

**Right to Education and Right to Educate:  
A Study of the Impact of Right to Education Act on  
Unrecognised Schools in Delhi**

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## **I. Abstract**

The following paper examines the status of unrecognised schools post the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (hereafter RTE Act). The RTE Act states that every school has to meet the recognition criteria under the new norms of the RTE Schedule within three years, otherwise they would face closure. Field visits were conducted in recognised and unrecognised schools in Shahadara to gather information about which of State norms and RTE norms could not be met. These were land norms, teacher salary and the playground requirement for all schools and additionally, teacher salary for the unrecognised schools.

While the schools might not meet any of these norms, parents continue to send their children to unrecognised schools as they are preferred to government schools and charge a lower fee than the recognised ones. Group discussions with teachers from these schools also showed that they were passionate about teaching children to the best of their ability. The paper argues that while it is good to provide recognition and make every school meet a certain minimum standard, the regulations should not be such that every unrecognised school would face closure. If the schools need to survive without assistance, there has to be concession in space requirement, adjustment of teacher salary with fee- even if not completely market driven, greater number of teacher training centers and reconsideration of playground norms.

## **II. Acknowledgements**

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### **III. Abbreviations**

B.Ed	Bachelors in Education
DIET	District Institute of Education Training
DOE	Directorate of Education
DSEA	Delhi State Education Act
DSEAB	Delhi School Education Advisory Board
ETE	Elementary Teacher Education
MCD	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCF 2005	National Curriculum 2005
NDMC	New Delhi Municipal council
PIL	Public Interest Litigation
RTE	Right to Education

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## **1. Introduction**

The Right to Education Act, a fundamental right provides for free and compulsory education for every child between the age group of 6-14 years. While the Act has made the State responsible for educating each and every child, it has restricted the agencies that can provide education. Section 19 of the Act states "Where a school established before the commencement of this Act does not fulfill the norms and standards specified in the RTE schedule, it shall take steps to fulfill such norms and standards specified in the schedule at its own expenses within a period of 3 years from the commencement of the Act". According to this, both the recognised and unrecognised schools will have to meet the new norms for recognition under the RTE Act. The unrecognised schools would additionally have to meet the present State norms for recognition.

After studying various legal documents and reviewing literature, this paper examines the areas in which unrecognised schools will not be able to meet the recognition criteria and the general condition and quality of these schools. It has looked at the perception of the Act among the schools- the level of awareness about the section 19 of the Act and whether it is looked at as a serious threat. It has also examined the likely government response to the closure, whether any leniency or assistance is likely. For this purpose 13 schools were visited in Shahadara (an irregular colony in East Delhi), both recognised and unrecognised. A group discussion was conducted with six parents and four teachers of different groups. Interviews were conducted with the President of Public School

Association and the President of unrecognised School Association. Two Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Directorate of Education (DOE) officials were also interviewed.

Finally, the paper gives policy recommendations for assisting the unrecognised schools to meet the prescribed standard within the RTE as well as the State Act keeping in mind the capacity of these schools.

## **2. Background**

Unrecognised schools in Delhi are mostly situated in unauthorised resettlement colonies in Delhi. While some of these colonies are regulated and have been brought within the governance structure, others remain illegal. According to the President of Unrecognised School Association, Surendra Gupta, around 2000 unrecognised colonies exist. A mapping of these schools was done by the MCD in 2007, according to which there are 1591 unrecognised schools, majority being in North-East and West Delhi. It is highly likely that the number of unrecognised schools exceed the number given by MCD as well as the Association.

In most of these areas, while the population has been rapidly increasing, the numbers of government schools and private recognized schools have not increased to the same extent. The unrecognised schools have usually been established by the members of the same community, to meet the demand of affordable private schooling. These schools are set up by NGOs, private institutions and individuals. While in some cases (mostly with NGOs) there is no fee charged, in most schools a basic fee is charged and the schools manage to run solely on the fee. Most of these schools teach till the elementary level as they lack the resources to teach further. Usually these schools do not gain recognition as they are unable to meet the MCD and DOE criteria for recognition.

According to National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) an unrecognised school is that which is not recognised by the authority but which runs regular classes on the pattern of recognized schools. (NCERT 2002) The major difference between the functioning of recognised and unrecognised schools is the ability of the recognized schools to issue transfer certificates stating that the child has completed a given standard from their school. The unrecognised schools do not have the authority to issue these and hence can provide no legal proof that the child has studied till a certain grade. Either these schools have a tie-up with a recognised school that illegally provides transfer certificates at a certain cost, or a child can file an affidavit (till grade 5th) stating that he/she has studied informally till a certain standard, which can get them admission into a government school for the next level. For grade 6-8th, the children can take an online test on the DOE website; after clearing this, they can study in the government school at the next level.

The DOE under the Government of Delhi is responsible for opening government schools for middle, secondary and senior secondary level. It also decides on the recognition criteria for middle schools, their inspection and provides financial aid. The above is based on the Delhi State Education Act (DSEA) 1973 and recommendations made by its Advisory Board which are then approved by the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), which are autonomous organisations with their own separate elections are responsible for providing schools till primary level in their jurisdiction. While the NDMC has its jurisdiction in New Delhi, the MCD is responsible for rest of Delhi divided into 12 zones.

The recognition criteria for primary level are decided on the basis of the Delhi State Education Act, the decisions made by the Delhi School Education Advisory Board and their own notifications. The MCD also follows the norms in the Master plan 2021. The MCD and NDMC are responsible for providing recognition, inspection and providing aid to primary schools.

The opinion on unrecognised schools varies among different groups. Those against these schools argue that they are siphoning off the poor and exploiting the marginally better off among them by providing them substandard education at a greater price. Others argue that these schools provide greater choice to the poorer student, especially those who do not want to go to government schools and cannot afford the fee of the private recognised schools. The schools have learnt to function effectively in the limited resource that they have.

Till now, the unrecognised schools have functioned without state interference and existed and grown alongside private recognised schools. They faced a threat of closure in February 2008 because of the judgement of a PIL filed by Advocate Ashok Aggarwal in April 2006. The PIL argued that there are around 10,000 unrecognised schools running in Delhi which are ill-equipped, sub standard and not fit to teach young children. It argued that they lack the basic facilities and are run like 'substandard teaching shops'. The unrecognised schools counter argued that they were not under the purview of DSEA and being able to teach is a Fundamental Right under Section 19 (1) (g) which allows every Indian to carry on any profession/ trade.

The judgment was in favour of Mr. Ashok Aggarwal and it stated that DSEA was applicable to the unrecognised schools for the closure of these schools after giving a notice of six months to attain the standard. Ultimately, no action was taken; while the reasons are not very clear, an MCD official mentioned, the orders came from 'above' to not shut these schools. Perhaps it was realised that such a decision would lead to a large number of students without a school and many teachers unemployed.

With the RTE Act being operational from 1 April 2010, the threat of closure is real and binding. None of the unrecognised schools can meet either the required recognition criteria under the State Act and some of the additional criteria that have been laid down by the RTE Act and would all shut down if there is no leniency in the norms.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **Secondary Research**

Legal Documents: While the Act has come into force on April 1, it is yet to be implemented. The Delhi Government has come up with its set of Draft, but they are yet to be finalised. The paper examines the Right to Education Act, the Delhi State Education Act, the MCD norms, DOE norms and Delhi Draft Rules to gather what the norms would be likely if there are no changes made to them.

Literature Review: Literature on the effectiveness of unrecognised schools and private schools in terms of the education imparted- student learning, teacher performance and parent satisfaction has been reviewed. The studies have also looked at the difference in facilities and infrastructure compared of the unrecognised schools as compared to the government schools.

#### **Primary Research**

Interview with MCD officials: Two MCD officials were interviewed; an Attendance Officer and a Senior Clerk on. They were asked questions on which norms were the most important, what problems were faced with meeting the norms, how often inspections happened, their opinion of the unrecognised schools and whether any attempt has been to assist them or map them. The MCD is especially relevant since most unrecognised schools apply for recognition only till the primary level.

Interview with DOE officials: A senior level DOE Official and the Personal Assistant of a Senior Official were spoken to. They were asked about attempts made for school mapping. They were also asked whether the changes in the norms are likely, if there is any plan of providing aid and their opinion on unrecognised schools.

Questionnaire and Interviews in Shahadara: Eight unrecognised schools and five recognised schools were visited in Shahadara. The questionnaire used has been annexed (3). Shahadara was selected for research since there are many unrecognised schools in this area. According to MCD data, Shahadara North and South have a combined 380 unrecognised schools. The areas visited were Usmanpur, Chauhan Bangar, New Seelampur, Jaffrabad and Maujpur. Even most of the recognized schools are budget private schools as they cater to the needs of the population that cannot afford bigger public schools.

