Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity

Access to What? Access, Diversity and Participation in India's schools

Nalini Juneja

CREATE PATHWAYS TO ACCESS
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Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Acronyms

AIE	Alternative Initiatives in Education
APPEP	Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project
AS	Alternate Schools
BEP	Bihar Education Project
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
EGS	Education Guarantee Scheme
LJ	Lok Jumbish
MCD	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
NCAER	National Council of Applied Economic Research
NCERT	The National Council of Educational Research and Training
NDMC	New Delhi Municipal Corporation
NFE	Non Formal Education
NGO	Non Government Organisations
NPE	National Policy on Education
NSS	National Sample Survey
PFED	The Police Foundation for Education
SOS	State Open Schools
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TLC	Total Literacy Campaign
UP	Uttar Pradesh
UPBEP	Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project
UTs	Union Territories

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Preface

This review paper by Nalini Juneja forms part of the larger exercise of developing a comprehensive Country Analytical Review for CREATE in India. Specifically, it reviews the available information base at the national level and the findings of different research studies on the progress made by the country in providing access to elementary education. The enormous expansion of schooling facilities has resulted in moving away from conventional norms and standards in establishing schools, and the large variation is evidenced in the nature of provision made. In particular, the paper focuses on the diversity of supply within state provided schooling facilities, issues related to equity, and patterns matching certain categories of population to certain types of schooling. This review is of special importance because it examines the increasing demand for education provided by different types of schools, maps the trends in growth of private and public schools, enrolment in these schools and discusses emerging policy issues relating to the diversification of delivery of elementary education which has tremendous influence on and access to quality education.

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Summary

India has witnessed enormous expansion of its facilities for elementary[1] education in the recent past. This expansion has not been limited merely to an increase in the number of state-aided private schools. A diversity of schooling options are now available provided both by the state and the private sectors. This paper attempts to examine, through review of recent literature, what this diversity of provisioning means in terms of meaningful access of children to elementary education. The paper notes at the outset the policy shift from the eighties onwards, which saw the creation of para formal delivery systems and the inclusion in the system, of non-state producers of state-provided informal education. Private schools, which have always existed, but were few, and considered preserves of the privileged, are no longer restricted to the elite but may be seen targeting niche clientele from the very rich to all but the destitute. This paper then explores the available literature noting the relative spread of the different types of schools, their enrolment shares, and diversity of structure, cost, and some distinguishing features. The paper also explores research on whether, and how, this diversity of schooling options translates into greater access, participation, learning and transition to the upper primary stage.

[1] Elementary education includes Primary (grades 1-5) and Upper Primary (grades 6-8)

Access to What? Access, Diversity and Participation in India's Schools

1. Introduction

This paper asks whether every child has equal access to primary education in India where there is a diversity of education providers. The paper addresses this question by investigating 'the supply side' of primary schooling (grades 1-5).

In the years since independence in 1947, there has been considerable growth in the number of schools in India. Table 1 shows that since 1950, the number of primary schools (grade I-V) has multiplied almost four times while there has been a nineteen fold increase in the number of upper primary (grade VI-VIII) and a twenty one fold increase in secondary (Grade IX-XII) schools. Now over 130 million are enrolled in primary, 51 million in upper primary and 37 million in secondary school.

Table 1: Primary, upper primary and secondary schools: numbers of schools, enrolments and drop outs

Year	Number of Schools and Enrolment and drop out rate								
	Primary I-V			Upper Primary VI-VIII			Secondary / Senior Sec.		
	Schools ('000)	Enrolment (Millions)	Drop out rate from grade I-V (%)	Schools ('000)	Enrolment (Millions)	Drop out rate from grade – VIII (%)	Schools ('000)	Enrolment (Millions)	Drop out rate (I-X) (%)
1950-51	210	19.2		14	3.1		7	1.5	
1960-61	330	35	64.9	50	6.7	78.3	17	3.4	
1970-71	408	57	67	91	13.3	77.9	37	7.6	
1980-81	495	73.8	58.7	119	20.7	72.7	52	11	82.5
1990-91	561	97.4	42.6	151	34	60.9	80	19.1	71.3
2000-01	639	113.8	40.7	206	42.8	53.7	126	27.6	68.6
2004-05	768	130	29.0	262	51.2	50.8	146	37.1	61.92
Increase (X times) 1950-2005	3.7	6.8		18.7	16.5		20.9	24.7	

Source: GoI, 2007.

Despite the phenomenal increase in the number of children entering primary school, the number of drop outs, is enormous. Table 1 indicates that almost a third (29 percent) of children drop out somewhere between classes one and five of primary school. Drop out on such a scale means that a considerably depleted number of students enter the upper primary stage. By the end of the upper primary more than half of the children who entered school (50.8 percent) are no longer in the system. By class ten the loss from the system has reached 62 percent. For a variety of reasons schools only retain about 38 percent of children who started primary in grade 10. This paper examines some of the systemic reasons why so many children are excluded from the primary cycle of education and why such a large number of them fail to make the transition to the upper primary stage.

A study of systemic factors is complicated because there is there is no single system of education in the country. In India each state has historically run its own education system, meaning that between states and within them, there exists a great deal of diversity in

education provision. It was only in 1972, as a result of the 42nd Amendment to the Indian Constitution, that responsibility for legislation on school education came to be shared between the centre and the states. However, in practice, there exists no central law on school education in India. The role of the centre in education in India has largely been exercised through financial grants, conditions attendant upon 'centrally sponsored schemes' and through subtle processes of influencing education through central policy pronouncements, and through workshops, meetings, conferences and training programmes.

There is a large diversity in educational structures and facilities in India. The general pattern of education adopted at the national level, commonly known as the 10+2+3 pattern, envisages a broad-based general education for all pupils during the first ten years of schooling. However there are variations at the state level. Variation also occurs in terms of the structures of the educational system and the bodies entrusted with providing education. Rural and urban areas can also be distinct in terms of administrative structures and facilities.

There are a wide range of education providers that differ in terms of number, quality of what they offer and facilities. In a large number of government schools the facilities provided are not sufficient to qualify them as schools, rather they are termed 'alternate schools'. The formal schools run by the government differ greatly both between and within states.

Juneja (2005) describes how there is more diversity of provision in cities. In addition to state-funded schools, there are municipal schools, state government schools, central schools (Kendriya Vidyalayas) and schools run for the children of various public sector workers (e.g. army, navy, air force, police, railways, etc). There are schools run by the Tibetan Schools Organisation and many public sector companies, such as the Atomic Energy Commission, Indian Airlines, Indian Oil Corporation may also run schools for the children of their staff. There are private schools affiliated to the State Boards of Education, the Central Board of Secondary Education, (CBSE), the Indian Certificate of School Education (ICSE), and in places like Delhi and Mumbai there are schools run by international embassies. There may also be a number of unrecognised schools feeding into secondary schools. A number of children may also be enrolled through correspondence courses to the National or State Open Schools (NOS or SOS). These are described in this paper.

