem, let us consider:**

- Importance of PPPs in education
- Preferred PPP models
- Success stories examples of PPPs in education

**Importance of PPP in education:**

PPPs play a crucial role in the context of Indian education ecosystem due to the following reasons:

- ❖ **Bridging the quality and infrastructure gap:** PPPs can bridge quality and physical infrastructure deficit by using underutilized school infrastructure across India especially, in major metropolitan areas such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Pune and Ahmedabad. For new infrastructure, PPPs ensure that public resources are optimally utilized and infrastructure is developed at a faster pace, improving access to well-equipped schools.
- ❖ **Increasing access to education:** India has a high dropout rate at the secondary school. Now that the Government's efforts have made access at the elementary level nearly universal, the focus now needs to shift towards increasing learning outcomes and higher enrolments at secondary and in higher education. PPPs can increase Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at secondary levels by inculcating vocational trainings, industry partnerships, skill development for better employability and livelihood. PPPs can also play a vital role in expanding access to education,

particularly for marginalized segments and under-served regions by supporting infrastructure for schools in remote places, scholarship and educational initiatives specifically for these groups; thereby ensuring education reaches every child, regardless of their socio-economic background or geographical location.

- ❖ **Augmenting teaching quality and methodologies:** Private sector participation brings fresh perspectives, innovative teaching methodologies, and technology integration to education. Through PPPs, schools and colleges can benefit from the private sector's expertise in curriculum development, teacher training, pedagogy and instructional design. This leads to enhanced teaching quality, better learning experiences, and improved academic outcomes.
- ❖ **Industry alignment and innovation:** PPPs encourage the integration of industry-relevant skills and vocational training, bring industry expertise, connections and increases internship and placement opportunities, allowing educational programs to align with evolving job market requirements. This collaboration equips students with practical skills, enhances employability, and contributes to the country's economic growth by producing a skilled workforce.
- ❖ **Risks and rewards sharing:** PPPs distribute risks and rewards between the public and private sectors. Governments can transfer financial and operational risks to private partners thereby reducing the burden on public finances. At the same time, private partners can be incentivized through revenue-sharing models or performance-based contracts, aligning their interests towards operational excellence.

**Types of PPP models in education:**

India has experimented with various PPP models. Implementation of these models vary on parameters such as ownership of institutes, infrastructure, types of teachers, type and extent of aid, operating model and so on. Some prominent forms of PPPs are as follows:

- ❖ **School Infrastructure Initiative:** Here private partner builds, owns and operates (BOT) school infrastructure and government pays a fee for these services to the private players.
- ❖ **Capacity Building:** Government pays the private partner for provision of specific support or services like teacher training, curriculum building, textbook provision, sports etc.
- ❖ **Purchase of Educational Services:** Government sponsors students to attend private schools through financial aids.
- ❖ **Voucher-like Programmes:** Government provides vouchers to parents to pay school of their choice. The reservation of 25% of seats in private schools for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) under #RTE2009 is an example of this.
- ❖ **School Operations and Management:** Private player manages day-to-day operations of public schools which are publicly owned and funded.

#### **Success stories in PPP model**

Although PPP projects are not very popular in the education sector unlike that of energy, road, physical infrastructure or tourism projects, there are some examples of PPP in Education that have seen success:

- ❖ **Atal Tinkering Labs:** The Atal Innovation Mission, a flagship initiative of the Indian government, promotes PPPs in education through #AtalTinkeringLabs. Private partners collaborate with schools to provide mentorship, infrastructure, and industry connections, fostering a spirit of innovation.
- ❖ **Model Schools:** Private partners invest in infrastructure development, teacher training, and technology integration, enabling schools to offer quality education.

Ampersand Group has played a crucial role as PPP in the Operations and Management of government schools in Punjab.

- ❖ **Early Childhood Care and Education:** The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation and Ampersand Group public-private partnership has given a veritable facelift to over 575 #Balwadis in the city. With a structured curriculum, #phygital

(digital and non-digital) learning resources, multilingual content with integrated assessments, use of local materials for teaching aids, these Balwadis students have shown substantial improvement in their #language, #literacy and #communication skills, along with #cognitive, #sensory and #perceptual development.

Studies show that a strong foundational-level learning environment goes a long way in enabling the school-readiness of young children and the increase by 100% in enrollments at a school-entry level is a valid testimony to it. PPP can be a wonderful tool to bridge the gap between government, private service providers and industry requirements. However, it requires determination and a long-term vision. Successful implementation of PPPs in education requires overcoming challenges such as funding models, equitable access, quality assurance and regulatory frameworks. Balancing private player's interests with social objectives and ensuring accountability are also essential considerations. Regular #stakeholder consultations, sharing of best practices, and knowledge exchange forums can address these challenges. Altogether, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) have emerged as a powerful catalyst for the Indian education ecosystem. By leveraging the strengths of both sectors, PPPs are expanding access, enhancing learning outcomes, fostering innovation, and preparing students for the challenges of the future. As India strives to provide inclusive, equitable and quality education to all its citizens, PPPs will continue to play a pivotal role.

#### **Conclusion**

The recent documents insist on fast expansion of higher education institutions with due emphasis on private sectors responsibilities in it. However, the public sector must come forward to provide leadership to well-motivated private institutions for strengthening quality of the system. The private system must be open to promote quality educational practices by involving innovators and the researchers who may be

working in the public sector. They must extend material support to the government system since they avail a lot of government subsidies and benefits to provide higher education programmes. The industrialists must come forward to promote research activities and infrastructure support in the government institutions of higher learning. There must be collaborative ventures between higher education institutions and the industries in conducting the research and development activities aiming at improving productivity and meet the need of the outer community.

Continuous communication and networking of different kinds of government and nongovernment institutions shall strengthen the journey for quality higher education in the country. Besides linkage of public institutions with private institutions, immediate steps should be taken for networking and collaboration of public institutions i.e. among government semi government universities and colleges and research institutions. Collaboration and co-operation should be the motto of development of higher education rather than encouraging competition among institutions of higher education. It can be concluded that in the era of globalization and ICT there should be more scope for sharing the material and manpower resources, academic programmes, learning materials and providing multiple alternative opportunities to the students for higher education not only at state/ national level but also at international level.

There are many models of private and public sector participation in education, but we should choose according to our needs and

circumstances. We have to address the challenges in the field of education through multi-layered approaches and imaginative solutions. The use of private capital with public money does not mean that the government has lost its responsibility to provide good education, but it means that we are trying a more efficient and just method.

**Limitations of the Study :-**

Due to the nature of research questions and the limited use of data evidence, this research was based on largely qualitative research methods. The evidence discussed in this research provides the key knowledge for further PPP-related research. It is possible to enlarge the current research in project-specific research. PPP proposals approval methods, and stakeholder management issues are for future research topics. 8

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