



**Institute of
Social and Policy Sciences**



Background Note

Report Launch and Discussion

on

Education Sector Procurements in Punjab: A Horizontal Accountability Perspective

Lahore

January 06, 2015

Background Note

1. Introduction:

Pakistan is currently facing an education emergency where millions of children are still out-of-school. About half of the out-of-school children in Pakistan are in Punjab alone. 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 2013-14, the provincial government of Punjab allocated more than 50 percent of the education sector Annual Development Program (ADP) for school civil works¹. Development, printing and distribution of textbooks constitute another big procurement budget line as it costs over Rs. 3 billion annually. At school level, school councils (SCs) are involved in procurement of minor civil works and purchases of stationery and learning materials, etc. which involves annual grants worth over Rs. 1.5 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 implementing an initiative ‘Education Procurements In-Sight (EPIS)’ with an aim to enhance transparency and accountability in education sector procurements. Under this initiative, “Education Sector Procurements in Punjab: A Horizontal Accountability Perspective” is a research study undertaken to promote a debate on the need for strengthened internal accountability mechanisms in education sector procurements of Punjab.

2. Aim and Objectives

The key objectives of this event include:

- To share the key findings of the study on procurements of school civil works, textbooks and school council purchases.
- To have an evidence based debate on the issues in education sector procurements with a lens of ensuring transparency and accountability in such procurements.

¹ Annual Development Program (ADP) 2013-14, Government of Punjab

- Provide the much needed interface between government officials, public representatives and civil society for improving the effectiveness of spending in the education sector along with a critical revisit of the associated issues.

3. Participants

The participants of the event will comprise key stakeholders including public representatives, government officials, civil society organizations, representatives of international development partners and media.