Since colonial times, the private sector has also been an education provider in India. Schools in the private sector are more diverse than the schools in the government sector. Private sector schools may be aided by the government, or, as is increasingly the case, unaided. They may operate as schools recognised by the government or may remain unrecognised.

In the face of such difference, no single paper can adequately cover all the diversities in school supply in India. Nor can any scheme of classification expect to portray its variety and uniqueness. With this in mind, this paper relates the diversity of school supply to issues of access and participation in primary education. The paper uses evidence from research literature and government reports in order to ask the question: does every child have equal access to primary education especially where there is such a diversity of education supply? It also identifies areas for further research.

This paper outlines the diverse range of schooling options available in India and some emerging trends, noticeable in the past few years. Finally, this paper looks at research evidence that examines how this diversity of schooling options affects access to primary schooling. It looks at drop-out rates from these schools, learning achievement and transition

possibilities from primary to the upper primary stage. This paper looks at whether this diversity works towards ensuring every child has equal access to primary education.

The paper is written in relation to a programme of research being carried out by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE)[2] which looks at meaningful access to education in a range of country contexts, including India.

[2] See www.create-rpc.org for further information on CREATE. Lewin (2007) provides some of the background thinking and conceptual framework behind CREATE.

2. Diversity of schooling options

In this section a variety of providers of education are outlined and some of the key debates highlighted.

2.1 Government Schools

Schools run by the government are usually referred to as government/municipal schools in India and are largely synonymous with formal schooling. Government schools discussed in this section include schools run by different levels of government, central, state and local body/district (municipal) level. The schools run by the government can be categorised according to the level of government that manages the school. Responsibility for the primary cycle of schooling has recently been devolved to the district level in some states (GoI, 1993b), while in some cities devolution of responsibility for primary education has been in place for around two hundred years. Practices in these cities are different to their state. There is a wide variation among states in the extent to which they have devolved responsibility for schools to the third tier of government below state level.

In each district there may be a 'model' school, in which case the government school would be known as the government model school. Model schools were established in colonial times and continue today. Places in these schools are sought after as they are often better equipped, with more teachers in place than other government schools.

The EGS or Education Guarantee Schools have recently been established as formal government schools. EGS schools were set throughout India under the SSA. These schools, usually staffed by a single untrained local 'teacher', were set up to provide schooling facilities in areas that did not qualify for a full primary school. These schools were also envisaged as feeder schools to the larger primary schools that were usually at a greater distance from the habitation. The guarantee of education was given to a group of parents, who got together to demand a school for at least ten children. Within three months, a local youth was identified and put in place to start teaching the children. Govinda and Biswal (2006) comment that smaller schools in the EGS scheme (and alternative models) appear to have been successful in drawing a greater number of children into school. They raise questions however about the future policy implications of these small schools and how these children move onto other forms of education.

While both model and EGS schools represent diversification from the norm, model schools have evolved to provide quality education to generally a select and exclusive group. EGS schools evolved in response to the need to include the masses and often have poorer quality provision.

The Central Government runs three categories of schools – the Kendriya Vidyalayas (literally translated as Central schools), the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and the Central Tibetan Schools for Tibetan refugees (not discussed in detail here).

The Kendriya Vidyalayas (Central schools) were created in 1965 as separate schools for the children of transferable Central Government employees. With most education provision being managed at the state level, the curriculum, medium of instruction and text books vary according to state. This causes disruption for the children of employees who have to move location on a regular basis. The Kendriya Vidyalayas have a four-fold mission: a) to cater for

the educational needs of children of transferable Central Government employees including defence and para-military personnel by providing a common programme of education; b) to pursue excellence and set the pace in the field of school education; c) to initiate and promote experimentation and innovations in education in collaboration with other bodies like the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT); and d) to develop the spirit of national integration and create a sense of 'Indianness' among children. These schools, which are maintained and administered by the Central Government, are better funded and better equipped than the state government schools, and are more sought after than the district Model schools. In the Kendriya Vidyalayas, the national average cost per learner to the government is around Rs. 11,000, whereas it is only around Rs. 1,800 (varying from state to state) in ordinary government schools (Raina, 2006). The medium of instruction in these schools is often English, at least at the secondary stage.

Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, residential schools were set up to cater to rural children all over the country after the Education Policy of 1986 (GoI, 1986). There is at least one in every district. The objectives of the Navodaya Vidyalaya Scheme are to a) provide good quality modern education, including a strong component of culture, inculcation of values, awareness of the environment, adventure activities and physical education, to talented children predominantly from rural areas, without regard to their family's socio-economic condition; b) to ensure that all students of Navodaya Vidyalayas attain a reasonable level of competence in three languages as envisaged in the three-language formula; and c) to serve as focal points for improvement in quality of school education in each district through the sharing of experiences and facilities. These schools, although rurally-based, have been accused of having created a super layer over ordinary rural schools; they have been accused of being based on the vision of elite residential public schools. Admission to these schools is greatly sought after and tests are conducted to select children to these schools.

Ashram Schools provide education to children from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community. State governments provide free education, accommodation and stipends exclusively for students belonging to ST communities to facilitate their integration into mainstream society. Ashram Schools are in forest areas, near dwellings of tribal communities and near *tehsil* towns (local administrative headquarters), but never in cities or large townships. Ashram School buildings usually have one room of approximately 300-400 sq. ft. size with one small classroom, an office room, and a kitchen, where meals for the students are prepared (Upadhyay et al, 2005).

2.2 Alternate models of delivery

The government, in setting up schooling for the masses, followed a uniform standard of provision until 1979-80 (Ramachandran, 2004). In these years, the Non Formal Education (NFE) scheme was initiated as a pilot project following recommendations from the Education Commission (GoI, 1964-66). These initiatives included project and programme-based education provision, supported by government, but not necessarily funded and run by government (with some implementation, for example being carried out by NGOs).

The 1970s and 1980s also saw a range of delivery methods being introduced, which included night schools for adults in urban areas. Large projects such as Lok Jumbish (LJ) in Rajasthan, the Bihar Education Project (BEP), the Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (UPBEP) and the Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP), were introduced. These programmes

drew on the innovative experiences from NFE, such as the Shiksha Karmi Project, Mahila Samakhya and the social mobilisation efforts through Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs). They could be seen as forerunners to the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) (Ghosh, 2004).

The District Primary Education Programme in turn led to the development of the SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) in 2002. SSA is a scheme financed centrally by the government to ensure the universalisation of elementary education. Under SSA, the national Education Guarantee Scheme 'EGS' provided education provision through methods other than formal schooling, these alternate modes of education, were collectively referred to as Alternative Initiatives in Education (AIE). This idea was originally initiated on experimental basis in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Although provided through NGOs, alternate methods for provision of education came to be adopted by the government as well.

