School Council Activation Strategy in Punjab

PURC continues to seek ways to involve citizens in urban policy making. In order to search a model, it invited Atif Hassan to present his work on the school councils of Punjab. In fact, some of the school councils are contributing in a good way to increase enrollments, reduce drop outs and improve quality of education. PURC believes this experience can be used to establish citizens' councils to improve water and sanitation and solid waste services in Lahore.

Atif Hasan provided introduction of education system in Punjab and told that public sector schools are more in numbers and enrollment than private schools but people trust in government schools has declined over a period. Although, Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PESRP) has succeeded in increasing student's participation at primary level but not in its transition to middle and secondary level and Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) is still a question. Almost 56000 School Councils (SCs) exists in Punjab but their activation could not be ensured fully. Shifts in School Council Policy (SCP) have taken place four times which shows lack of research and existence of political and administrative issues as well as poor level of implementation. Therefore, Mr. Hassan suggested in-depth research for revisiting SCP and focus on oversight of quality education by SC after analyses whereas; reconstitution of SC is also recommendable. Social mobilization strategy can help to sensitize community and capacity building of stakeholders is also needed by Program Monitoring and Implementation Unit (PMIU). There is also a gap in proper utilization of funds allocation with respect to demand while, monitoring system is also week at its end. He also suggested third party validation for improvement of SCs to achieve quality education in the province.

The discussion revolved around the question of using the school councils for helping the communities get better services for the agencies such as WASA, LWMC and Lahore Transport Authority.