

## Books

# Useful Compendium of Case Studies

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Public-Private Partnerships in Health Care in India:  
Lessons for Developing Countries.

By Venkat Raman and James Warner Bjorkman.  
Routledge Studies in Development Economics,  
London and New York, 2009. 226 pp

**I**t was indeed a personal delight to come across a book which has managed to marvellously capture the ongoing in the Public Private Partnership (PPP) in India along with a with a sound theoretical base.

The book comprises of six chapters. The first chapter titled ‘Concepts, Theories and Models’ mentions regarding the concepts, theories and models of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in health sector. Largely drawing from international studies, authors have elaborately quoted the various perspectives, variety of approaches and models cross cutting the framework of PPP. Authors describe at length regarding the motives of the actors/stakeholder entering into partnership. The manner, in which the chapter gradually moves from historical underpinnings to the different frameworks and viewpoint ranging from neo-liberal conceptual to other polity arguments, is indeed commendable and makes this chapter a very interesting read. The chapter through review of literature encapsulates key arguments of other studies. The key features/arguments are very well highlighted in the entire chapter. One of the sections in the chapter chronologically mentions thirteen definitions of definitions of PPP starting from WHO’s 1999 definition to World Economic Forum’s way of defining PPP. The authors have defined PPP as “Partnership is therefore a collaborative effort and reciprocal relationship between two parties with clear terms and conditions, well-defined partnership structures, and specified performance indicators for delivering a set of health services within a stipulated period of time.” The later part of the chapter details the types and models of PPP viz., Contracting, Franchising, Social Marketing, Joint Venture, voucher schemes etc, also highlighting the issues and challenges which a private sector faces in a partnership.

In the second chapter ‘Health systems and Health Care in India’, the authors slowly introduces the health scenario in India focusing on health infrastructural growth in the country, its limitation and where and in which circumstances private health care and services took precedence in the country. The interactions of the key The issues of privatization and the actions by different states in the country, regulation and the shaping up of health reforms in the nation is vividly described in this part of the book.

As a part of the IDPAD (Indo-Dutch Program for Alternatives in Development) project a national wide study was rolled out in 2003 headed by authors. The third chapter 'Public-Private Partnership in India' is churned out of the exhaustive study, which thoroughly describes the selected 16 case studies from nine states in India. Each case is depicted taking in consideration the process, modalities and the patterns among them across nine themes detailing its policy implications. These cases are analyzed on the basis of partnership, objectives and scope of services, benefits for target populations, responsibilities of partners, and selection of private sector partners, capacity to monitor performance, payment mechanisms and operational concerns. (pp. 73). With adoption of case study as a research method, it becomes difficult to compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of the different partnerships. However, this largely is taken care of by the presenting tables describing the types of partnership, the population they are catering to, the payment mechanisms. Other variables like the type of leadership, power dynamics and notions like 'trust' and 'relationship' is weaved in the qualitative write-up. However, it looks like it fails to descriptively carry forward the references to all the Indian cases in the later part of the book.

The fourth chapter, 'Stakeholders in Public-Private Partnership' mentions the different stakeholders in the partnership: types, patterns, and the power dynamics. The chapter mentions uses a number of diagrams in explaining the involvement of stakeholder separately in public and private sector and later stakeholder interaction in public private partnerships. Authors have also in detail talked about the stakeholder involvement in the different types of partnership (contracting in and out, voucher system, mobile health, tele-health, community based insurance partnership and public private mix.) Authors have succinctly and clearly carried out the comparisons and differentiation between these kinds of partnership and have brilliantly supported them with figurative representation.

Fifth chapter 'Comparative Public Private Partnership' moves from Indian experience to international studies and describes public private partnership in other parts of the world. Author mentions regarding interactions in Europe, United Kingdom, The United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, West Asia and Mediterranean Region, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Contracting-out having being the most widely utilized it compared across countries in the chapter.

In the last and the summary chapter 'Observations and Policy Lessons', the authors have summarized their arguments and given key recommendations. While acknowledging the presence of PPP worldwide as well as Indian Health systems, the books clearly speaks of complex challenges at policy and operational level. The challenge to define private sector has faced problems since the very beginning, which is also in a way translated in defining PPP. As the authors put in "in common parlance, almost every interaction between the state and the private sector is labelled a 'partnership'" (pp 185). Authors have labelled partnership as 'formidable alternative to overcome the deficiencies of service delivery by

either partner, but there are no panacea for the ills of public sector health systems in developing countries...”

The book is written lucidly, wherein conceptual frameworks and arguments are well placed. This book stands out as different from other recent books by Mishra & Panigrahi (2008), Chakraborty (2008), and Ramani, et al (2008) for a several reasons. Firstly, this book is not a result of multiple articles by scholars, hence to the reader the review of literature and background information on ‘what is PPP’ does not necessarily repeat in the whole book. Secondly, authors have managed very well to locate the Indian experience within developing countries and world scenario with the help of elaborate review of existing literature and corroboration through empirical research. Thirdly, the authors have largely put forward the challenges and risks involved with partnership and policy reforms and state action in the same direction. Lastly, it is certainly the largest compilation of cases from India.

The analysis is presented in the backdrop of management perspectives of analysing the scenario rather than that talking about the political economy of the partnership scenario. A detailed description of politico-economic side of PPP and the assessment of the gains in depth would have been more insightful.

Overall, the book is an excellent assemblage of the review of literature pertaining to PPP in the health sector in India along with recent empirical research findings from all over India. The elaborate number of studies quoted ensures that the book will be widely read and cited among policy reformers, scholars and academia at large.