

SCHOOL EDUCATION IN DELHI UNDER THE LENS

**KANIKA MAHAJAN
YUGANK GOYAL**

**CENTRE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY, NEW DELHI
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ABSTRACT

The paper is an endeavour to explore the essence of the education system existing in Delhi and explicate upon the scenario that is prevalent. The academic performance of the system is weighed upon keeping various factors as indicators like number of schools, enrollment, pass percentages, dropout rates and so on and so forth.

After an introduction of the education system as it firms itself to the ground in Delhi, the authorities concerned have been highlighted. Delhi's education system is run on parallel grounds under various heads, which is then elaborated under the Types of Schools. The multiplicity of the schools can leave one perplexed, and this has added to the complexities of these noble institutions.

Then a detailed analysis of the number of schools follows, comparing the skewed data from the Directorate of Education and the Planning Commission. Graphical analysis of enrollment sheds light on the existing trends. A detailed comparison of the pass percentage in secondary and senior secondary schools is presented, which is followed by the dropout rates ratios.

The researchers have then tried to figure out the factors responsible for the dismal state of education in Delhi, hinging upon the evidences they got from the ground level. A few suggestions in the form of conclusion follow thereafter.

INTRODUCTION

Education holds the key to economic growth, social transformation, modernization and national integration. During the last decade (1991-2001), the literacy rate in Delhi has increased by 6.5 percent as compared to 13.2 percent at national level. In Delhi, the literacy rate for males has increased from 82 percent in 1991 to 87.37 percent in 2001. While at the national level the literacy rate for males has increased from 64.1 percent in 1991 to 75.8 percent. In the case of females, the literacy rate in Delhi has increased from 64.1 percent in 1991 to 75 percent in 2001. At the national level the literacy rate for females for the same period has increased from 39.3 percent to 54.2 percent. In 2001, the literacy rate in Delhi was 75 percent and it ranked seventh on all India level.¹ However, these figures exist when a literate person in the National Literacy Mission is defined as a person who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his/her everyday life².

The educational facilities in Delhi are provided in the following stages:

- Pre-primary
- Primary (I-V)
- Upper primary/ middle (VI-VIII)
- Secondary (IX-X)
- Senior secondary (XI-XII)
- University

Pre-primary, primary, upper primary/middle education constitutes the elementary education in Delhi. In Delhi, pre-primary and primary education is the responsibility of the local authorities like the Municipal Corporation Of Delhi (MCD), the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and the Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB). Middle, Secondary and Senior Secondary is primarily looked after by Directorate of Education, Government of National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. However, the Directorate of Education has introduced primary classes, by converting some of its schools into Sarvodaya Vidyalayas with classes 1 to 12. Indeed, the labyrinth of educational institutions in Delhi can leave one perplexed with so many local bodies entrusted with the responsibility of imparting education.

Types of schools in Delhi (By Management)

1) DELHI STATE RUN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS: These are funded and administered by the Directorate of Education.

- a. State run Government Schools- These include *middle, secondary, senior secondary* schools run by Delhi Government.

¹ Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 660, dated 23.11.2001. Accessed at <http://www.indiastat.com/india/ShowData.asp?secid=21217&ptid=367615&level=4> on 1 July, 2005

² United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, "India- National Literacy/Non-Formal education policies," *UNESCO E-9 Initiative*, http://www.unesco.org/education/e9/countries/india_indicators_4.shtml. Accessed on 6 July, 2005

- b. Sarvodaya Vidyalayas- These are also called composite schools as they have classes from I-XII.³
- c. Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas- These are schools for gifted students in Delhi by Delhi government. In these schools meritorious students from government schools are admitted through a planned achievement-cum-aptitude test. These schools are prestigious Government institutions that have facilities and teaching faculty at par with the private schools in the Capital; have excellent teachers, good laboratories, libraries and other equipments. The idea is to provide avenues of development and realisation of full potential for deserving children, with restriction in the number of students per class.

2) KENDRIYA VIDYALAYAS⁴: Kendriya Vidyalayas were established in the year 1963-64, on the recommendation of the Second Central Pay Commission, as a welfare measure for the employees who are transferable throughout the country. It marked the beginning of a new era for the education of the children of Union Government Employees who could not refuse to go on transfer and at the same time could not allow the studies of their wards to be disrupted. They are managed by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Samiti that comes under the Union Government.

3) JAWAHAR NAVODAYA VIDYALAYAS (JNV): The National Policy on Education 1986 envisaged establishment of a Navodaya Vidyalaya in each District of the country. The Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti runs these Schools. Navodaya Vidyalayas are fully residential and co-educational schools covering classes VI to XII. Admission to Vidyalayas is made at the class VI level through open test conducted at District level by Central Board of Secondary Education. Education in the Vidyalayas is free for all enrolled students including lodging, boarding, textbooks, uniforms etc. The Vidyalayas seek to promote and develop talented, bright and gifted children predominantly from rural areas who may otherwise be denied good educational opportunities. There are two Navodaya Vidyalayas in Delhi⁵. Education in the JNVs including boarding and lodging as well as expenses on uniform, textbooks, stationery, rail/bus fare from to the homes etc. are free for all students. The opening of a Navodaya Vidyalaya is based on the proposal from the concerned State/UT Governments offering 30 acres of suitable land free of cost, sufficient temporary building and other infrastructure free of rent or on permanent basis.

Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas are Central schools, which come under the Ministry of Human Resource and Development.

4) MCD SCHOOLS: MCD has the largest number of primary schools under its purview in Delhi and caters only to primary education and hence it is a major player in the provision of primary education in Delhi. These schools are funded and administered by the MCD.

³ Twenty-two more schools were converted into Sarvodaya Vidyalayas by adding primary sections during the current year.

⁴ Ministry of Education, Government Of India. Accessed at <http://www.education.nic.in/htmlweb/kvsini.htm> on 6 June, 2005.

⁵ Official website of Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti, Government of India. Accessed at <http://www.navodaya.nic.in/welfinal.htm> on 6 June, 2005.

5) NEW DELHI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL (NDMC) Schools:

- a. NDMC RUN: These are run by New Delhi Municipal Council⁶ as per NDMC Act 1994, Section 12. Besides Primary Education, Council is running Middle, Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools for the children of families residing in the NDMC area. Medium of instruction in most of the schools is Hindi, though English has been introduced as a subject from Class-I.
- b. NAVYUG SCHOOLS⁷: These are run by NDMC for the gifted students in Delhi. In the series of Navyug Schools first School came up with class-VI in 1973 at Sarojini Nagar. The objective was to provide wholesome education to the gifted children of economically weaker section of the Society. The children were to be admitted through a test to be conducted by the National Council for Educational Research and Training. Earlier these schools were running under the control of two Governing Bodies, one for Senior Navyug School, Sarojini Nagar and the other for the other Junior Navyug Schools. In the Year 1992 these Board of Governors were merged into one and the schools came under the control of Navyug School Educational Society, a registered Society under the Societies Registration Act which is 100% financed by the NDMC. Presently the society is managing six Senior Secondary Schools and three Primary Schools under its control.

6) SCHOOLS RUN BY DELHI CANTONMENT BOARD: These are currently eight in Delhi and are funded and administered by the Delhi Cantonment Board.

7) GOVERNMENT-AIDED SCHOOLS: These are run by private, recognised organisations in Delhi and are engaged in imparting education at all levels of schooling in Delhi. These organisations are given aid in the form of maintenance grant from the Government of Delhi to meet their expenditure on education (approximately 95%). This aid is largely given for the payment of salaries, allowances and provident fund of the employees of the school. These schools include:

- Delhi State government-aided schools under the Directorate of Education.
- Municipal Corporation of Delhi Aided schools
- New Delhi Municipal Council aided schools

8) PRIVATE UNAIDED SCHOOLS: These are recognized unaided schools, which are run in Delhi by registered trusts and societies. These institutions are managed by an individual or a private organization and do not receive a maintenance grant either from a government or local body. These schools include:

- Directorate of Education Recognised schools
- Municipal Corporation of Delhi recognised schools

The guidelines, which must be fulfilled by a private school to gain recognition by the appropriate authority are prescribed in Delhi School Education Act, 1973⁸.

⁶ NDMC is a local body under the Union Government.

⁷ New Delhi Municipal Council, official website. Accessed at http://www.ndmc.gov.in/main_edu.htm on 6 June, 2005.

⁸ Section 4

The multiplicity of institutions involved in imparting education in Delhi clearly adds to the complexities that have engulfed the existing system. Instead of providing a good quality education to all through a common school system, the government has been encouraging and supporting the creation of parallel structures to meet sectional demands wherever needed: Government Model Schools, Central Schools, Sarvodaya and Navodaya Vidyalayas are examples of this policy. The government schools to which the majority of the children of lower middle class and working people go have become defunct in terms of education. Ms. Sheila Dikshit said all efforts were being made to open new schools that have all the facilities including proper educational infrastructure in place before teaching begins there. Due to paucity of seats and space, schools have taken up the lottery system whereas children are admitted on the basis of lottery in order to prevent any kind of dispute. This leaves a lot of people disgruntled and the opening of new premium schools would go a long way in dealing with the scarcity of seats. Ms. Dikshit said if there was any scarcity of land for starting such schools, the Government could upgrade some of the present ordinary schools into Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas or Sarvodaya Vikas Vidyalayas and throw them open to the meritorious students.⁹ This clearly exemplifies the fact that more stress is being laid on increasing the number of schools without much importance being given to the deteriorating condition of the existing Government schools. It is equally important to renovate and upgrade the existing institutions so that they can cater to a greater number of students and deal with the problem of scarcity of seats rather than simply constructing new structures. Optimal and efficient utilization of the existing resources should be the utmost priority.

THE NUMBER GAME !

There are two bodies, which compile educational statistics namely;

- Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD)
- National Council of Educational Research And Training (NCERT)

But neither of them has ever compiled data about the number of schools in Delhi by management. The table below shows the number of schools in Delhi by management in 2004-2005.

MCD	1827
NDMC	61
Government	938
DCB	8
DOE Recognised	1104
MCD Recognised	661
DOE Aided	228
MCD Aided	47

⁹ Mehduia, Sujay.2004. Parents To Have Choice Of More Schools. *The Hindu* , 20 Jan.

SOURCE: The Computer Cell, Directorate of Education, Old Secretariat.