A questionnaire was designed to gather how many of the present norms, especially those considered important by the MCD, could be met by the unrecognised schools. The recognised schools were studied to see if they met the present State criteria for recognition and the present RTE norms. This was also done to compare in which areas the recognised schools were better off than the unrecognised ones.

The recognised and unrecognised school Principals were asked about their opinion on unrecognised schools and the government schools and what alternatives would they have if the schools were to be shut down.

Interview with the President of Unrecognised School Association and the Public School

Association President: The President of the Unrecognised School Association Mr. Surendra Gupta and the Public School Association President Mr. RC Jain were both asked to provide an estimate of the number of unrecognised schools, the areas where they are most common, the biggest problems that these schools face in gaining recognition. Also why both the associations think that these schools should remain open and what would happen if these schools would be shut down.

Group discussion with the parents: Six parents from unrecognised school G were spoken to regarding why they chose to send their child to that school, what are the criteria that they look at when selecting a school and how satisfied they were with their child's performance and their perception of the school.

Group discussion with teachers: 4 teachers of school G were spoken to about their qualification, their residence, their motivation and why they chose to teach in this particular school.

## **4. Secondary Research**

### **4.1 Analysis of Legal Documents**

#### **Right To Education Act: The new additions**

While Section 19 of the RTE Act remains vague on many issues (perhaps to be able to include the state norms), it clearly states that every school has to meet the requirements in the schedule within 3 years, whether recognised or unrecognised. Schools running without certificates of recognition, or after withdrawal of certificate of recognition would be liable to a fine of 1 lakh Rupees and 10,000 rupees for each day if the contravention continues. Section 18 (3) states that every displaced child will be provided admission in the neighbouring recognised schools.

The RTE Act adds that the teacher-student ratio should be 1:30 for primary schools, while it should be 1:35 for middle school with a teacher to teach every subject and separate teachers for physical education. It states that there should be separate toilet for boys and girls, a playground, a kitchen where mid-day meal is cooked and a library. The schedule has been attached as annexure (1). RTE norms focus more on the infrastructure rather than quality of education provided, perhaps making the state government responsible for it.

While the RTE Act does not mention teacher salary, according to section 18 (1) of the Model Rules, "The state government or the local authority shall notify the terms and conditions of service and salary and allowances of teachers in order to create a

professional cadre of teachers". The Act does not stipulate the minimum qualifications for teachers, which is to be decided by the State. Those lacking the demanded qualifications are supposed to acquire them in five years.

At the same time, Section 20 of the RTE Act states that the Central government by notification may amend the schedule by adding or omitting any norms and standard. Hence the Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Mr. Kapil Sibal has stated that there might be some relaxations, that he would hold consultations with States since a playground is not possible in many urban areas (Times of India, 2010)

### **Delhi State Education Act 1973**

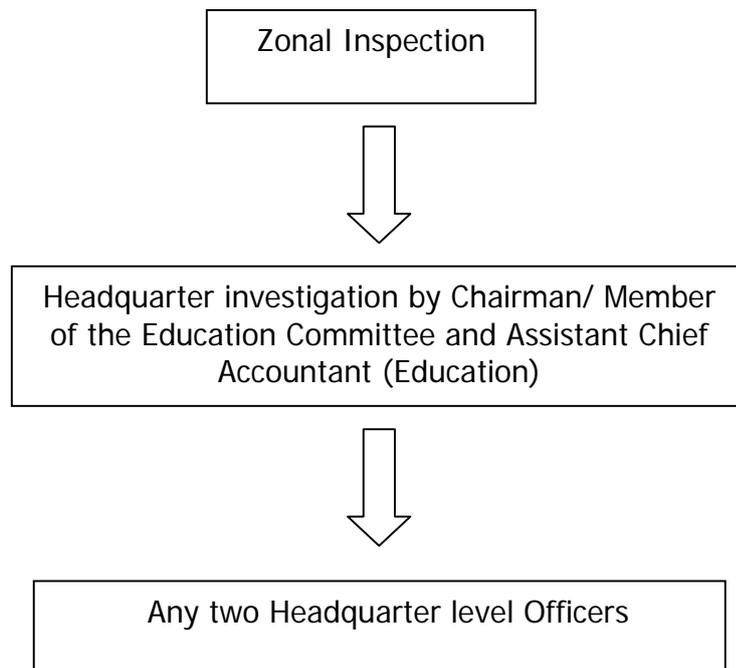
As has been mentioned, the Right to Education Act is silent on the teachers' pay and in the Model Rules, gives the State the power to decide the salary. According to DSEA, the salary of private school teachers has to be on par with that of government schools. After the Sixth Pay Commission there has been a tremendous increase in the salary that was being paid to teachers. For a fresh primary school the teacher salary has increased from Rs 12,843 to Rs 23,346 and for those that have been teaching for more than 10 years, it has increased from Rs 17,513 to Rs 28,881. The break up of these figures can be found in annexure (2).

DSEA in itself is very vague on the standards for recognition. It states that there is a need for a school to have 'adequate' space and sanitary facilities, it has to have the funds to ensure regular payments to its teacher and employees, teachers need to be

qualified to the standard prescribed, it needs to teach the approved course of studies and have the required space for co-curricular activities. As mentioned, most of the norms are decided by the DSEAB. They also follow the norms under the Master Plan 2021 and those suggested by other advisory bodies. While the Act is binding and can only be changed by an amendment, the norms decided by the Advisory Board can be changed if the Lieutenant Governor approves the changes. While the MCD is responsible for providing recognition till grade 5<sup>th</sup>, the DOE is responsible for Class 1-8<sup>th</sup>.

MCD Rules

Under the MCD, the application for recognition goes through a three level process-

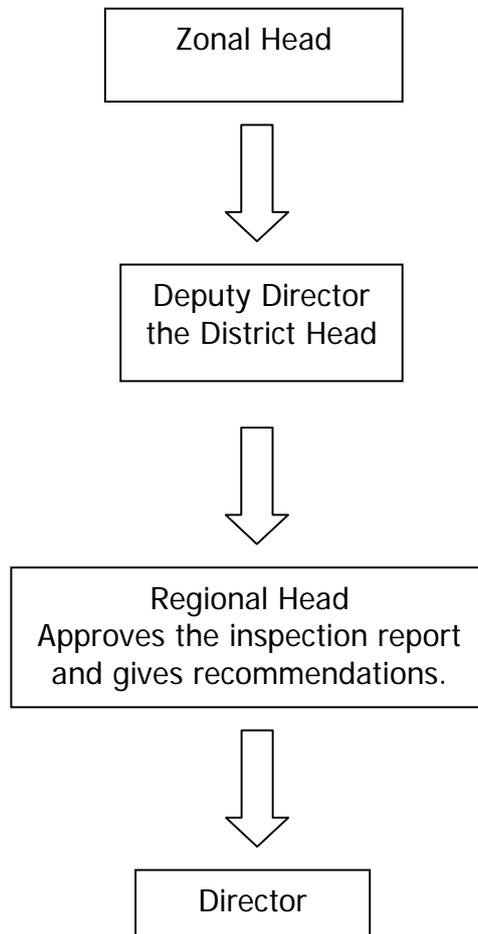


This process, according to the MCD takes a year, but the schools that gained recognition said it can take up to two years. While the MCD has many norms, only those that are most important have been mentioned.

- Till 2007 the land requirement (not counted in floors) for opening a primary school was 200 square yards, it has now increased to 800 square yards in accordance with the Delhi Master Plan 2021.
- Each classroom has to be of 150 sq ft with 10ft length.
- 80 square yards of open space is required for games but a playground is not required.
- While there are norms on ventilation, hall, number of rooms and lavatories, the factors that MCD does not overlook are space norms, building fitness certificates, fire certificates and availability of potable water.
- After gaining recognition, the officials state that the corporation inspects the schools every month.

DOE Norms for Middle Schools

The application for recognition goes through four stages-



The process of getting recognition takes less time in DOE, according to the DOE officials; the process can be completed in 3 months but can take years if the schools do not respond to notices.

Among the most important norms are-

- To get an essentiality certificate proving that there is a need for a school in the neighbourhood.

- Land requirement of 1000 square yards (not counted in floors).
- The Minimum size of the classroom to be 300 square feet.
- Building Fitness/ Occupation, Water, Fire and Health Certification, along with a Building Plan.
- Separate toilets for boys and girls.
- A playground to play or any alternate arrangement.

#### Delhi Draft Rules on the RTE

According to the Draft Rules, to gain recognition, the school has to meet the criteria mentioned in the RTE as well as those under Delhi School Education Act Rule 1973. Hence if the Advisory Board makes no changes then the present MCD and DOE norms would remain with the addition norms by the RTE.

Delhi Draft Rules also mentions that for the next five years, teachers could teach with a higher secondary degree. According to the State Norms they are supposed to have a B.Ed qualification or should have done Elementary Teacher Training under DIET to teach Primary Schools. The Rule acknowledges that there might be a shortage of trained teachers presently. It should be noted that the draft makes no mention of the teacher salary that should be paid by private schools.

