

Public Spending on Elementary Education in Punjab:
A Multi-dimensional Analysis

A

Research Project

Submitted

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The contribution of public resources in the educational development cannot be over-emphasized. The economic literature, both in its theoretical and empirical settings, demonstrates in a scientific manner the relevance and various contributions of public resources in the expansion and progress of education. The importance of public resources further increases in a developing society consisting of huge and multiple socio-cultural inequalities, large number of first generation learners, and people's misperceptions about the actual and potential benefits from acquiring of education. Instead of reports of large number of committees and commissions and constitutional provisions the public spending on education in the country remained much below the desired levels. The state of Punjab, though being placed among the high per capita income states of the country, too had not spared the enough resources for the development of the education sector. In fact, the inadequate spending on education, along with other factors, has made the public education providing institutions dysfunctional and ineffective with large number of unhealthy consequences particularly for the weaker sections of the society who could not afford to send their wards to the high cost private institutions mushroomed in the state during the last about two decades.

The overwhelming proportion of students in the state critically depends upon the government schools for their educational needs. The bulk of the supply of quality human capital is crucially dependent upon the state of affairs in the publically provided basic education as all levels and types of education are organically connected to each other. The state's intervention in the elementary education sub sector in the past by some sort of decentralized modes, public-private partnerships, special schemes and programs, special types of schools, could not provided the desired momentum to the school sector. In fact over experimentation in the absence of proper public resources back up created more confusion and organizational problems and generated structural impasse. Keeping such factors as back drop, the study has been pursued with an overriding objective of examining and evaluating the various spatial and temporal dimensions of public spending on education by the state on the elementary education during the post reforms period. The analysis would cover the absolute and relative levels of public spending on education

in the context of state budget, state income and educational budget; both at the nominal and real prices. The distribution of education budget among the various functional and economic sub heads would be examined. The inter-district distribution of elementary education budget would be ascertained in order to assess the distribution priorities and requirements. An attempt would be made to work out the policy priorities based on the analysis in order to enhance the effectiveness of public resources put in the education sector.

Project Requirements:

1. Project Assistants (One): Either Paid Lump-Sum Payment
or Paid on Piece Rate Basis
2. TA/DA of the Principal Investigator
3. Contingencies (Data Processing, Stationery Items, Photocopy, etc.)