The number of Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in Delhi are 75 and 2 respectively. This makes the total number of schools in Delhi, to be 4951 (as on 1st July 2005).¹⁰

The schools that come under the purview of the Directorate of Education (DOE) are Delhi State Government run, DOE aided and the DOE recognized. Within the government (Directorate Of Education run) schools, out of the 938 schools 83 are Middle schools, 216 are Secondary schools and 639 Senior Secondary schools. The total number of Sarvodaya schools in the total is 364 and Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas are fourteen¹¹. While all the Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas are only Senior Secondary, Sarvodaya Vidyalayas are Middle, Secondary, and Senior Secondary Schools, at present, owing to the ongoing process of converting the existing government schools into Sarvodaya Vidyalayas.

The table below shows the number of schools under the DOE in the past years¹²

	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Owned	988	1003	1009	1001	997	974
Aided	218	218	218	217	218	215
Private/unaided	797	950	959	995	1049	1076

The table below shows the growth of schools over the past years¹³.

		1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
	No. of Schools	4599	4642	4642	4912	4908
A	Government+ Aided schools	3197	3195	3196	3211	3185
	Department of Education	1227	1219	1220	1215	1189
	(a) Middle	180	179	172	173	141
	(b) Secondary	221	219	222	213	243
1	(c) Senior Secondary	826	821	826	829	805
	MCD					
2	(a) Primary+Nursery	1850	1890	1890	1910	1910
	NDMC	114	80	80	80	80
	(a) Primary+Nursery	82	55	55	55	55
	(b) Middle	14	10	10	10	10
	(c) Secondary	10	9	9	9	9
3	(d) Senior Secondary	8	6	6	6	6
4	Delhi Cantonment Board	6	6	6	6	6

¹⁰ This figure exclude private unrecognised schools in Delhi.

¹¹ Total number of schools run by the Directorate of Education.

¹² Planning Department. Official website. Government of Delhi. Accessed at <http://delhiplanning.nic.in/Write-up/2004-05/Volume-11%20pdf/ChXV.pdf> on 13 June, 2005.

¹³ Planning Department. Official website. Government of Delhi. Accessed at <http://www.delhiplanning.nic.in/Socioecoprofiles/finalsocioecoprofile.pdf> on 26 May 2005

	(a) Primary	3	3	3	3	3
	(b) Middle	3	3	3	3	3
B	UNAIDED SCHOOLS	1402	1447	1446	1701	1723
	Department of Education	950	995	994	1049	1071
	(a) Middle	469	487	481	489	496
	(b) Secondary	174	186	183	222	222
1	(c) Senior Secondary	307	322	330	338	353
	MCD					
2	(a) Primary	452	452	452	652	652

The tables indicates that the number of government and government-aided schools have fallen over the years. According to The Planning Department, Directorate of Education, this fall has been due to the ongoing mergers among the government schools. Schools, which do not satisfy the minimum criteria, are being shut and the students being sent to the school in the vicinity of the closed school.

However, the total number of schools in Delhi still remains a "Million Dollar" question since the data from the tables taken from the same source gives us a different number of schools under the Directorate of Education in the years 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002 and 2003-2004. The total number of schools (owned, aided and unaided) under the Directorate of Education vary in the following manner:

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
Planning Department ¹⁴	2177	2214	2214	2264	2260
Planning Department ¹⁵	2171	2186	2213	2264	2265

There also exists a discrepancy between the data of the Planning Department and the Directorate of Education as shown below:

Stage	1998-1999		1999-2000		2000-2001	
	Directorate of Education ¹⁶	Planning Department ¹⁷	Directorate of Education	Planning Department	Directorate of Education	Planning Department
Middle Schools	164	171	164	160	154	154
Secondary Schools	181	185	188	185	191	191

¹⁴ Planning Department. Government of Delhi. Official website. Accessed at <http://www.delhiplanning.nic.in/Socioecoprofiles/finalsocioecoprofile.pdf> on 26 May, 2005.

¹⁵ Planning Department. Official Website. Accessed at <http://delhiplanning.nic.in/Write-up/2004-05/Volume-11%20pdf/ChXV.pdf> on 13 June, 2005.

¹⁶ Directorate of Education, Government of Delhi. Accessed at <http://www.edudel.nic.in/directorate.html> on 20 June, 2005 .

¹⁷ Op. cit 15

Senior Secondary Schools	643	632	651	658	664	664
TOTAL	988	988	1003	1003	1009	1009

The above table relates to only Government schools owned by the directorate of education. Although the total number of schools owned by the Directorate are the same according to both the departments, but the discrepancy exists between the classification of these schools as Middle, Secondary and Senior Secondary.

We can clearly see the dismal state of education in Delhi, with no consistency between the data provided by various authorities entrusted with the responsibility of providing education in Delhi. The Planning Department allots funds to the Directorate of Education, which further allots the funds to the schools. The lack of coordination between the two is certainly reflective of the friction between the government departments.

ENROLLMENT

The school enrollment is affected by two factors, namely, the behavior of demographic indicators and the flow of students from one grade to another within the educational system. The table below gives the enrollment data for the MCD run schools.

Year	Enrollment-boys	Enrollment-girls	Enrollment-total
1998-1999	403729	403604	807333
1999-2000	411539	417851	829390
2000-2001	426826	420261	847087
2001-2002	443276	443662	886938
2002-2003	450048	436754	886802
2003-2004	449706	439146	888852
2004-2005	450810	446720	897530

SOURCE: Deputy Education Officer, Department of Education. Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Kashmere Gate. 1 June, 2005.