## **4.2 Literature Review**

For literature review, a few newspaper articles, journal articles and books were read and internet websites were visited for various views on the unrecognised schools.

### Anti-Unrecognised Schools

As had been mentioned earlier, Ashok Aggarwal filed a PIL stating that these schools were substandard and not fit to teach children and are 'mushrooming' in every corner of Delhi. He argued that innocent parents and their children fall prey to the schools under the impression that they are recognised. (Aggrawal, 2006) Vinod Raina (2010), member of Central Advisory Board of Education, who was involved in drafting the RTE Act, has argued "It is inconceivable that the garage shop unrecognised private schools — mostly an urban and semi-urban phenomenon — can be entrusted with the task of providing education by the state, once provided with funds".

Krishna Kumar (2005, 6-7), former Director of NCERT adds, "there is a great possibility that unrecognized private schools may be siphoning off the children, especially boys, of the marginally better-off strata of rural society in many parts of India. Privately run institutions thrive on the popular assumption that whatever is not under state control must be of some quality."

### Pro Unrecognised Schools

A study of unrecognised schools was conducted by James Tooley and Pauline Dixon (2005) in North Shahadara which showed that-

There was higher achievement in private than in government schools, the mean mathematics scores were about 18 percentage points and 19 percentage points higher in private unrecognised and recognised schools respectively than in government schools. The advantage in English was even more pronounced being 35 and 41 percentage points higher in private unrecognised and recognised schools respectively than in government schools. In Hindi the comparative results are 22 and 24 percentage points higher in private unrecognised and private recognised schools respectively.

Secondly. Private unaided schools cost significantly less than government schools, fees in these unrecognised private unaided schools averaged at about Rs. 125/-per month in primary grades. It was also found that about 10% of all children got free education or paid concessionary fees.

Thirdly, The Teaching commitments were higher in private unaided than government schools; visiting classrooms unannounced, it was found that only 38% of government teachers were teaching, compared to around 70% of teachers in private unaided schools. Lastly, Head teachers or School Managers more frequently observe classes in private unaided schools and were more in control.

A study on the quality of education was conducted by Y.P. Aggarwal and Sunita Chug (2003) in six Delhi slums. The mean score for Grade I competencies was 59.64 percent for mathematics and 55.65 percent for Hindi in the Government schools. However, for the unrecognised schools the mean score for Grade competencies was 77.5 percent for mathematics and only 35.2 percent in language. In grade four while 53% of unrecognised school children got above 60%, only 2 % of those studying in government school did. In language learning, 23% of government school children were above the mark of 60%, whereas the number was 19% in unrecognised schools.

Accountability is also the factor highlighted by Drèze and Saran (2003), who argue that, in case of government schools, "since the salary of the teacher was not related to his work performance, and since his appointment was technically a 'permanent' one, he had little incentive to take his job seriously. In fact he rarely took the trouble of turning up at all'. They note that such problems are not found in the private sector. Aggarwal (2000) argues that in Haryana, "In terms of attendance and school functioning, both the teachers and the students regularly attend the unrecognised schools. The attendance rates in unrecognised schools were much higher as compared to the government schools."

Gurcharan Das (2010) mentions that "Unrecognised private schools are successful because teachers are accountable to parents who can move their child to a competing school if they are not satisfied as opposed to government schools where teachers lack accountability. As a result, most parents prefer to send their children to private

unrecognised schools despite the fact that they get free mid day meals, uniform, textbooks and education in government schools. They should be looked instead as a heroic example of people solving their own problems. School entrepreneurs are like micro-finance companies who are trying to compete and 'make a fortune at the bottom of the pyramid'. What they need is a safe environment free from rapacious inspectors."

James Tooley (2009) feels that to attain Universal Elementary Education, both the private recognised and unrecognised schools can play an important role. He argues that since the private budget schools employ teachers who are from the neighbourhood, there is no problem of social distance, where the teachers coming from richer areas to teach in private schools are unable to interact and relate to the students from poorer classes. Rather than discouraging these entrepreneurs, microfinance kind of loans should be provided to the private schools so that they are able to have the necessary infrastructure.

According to Kingdon (2007) there has been a growing demand for unrecognized schools form the majority of private primary schools in North India and Punjab which have gone hand in hand with increasing literacy in these areas. Arun Mehta's 2005 survey of Punjab revealed the following trends: unrecognised schools, when compared to recognised schools are most likely to occur in urban areas, have a higher percentage of female students and teachers and have more qualified teachers and more favorable student-teacher ratios.

While Tooley and Dixon are of the opinion that private schools should play a greater role in imparting education, Aggarwal argues that they should play a supplementary role and not a substitute.

The study of the literature highlighted that while there are certain unrecognised schools that are substandard, there are others that are performing well in several areas and positively impacting student learning. This further supports the argument that while some basic regulations are required for schools so that they are able to provide a safe environment with a basic standard of education, there need to be relaxation in norms so that the unrecognised schools that are being able to provide decent education can come within the ambit of mainstream education.

## 5. Primary Research

As has been mentioned earlier, two MCD officials, two DOE officials, Mr RC Jain, President of Public School Association and Mr Surendara Gupta, President of Unrecognised School Association were interviewed. Group discussions were conducted with six parents and four teachers from school G and thirteen recognised and unrecognised schools were surveyed in Shahadara. The detailed research has been annexed (4). The main observations made during the primary research are the following-

Number of Unrecognised Schools: As has been mentioned, it was gathered that MCD released a list of 1591 unrecognised schools in 2007. According to Surendra Gupta, President of Unrecognised Schools Association, there are about 2000 such schools each having about 200 students and employing around 20 workers, but both these numbers can be considered conservative estimates.

Mapping of schools: While the earlier MCD list of 1591 schools remains, no further plans to map these schools have been made. It is difficult to do so, as the MCD Attendance Officer states "There are new schools spurting everyday making it very hard to keep track". The Senior Clerk mentioned that an attempt was made to map these schools after the High Court judgment of Ashok Aggarwal's PIL, but the task was too

tedious and perhaps unimportant. The DOE has given the task of mapping to SCERT and DIETS all over India.

Opinion on unrecognised schools: According to a senior DOE official, those unrecognised schools should be given some leniency, that have the 'semblance' of a school structure rather than those operating in 2-3 rooms. MCD officers argued that these schools are opening in every corner, without assuring quality. According to Mr Jain, unrecognised schools provide some standard of education and the government does not have the capacity to provide better. Government schools do not even have the necessary infrastructure to provide decent schooling. The opinion on unrecognised schools varied among the private schools, some argued that the teachers were least qualified and these schools were ruining the lives of students. Others argued that these schools provided the best education that they could with their limited resources.

The parents from school G were of the opinion that the private unrecognised schools have advantages over the government schools and at the same time are cheaper than the private recognised schools. While it can be agreed that there are wide range of government schools and it is not possible to have a standardised opinion on them, the parents of school G argued that none of the better of government schools were in their locality. They felt that unrecognised schools like G had greater accountability rather than the government schools that have no responsibility toward the parents. The quality of education in unrecognised schools is better than government schools where the children do not even learn to read and write. They argued that the government schools lack

discipline and there are regular fights. They also enroll their students in the unrecognised schools as they are English medium, unlike most government schools, which they feel would help their children succeed in future.

Problems with gaining recognition: According to the Senior MCD Clerk, 90% of the applications were rejected on the criteria of space last year. Even after the inception of RTE Act, only three schools had applied for recognition since most do not make the space requirements. Also, some schools cannot afford to put a minimum of 2.5-3 Lakhs in fixed deposit, which is to be maintained to pay teacher salary in case of emergency. MCD is also aware that most schools that are recognised are unable to pay the stipulated teacher salary, but since teachers sign documents stating that they get a higher salary, the MCD can do nothing about it.

Surendra Gupta agreed that the biggest problem the schools face is the land norm. Also, such schools cannot possibly pay the government teacher salary unless they are provided with assistance. At the kind of salary the unrecognised schools offer, their teachers will be less qualified. RC Jain, Head of Public School Association, adds that 80% of public schools cannot pay the given teacher salary and except the elite schools, most can't meet the new land norms. According to him, there is a teacher shortage even in government schools to the total of 1100 and it cannot be expected that the unrecognised schools will have qualified teachers.

Some of the recognition problems may be met by changes in the DSEAR norms. The Senior Official from DOE said that they are in a process of revisiting the land norms. Certain areas like the North-East Delhi can get a concession since the government is aware of the shortage of land and many times even the government schools do not manage to have adequate space. While the land norms are being looked into, they would continue with having the private school teacher's salary being on par with the government school teacher as the teacher salary norm is a part of the Act which would have to be amended for any changes. This is despite the fact that the Senior Official is well aware that most schools are not paying the required amount. At the same time he argued that different slabs for schools with different fee is not an option, it is too hard a task as there is a large variety of schools. Another DOE official argued that higher salary does not mean better quality education; most private schools that pay a much lower amount are more efficient. At the same time keeping the salary completely market driven can lead to teacher's exploitation.