As the Alternate School programme evolved, a wide range of strategies were tried out in various parts of the country (Ghosh, 2004). Bridge courses used a non-formal model to get out-of-school children back to school. Ghosh (2004) outlines the following strategies emerging from different states:

- *Full-time schools for children of remote and unserved habitations:* This includes community schools serving the tribal and coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, multi-grade centres for the tribal and coastal areas of Kerala, contract schools in Maharashtra operating in a few tribal districts, single-teacher multi-grade schools in remote habitations in parts of Uttar Pradesh and the EGS in Madhya Pradesh.

- *Long and short duration camps and bridge courses:* These courses aim to bring the out-of-school children back into formal schools after reaching appropriate learning levels. Strategies such as summer schools in Andhra Pradesh for children aged 6-8 and the 'back to school' drive in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh fall into this category. There are also long-duration residential camps for older working children in several districts of Andhra Pradesh. These are organised along the lines of the model initiated by the M.V. Foundation in the Ranga Reddy District of Andhra Pradesh.

    - *Bridge courses during vacation offering remedial lessons:* Remedial lessons are offered to children who fall behind in school due to irregular attendance and the seasonal migration of families. For example, in Gujarat, a teacher from a formal school runs short-duration, condensed courses to cater to the children who migrate with their parents to sugarcane factories. On their return, they are mainstreamed back into the formal school, thus preventing the disruption of their studies.

    - *Schools for children of migrant labourers in sugarcane fields and salt farms:* The states of Gujarat and Maharashtra have tried to encourage employers of migrating families to provide minimum facilities at the worksite so that children can continue to study. One teacher from the nearest formal school is deputed to run the school.

- *Schools with specially designed curriculum for adolescent girls:* Angana Vidyalayas in Bihar and Prehar Pathshalas in Uttar Pradesh are two examples of providing education to adolescent girls who are out of school mainly due to social, cultural and economic factors. The curriculum is designed to suit the needs of these girls and draws on the experience of the Mahila Samakhya programme.

- *Strategies for the education of urban deprived children:* Migration to urban areas often results in the disruption of education. The AS programme of the DPEP in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and other states, is addressing the problems in urban slums. They offer special programmes to help children bridge the gap before they can be enrolled back into formal schools.

- *Support to maktabs and madrasas*: This provision aims to reach girls from Muslim communities by providing supplementary training to the instructors in traditional *madrasas* and *maktabs* where religious instruction is provided. Programmes in Assam and Uttar Pradesh have been able to help girls from Muslim communities access basic education.

- *Seasonal hostels for children of families who migrate during lean agricultural seasons:* These hostels help prevent migrant children from falling behind on their studies. There have been small experiments in Gujarat to retain children in their villages by accommodating them in temporary hostels so that they can continue their studies while their parents migrate seasonally to urban centres in search of work.

Ghosh (2004) acknowledges that in many ways the evolution from 'equality' to greater diversity has brought with it more flexibility and has enabled access to education to remote and marginalized groups, albeit on a limited scale. He also suggested that the opening up of the NFE scheme to NGOs and the renewed commitment of the National Policy on Education (NPE) (GoI, 1986) served to draw attention to the circumstances and needs of these poor, disadvantaged and marginalised children and the imperative to provide them with primary education. Ghosh (2004) gives the example of the Shiksha Karmi project in Rajasthan where Shiksha Karmis teach children using the existing buildings of primary schools. Much innovative work has been done to introduce NFE in tribal areas, for example, by starting night schools for working children and experimenting with new activity-based pedagogy, as well as garnering community support for these programmes (Ghosh, 2004).

2.3 Private Schools

Private schools are established by and managed by the private sector. In India, schools managed by the private sector could be variously described as aided, unaided, recognised, or unrecognised.

To explain further, a large number of private schools are run on grants provided by the government, and are therefore referred to as private-aided schools, they represent a kind of partnership between government and the private sector. In many places, private schools started by philanthropists were struggling to survive. These schools were converted into government schools and their teachers became public servants secure salaries. In other situations, private schools were run either independently, or through a partnership agreement

with the government. These were referred to as 'grant-in-aid' schools. In many cities, grant-in-aid schools were the official and only means of upper primary education and secondary education in colonial times. Conversely, unaided schools get no financial support from government.

Many schools are recognised (i.e. registered by local authorities), while others remain unrecognised and therefore often unaccounted in statistics. Recognised schools are granted recognition by a statutorily empowered authority (the government or by an authority empowered by the government), in accordance with the law, rules, or executive instructions governing the recognition of schools. Government recognised private schools work within the overall framework of grant-in-aid rules whether they are receiving grants or not. Recognised schools are periodically required to report their activities to the officials of the Education Department and follow prescribed procedures for the appointment of teachers and the provision of infrastructure. Recognition is subject to continued compliance with these regulations. The department also inspects and supervises recognised schools and recognition can be withdrawn if they are found to be violating procedures. Unrecognised schools are not monitored, nor are they included in government statistics. For further discussion on unrecognised schools see section 4.1. There is also a growing literature on low-cost private schools (e.g. Tooley and Dixon, 2003) which have increased in numbers in some states. This is reviewed in Harma (2010), who argues that though such schools do respond to market demand and flourish were the quality of government schools is judged to be low, the costs preclude participation by the poorest.

2.4 Quasi Government schools

Quasi government schools are generally associated with the armed forces. These schools are neither exclusively private, nor are they government established / overtly aided. They appear to enjoy the independence from government regulations that characterise private schools. But, at the same time, they are also alleged to be recipients of public funds and privileges, conveyed, not through the departments of education, but though other indirect or direct means owing to their association with prestigious government services. These schools are often considered elitist. They are perceived to be less than transparent about the aid they receive and issues of transparency and accountability have been raised in recent years. The assessment of these schools as private or government continues to be hazy.

These may be schools set up by the officers or their wives of specific government services, through the formation of an 'association' registered as a non-profit (charity) organisation. The names of the schools set up by them usually include the name of the specific service category (for example 'Naval Primary School') and they cater primarily to the children of employees of the specific category of government servants. Quasi government schools are discussed in more detail in Section 4.3.

3. Government and Private Schools: Spread, Share of Enrolment, Structure, Cost and Facilities.

3.1 Share of Schools

Private provision of schooling has been growing in coverage in India in recent years. While according to the Selected Educational Statistics of the Government of India, more than 90 percent of primary schools are run by government and local bodies (see Table 2), the share of private sector coverage has increased to higher levels. The private-aided sector between 1973/4-2004-5 shrunk to almost half its former size, and just one third in the case of the upper primary stage.

Table 2: Percentage of schools under different types of management structure 1973-74 and 2004-05 - India

Type of school	Government and Local Bodies schools (%)	Private-aided schools (%)	Private-unaided schools (%)
Primary School			
1973-74	93.3	5.0	1.6
2004-05	90.2	2.6	7.2
Upper Primary			
1973-74	77.6	17.8	4.7
2004-05	72.2	6.4	21.4
Secondary/Hr. Secondary			
1973-74	37.4	57.0	5.6
2004-05	41.1	29.4	29.6

Source: GoI., 2007.