The enrollment in the MCD schools has been rising, though the rate of increase has slowed down.

This can be somewhat comforting. On the other hand, surprisingly, the enrollment in the State run government (DOE) schools has fallen in the past two years.

YEAR	ENROLLMENT
2003-2004	1015412
2004-2005	1003823

SOURCE: Amit Kumar, IT Assistant, Directorate of Education. Obtained on 6 June, 2005

Ironically, the Directorate of Education has no data regarding the number of students enrolled in the schools, which came under its purview, prior to 2003. How it has been

monitoring the schools for the past so many years is indeed debatable. However, the website of The Planning Department had the data, and the Directorate of Education officials were completely oblivious about it. Neelam Verma, Assistant Director of Education (Schools), Directorate of Education said that the Directorate had no information regarding the total number of students in the Government schools prior to 2003. The extent of indifference among the government officials leaves one doubtful about the working of the education system in Government schools.

The enrollment in Government, Government aided & unaided schools is as under: -

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Government Schools	8.75	8.97	9.55	10.24
Government Aided Schools	1.58	1.60	1.50	1.41
Unaided Schools	7.66	7.95	8.35	8.77

in lakhs

Source: Official website of the Planning Department. <http://delhiplanning.nic.in/Write-up/2004-05/Volume11%20pdf/ChXV.pdf> accessed on 20 June, 2005.

There exists a discrepancy between the enrollment figures of 2003-2004 provided by the Directorate of Education and the Planning Department. The reliability of the data is thus again subject to question. The lack of synchronisation between the data collected by both the departments is surprising.

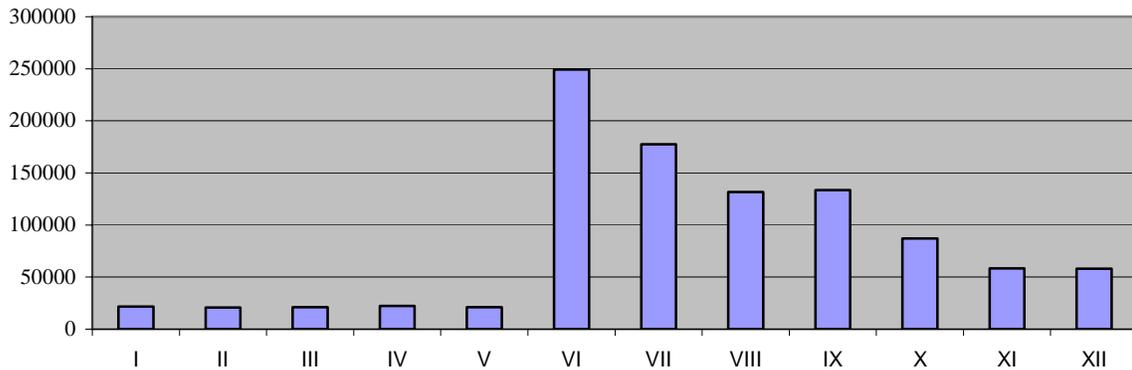
To increase the enrollment in the Government schools, the Directorate of education has started a new online admission procedure with effect from 1st April 2005. Under this system the Delhi Government schools have been termed "Parent Schools" and MCD/NDMC/DCB schools attached to them for admission process have been termed as "Feeder Schools".¹⁸ This has been done to ensure admission is convenient, hassle free and compulsory admission of all the children of Feeder Schools and other eligible children in the Parent Schools. All the Heads of Schools of Parent Schools are required to take a printout of one copy of admission Form and one copy of Fund Receipt having three parts. These two documents will be made available to the Feeder schools once they enter the students of class V in the Student Module of the Management Information System (MIS). The Fund Receipt will be kept with the Parent School. The schools which are working in tin sheds or no computer has been available to them should contact the IT branch of the DOE. After getting the filled up admission form and School Leaving Certificate the Principal will go to the Student Module and admit the child by filing the online admission Performa. Those students who wish to take admission in schools other than the allotted school due to change of residence in Delhi will have to seek admission in the designated school from where they will be transferred to the school at the changed residential address.

However, many problems have come this year due to lack of computers and absence of IT Assistants in many schools. In fact according to the IT Branch (DOE) officials, many principals are not well informed about the new admission procedure. *It's one thing to make education compulsory, but meaningless if the infrastructure is not in place to handle it.* Moreover, the above system clearly restricts the decision-making mechanism of the parents. The children are not given any choice of the school; the decision is simply imposed upon them.

¹⁸ Department of Education, Municipal Corporation of Delhi 2005. *Circulars and Orders Related to Education.*

The enrollment in the government-aided schools has been falling, while the enrollment in the government schools has been rising, although in 2004-05 the enrollment fell in the government schools as well. The increasing enrollment in the MCD schools but a falling enrollment in the government schools is indicative of the fact that more number of children at the primary level are dropping out since the government schools largely cater to the Middle, Secondary and Senior Secondary education. The emphasis, thus, should not be laid on enrollment alone, equal attention must be paid to the retaining power of our educational system. The class wise enrollment in the government schools is heart rendering; with the number of students in the government schools falling with every stage of schooling. The number of students enrolled in class X of the government schools is 1/3 of the students enrolled in class VI. This proportion reduces to 1/5 by class XII. This large reduction is clearly indicative of the fact that a very few children are able to complete their school education in State run government schools. The interschool migration also plays an important role in enrollment figures. According to one of the teachers, a large number of students migrate in MCD schools from private schools in class IV. This is because it is easier to get admission in upper primary classes in government schools if the child has completed his primary education from a government school. Similarly in class XI, students who could not secure subject of their choice in public schools due to a lower percentage, migrate to government schools. There is a sudden rise in students enrolled in Delhi Government schools in class VI due to large number of children from the MCD/NDMC/DCB schools seeking admission in these schools.