Reality in Shahadara: It is interesting to note that none of the recognised and unrecognised schools in this area would meet the present DOE and MCD space criteria. Recognised school A has 500 square yards of space, which is half of the present DOE requirement for middle schools, but it still received an Award of honour from Delhi Chief Minister Mrs. Sheila Dikshit for imparting quality education. Clearly, not having the present stipulated land has had no impact on the quality of education. Also, while none could pay the prescribed government teacher salary, they were hesitant to disclose the exact amount they paid while on paper, their salary matched that of the government

schools. In recognised school C, while the fee charge is shown on the balance sheet as Rs 500 per month per child, they actually charge Rs 250, as the parents in the area cannot afford more. This is done to tally the fee with the teacher salary on paper of Rs 5,500, who are otherwise paid half the amount

Out of the eight unrecognised schools visited, six functioned only till grade 5<sup>th</sup>. Those that functioned beyond were aware that even if recognition norms are reduced, they would be unable to gain recognition beyond grade 5<sup>th</sup>. Usually, the unrecognised schools have a lower student-teacher ratio than the recognised ones. Most unrecognised schools cannot even meet the earlier requirement of 200 square yards. School G, which has about 300 square yards of land, would have met the earlier criteria, but at that point the manager did not have enough money to pay the bribe required to process the application. Now, it can no longer meet the present land norm.

The unrecognised schools have lower fee than the recognised schools and many times the children are taught free of cost if they cannot afford to study in these schools. Usually the educationists belong to the same community and feel responsible to provide assistance to them. Teacher salaries in these schools mostly range from Rs 1500- 2000. As a result, less qualified teachers mostly that are pursuing their undergraduate degree teach in these schools. At the same time, interview with teachers from school G showed that though less qualified, these teachers wanted to teach to the best of their ability. They felt that by teaching in this school they could get guidance on how to teach better, they stated that the Principal of school G made sure that they were teaching the

children properly and working hard at doing so. While other jobs could have paid better, they were passionate about being teachers. After gaining the necessary experience they wanted to teach in better paying private schools or government schools.

Most of these schools also do not use NCERT books because of lack of availability; NCERT books are published keeping the recognized school's number, not accounting for these schools. Also, many schools argued that the quality of private textbooks is superior to the NCERT books. To overcome the problem of being unrecognised, many times, the students from an unrecognised school are simultaneously enrolled in a recognised school so that they can receive a transfer certificate from the recognised school on completing grad 5<sup>th</sup> which would help them gain admission in recognised private schools at a later stage. Schools pay from Rs 100-1500 per child per year in grade 5<sup>th</sup> to the recognised schools to get their students enrolled under these schools.

To conclude, while there is no clear-cut distinction between the recognised and unrecognised schools and sometimes the unrecognised schools have better resources than recognised. In general, the recognised schools are better equipped in certain areas, they have better toilet facilities, they all have a small library, their teachers are better paid and qualified and most of the times they have more space than the unrecognised schools. But at the same time, most recognised private schools in Shahadara are unable meet the either the new MCD or DOE requirements.

Solutions: While conducting research, different authorities were asked about what could be the likely solutions to this problem.

- 1) Aid: MCD has not been able to provide aid to any new schools in the last 30 years due to lack of funds, presently MCD has no plans to aid unrecognised schools. While DOE provides aid, it is not very keen on extending aid to more number of schools. This is due to there being much inefficiency in the schools receiving aid. While they receive government funding, there is not transparency on how teachers are recruited. Since these teachers are paid higher salaries by the government than regular private schools, those who are willing to pay bribe fill these positions many times. Also, while DOE provides for 95% of teacher salary, sometimes it is difficult for the schools to come up with even rest of the 5% and the additional costs of running the school. Mr. Jain feels that aid is not the solution, in the present system of aid where, by giving 95% of teacher salary, the government controls the school. This is despite the fact that it is the school's own land and their own selected teachers. Also while a nominal sum of Rs. 3000 per year is set for electricity and phone bills, it does not even cover the costs for a month.

- 2) Public-Private model: While there are models being discussed, no pilot study has been conducted in Delhi yet. The DOE is keen on handing over government schools to private management, but it has not delved into any other model.
  
- 3) Reducing norms: Mr. Gupta feels that it is necessary to reduce norms along with providing certain assistance. Mr. Gupta felt that instead of having land norms, they should have criteria for adequate rooms; as long as the schools are able to meet this criterion, they should be allowed to operate. Also, instead of dictating qualification terms, the government should train the teachers from unrecognised schools for short period to make them fit to teacher.

## **6. Analysis of the Findings**

After reviewing the primary and secondary material, one can argue that, in principle, recognition has its advantages:

Firstly, any official education surveys like All India Education Survey or District Information System for Education do not take into account the unrecognised schools. Without being recognised, such schools cannot have an impact on the actual policymaking process and outcomes.

Secondly, if the schools gain recognition then they can issue transfer certificates. Most parents hesitate to send their children to unrecognised schools that do not provide transfer certificates and it becomes hard for them to transfer to a private recognised school after grade 5th. Some have tie ups with recognised schools for issuing them transfer certificates but this is done at a substantial cost and bribes are paid to let this system officially function.

Thirdly, since the recognition criteria would take fire, water, health and building safety into account, only those schools that are fit for the children and do not hamper their security will be allowed to remain open. Also, some basic regulation is needed on the quality of education imparted, which would be taken care of by these norms.

Fourthly, recognition can also help with greater dissemination of correct information. While conducting the research, it was noticed that some unrecognised schools claimed to be recognised and were providing false information to parents. If every school would be recognised, it would become easier to provide the correct information to the parents.

Lastly, if these schools are included into the formal system, they can work with the government as well as other recognised private schools in attaining the goal of Universal Elementary Education by providing education to the poorest. It has even been agreed by Mr. Kapil Sibal, that these schools play an important role and should not shut down. He states "The RTE does not aim to further marginalise the poor. Closing such schools is not an option. In fact, we will give them three years to conform to the infrastructure and teaching standards in the Act". (Indiaedunews, 2010)

#### Advantages of unrecognised schools

While it is not being argued that all unrecognised schools deserve to function, many of the schools should be allowed as they have their own advantages.

Student-teacher ratio: Most of the unrecognised schools have better student-teacher ratio than the government as well as the private recognised schools and fulfill the RTE criteria of 1 teacher per 30 children.

Accountability: While the government schools face the problem of teacher absenteeism, this is not the case in private budget schools since there is greater accountability of the

teachers towards the Principals. School G and C have even installed CCTV cameras in classrooms to keep a greater check on teachers. Also the schools are more accountable to parents and hold regular parent teacher meetings.

Reputation: Most of the unrecognised school owners are partially in the business to have a good reputation in the community, which in turn would support the other side business they have. The managers of many schools had business from where they had the majority of earning. Building a school gave them a good name in the community, which they want to maintain by providing decent quality of education. The Manager of School I, who is also a property dealer, stated he that he established the school to have a name in the *kaum* or community. This is not to say that these schools do not make profit, many agreed to have made about 10 percent profit.

Innovation: Since these schools have to compete with each other for the students, they constantly innovate themselves to attract more students. Each school tries to provide the best facilities and teachers from the limited resources that they have.

Affordability: These schools on an average charge lower fee than the recognised budget private schools, making it affordable for those who cannot afford the private recognised schools and do not want to send their children to government schools. Studies conducted by James Tooley and Pauline Dixon show that the private budget schools provide better education than the government schools at a lower cost.

Philanthropy: Most of the unrecognised schools stated that many children who could not afford to pay the fee were given free education and textbooks as they were part of the same community where the school owners stayed and there was a sense of obligation towards their own community. School G provides free education to the third sibling if the first two siblings are enrolled in their school. The manager of School I is especially sympathetic to girls from deprived background and to the children who have lost their father, most of them are given free education.

No social distance: The teachers belong to the same community and are easily able to interact and teach the children unlike those teachers that come from a more privileged background.

Teacher motivation: Though the teachers teaching in the unrecognised schools do not meet the teacher qualification norms, they are motivated to teach to the best of their ability even if they finally want to teach in better private schools or government schools.

English medium: Most of these schools are English medium unlike the government school, making it more attractive to the parents who feel that learning to speak English would help their child's future.

Choice: These schools also provide a choice to the parents who chose to send their children to these schools voluntary after judging the quality of education that is provided in these schools.

The unrecognised schools function, because they cater to the needs of the poor, who prefer to go to these schools rather than the government run schools. This is not to say that even the most substandard schools should be allowed to be open, nor does it imply that the unrecognised schools do not need to improve.