However, it is uncertain whether the data in Table 2 represents the exact size of the private sector. Government data gathering exercises are usually limited to recognised schools, and may not count most of the unrecognised schools.

Statistics on school education are usually more accurate for state government schools and aided schools. Central government and private schools have been less than cooperative in some data gathering exercises. According to Mehta (2006), the DISE data suffers from inconsistencies, resulting from how schools fill in the school information schedule. In 2005, two other estimates of school coverage were published (Pratham, 2005; the Indian Market Research Bureau). However, neither of these data sets is relevant for estimating the size of the private sector, since they were restricted to rural areas and private schools are largely located in urban areas.

The latest DISE report (Mehta, 2007) admits that its coverage of certain kinds of schools may be less than complete and that despite all efforts to ensure that all recognised schools are covered under DISE, 'schools like Navodaya Vidyalayas, Sainik Schools, Military Schools, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV), Project Schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Tibetan Schools, and other private management schools, are supposed to be covered under the DISE but their coverage varies from state to state' (Mehta, 2007: 17).

In elementary schooling, it has been estimated, (DISE, 2007) that private management run about 17 percent of all schools (Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of elementary schools by management type: 2005-06

Management Category	Government Management of schools		Private Management of schools		Total number of schools
	Number of schools	929,345	Number of schools	189,521	1,124,033
	% of schools	83.1*	% of schools	16.9	100.00
Department of Education	69.7		Private Aided	33.5	
Tribal/Social Welfare Department	5.5		Private Unaided	66.5	
Local Body	24.0				
Other Managements	0.8				
Government	**100.00**		**Private**	**100.00**	

* Including 0.46 percent non responding schools
Source: (TableB7), Mehta, 2007.

Of the privately-managed schools, 33.5 percent are private-aided and the remaining 66.5 percent are private unaided schools. At the secondary and the higher secondary stage, around 60 percent of schools are privately-managed. The DISE report (2007) notes that over the past three years although there has been an increase in the number of government schools, in comparison to the privately managed schools, in percentage terms, 'they have a declining trend during the period from 2002-03 to 2005-06' (Mehta, 2007: 32). The report also points out that correspondingly, the share of private management schools (aided and unaided), during the same period, increased marginally.

3.2 Enrolment Share

Data collected from households in 1995-96 through the NSS (National Sample Survey) 52nd round (GoI, 1998) estimates that the enrolment share of the private sector schools, at the national level is about 17.3 percent at the primary stage and 11.4 percent at the upper primary stage. According to the NCAER (National Council of Applied Economic Research) survey of 1993, these figures were 11.3 and 8.3 percent, respectively.

It is interesting, given the data on school types from the Tables 2 and 3, that private schools have a larger share of enrolments at the primary stage, than the proportion of private schools. On the other hand, the proportion of private schools to government schools increases at the upper primary stage, but their enrolment share declines. The greater enrolment share of government schools at this stage may perhaps not be unexpected, in the context of the higher costs of secondary education.

3.3 Structure

School structures differ greatly. Three percent of schools in India (see Table 4) provide a complete cycle of schooling (i.e. primary to higher secondary). Other schools provide one, perhaps two and sometimes three cycles of education.

In India, the primary cycle usually refers to grades 1-5 while the upper primary refers to grades 6 to 8. Elementary education is usually grades 1-8. This differs in some states. For example, primary education is from grades 1-5 in 23 out of the 35 states / Union Territories (UTs); and grades 1-4 in the remaining 12. The upper primary stage refers to grades 6-8 in 22 of the States / UTs, but grades 5-7 in 12 states / UTs. In one state, (West Bengal) the upper primary stage differs from the two established patterns, and comprises of grades 5-8. The

diversity in structure is important because in 12 of the 35 states, elementary education is made up of one year less of schooling i.e. seven rather than eight years. Many pupils (see Table 1) leave school after the elementary phase, some with only seven years in school.

Table 4: Diversity of school structure in India

	School Category					No Response	Total Schools
	Primary only	**Primary with Upper Primary**	**Primary with Upper Primary & Secondary/Hr. Secondary**	**Upper Primary Only**	**Upper Primary & Secondary/ Hr. Secondary**		
Number of Schools	738,150	199,946	27,907	89,164	60,306	8,560	1,124,033
Percentage of total (%)	65.7	17.8	2.5	7.9	5.4	0.8	100.00
Rural							87.23

Source: (Table B1), Mehta 2007.

As can be seen from Table 4, almost two thirds of all schools are primary only schools, while less than a fifth (17.8 percent) provides elementary education. Only one school in twenty (5.4 percent) provide the opportunity for students out of primary school to complete their schooling, while less than three percent of schools provide schooling from primary to upper secondary. Only 37 percent of all those who enter grade I reach grade X (see Table 1).

The complexity of schools and their structures is commented upon by Jeffery et al (2007), in their study of secondary schools in Bijnour town and its surroundings. The schools they looked at fell into three main categories:

- Government Hindi-medium schools, of two kinds: Fifty-five junior high schools, mostly coeducational, teaching only classes 6-8; two single-sex intermediate college, teaching classes 6-12, and one girls' middle school, teaching classes 6-10. Admission is by examination, for those entering in class 6 or class 9, or on public board exam results for those entering in class 11.
- Aided Hindi-medium schools, 7 single-sex schools in Bijnor town itself (three for boys, four for girls) and five coeducational schools in the hinterland. Most of the girls aided schools are aided only for classes 6-8, whether they stop at class 8 or go on to classes 10 or 12, whereas the boys aided schools are all aided at least for classes 6-10 and many also up to class 12.
- Unaided schools, all coeducational: About forty-five Hindi-medium schools, most of which began with the primary classes and are slowly expanding to offer secondary schooling. Six English-medium schools all founded since 1987. These also offer primary schooling, and because of their more recent foundation they have started teaching the higher secondary classes since 1995. (Jeffery et al, 2007: 447).

Jeffery et al (2007) describe this range of schools as typical of the situation in much of UP.

School structure, presented in Table 5 below, relates to the provider or management type of the school. Table 5 presents the category of the schools cross-tabulated with management type. The Departments of Education and local bodies provide more primary / upper primary only schools. The largest numbers of whole schools (primary with upper primary and secondary / hr. secondary) are provided in the private sector.