Enrollment in Delhi Government schools



PASS PERCENTAGES:

There are various indices for education. The notion of quality is often linked to efficient management. The actual transaction time, classroom processes and learning outcomes of children have not figured in any study conducted so far. Thus, the percentage of children clearing the terminal examination is an important indicator of quality. At the primary level of education a no-detention policy is followed in government schools. The following tables show the pass percentages in government, government aided and

private schools in Delhi in class Xth and XIIth examinations conducted by Central Board of Secondary Education.

GOVERNMENT (DOE RUN) SCHOOLS

Secondary

Year	Students appeared	Students passed	Percentage
1997-98	88846	28519	32.1
1998-99	89746	31023	34.57
1999-00	91392	35611	38.97
2000-01	72287	29010	40.13
2001-02	80317	37127	46.23
2002-03	79069	38642	48.87
2003-04	79399	40319	50.78

Senior Secondary

Year	Students appeared	Students passed	Percentage
1997-98	38033	24131	63.45
1998-99	44918	30595	68.11
1999-00	41828	30344	72.54
2000-01	44044	30925	70.21
2001-02	51560	36725	71.23
2002-03	47728	36761	77.02
2003-04	54278	42267	77.87

Private School Results

Secondary

Year	Students appeared	Students passed	Percentage
1997-98	41742	36467	87.36
1998-99	45076	38908	86.32
1999-00	41383	35610	86.05
2000-01	45196	37884	83.82
2001-02	56021	48351	86.31
2002-03	50977	43910	86.14
2003-04	52845	45630	86.35

Senior Secondary

Year	Students appeared	Students passed	Percentage
1997-98	30566	26982	88.27
1998-99	33308	29647	89.01
1999-00	31454	27854	88.55
2000-01	34568	30653	88.67
2001-02	42306	38168	90.22
2002-03	45178	40882	90.49
2003-04	48850	43794	89.65

**DOE Government Aided school Results
Secondary**

Year	Students appeared	Students passed	Percentage
1997-98	14330	6937	48.41
1998-99	14408	7659	53.16
1999-00	14518	7826	53.91
2000-01	13717	6991	50.97
2001-02	12577	7043	56
2002-03	13246	7794	58.84
2003-04	13465	8025	59.6

Senior Secondary

Year	Students appeared	Students passed	Percentage
1997-98	9109	6271	68.84
1998-99	10071	7357	73.05
1999-00	9447	6991	74
2000-01	10488	7808	74.45
2001-02	10979	8068	73.49
2002-03	10997	8431	76.67
2003-04	11656	8997	77.19

SOURCE: Directorate of Education, www.edudel.nic.in

From the above data it can be clearly seen that the pass percentages in the government and government-aided schools have consistently been rising for both secondary and senior secondary examinations conducted by CBSE, while those of the private schools have either fallen or remained stagnant for secondary examinations but have increased for the senior secondary examination. However, the absolute value of the pass percentages for the government schools is much lower (almost 50%) than the private schools in the secondary examination and the number of students appearing in the Secondary examination has been falling. *Only one out of two students appearing in the class X examination are able to pass the examination*, which clearly exemplifies the dismal state of education in the government schools. But according to the education department officials, this comparison is not just, since a majority of the students in the government schools belong to the lower economic strata. On the other hand, for the *Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas* (PVV), the ability schools started by Delhi Government, the performance has been nothing short of sterling. Many of the PVV in the past years have shown a pass percentage of greater than 95%. Although, one can derive pleasure from the fact, that the pass percentages at senior secondary level are much higher than the secondary level in government schools. Does this mean that the quality of education becomes better as we go higher up the ladder?

The table below shows the performance of the various schools in Delhi in the examinations conducted by CBSE in 2004-2005.

SCHOOL	PASS PERCENTAGE	
	Secondary ¹⁹	Senior Secondary ²⁰
Government	48.03	76.44
Government-Aided	58.27	75.25
Private/ Public	86.36	89.46
Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas	93.92	90.54
Kendriya Vidyalayas	90.82	96.39
NDMC Schools	76.79	58.12

The above table clearly reflects the poor job Delhi government is doing in running the city's schools. Government has decided to arrange special coaching classes for weak students. But the system of remedial classes has already been in place for some time now, and these efforts do not seem to be translating into the desired results. Similar arrangements have also been made by Delhi Government for those placed in compartment in the Class XII examinations. But undoubtedly Private unaided schools are qualitatively better than the public sector schools.

Among the Urdu minority schools in Delhi the performance has been worse²¹, with a majority of them having a pass percentage well below 50% in class XIIth this year. Class Xth results are more pathetic with the pass percentage this year plummeting in some cases to as low as a shocking 7 percent. Only a few prominent Urdu schools like Anglo-Arabic and Qaumi School seem to have fared better.