#### Problems faced by the unrecognised schools

This paper looks at the requirements at the primary level, since most apply for recognition at this level as they do not have resources anywhere close to the norms that are required above the primary level.

Space: While the space requirement now is 800 square yards, many of them do not even meet the requirement 200 square yards as there schools have less space and classrooms are spread on different floors.

Teacher Salary: Private Schools in Delhi pay as low as one-tenth of the salary of a Government school teacher and the unrecognised schools pay lower than the recognized ones. (Tooley and Dixon, 2005) As mentioned, paying the government salary has become impossible for the budget schools especially after the salary increase by the 6<sup>th</sup> pay commission. This becomes even harder in the slum areas where teachers can only be paid according to the low fee that is charged

Teacher qualification: For the salary that the unrecognised schools pay, it is not possible to get highly trained teacher, who are as it is in shortage.

Infrastructure: Most of the unrecognised schools do not have the resources for a library, a canteen or greater number toilets. Some fail to provide clean drinking water or adequate fire safety.

## **7. Recommendations**

One option could be the Public Private model where the government can provide them with the required land space, infrastructural facilities and financial assistance and let them provide the management. Alternatively, if the land norms are reduced then government could provide facilities and financial assistance while the schools continue to operate on their own land. But presently, as has been mentioned, the government has only been looking at public-private model in terms of government schools being managed by a private management committee rather than any other way. Also, the concept of public-private partnership remains abstract till now and it will take time before it is implemented at any level.

The more likely solution is to provide concessions in certain areas that would help these schools attain recognition. At the same time some monitoring mechanism is required to ensure that MCD and DOE do not usurp bribe for granting recognition. While certain minimum standard are important like fire safety, potable water, health facilities, electricity and a sturdy building, relaxation can be granted on others.

On space: The government could reduce the land criteria to accommodate these schools, if not for entire Delhi, then for these illegal settlements. Though, even if the land requirement is reduced to 200 square yards, most of the unrecognised school would not be able to fulfill it. The authorities could consider counting the number of

rooms which have adequate ventilation and some open space for movement rather than expecting a large ground floor space of 800 square yards.

At the same time, the room size should take into account the number of students. While many schools have less than 150 square feet of space, they have only 15-20 teachers enrolled per class. Space should be calculated on per child basis and should be adequate for free movement.

Teacher Salary: It is only with government aid that these schools would be able to pay the required government salary. If there is no aid, then government has to be more realistic about the salary. Even if the government does not want teachers to be paid at the market price for the fear of exploitation, it could take into account the fee charged and decide on the salary correspondingly, otherwise all schools would continue to function without providing a salary anywhere close to what has been stipulated.

Curriculum: If the schools gain recognition, the government would automatically print greater number of NCERT textbooks that would be more widely available. But some schools were unhappy with the quality of the NCERT textbooks. While there are certainly better textbooks provided with the inception of National Curriculum Framework 2005<sup>1</sup>, the standard might not always be the same. There can be certain pre approved publishers that schools should have a choice to supplement the NCERT textbooks.

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<sup>1</sup> The textbooks under NCF 2005 of NCERT aims to promote the Constructivist approach to education which advocates that children should be offered opportunities to construct knowledge as they acquire it.

On teacher qualification: As has been mentioned, the Draft Rules have reduced the present teacher qualification to higher secondary for a period of five years. While according to R.C. Jain this is due to a teacher shortage even in government schools, according to the DOE official this is not the case and it is only a precautionary step. At the same time, most unrecognised school teachers have neither done the Elementary Teacher Education Training nor Bachelor's in Education.

The government could either not keep any qualification, but rather provide training to the teachers in the recess period to certify if they are fit to teach. If not, they can be provided greater access to government DIET colleges and private teacher training colleges. Presently there are only five private colleges, nine DIET centers and one SCERT center to provide teacher training in Delhi. By increasing the number of training centers it will not only make them more readily available but by providing greater choices, it can improve the quality of these institutes due to greater competition.

On playgrounds: Instead of insisting that each school should have a ground or a park, the government should ensure that each school has a park in the vicinity to play and ensure that the children from each school are made to do physical activity for a stipulated time.

Infrastructure: As Mr. Sibal mentions, "Schools should not be closed because of their poor economic conditions" (The Pioneer 2010), hence there is a need to find ways for them to generate income or provide them with funding.

(i) Aid: The government could provide them with the necessary aid to construct more toilets, to have a library (which even in the case of recognised schools is a tiny room with two book shelves), a kitchen and be able to provide the children with filtered drinking water.

(ii) NGO assistance: If the government keeps any land criteria, schools that have been opened by NGOs like School H would definitely face a closure (unless they try to keep it running as a tuition centre). The resources that were being utilised in paying their own teachers and maintaining their own schools could go into assisting other schools.

(iii) Loans from finance companies: private non-banking finance companies should be encouraged to set up in Delhi to provide loans to schools below a certain income, which are not considered a viable option by the bigger banks. The Indian School Finance Company has been providing small loans in Hyderabad. The Indian School Finance Company extends loans at market rates to private schools that fall in the monthly average student fee range of Rs 250-600. School borrowers have to meet credit and collateral requirements and be able to demonstrate management skills that are needed to use and repay borrowed loan capital effectively. The loan size can vary between RS 20,000 – Rs 12 lakhs and should be mostly used for infrastructural purposes.

To conclude, taking these measures would not only help the unrecognised schools to attain a better standard in terms of infrastructure, teacher quality and student learning, it would also make them a part of mainstream education system. At the same time, it would eliminate those schools that cannot fulfill even the basic criteria. The following paper does not argue that only private schools are the way forward, but that they should be encouraged to work alongside government to attain the goal of Universal Elementary Education which has become even more important with the inception of the RTE Act.

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## 9. Annexure

### 1. RTE Schedule

#### THE SCHEDULE

(See sections 19 and 25)

#### NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR A SCHOOL

Sl. No.	Item	Norms and Standards	
1.	Number of teachers:		
	(a) For first class to fifth class	Admitted children	Number of teachers
		Up to Sixty	Two
		Between sixty-one to ninety	Three
		Between Ninety-one to one hundred and twenty	Four
		Between One hundred and twenty-one to two hundred	Five
		Above One hundred and fifty children	Five plus one Head-teacher
		Above Two hundred children	Pupil-Teacher Ratio (excluding Head-teacher) shall not exceed forty.
	(b) For sixth class to eighth class	(1) At least one teacher per class so that there shall be at least one teacher each for—	
		(i) Science and Mathematics;	
		(ii) Social Studies;	
		(iii) Languages.	
		(2) At least one teacher for every thirty-five children.	
		(3) Where admission of children is above one hundred—	
		(i) a full time head-teacher;	
		(ii) part time instructors for—	
		(A) Art Education;	
		(B) Health and Physical Education;	
		(C) Work Education.	
2.	Building	All-weather building consisting of—	
		(i) at least one class-room for every teacher and an office-cum-store-cum-Head teacher's room;	
		(ii) barrier-free access;	
		(iii) separate toilets for boys and girls;	
		(iv) safe and adequate drinking water facility to all children;	
		(v) a kitchen where mid-day meal is cooked in the school;	
		(vi) Playground;	

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 3. Minimum number of working days/instructional hours in an academic year | (vii) arrangements for securing the school building by boundary wall or fencing.<br>(i) two hundred working days for first class to fifth class;<br>(ii) two hundred and twenty working days for sixth class to eighth class;<br>(iii) eight hundred instructional hours per academic year for first class to fifth class;<br>(iv) one thousand instructional hours per academic year for sixth class to eighth class. |
| 4. Minimum number of working hours per week for the teacher               | forty-five teaching plus preparation hours.  |
| 5. Teaching learning equipment  | Shall be provided to each class as required.   |
| 6. Library  | There shall be a library in each school providing newspaper, magazines and books on all subjects, including story-books.   |
| 7. Play material, games and sports equipment                              | Shall be provided to each class as required.   |

## 2. Salary of Teachers Post Sixth Pay Commission

## Fresh Primary Level Teacher

	Old Scale	New Scale
Basic	4500	9300
DP	2250	4200
DA	3173	2160
HRA	2025	4050
PF	780	780
TA	40	1856
MISC	75	1000
	12843	23346

## Primary Teacher with 10 years of Experience

	Old Scale		New Scale
Basic	6250	Basic+GP	17292
DP	3125	DA	2766
DA	4406	HRA	5187
HRA	2812	PF	780
PF	780	TA	1856
TA	100	CE	1000
MISC	40		
	17513		28881

### 3. Questionnaire

#### Part I: General Information

1. Are you aware that under the Right to information act all unrecognised schools will be shut down if they fail to meet the standard of recognition in 3 years and all recognised schools have to go through inspection.