Table 5: Percentage of schools by management and category: 2005-06

School Category	School Management					
	Department of Education	**Tribal/Social Welfare Department**	**Local Body**	**Private aided**	**Private unaided**	**Other Management**
Primary Only	63.4	4.9	21	2.9	7.2	0.56
Primary with Upper Primary	44.0	2.2	28.3	5.4	19.6	0.45
Primary with Upper Primary & Secondary/Hr. Secondary	29.1	3.8	3.8	12.9	48.0	2.28
Upper Primary Only	68.5	7.8	1.6	9.1	11.6	1.41
Upper Primary & Secondary/ Hr. Secondary	37.1	2.8	15.3	29.5	14.4	0.87
All Schools	**57.6**	**4.5**	**19.8**	**5.6**	**11.2**	**0.67**
All Schools (Rural Areas)	61.1	4.9	21.1	4.5	7.8	0.61
All Schools (Urban Areas)	35.1	1.7	12.1	14.1	35.8	1.11

Source: Table B7, Mehta, 2007.

Table 5 also shows that private providers of education are concentrated in urban areas, and in urban areas make up almost half the schools, whereas in rural areas, private providers only account for about 12 percent of schools. Juneja (2005) points out that private schools are largely an urban phenomenon. According to a ten city study (Juneja, 2001b) the private sector was the major provider of education in the cities at the elementary level. Although at the district level, the share lowers. For example, at the Indore district level in 1998 the percentage share of government to private managed schools was 72.4 percent (government): 27.6 percent (private). The situation was the opposite in Indore city, where the percentage share of government to private managed schools in 1999 was 32.6 percent (government): 67.4 percent (private). Among the ten cities in the study the share of private primary schools ranged from a low of 38 percent of all schools (Coimbatore City) to as high as 76 percent (Kanpur City).

Private-aided schools are most represented at the upper primary stage, whereas only three percent of their schools are primary only. They provide about five percent of schools combining primary with upper primary, 13 percent whole schools, and about 30 percent of the schools from upper primary to secondary.

According to DISE data (Mehta, 2007), of the total of 1,124,033 schools teaching at the elementary level across 604 districts, about 223,158 are run under the Local Body management. In a few states, the percentage of such schools is higher than the all-India average, for example, in Andhra Pradesh this percentage is as high as 72.8, 71.0 in Gujarat, 69.1 in Maharashtra, 32.1 in Rajasthan and 56.3 in Tamil Nadu. Two of these states include the 'presidency cities' Bombay and Madras whose municipalities were entrusted with running primary schools in colonial times. Delhi has 39.8 percent of its schools under Local Body management. The rest of the states have between zero and six percent of schools being run by the Local Body management.

3.4 Small Schools

The DISE 2005-06 reports the presence of a large number of small schools (55.3 percent of all primary schools), with enrolments of less than 100 students. It is the presence of such schools, in small and remote habitations to which Govinda and Biswal (2006) credit the steep reduction of out of school children in recent years. However, this has lead to a situation where these children are often taught by poorly qualified, low paid para-teachers. Para-teachers, who are usually teachers on low salary contracts and who may not be qualified, are favoured by some state governments, as they can save huge resources and they avoid some of the managerial problems of teachers (Tilak, 2004). Govinda and Bandyopadhyay (2008) express concern for children in such schools beyond the second or third grade, and the need to consolidate, plan and create support systems for continued education of these children. 27.4 percent of small primary schools are in urban areas, suggesting for them, moves to more mainstream schooling might be possible.

The National Policy on Education (GoI, 1986) talks of providing upper primary schools with every primary school, however the reality is quite different. As Table 6 shows the estimated ratios of primary to upper primary sections in schools, indicate that for every 2.6 primary sections there is only one upper primary section in the same school. Mehta (2007) describes this ratio as 3.2 in 2002-3. Thus there are many small primary schools unattached to upper primary schools.

Table 6: Ratio of primary to upper primary sections in the same School (2005-06)

	Department of Education	Tribal/Social Welfare Department	Local Body	All Government Managements	Private aided	Private unaided	All Private Management	All schools
All India	3.1	3	3.1	3.1	0.9	1.5	1.3	2.57
Rural	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.2	0.9	1.6	1.3	2.79
Urban	2.3	1.9	2.1	2.2	0.9	1.3	1.2	1.57

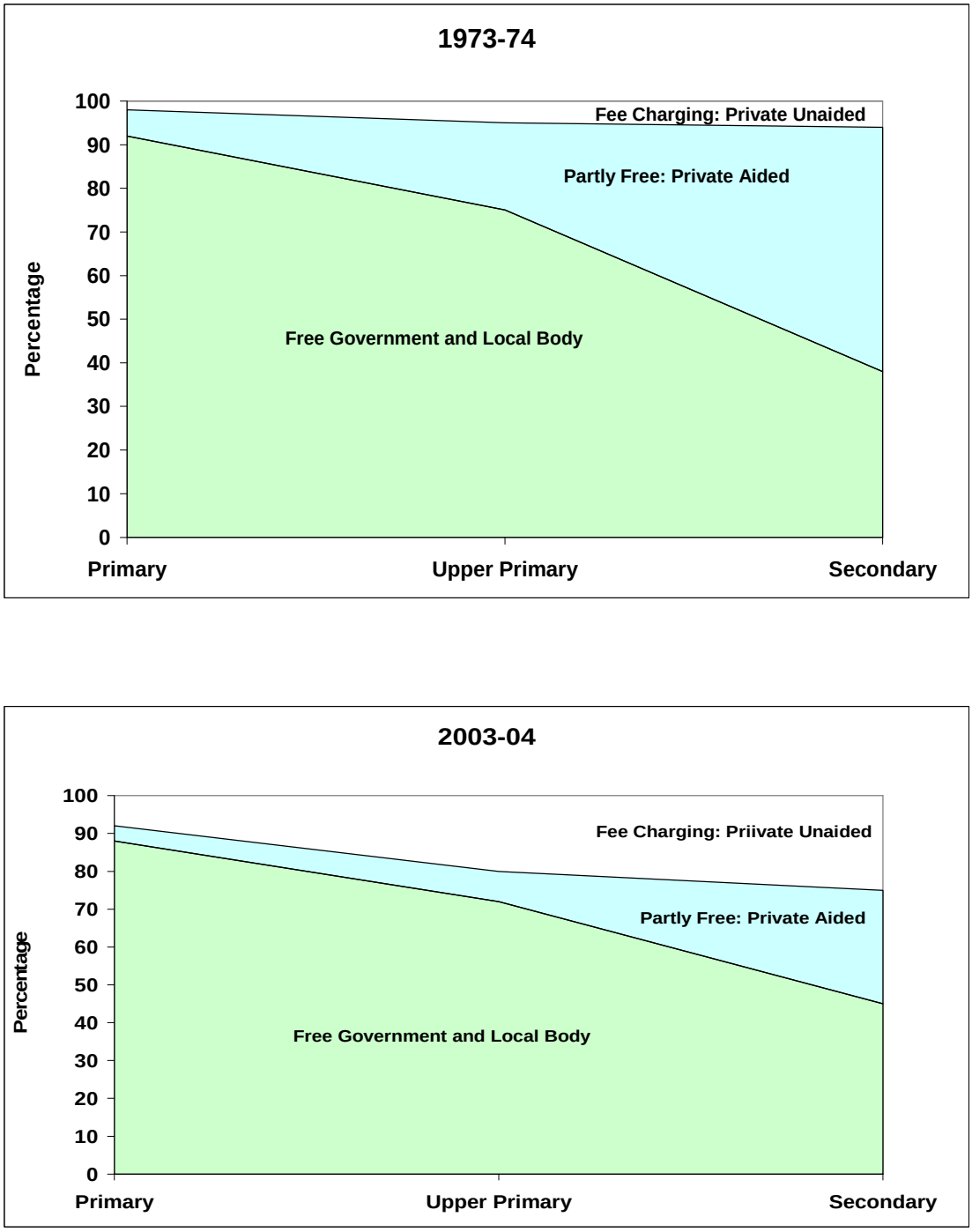
Source: Table B3, Mehta, 2007.