DROPOUT RATES

One of the important indicators of educational development is dropout rate, which like other rates should be computed grade-wise. Before the dropout rate is computed, the first requirement is to obtain number of dropouts between the grades. The balance of enrollment in a particular grade is termed as drop-outs. Or in other words, of those who are not promoted and/or repeated is known as drop-outs.

According to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, the dropout rates in the primary schools run by it are as follows:

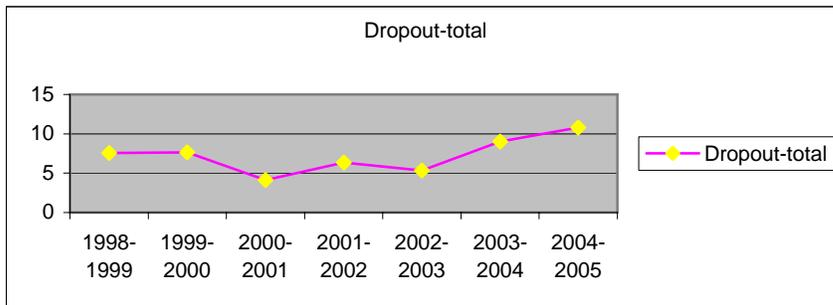
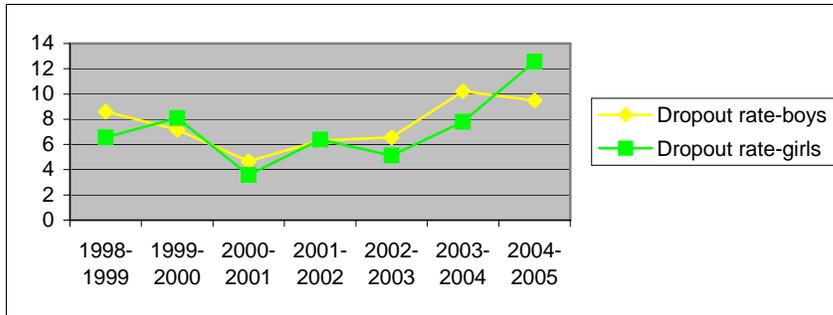
Year	Dropout rate-boys	Dropout rate-girls	Dropout-total
1998-1999	8.59	6.55	7.57
1999-2000	7.17	8.1	7.64
2000-2001	4.66	3.57	4.12
2001-2002	6.3	6.38	6.34
2002-2003	6.56	5.12	5.34
2003-2004	10.22	7.79	9.02
2004-2005	9.49	12.56	10.8

Source: Deputy Education Officer, Department of Education, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Kashmere Gate. Obtained on 1 June, 2005.

¹⁹ Banerjee, Rumu. 2005. Science perfect, English shaky. *Times of India*, 27 May

²⁰ Times News Network, 2005. In City, 1178 Score Over 90%. *Times of India*, 24 May.

²¹ Pankhoori Sinha, 2005. Yet another disappointing show by Urdu schools. *Times of India*, 27 June



Following facts are notable:

- The dropout rate has risen in the past few years. There has been a rise of 4 percent since 2001-2002.
- In 2004-2005 the dropout rate for girls was much greater than the dropout rate for boys.

The methodology adopted by MCD to calculate the above dropout rates is

- Finding the enrollment in the MCD schools on 31 August of one year and the total number of students studying in the MCD schools on 31 March of the next year.
- Calculating the difference between the two figures obtained and expressing it as a percentage of the total number of students enrolled in the MCD schools on 31 August.

There are two flaws with the methodology adopted by the MCD: Firstly, it has not been compiled class wise. Secondly, it does not take into account the interclass dropouts. By interclass dropouts we mean the students who pass a class but do not get themselves enrolled for the next class. So, the actual value of the number of dropouts could be much more. According to the PIL filed by Social Jurist²² on 19 November 2001, the dropout rate of the schools run by Municipal Corporation of Delhi is as high as 25.36% (23.73% for boys and 29.17% for girls). As MCD accounts for about 80% of total primary schools and 90% of primary school enrolment, the high dropout rate clearly speaks about the state of primary education in Delhi. While the overall access and participation in primary education is increasing the dropout rates continue to be

²² Social Jurist vs. Union of India and others C.W. 7027 of 2004 (Delhi High Court). Date of filing 19 November 2001, decided on 7 April 2003.

unacceptably high leading to an in-optimal utilisation of scarce financial resources. The data suggests that many students dropout before reaching the penultimate grade of primary education in the MCD schools.

However, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi does not seem very concerned with this increase. According to Ms Indira Yadav²³, the Director, MCD, "The increase in the dropout rate is largely due to an increase in the economic status of the students. Their parents prefer sending them to the private schools due to a rise in their income." In fact, according to one of the teachers in the MCD schools, the rise in the dropout rates was due to removal of slums from Delhi. Thus every player in the provision of primary education simply refused to acknowledge the fact that the quality of education imparted is poor.

Let us incorporate a small element of Mathematics here. The dropout rate in 2004-05 was 10.8 percent as shown in the table above. Now the probability of a child passing class V in MCD run schools shall come out to be as: $\{1-(0.108)\}^5$ which is close to 0.57. This implies that out of hundred students entering in class I of MCD run primary schools, only 57 are able to pass class V.

The survival rate at secondary level is also alarming. According to the same PIL referred above, out of every 100 children who enroll in the Government and local bodies in Delhi, only 14 make it to the class X level; out of which only 4 pass the class X level.