Yes-1 No-2

2. What is the lowest class in the school?

3. What is the highest class in the school?

4. Does the school have recognition for any classes?

Yes -1, No – 2, Applied -3

5. For recognised schools only:

a) When did the school obtain recognition? (Which Year)

b) Which is the highest recognized class in the school?

6. What is the composition of the school?

Boys school: 1, Girls school: 2, Co-educational school: 3

7. What is the number of students enrolled in the school?

8. What is the total number of fully covered classrooms in the school?

9. What is the size of each classroom? (Specify in Square feet)

10. What is the size of the school plot (square yards)

11. Is there a playground?

Yes: 1 No:2

12. What is the size of the Playground (in square yards)

13. Is there a proper compound wall around the school?

Yes: 1, No: 2, Partially: 3, Under construction: 4

14. Is there an office for the head master and school records?

Yes: 1, No: 2

15. Is there a staffroom for teachers?

Yes: 1, No: 2, Same as the Head master's office: 3

### Part II- Teacher information

16. Number of teachers hired.

17. How are teachers paid their salaries?

Deposit to bank account: 1, Cheque: 2, Cash: 3, Others: 4

18. What are the Teacher's Salary?

### Part III- Other recognition criteria

19. Is it registered a society/trust?

20. What is the teacher qualification?

21. Does the schools have a Health Certificate?

Yes: 1, No: 2,

22. Does it have Building Occupancy/ Building Fitness Certificate?

Yes: 1, No: 2,

23. Does it have a Fire Certificate?

Yes: 1, No: 2,

24. For without the certificates

a) Fire extinguisher.

Yes:1 No:2

b) Does the school have a pucca building?

Yes: 1 No: 2 Partially: 3

c)First aid kit.

Yes:1 No:2

Part IV- School Expenses

25.

SN	ITEM (per annum)
1	School tuition fees
2	Course book fee price
3	Uniform fees
4	Admission fees
5	Examination fees
6	Source of income 1 :Fees and Funds 2: Other Charges (specify) 3:Donations and gifts (specify) 4- aid (specify)
7	School vehicle transport (for distances till about 2 km)

V- Textbook and Syllabus

26. What textbooks are followed and why?

27. What is the Medium of instruction?

VI- Other Facilities

28. Is there drinking water? What is the source?

29. Is there regular source of electricity?

30. What are the number of toilets?

31. Are they separate for boys and girls?

Yes-1 No-2

32. Is there a library?

33. If so, provide the number of books in the library

## 4. Primary Research

### 4.1 Interview with MCD Officials

Mapping of unrecognised schools: According to an MCD Assistant Attendance Officer, there is no account of the number of unrecognised schools and no circulars can be sent to these schools to notify them about Section 19. "There are new schools sprouting everyday making it very hard to keep track", he adds. The Senior Clerk mentioned that while an attempt was made earlier to map these schools, after the High Court judgment of Ashok Aggarwal's PIL, the task was too tedious and later the decision to close them was revoked, making it unimportant. While no mapping was the reason given for no notifications, as mentioned earlier, an MCD list of 1591 unrecognised schools was released in 2007. As has been mentioned later, the DOE has given the task of mapping to SCERT and DIETS.

Problem of gaining recognition: According to the Senior Clerk, 90% of the applications were rejected on the criteria of space last year. Even after the inception of RTE Act, only three schools had applied for recognition since most do not make the space requirements. Additionally, every school has to pay Rs 5000 as a processing fee, since they know that they will default on land criteria in any case, they do not apply. Also, some schools cannot afford to put a minimum of 2.5-3 Lakhs in fixed deposit, which is required to be maintained to pay teacher salary in case of emergency.

At the same time, MCD is aware that most schools do not pay the required salary and pay below the amount that is shown to MCD. But since the teachers sign the document stating that they are getting the stipulated salary, the MCD officials cannot do much about it. They also know that most schools do not follow the NCERT textbooks. But as long as safety measures are met and space requirement is met, they can concede on other factors.

Aid: MCD had not been able to provide aid to any new schools in the last 30 years due to lack of funding, presently MCD has no plans to aid unrecognised schools . While DOE provides aid, it is not very keen on extending aid to more number of schools.

## 4.2 Interview with DOE officials

Mapping of unrecognised schools: According to DOE Senior official, there will be SCERT and DIET projects to determine the number of unrecognised schools. While no notifications have been sent to them, they plan to do so once DOE Rules are finalised and implemented at the ground level.

Opinion on unrecognised schools: According to the PA, they meet the needs of certain sections of society who prefer sending their children to public schools rather than government. But unless these schools meet the safety norms and certain space criteria, government cannot provide them recognition. The Senior Official argues that norms should be relaxed to save those schools that have the 'semblance' of a school, not those that are running in 2-3 rooms.

Opinion on RTE Act: According to the Senior Official, it is a good act in principle, but has been made not keeping the ground reality in mind, the playground would be especially impossible in unauthorised colonies in Delhi.

About DSEAR norms: The Senior Official said that they are in a process of revisiting the land norms. While the schools that are unrecognised would have to meet the present State and RTE Act norms, the recognised schools will have to meet only the RTE Act norms. Certain areas like the North-East can get a concession since the government is aware that there is a shortage of land and many times even the government schools do not manage to have adequate space. The PA argued that the Act itself needs to be

amended as it had become obsolete in many areas in the present context. For example, he mentioned that while the Act expects every school to be a charitable nonprofit institution, this can certainly not be the case right now.

While the land norms are being looked into, they would continue with having the private school teacher's salary being on par with the government school teacher as it is mentioned as part of the Act which would have to be amended for any changes. This is despite the fact that the Senior Official is well aware that most schools are not paying the required amount. At the same time he argued that different slabs for schools with different fee is not an option, it is too hard a task as there is a large variety of schools.

According to the PA, while the salaries should not be completely market driven as it would lead to exploitation of teachers, at the same time they cannot be on par with that of the government teachers. Also, higher salary does not mean better quality education, most private schools that pay a much lower amount are more efficient.

Aid: There is no plan to provide aid to greater number of schools, as there is much inefficiency in the schools receiving aid. While they receive government funding, there is not transparency on how teachers are recruited. Since these teachers are paid higher salaries, many times they are filled by those giving bribe. Also, while DOE provides for 95% of teacher salary, sometimes it is difficult for the schools to come up with even rest of the 5% and the additional costs of running the school.

Public-Private model: While there are models being discussed, no pilot study has been conducted in Delhi yet. The DOE is keen on handing over government schools to private management, but it has not delved into any other model.

Opinion on private vs. government schools: According to the officer, there is a broad range of government schools and private schools and in both cases while some are performing well others are not. Many times it is just a perceptual issue that private is better than public.

The interviews with both the DOE officials and MCD officials highlighted that both the parties are aware that norms of teacher salary and space requirement cannot be met by a large number of schools. But at the same time, there seem to be no plans of assisting some of the schools in attaining the standard. Most likely there would be changes in DSEAR norms, but it is not very likely that they would be a great shift from present norms which is required for the unrecognised schools to survive.

### 4.3 Fieldwork in Shahadara

As mentioned, eight recognised and five unrecognised schools were asked to take a survey on factors that were most important for recognition.

#### Recognised Schools

Table below shows how they fared in most of the criteria.

	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E
Plot size	500 sq yards	250 sq yards	250 sq yards	350 sq yards	350 sq yards
Number of floors	Ground floor and first floor	Ground floor and first floor	Ground floor and first floor	Ground floor and first floor	Ground, first and second floor
Number of Classrooms	9	12	10	9	12
Class room size	180 sq feet	210 sq feet	180 sq feet	176 sq feet	240 sq feet
Classes taught.	1-8 <sup>th</sup>	1-5 <sup>th</sup>	1-5 <sup>th</sup>	1-5 <sup>th</sup>	1-8 <sup>th</sup>
Number of	10	5	7	6	10

teachers					
Number of Students	181	300	283	270	500
Teacher qualification	B.Ed and above.	Bachelors or B.Ed, teachers selected after 3 day trial.	Elementary Teacher training	B. Ed and Above.	BA and B.Ed
Teacher Salary (Rs/month)	-	3000-4000	5,500 on paper otherwise paid half	-	-
Number of toilets	10 separate	4	2Separate	7 Separate	8
Library	Yes 2000 books	Yes 1200 books	Yes 2000 books	Yes 675 books	Yes 4000 books
School Fess (Rs/month/child)	400-500	350-450	500 on paper, otherwise 250	300	400
Textbooks followed	NCERT	NCERT	NCERT	NCERT	NCERT

Language of instruction	SST in Hindi Science and Math in English	English	English	English and Urdu	English
Playground	No, Open gallery	No	No open gallery	No Open gallery	No Open gallery
Staff Room	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Headmaster's Room	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

It is interesting to note that none of the schools would meet the present DOE and MCD space criteria. Also, while none could pay the prescribed government teacher salary, they were hesitant to disclose the exact amount they paid. Most of the schools were unaware that there are new criteria under the RTE schedule that they need to fulfill.