As Table 6 shows lower ratios are observed in schools under private management while government schools are higher. Upper primary schools for children in rural areas, whether attending government or private schools, tend to be more distant as fewer primary schools have upper primary schools located in the same building.

3.5 Costs of schooling

'Nothing emphasises the heterogeneity of the schooling scene as much as schooling costs' (De et al, 2005: 108). This section explores this statement in the context of India.

Figure 1: Squeezing the space for free education: how much schooling is free?



Data source: GoI, 2007.

Figure 1 indicates that over the thirty year period from 1973-74 to 2003-04 education provision from the low cost / free government-aided sector has remained almost the same in terms of its share among providers, whereas the private unaided sector (dependant on fees charged) has gained in its percentage share. While in 1973-74, less than six percent of secondary schools were private unaided, these fee charging secondary schools accounted for almost a third of all secondary schools in 2003-04. In the space of three decades, unaided fee

charging schools occupy a third of the space in the secondary education sector, possibly squeezing the chances of the poor to complete the high school education (see Figure 1).

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2) from 1998-99 (IIPS, 2000) points out that many children never attend school because of financial constraints. Among the 6-17 year-old population, it was reported that the cost of schooling was one of the main reasons for non-enrolment in school. In urban areas, a larger proportion of children cited (28.5 percent of the boys and 30.1 percent of girls) cost as the main reason for being out-of-school, compared to children in rural areas (25.8 percent of the boys and 23.8 percent of girls).

Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006), on the basis of a survey in eight states with the largest out-of-school populations, found that the financial burden on households with children going to private-unaided schools is much higher than those with children going to government schools. The financial burden in urban areas (for all categories of schools) is much larger than in rural areas. In rural areas the annual household cost of sending a child to a private unaided elementary school was 3.4 times the cost in government schools in Andhra Pradesh, and anywhere between 1.4 and 1.9 times in the rest of the states. In urban areas, the difference was 3.7 times in Tamil Nadu, and between 1.8 and 2.7 times in the rest of the states. In absolute terms, on an average the cost per child in rural government schools in the states was Rs 891 per annum, while in private unaided schools it was Rs 1,588. In urban areas it was Rs 1,100 in government schools, and Rs 2,268 in private unaided ones.

Jeffery et al (2005:47) point out that government and aided schools are undergoing a 'creeping privatization', with a declining proportion of teachers being paid by the government and increase in school fees charged. Moreover, children attending all types of school are spending more time with private tutors. Since the late 1980s, unaided schools have grown rapidly in number and in the proportion of children they teach. In rural areas, Leclercq (2003) found much the same story except that being a poorer area, fees in the private school varied depending on location and stature. He also mentions a voluntary 'donation' of several hundred rupees to be given to schools on enrolling, which is in addition to monthly and annual fees (Leclercq, 2003:1867).

Table 7 shows the school fees and the total expenditure on schooling in government and private schools in the sample of schools in Uttar Pradesh studied by De et al (2005). The table indicates that even in government schools, costs of schooling can be high.

Table 7: Average annual household expenditure on schooling

	Average Annual Household Expenditure on Schooling at			
	Primary Stage		Upper primary Stage	
	School Fees	Total Expenditure*	School Fees	Total Expenditure*
Government	47	499	107	1,579
Private (fees below Rs.600)	420	1,373	753	1,967
Private (fees between Rs.600 and Rs.1200)	857	2,427		
Private (fees greater than Rs.1200)	2,733	6,174	3,480	5,924

* Total expenditure includes school fees expenditure on stationery, textbooks, uniform, transport, private tuition, and other costs associated with schooling
Source: De et al., 2005.

This study highlights the fact that at the primary stage, government schooling requires the lowest household expenditure (Rs. 500 annually), and that expenditure rises sharply the different categories of private primary school. There is a rough proportionality between the tuition fee and other expenditure, meaning schools that charge high tuition fees also require proportionately higher schooling expenditures. This also implies that parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to be able to afford high fee schools. Sometimes the access to private schools is allowed for only some children within a household:

> When poor parents aspire but cannot afford the fees of private schools, they even differentiate among the children in their family. The extreme effect of such differentiation was sometimes found in families where girls were non-enrolled or walking long distances to government schools and boys were going to private schools (De et al, 2005:108).

Krishna and Brihmadesam (2006) highlight the fact that despite poverty, education is seen as a way out of hardships, driving many to try to complete secondary education. A respondent cited by them reports:

> We were very below average, you can say. We used to struggle for food sometimes… there used to be no money at home. My father had to borrow some money from his friends, and he used to bring grains for cooking that night. Till that time my mother used to wait for grains and then cook and sleep…She is from [an] agriculture family background. She used to tell us that it is very difficult to do agriculture, i.e., cultivation. She used to tell me, 'You better study.' In fact, she sold her gold chain once, the neck chain, and she gave that money to me to continue studies… (Krishna and Brihmadesam, 2006:3312).

The man above eventually completed high school and higher technical education, but demonstrates the determination needed to achieve in education even with a supportive family. De et al (2005) highlight the fact that parents, who have difficulty in paying the private school fees (about Rs 1,400 annually) at the primary stage, will probably find it even more difficult at upper primary / secondary stages, given the additional costs. They point out that, 'failures add to these costs, and many children in these households had to drop out. The few children who still go to private schools are mostly in the high fee ones' (De et al, 2005:109). They conclude, 'costs of schooling are some of the main excluding factors, since this is far higher whatever the type of school' (De et al, 2005:109).

Jeffery et al (2005) point out that profits are often the main reasons for establishing private schools, at least those set up in the past ten years or so:

> At least four of these schools have been established by families, partly to provide employment and business opportunities for an educated wife or daughter-in-law. The managers of these schools all claim to be fulfilling social obligations and carrying out a social service. In part, this is because profit-making from schooling is forbidden by the Constitution; school managers are also highly sensitive to accusations that, nonetheless, they pocket substantial sums from admission fees, etc. (Jeffery et al, 2005:54).

3.6 Facilities and resources

Resources and facilities in some schools are limited, particularly as Table 8 shows in government schools. Table 8 shows that in 2005-6 only about 19 percent of primary schools had an electricity connection, which severely limits what schools are able to do. Mehta (2007) points out that only 15 states had electricity connections in more than 50 percent of their total number of schools.