Despite free and compulsory education for children propagated by the Indian government, government schools remain unreformed, and a wide gap persists between the government and private schools. Most of those who enroll in class I do not complete the 8 years of education. A very high dropout rate is visible even before reaching class V. Among those remaining in school do not attain the academic achievement levels, which is expected of them at various stages. The indicators of academic performance like the pass percentages and the dropout rate put the government schools in bad light. Despite, the tall claims made by MCD and the DOE of improving the standard of education in their respective schools, there seems to be no improvement in the desired direction. Largely their efforts have been directed into formulation of new schemes like the Mid Day Meal, Free Supply of Textbook, and Subsidy for schools Uniforms. However, the authorities have failed to take cognizance of the fact that these schemes are only short-term incentives and at their best can only attract students to schools. Many a times it has been the case that the students avail of the facilities and then simply leave the school and dropout. There have been many acclaimed policies but none have stopped the downslide. The foremost aim of any school is to inculcate a desire for education and a sense of pride in the institution. The children can only be permanently retained in the school if the overall quality of education and the environment in the schools is made conducive for the growth of children.

A key factor for large numbers of Dropouts is poor quality of education and no value in terms of skills training that might fetch a job on leaving school. Education has a much

²³Yadav, Indira. 2005. Interview by Author. Verbal Interview. Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Kashmere Gate. Delhi. June 1, 2005.

broader goal to fulfill than just literacy or acquiring degrees. The fact that the Director of MCD Department of Education herself admits that more number of students are shifting to the private schools highlights the lack of faith among the parents and students in the MCD primary schools. They are willing to pay Rs. 300- 500 per month²⁴ to educate their children in the private unrecognised schools shows the will among the parents to educate their children and their commitment for the child's education. Poor parents also want their children to learn English which they consider being the need of the hour. Going to an English Medium schools carries with it so much of status and this has contributed to the exodus of the students from the Government primary schools.

Broadly speaking, the dropouts can be classified in two categories: one who dropout due to long term absenteeism from the school and poor academic performance because they are not interested in education and the others who face economic stresses in their families. They are mostly found working as child laborers and contribute to the earnings of the family. While the latter can be mobilized into the education system only by spreading awareness and giving incentives, the former can only be retained if the quality of education is increased.

After interviewing a few principals and teachers a large number of other reasons for the high dropout rates in the MCD run primary schools and the DOE run came up:

- 1) Lack of infrastructure: There are no blackboards, restrooms and sometimes not even adequate classrooms. Classes are held in the open, even during the summer. Class sizes are big, thus teachers are not able to give individual attention to the children. Textbooks and uniforms frequently do not reach to their beneficiaries on time²⁵. The school is hardly a place where a child would like to go willingly. In the Government Girls Secondary school in Sangam Vihar there has been no electricity and water since it has been established. Instead of a playground there is a huge rock in the middle of the school. The atmosphere is suffocating and everything is laced with dust. Seeing these conditions in the school one is forced to ask the question that why are students even coming to this school. The study conducted by National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration in the District Primary Education Program districts in Tamil Nadu²⁶ demonstrate the positive association between the availability of school infrastructure facilities and the dropout rates. It was found that the schools having girl's toilet had a lower dropout rate than the schools without it. Similarly, the presence of boundary wall was also associated with the dropout rate.
- 2) Lack of teachers and high teacher absenteeism: There is a high student to teacher ratio in the government schools. While there are 8,913 vacancies in government schools, about 4,000 posts are lying vacant in MCD schools

²⁴ The figure was obtained after interviewing a few parents who send their children to private primary schools.

²⁵ Gohain, Manash Pratim. 2005. Popularising MCD Schools. *Education Times, Times of India*. 6 June.

²⁶ Aggarwal, Yash. 2002 *Regaining Lost Opportunity: The Malaise of School Inefficiency*. Pub: Educational Consultant India Limited on behalf of the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. Page 82.

currently²⁷. The high number of vacancies further reduce the quality of education since the children have to study without any guidance. 10% vacancy of teachers is considered to be normal in Delhi government schools, according to the Principal of Babu Ram School, Bholu Nath Nagar²⁸. However, this rule is being flouted blatantly e.g. in R. K. Puram, the total number of teachers at present is 28 while vacancies are 10. Also, many teachers do not show up for days on a stretch.

- 3) Irresponsibility on the part of the teachers: According to the parents, who send their children to the government schools the quality of teachers, especially in the primary schools is very poor. The teachers are hardly bothered to check the indiscipline among the students. Even if the children are fighting or loitering around in the school premises, the teachers do not make any attempt to get them back to classes. If they do so, they resort to beating and abusive language, which has a negative impact on the impressionable minds of children. The poor quality of education at primary level creates problems for the students at the upper primary level, as they are not able to cope up with syllabus. So most of the parents prefer putting their children in private schools because at least that ensures that their students will *learn* something. But these people are very smart; they shift their students to MCD primary schools in class V, because this makes the admission into the government schools easier in class VI.
- 4) Teachers' motivation decreases over time: There are no incentives for the teachers to perform better. The teachers are promoted on the basis of their seniority and not on the basis of their performance. According to Ms Indira Yadav, the Director, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, 50% of the teachers in the MCD schools are not fit to be there. They are too mature to deal with children.²⁹ Primary school teachers need to be softer and gentle to the children. The male and female teachers are employed for girl and boys schools respectively. The male teachers are less motivated and are not well equipped to handle small children. On the other hand female teachers are more sensitive and resort less to corporal punishment. They are able to inculcate some sense of social responsibility and encourage students to study further. A student in the age group 6-10 is extremely vulnerable. The attitude of the teachers leaves an indelible mark on the future of the child. If the teacher has a lax attitude, it gets translated into a similar approach towards education of the child. A child has a one to one interaction with the teachers and a sense of faith in the institution can only be developed in the child if he has faith in his teacher.
- 5) Training for the teachers is inadequate: Although a large number of seminars are held for the teachers but their usefulness for them continues to be debatable. Only one time, in-service training is provided to the teachers. Regular seminars are held during summer, but the teachers are generally unable and unwilling to participate in it.