While the MCD said that recognition process takes a year, for most of the elementary schools it took 2-3 years and many times an additional bribe was paid to move the recognition file from one stage to the other, To gain recognition school C had to pay a bribe of Rs 80,000. Interview with a few schools also revealed some additional information.

School A was given an award of honour by Delhi Chief Minister Mrs. Sheila Dixit for providing good education in 2007. It was established in 1986 and has a space of 500 square yards and teaches till 8<sup>th</sup> standard, hence meeting only half of the present requirement under the DOE. Clearly, not having 1000 square yards of space did not make the school ineffective. The manager argued that in areas like Maujpur, it is impossible to extend the school since land costs Rs. 50,000 per square feet. Also, there is no land available around the school in the irregular colonies. The manager said added that the school had only been inspected when "DOE officials wanted a hot cup of tea."

School C could also does not meet the present norms land norms and cannot pay the required teacher salary. While the fee charge is shown on the balance sheet as Rs 500 per month per child, they actually charge Rs 250 as the parents in the area cannot

afford more. This is done to tally the fee with the teacher salary on paper of Rs 5,500, otherwise teachers are paid half the amount on an average. While most teachers are trained under ETE<sup>2</sup>, he felt that this should not be the criteria as many teachers without these degrees can do a better job of teaching children. The Principal ensured that all teachers took classes which he monitored using CCTV camera.

Recognised schools' opinion on unrecognised schools: Manager of school A felt that anyone unemployed opens a school and these people are not equipped to have their own schools. The Manager of school C states "They are ruining lives of children as they cannot get admission in private recognised schools if they do not have a transfer certificate. Whenever the MCD closes a tailor shop in the region, they open a school till the time the MCD threat is over for alternative employment". Schools B and E had a more positive opinion that most of the unrecognised schools try their level best to impart decent education and the norms should be reduced to help them gain recognition.

Opinion on government schools: According to the manager of School C, "the only reason that children are sent to these schools is because of the midday meal". Manager of school A states that there is no accountability, "In government schools principals have no control over teachers and teachers have no control over the students. The only time some government teachers go to the classroom is if a child has broken a tube

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<sup>2</sup> Elementary teacher training is offered by DIET, SCERT and private institutes for teacher training right after higher secondary education.

light". Principal of school B adds that unlike private schools, which hold regular parent-teacher-meetings, government schools have no obligation towards parents.

### Unrecognised Schools

All unrecognised schools were aware that they face the threat of closure after the RTE act. While many said they would continue to keep it open as tuition centers, others were happy to shut down. Some argued that they would receive the equivalent amount by putting the building on rent. Others claimed to keep their school open despite no profit. If they shut the school on their own volition, they would face harassment from the community, but if the government tells them to do so, this won't be the case.

The unrecognised schools that were visited had some basic building structure; they had *pucca* buildings and most had proper rooms with adequate ventilation. The details have been tabulated below.

	School F	School G	School H	School I
Plot size	100 sq yards	300 sq yards, not all space used	25 sq yards	300 sq yards
No. of floors	First and Second floor.	Ground floor	Ground, first and Second floor.	Ground in one part, ground first, second in the other.
Number of Classrooms	8, including halls that has been partitioned.	8	3, hall used to teach class 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> .	10
Class room size	120 s feet	120 sq feet	125 sq feet.	180 sq feet
Classes taught.	1-8 <sup>th</sup>	1-5 <sup>th</sup>	1-5 <sup>th</sup>	1-5 <sup>th</sup>
Number of teachers	9	6	5	10
Number of Students	150	140	70	360
Teacher qualification	12 <sup>th</sup> pass and above.	Doing BA and above.	BA pass and Compulsory computer	12 <sup>th</sup> pass and higher.

			education.	
Teacher Salary (Rs/month)	Rs 1000- 18000	1200-1500	3000-3500	1500-2000
Number of toilets	1	2	2	3
Library	No	No	No	No
School Fess (Rs/child/month)	125-200	250-300	Free	170-220
Textbooks followed	Private	Private	Private	Private
Language of instruction	English	English	English	English.
Playground	No	No Open gallery	No	No Courtyard
Headmaster's room	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staff room	No	No	No	No

Any Certificates obtained	No	No	No	Applied
Fire, water, first aid kit and electricity.	Fire extinguisher, first aid kit, the direct MCD water is given. Direct supply of electricity.	Fire extinguisher, first aid kit, filter water and regular electricity.	Fire Extinguisher, first aid kit, filter and regular electricity.	Fire Extinguisher, first aid kit, filter and regular electricity.

	School J	School K	School L	School M
Plot size	-	40 sq yards.	150 sq yards.	100 sq yards
Number of floors	-	Ground, first, second and third floor.	Ground, first, and second floor.	Ground and first floor.
Number of Classrooms	6	7	12	Halls on ground and first , have been

				partitioned in three parts for 6 semi rooms.
Class room size	120 sq feet	120- 144 sq feet.	128 sq feet	120 sq feet.
Classes taught.	1-5 <sup>th</sup>	1-5 <sup>th</sup>	1-10 <sup>th</sup> , but wanted to apply for recognition only till grade 5 <sup>th</sup> .	1-5 <sup>th</sup>
Number of teachers	7	6	12	6
Number of students	160	120	250	200
Teacher qualification	Doing graduation.	Doing Graduation and DIET training.	Those doing undergraduate for lower classes, for higher there are teachers who are B.Ed or DIET trained.	Higher secondary qualified and graduates.
Teacher Salary	1800-2000	1500-2000	800-3000	1000-2500

(Rs/month)				
Number of toilets	1	2	5 Separate	1
Library	No	No	No	No
School Fess(Rs/child/month)	250-300	200-300	150-450	300
Textbooks followed	Private	Private	Private and NCERT	Private
Language of instruction	English	English	English	Social Studies in Hindi, Math and Science in English. Compulsory Urdu for Muslims.
playground	No	No	No	No
Headmaster's room	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staff room	No	No	No	No
Any Certificates	No	Health Certificate	No	No

obtained				
Fire extinguisher, water, first aid kit and electricity	Fire extinguisher, first aid kit, only tap water and electricity.	Fire extinguisher, filter water, illegal electricity but provision for inverter.	No fire extinguisher, first aid kit, Water machine and regular supply of electricity.	Fire extinguisher, first aid kit, MCD water supply and regular supply of electricity.

	School J	School K	School L	School M
Plot size	-	40 sq yards	150 sq yards	100 sq yards
Number of floors	-	Ground, first, second and third floor.	Ground, first, and second floor.	Ground and first floor.
Number of Classroom	6	7	12	Halls on ground and first, have been partitioned in

				three parts for 6 semi rooms.
Class room size	120 sq feet	120- 144 sq feet	128 sq feet	120 sq feet
Classes taught.	1-5 <sup>th</sup>	1-5 <sup>th</sup>	1-10 <sup>th</sup> , but wanted to apply for recognition of grade 5 <sup>th</sup> .	1-5 <sup>th</sup>
Number of teachers	7	6	12	6
Number of students	160	120	250	200
Teacher qualification	Doing graduation.	Doing graduation and DIET training.	Those doing undergraduate for lower classes, for higher there are teachers who are B.Ed or DIET trained.	Higher secondary qualified and graduates.
Teacher Salary (Rs/month)	1800-2000	1500-2000	800-3000	1000-2500

Number of toilets	1	2	5 Separate	1
Library	No	No	No	No
School Fess (Rs/child/month)	250-300	200-300	150-450	300
Textbooks followed	Private	Private	Private and NCERT	Private
Language of instruction	English	English	English	Social Studies in Hindi, Math and Science in English. Compulsory Urdu for Muslims.
playground	No	No	No	No
Headmaster's room	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staff room	No	No	No	No
Any Certificates obtained	No	Health Certificate	No	No
Fire extinguisher,	Fire extinguisher, first aid	Fire extinguisher,	No fire extinguisher,	Fire extinguisher,

water, first aid kit and electricity	only tap water and electricity.	filter water, illegal electricity but provision for inverter.	first aid kit, Water machine and regular supply of electricity.	first aid kit, MCD water supply and regular supply of electricity.
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Classes taught: Most schools visited were till grade 5<sup>th</sup> while one functioned till grade 8<sup>th</sup> and other till grade 10<sup>th</sup>. Though School F teaches until grade 8<sup>th</sup>, it had only applied for recognition till grade 5<sup>th</sup> because the Manager was aware that they would not get recognition for a higher stage due to the stricter norms for middle school. School L functions till grade 10<sup>th</sup>. While School L does not provide transfer certificate, students till 5<sup>th</sup> standard are made to file an affidavit stating that they had been educated till a given grade informally and those from 5-8<sup>th</sup> standard take an online test on the DOE website to determine which class they are suitable for and can attain admission in. According to the Principal of School L, all students are able to clear the paper. Children for class 10<sup>th</sup> the take open school exams, 98% of the children passed, but most scored between 40-50% and only 1 child out of 20 could get 70%.