Table 8: Percentage of schools having electricity connection in school: 2005-06

School Category	**Percentage**							
	All Areas				**Rural Areas**	**Urban Areas**	**Govern-ment School**	**Private School**
	2002-03	**2003-04**	**2004-05**	**2005-06**				
Primary Only	12.24	14.57	17.23	18.82	15.52	52.84	14.20	60.13
Primary with Upper Primary	45.99	50.74	52.10	53.79	47.74	80.47	45.75	77.81
Primary with Upper Primary & Secondary/Hr. Secondary	73.71	75.44	78.37	79.22	70.70	93.00	64.93	88.40
Upper Primary Only	18.93	20.91	22.80	26.09	21.14	70.91	20.66	46.92
Upper Primary & Secondary/ Hr. Secondary	74.25	77.86	77.45	78.31	73.24	93.19	72.50	85.71
All Schools	**21.64**	**25.23**	**28.37**	**30.39**	**25.08**	**69.20**	**22.51**	**69.78**

Source: Table C6, Mehta, 2007.

4. Emerging Trends

Some emerging trends have become noticeable in the past few years, these will be described below.

4.1 The Growth of Private Unrecognised Schools

Many formal schools are recognised (i.e. registered by local authorities), while others remain unrecognised and therefore often unaccounted in statistics. Recognised schools are granted recognition by a statutorily empowered authority (the government or by an authority empowered by the government), in accordance with the law, rules, or executive instructions governing the recognition of schools.

Unrecognised schools are different though. Even though a large number of children attend these schools, they do not officially exist, and are beyond the reach of the regular statistical databases in the country. The Selected Educational Statistics from the Government of India includes only recognised schools, as does the All India Educational Survey from NCERT. DISE data too is based on school level data provided by government officers, and therefore is usually limited to recognised schools. However, according to the DISE Analytical Report 2005-06 some unrecognised schools are included:

> In addition to a few uncovered recognized schools, unrecognized schools are also not covered under the DISE which in a few states may be in large numbers. However, states like Andhra Pradesh and Punjab have extended the coverage of the DISE to unrecognized schools in their states and collected information by using the DISE Data Capture Format. In both these states, the number of schools as well as enrolment in unrecognized schools is significant (Mehta, 2007:17).

According to Kingdon, (2005), few studies have attempted to estimate the size of the unrecognised school sector in India, since such an exercise entails, in the absence of any register of unrecognised schools, going from street to street to find such schools, which may be difficult.

Attention to the large-scale presence of unrecognised schools in India was first drawn by data collected by the NSS 52nd round (GoI, 1998) which collects household data on education, by nature of the institution attended. Overall, both in rural and urban areas, about 4 percent of the students were found to be attending educational institutions that were not recognised. At the primary level, attendance in unrecognised institutions was 6.4 percent in urban areas, and 4.3 percent in rural areas. At upper primary and secondary level, the rural / urban difference was not so great; however, in the case of higher education attendance in unrecognised institutions was 4.7 percent in rural areas, against 1.5 percent in urban areas.

Field study estimates of the share of unrecognised schools, is far greater than indicated by the NSS 52nd Round data (GoI, 1998). For example, the PROBE survey (PROBE Team, 1999) taking place in 1996 in five north Indian states carried out a complete census of all schools in 188 sample villages. It found 41 private schools, out of which 26 (63 percent) were unrecognised. Aggarwal (2000) too found that in four districts of Haryana in 1999, that there were 2,120 private primary schools of which 878 (41 percent) were unrecognised. Based on the date of establishment of each school, Aggarwal (2000) estimated that the number of unrecognised schools in Haryana had doubled roughly every five years. Similarly, Mehta

(2005) found that in seven districts of Punjab, there were 3,058 private elementary schools of which 2,640 (86 percent) were unrecognised and they had grown rapidly in the past few years. Of the total of 2,640 unrecognised private schools, only 16.4 percent of them were established before 1986. 26 percent were established between the years 1996 to 2000, and almost 30 percent between 2001 and 2005.

Studies indicate a large number of these schools are unrecognised. For example, PROBE (1999) put the number at 63 percent of private schools; Aggarwal (2000), 41 percent; and Mehta (2005), 86 percent of schools. This indicates a large number of schools in existence, over and above those officially reported, making official planning and management difficult, as official data on schools is inadequate.

Unrecognised schools raise concerns for standards and the safety of children. In 2004 90 children died in a fire in an unrecognised school in Tamil Nadu, and a similar tragedy was averted in Delhi, in a school housed in the same building as a spray paint unit. School recognition standards in India are designed to ensure a safe, secure and healthy environment; with the availability of facilities such as laboratories, libraries, playgrounds, toilets and drinking water; with reasonable tuition fees and standard pay scales for teachers. Many unrecognised schools fail to reach these standards. In India, schools are not allowed to be run for profit, and although a right to establish and run schools exists, this right is subject to regulation by the state. Many unrecognised schools aim to make a profit and are privately owned.

In a recent judgement from the Delhi High Court (Civil Writ Petition 43/2006) against the growth of unrecognised schools, it was revealed that there are a larger number of unrecognised and unauthorised schools in Delhi than those that are authorised and recognised. A team deputed by the High Court inspected 10 such schools and found that they were running without a proper infrastructure, in unsafe locations, without qualified teachers and were able to make a profit by underpaying the teachers. These schools did not have playgrounds and one of them was run in no more than two rooms. The court itself acknowledged that, the lack of action of the government in providing good schools had created the space for these schools to set up, and as a result, endanger children and exploit the public.

Having said this, the differences between unrecognised and recognised schools are not always clear cut. De et al (2005:98) in their study of new private schools in UP report that there were different varieties of recognised schools: some had permanent recognition (as they satisfied stricter norms) and some temporary recognition to be renewed annually. Schools were often partly recognised and partly unrecognised and that schools with permanent recognition often had one section recognised (primary or upper primary) and one without recognition (secondary). The primary could have permanent recognition and the upper primary could have temporary recognition, while the secondary no recognition at all. Their survey (De et al, 2005) reported that there had been a rapid growth in private unaided schools in recent years. Interestingly, it was the space created by government and their failure to provide enough new schools, which was quickly filled by the private sector, mostly unrecognised schools.

> While no government or aided schools were set up in the last 10 years, close to 70 percent of the unaided recognised schools and over 90 percent of the unrecognised schools were set up in these years (De et al, 2005:99).

Table 9: Proportion of schools established within the last ten years in Uttar Pradesh

Management Type	Percentage
Government	0
Private aided	0
Private unaided recognised	69
Private unaided unrecognised	92

Source: De et al, 2005

The De et al (2005) study also reported that schools were not always honest with parents and government about their recognition status.