²⁷ Sinha, Bhadra. 2005. 13,000 vacancies in government, MCD schools. *Times of India*, 4 June.

²⁸ Jain, Sushma. 2005. Interview by Author. Verbal Interview. Babu Ram school, Bholu Nath Nagar. Delhi. 8 June.

²⁹ Op. cit. 23

- 6) Transfer of teachers: Transfer can take place even in the middle of an academic year, which decreases the productivity of the teachers. According to the teachers, the system has pushed them to a point where they have to cultivate politicians to avoid frequent transfers. Thus, building networks with patrons and supporters is more important. This has politicized the environment and actual teaching is rarely monitored. In this regard the private aided and un-aided school teachers have an upper edge as they are not subject to arbitrary transfers. Also, the system of frequent transfers does not give them adequate time to get acquainted with the problems faced by the students of the school and the possible solutions for increasing the quality of education in that school.
- 7) No accountability of Teachers: There is no accountability of teachers as far as 'teaching' goes in government schools while the private school teachers are more responsible for the performance of their students. They have to show their output in terms of results of the students. No such pressure of proving their merit exists on the government school teachers. In fact, the no detention policy at primary level has promoted the lethargic and irresponsible action of teachers leading to a very low learning at the primary stage, so much so that the students are not able to cope up with the syllabus at the upper primary level.
- 8) Teachers are saddled with a large amount of administrative work: The teachers have to maintain records of the income profile and the religion of the students and are also made in-charge of the various schemes implemented in the state run government schools. Majority of their time is wasted in asking the students for information that is to be entered in the records and the time devoted to teaching is reduced drastically. According to many of the school teachers, they are heavily burdened with the work that is meant only for the clerical staff. This seriously handicaps the quality and the motivation of the teachers.

Given the above scenario in Government schools it is very doubtful if the government can provide quality education to children. Thus, the moot question that remains is given the above gloomy picture of education in MCD and the DOE run schools will Delhi government be able to attain the goals envisaged in National Policy on Education and its policy of universalisation of elementary education.

CONCLUSION

The government education system in Delhi is dismal, and the paper has unveiled much of the supporting documents. What is required is a tailored, persevered and dedicated approach in upgrading the quality of these 'Citizen Producing Factories.' Improvements in school environment, teachers' availability and strengthening of classroom processes are extremely important. Infrastructure facilities should be made available. Just like investment has to be made in machinery and other requisites before starting production in any factory it is required that the proper machinery for imparting education in schools is available otherwise either the product will be of bad quality or will not churn out at all in the end.

Education, as perceived by the lower strata of the society is neither a status symbol nor a passport for going abroad. It's simply a way to empower one to earn money. That circumscribes the whole gist of it. And the very element of vocational training, quality and the tool to empower one to earn money is missing.

Decentralisation is the need of the hour. Bureaucratic control of the school system is heavily centralized. Decisions are made by some bureaucrat, seated above the pyramid, who might not be aware of the school specific problems. Solutions do not trickle down. It also makes it difficult for the parents to address any grievances and to suggest changes. The Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) have failed to achieve their goal of involving the parents in the everyday working of the school and hence increasing the quality of education and to increase the interaction between the teachers and the parents. The funds under the PTA are often not utilised for the intended purpose and spent in day to day running of the school.³⁰

Finances must be provided by the government to schools, but managed by the autonomous management committees of the schools. The procedures relating to ownership and control of school administration should be at the school level. This will protect against bureaucratic apathy, inefficiency and corruption. The burgeoning bureaucracy undermines the efficiency of the education system so all the Primary and Middle schools, presently under the local bodies should be brought under the Directorate of Education.

We need to shed the existing notions on education. Education should be treated like any other product in the market. The degree of the success of the school depends on the quality and marketing of its 'products.' Quality of education is judged by the knowledge and skills imbibed by the students. Thus the competent atmosphere backed up by Charles Darwin's theory that entails the Survival of The Fittest, is bound to fuel the machinery of the government schools.

And so Sir Adam Smith, in his celebrated treatise, *The Wealth of Nations* states, "Every individual endeavors to employ his capital so that its produce may be of greatest value. He generally neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows how much is he promoting him. He intends only his own security, only his own gain. And he is in this is led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention. By pursuing his own interest he frequently promotes that of the society more effectually than when he really intends to promote it."

³⁰ This fact was surfaced when the author was to get a Xerox copy of a document from a school and was relieved of the payment and told " Madam, we will fetch it from the PTA fund."