

# Educational Privatization and School-Choice: Implications for Inclusion

John Dain and Dr. Wajeeha Hazoor Bajwa

## Background

The issue of privatization in education has sprawled into a massive debate among policymakers, teachers, parents, and even among education expert themselves. Proponents for privatization argue that private schools give students a focused experience that is better suited for preparing them for higher levels of education compared to public schools that are often overcrowded and poorly managed.. Opponents of privatization argue that using public taxpayer money to fund private schools just exacerbates the issues facing public schools. They say that it leads to top performing students end up leaving for private schools, lowering the average test scores of the school and reducing the amount of funding the school gets as their funding comes based off their students' performance and the exclusion of students with disabilities or who may bring down class averages. For our project, we were determined to find out whether private or public schools were truly better for their students in terms of equity across gender, race, socioeconomic and disability status, and overall access to educational opportunities. We performed a literature review of previous research that gathered data that addressed our areas of focus. Many of these studies focused on just one country and only a subsection of the different identity classifications. Our study has focused to get data from not just all the aforementioned identity classifications ,but also from all of the following countries: United States of America, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda. We sought such a diverse number of countries studied so that we may see the differences of privatization between the developed and developing countries of the world.

## Methods

My research was conducted through literature reviews of of peer reviewed journal articles published between 2010 and the present day. Our team of research assistants performed keyword searches across four databases to find articles that pertained to private and public educational outcomes and access across our countries of focus: United States, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and Ghana. Once I saturated the ERIC database, I then reviewed through the 235,268 articles elicited for their data and overall conclusions. From there, I analyzed the accrued date for implications for Students with Disabilities and their access to public and private schools across our countries of focus.



Courtesy of Adam Pesek  
A girl in a wheelchair is studying in a private school



Courtesy of Arop Ghosh and United Nations  
An Indian girl in a wheelchair is going to class



Courtesy of Jo Hallet and Al Jazeera  
A class in Ghana is being lectured outside.

## Results and Findings

Private and Public schools often experience similar issues when it comes to access, inclusion, and equity. Yet, the source of these issues are much opposed. Teachers around the globe struggle to implement inclusive practices into their lessons. Teachers in India, both public and private, often have the right attitudes towards those with disabilities yet struggle to include those students in lessons. This is resultant of their lack of training to sensibly teach students with disabilities with public schools often not able to afford the training and private schools often choosing not to pay for it.

Students of lower socioeconomic statuses, disability statuses, and apart of racial minority groups struggle in the US compared to peers with the infrastructure needed to accommodate them either lacking or non-existent. Similarly as the issue of inclusion in lessons, public schools do not have the funds for the accommodations whereas private schools wish to maintain strong profit margins.

## Applications

My literature review has the expressed purpose of determining what ultimately is best for students: private schools or public school. My conclusions should help inform both the debate around the issue and guide policymakers in their funding decisions. For further studies, reviews of data from Europe and East Asia would be able to determine how general my results were or if a different relationship exists between disability access, inclusivity, and privatization.

## Resources

ERIC database - eric.ed.gov

Mitchell, Charlotte. "Q&A: The Reality of Free Education for All in Ghana." *Al Jazeera*, February 25, 2018.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/2/25/qa-the-reality-of-free-education-for-all-in-ghana>

eshek, Adam. "Private Schools Can Give Students With Disabilities the Flexibility They Need." *The 74 Million*, January 15, 2025.

<https://www.the74million.org/article/private-schools-can-give-students-with-disabilities-the-flexibility-they-need/>.

the Education Commission. "Loosening the Purse Strings: Financing the Education of Children With Disabilities in India," April 11, 2017.

<https://educationcommission.org/updates/loosening-purse-strings-financing-education-children-disabilities-india/>.