Space: The Manager of school G claim to have 300 square yards but a proportion of it has not been used to construct classrooms because of lack of students. He would have met the land criteria that existed earlier, but at that time did not have enough money to pay the required bribe and under the new norms the owner no longer meets the land requirements. While some schools would meet the earlier requirement of 200 square yards, none can meet the present requirement of 800 square yards. For NGO run schools like H, however low the land criteria might be, they would shut down with their 25 square yard of space despite providing free education to students.

Use of textbooks: Most do not use NCERT because of lack of availability, NCERT books are published keeping the recognized school's number, not accounting for these schools.

Most of them do not even have access to stores that sell NCERT books and even if it were accessible, they cannot provide textbooks for all. Some schools also argue that the private books are of better quality than the NCERT books. Other than that, many private players personally visit these schools and ensure that they get adequate supply of textbooks.

Problem with unapproved colonies: Since school K is situated in an unapproved colony, it cannot get fire certificate. Moreover, electricity has been acquired illegally by paying bribes to BSES and they still have to pay commercial rates for the electricity. The school does not have the adequate funds to have a tie up for transfer certificates.

Fee: For many schools, they do not end up getting the required fee making it hard to maintain the school. School J does not get fee regularly to even install a water filter. Even in school K parents many don't pay fee for a year. When the fee was hiked by Rs 50 per month, around 80 students had dropped out of school. At the same time School K has given tuition waiver to 27 out of 120 students studying. In School G the third child gets free education and those from very poor families are given a tuition waiver. School I gave free education to girls from deprived backgrounds. Many of the owners have side business and open such schools to have a good reputation.

Teacher salary: On an average the teacher salaries were Rs 1500-2000 per as the schools can only afford that much with the given fee. As a result, less qualified teachers mostly that are pursuing their undergraduate degree teach in these schools.

Transfer certificates: The children in school G are enrolled in a recognised school simultaneously so that they can get a transfer certificate and are not forced to study in the government school after grade 5<sup>th</sup>. The principal pays the recognised school Rs 1000 per child for the transfer certificate. Even if the space norms are reduced, these schools will be unable to meet any space criteria. School F calls itself under recognition, a category it has itself created. Since it takes transfer certificate from some other school, it considers the school to be recognised under that school. School M pays Rs 1500 to get transfer certificate from a recognised school.

Opinion of government schools: According to the Principal of School K, some government schools in the area are 150 square yards themselves. Many have no space and too many students per class, there is a complete lack of discipline. Most agreed that these schools had no accountability and were not able to teach the children to even read and write. The Principal of School G states that private schools have greater accountability; School G itself has CCTV surveillance to keep a check on the performance of every teacher. The Principal also gives incentives to the students to be regular and study by giving prizes for attendance and excelling in academics

Opinion on unrecognised schools: Manager of School N states that all have basic safety measures and are in decent conditions, they just cannot meet the government norms. Many teach out of good will towards the community when they would have earned more by renting the land. Manager of School G adds that there are four unrecognised schools

for every recognised school in the area, they impart education to a large number and cannot be shut down. He feels that many have more resources than the recognised schools and many recognised schools even violate recognition norms. Schools that were recognised earlier like School X have about 100 square yards of land but gained recognition as they applied a long time back when the criteria was far less. In recognised School Y, the open space that was required for recognition has now been converted into a building after gaining recognition. The MCD ignores it because they are paid good bribes.

#### Unrecognised Schools Vs Recognised Schools

While there is no clear cut distinction between the recognised and unrecognised schools and sometimes the unrecognised schools have better resources than recognised, in general, the recognised schools are better equipped in certain areas, they have better toilet facilities, they all have a small library, their teachers are better paid and qualified and most of the times they have more space than the unrecognised schools. But at the same time, most recognised private schools in Shahadara are unable meet the either the new MCD or DOE requirements.

#### 4.4 Group Discussion with Parents

A group discussion was conducted with six parents of students from school G to gather why they chose to send their children to this school. They stated that the schools had a great reputation in the neighbourhood. The Quality of education was important; they saw to it that the teachers are qualified to teach children at this level. Another important factor was accountability; the school has regular parent-teacher meetings where parents are given regular updates on their child's performance. The school is English medium, which according to the parents is essential for a good career. They are taught working/learning with computers which too would also help them further on. Most important factor for these parents is the quality of education, followed by facility for drinking water and basic hygiene. They were not concerned about a playground or bigger classrooms. They send their children to private schools so that they have a strong base and are able to study even if they are put in government schools later.

Most parents monitor what their children are learning in school, some do this themselves, others put them in tuition so that the tuition teacher monitors their progress. They pay about Rs 150 for tuitions. The parents end up spending at least 700-1000 on the child including uniform, textbook and transport, so clearly they do not cater to the poorest of poor.

While they do not have a problem with the school being unrecognized since they are provided transfer certificates, this would not have been the case if there was no tie. In

that case they wouldn't have sent their child to this school because of the fear that they might not get admission in any other good school later. They were asked if they thought the school made too much profit, they did not seem to think so, they get many facilities for the amount they pay and the school even provides free education to the third child, understanding the financial constraints of the parents. Other private schools make greater profit than School G.

When asked about their opinion on government schools, they said "there are no studies, the teacher in these schools only sit in the staffroom and drink tea. Government school students cannot even read and write. Government school students are undisciplined; there are regular fights in these schools". One of the parent regretted that they sent the older child to a government school and now her younger son who studies in school G can read and write more than the older one. Another parent who is a tuition teacher stated that there is no comparison between the work that the children from private and the government school do in the same grade, private school children are far ahead. They also added that government schools are always overcrowded and not many better off ones are in that area.

According to the parents while some might send their children to government schools because they do not have the resources to provide better education, there are others who do not consider education to be top priority and do not have a strong will to teach the children. Many parents also resign to the fact that their children would not get good jobs, even with the better education.

#### 4.5 Group Discussion with Teachers

A group discussion was conducted with four teachers of school G. Two of the teachers had finished their Bachelors degree, others were doing their graduation through correspondence and one of them was doing DIET teacher training simultaneously. All of them live in nearby areas and decided to teach in this school as it had a good reputation. They felt that by teaching in this school they could get guidance on how to teach better, they felt that the Principal made sure that they were doing their job properly and teaching the children to the best of their ability. They receive a salary of Rs 1500.. While other jobs could have paid better, they were passionate about being teachers. After gaining the necessary experience they wanted to teach in better paying private schools or government schools.

They were asked about their opinion on government schools, they said most imparted bad quality education; the students that took admission in their school from MCD Schools were far behind the children from their school. Private schools also have the advantage that they start from nursery level and children can start learning at a lower age.

#### 4.6 Interview with the President of Public Schools Association

President and the President of Unrecognised School Association

President

According to Surendra Gupta, the President of Unrecognised School Association, there are about 1500-2000 unrecognised schools; each having around 200 students and employing 20 staff members.

Problems with gaining recognition: The biggest problem that the schools face is land norms. Mr. Gupta felt that instead of having land norms, they should have criteria for adequate rooms; as long as the schools are able to meet this criterion, they should be allowed to operate. Also, the government teacher salary cannot possibly be paid by such schools unless they are provided with assistance. At the kind of salary the unrecognised schools offer, their teachers will be less qualified. Instead of dictating qualification terms, they should train the teachers from unrecognised schools for short periods. RC Jain, Head of Public School Association, adds 80% of public schools cannot pay the given teacher salary and except the elite schools, most can't meet the new land norms. According to him, there is a teacher shortage even in government schools to the total of 1100 and it cannot be expected that the unrecognised schools will have qualified teachers.

Opinion on unrecognised schools: Mr. Gupta feels that the unrecognised schools are assisting government in providing education and instead of shutting them down, the

government should assist them. The biggest advantage unrecognised schools in these areas have is the low student-teacher ratio and hence they can give more attention to the children from the lower strata of society who need it more. According to Mr Jain, unrecognised schools provide some standard of education and the government does not have the capacity to provide better. Government schools do not even have the necessary infrastructure to provide decent schooling. He states that there are 925 government schools functioning in 625 buildings.

Aid: Mr Jain feels that is not the solution, in the present system of aid where, by giving 95% of teacher salary, the government controls the school. This is despite the fact that it is the school's own land and their own selected teachers. Also while a nominal sum of Rs. 3000 per year is set for electricity and phone bills, it does not even cover rent. More than giving aid it should be realised that all schools are not equal and cannot have the same land and cannot pay the same salary.