Background Note

Policy Dialogue

on

Procurements in Education Sector:

Enhancing Transparency and Accountability

Peshawar

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Background Note

1. Introduction:

Pakistan is currently facing an education emergency where millions of children are still out-of-school. The learning outcomes of the children who are enrolled in the schools are poor and the quality of education imparted in the schools is also questionable. The provincial government is facing numerous challenges including effectiveness of the available education budget.

Procurement of school supplies, construction work, purchase of textbooks and services is an extremely important function for seamless working of any education system. Construction of new schools, classrooms and missing facilities is probably the biggest development expenditure in the education sector at provincial level every year. In 2014-15, the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has allocated more than 50 percent of the education sector Annual Development Program (ADP) for school civil works[1]. Development, printing and distribution of textbooks constitute another big procurement budget line as it costs over Rs. 2 billion annually. At school level, parents teacher councils (PTCs) are involved in procurement of minor civil works and purchases of stationery and learning materials, etc. which involves annual grants worth around Rs. 1 billion.

While research reports and media stories often highlight issues of inefficiencies, vested interests and lack of transparency in public sector procurements, this aspect has received little attention in education research and debate in Pakistan. This is partly due to the fact that the information about procurement process, for various reasons, is not easily obtainable.

In this context, Institute of Social and Policy Sciences (I-SAPS), in collaboration with Ilm Ideas, is conducting a Policy Dialogue on "Procurements in Education Sector: Enhancing Transparency and Accountability". The dialogue is aimed at discussing the efficiency issues in procurement practices and to share recommendations for improving transparency and accountability in education sector procurements.

2. Aim and Objectives

The broad aim of this dialogue is to facilitate an informed debate on procurements of school civil works, free textbooks and purchases by PTCs in order to ensure effective utilization of available resources in a transparent manner. Specific objectives of policy dialogue are to:

- Facilitate an interface between the government officials, public representatives and civil society for improving the effectiveness and transparency in funds utilization in the education sector;
- Discuss the concept of horizontal accountability in education sector procurements and debate the role of stakeholders for improving transparency and accountability in these procurements; and

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[1] Annual Development Program (ADP) 2014-15, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

- Debate viable options and best practices for enhancing transparency and accountability in education sector procurements.

3. Topics to be covered by Speakers

The speakers and discussants at the policy dialogue will include experts in the areas of education, procurements and community participation in school development. The topics to be covered in the policy dialogue include;

- Improving Horizontal Accountability in Education Sector Procurements: Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness of the State Institutions.
- Procurement and Purchases in Education Sector: Challenges at Policy, Procedure and Practice Levels.

4. Participants

The participants of policy dialogue will comprise key stakeholders including public representatives, government officials and civil society organizations.

5. Follow-up

I-SAPS has initiated a series of policy dialogues on education procurements at provincial and district levels with a view to creating and sustaining a vibrant interface between civil society, public representatives and government officials for improving transparency and accountability in the system.