> Claims were often exaggerated or downright untruths. One education officer told anecdotes of entire schools which could be fabricated for the purpose of the inspection for recognition and which were not to be located later (De et al, 2005:104).

For this reason, they found that schools were often reluctant allow investigators into the premises and there were several cases in which schools claimed to be recognised for a level for which they had not received recognition. In one notable example in Rampur, they discovered that a school that claimed to be a recognised secondary school during the preliminary school census was actually an unrecognised primary school.

The use of these schools by the public also raises a number of questions. For example, how and why does the government 'allow' such schools? Why do people send their children to these schools? Do the parents know that they are unrecognised and the implications of this? What happens to the children after the primary / elementary stage? Do they get mainstreamed, or do they join distance education courses at the secondary stage? What are the implications of such schooling options for accountability, the right to education and the administration of the system?

4.2 Hierarchies in Government Schools: The Case of Delhi

In recent years there has been a diversification in the types of schools run by the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, which promotes hierarchies in access to government schools. In the 1970s and 80s, there were two types of government schools: the municipal primary schools run by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), the New Delhi Municipal Corporation, (NDMC), and the Delhi Cantonment Board; and the secondary schools run by the state government. Some of the primary and secondary schools were designated as model schools, and were in theory, better staffed and better provided, and were expected to serve as a 'model' for other schools. The secondary schools were either only up to the secondary stage (class X), or they extended to the higher secondary stage. The senior secondary schools were considered to be more prestigious and more sought after.

Within the past fifteen years or so, two new categories of schools have been set up by the government of Delhi – the Sarvodaya Schools and the Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas. While the first selects its students through a lottery, the latter holds admission tests. Admission to the Sarvodaya schools is prized over admission to the ordinary municipal schools, and admission to the Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya is prized over admission to an ordinary senior secondary school.

4.2.1 Sarvodaya Schools

The Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi set up its own primary schools in the late 1990s which were in addition to the 1,800 or so municipal primary schools already in existence. Primary classes were introduced in the existing state government secondary schools to provide 'quality education to the children from class I to XII, under one roof as is being provided in the private public schools' (Directorate of Education, 2006).

These schools offering both the primary and the secondary cycles have become a great draw, and in theory, these schools are accessible to all. A lottery system was put in place to select students for the limited places (Mehdudia, 2004). The Delhi Government, which now has 363 such schools, is progressively converting its remaining 650 schools to Sarvodaya Schools.

4.2.2 Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas

The Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas were set up with the purpose of 'nurturing talent', (the term 'Pratibha' broadly translates as 'talent' and 'vikas' as 'development) with the explanation that:

> It is common knowledge that bright students from poor families are unable to realize their full potential because the spirit of competition does not exist when they compete with mediocre students (Welfare schemes, para 9, Directorate of Education, 2006).

The Pratibha and Sarvodaya series of schools are considered to be prestigious government institutions that have facilities and teaching at par with the public schools[3] in the capital (Mehdudia, 2004). These schools offer English and Hindi language options for social science papers, but all science and Maths teaching is in English. At present there are 14 Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas schools in Delhi. Admission to these schools is based on entrance exam results with children selected to sit from government primary and municipal schools. Primary schools pride themselves on the number of children that have made it from their school to the Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya. These schools are resourced differently from the normal government secondary schools. Their class sizes are strictly governed by an upper limit of 30. Their teachers are some of the best teachers from government schools, and the students are set apart in a uniform that distinguishes them from other students in government schools.

4.3 The Rise of 'Quasi-Government' Schools: The Example of Delhi

Quasi government schools have increased in numbers in recent years in Delhi with new schools for children of defence officers, police officers and civil servants. However, questions are being raised as to their status as private or government schools and their role in encouraging elitism in education provision.

Separate schools for the children of defence service officers began to be set up in the 1950s, setting a trend for others to emulate. The Army Public School was set up in 1953, followed by the Air Force School in 1955, and the Naval Public School in 1965. These schools were established under education societies, and provided English medium education to the children of officers and other ranks. These schools allowed children to move between schools as their

[3]In India a public school refers to *private* fee-charging elite schools, which are members of a "Public Schools association of Schools"

parents moved from postings in one location to another across a large country. Schools for children of defence personnel had already existed under the control of the Cantonment Boards for over a hundred years. However, these Cantonment Board schools were increasingly being left to the patronage of the lower ranks of the army and the civilians serving the Cantonment area. 'Central schools' were also set up after independence for the same purpose, but the expansion of defence services schools nevertheless continues.

The Delhi High Court in November 2008[4] ruled in a case challenging the decision of the Central Information Commissioner (CIC)[5], to consider army schools as public authorities since they were headed by serving officers from the forces. The government had contended that Air Force schools (and therefore army schools) were non-public funded ventures and were administered and managed by a society. A decision has yet to be reached on this matter.

In the meanwhile, the defence schools have now declared themselves to be private schools. A circular (Singh, 2004) posted on the website of the Army Welfare Education Society (AWES) that runs 126 schools throughout the country, now clearly states that:

> No financial aid/grant is received from the Central or the State Govts by AWES and the educational institutions run by it. No Public Funds are utilized by AWES and its educational institutions. AWES run educational institutions therefore come under the category of Unaided Private Educational Institutions.

Despite the availability of schools of the central government for children of their transferable staff, the officers of the prestigious civil services, including the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Foreign Service established another school in 1999. Its admission policy was visibly 'exclusive':

> As per the admission policy of the School, 60% of the seats are reserved for children of officers in the Civil Services and 40% are open to others. In partial fulfilment of the conditions under which the financial assistance from Performance Award Fund was extended, the Executive Committee of the Civil Services Society passed a resolution that children of Customs & Central Excise officers along with Defence, I.A.S., I.F.S. and Railways will be given preference for admission over the general (non-officers category) and children of officers of other services (Sanskriti School, 2007).

This school too was set up through an association of the wives of the officers of the 'civil servants belonging to various branches of the Government of India'. They established the Civil Services Society, the aim of the Society being, 'to fulfil a felt need in the city of Delhi for schools offering quality education to wards of officers of All India and Central Services coming on transfer' (Sanskriti School, 2007). The Sanskriti School described itself as 'a public service oriented, non-profit organisation, with the wife of the serving Cabinet Secretary as its chairperson' (Sanskriti School, 2007).

However, in the case of this school too, its status as a 'private school' was challenged. At a hearing[6], before the Central Information Commission, it was stated by the Principal that although the government did not give any grant for the day to day running of the school or for any other activity, it had given a substantial grant for setting up the infrastructure of the

[4] http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/001200811161540.htm
[5] The apex authority set up under the Right to Information Act, 2005
[6] http://cic.gov.in/CIC-Orders/Decision_23012007_3.pdf

School in its initial phase. Moreover, the wife of the Cabinet Secretary was the ex-officio chairperson of the board of management of the school and also wives of other civil service officers were on the board of management. On the basis of these two submissions, the commission decided that the Sanskriti School was a publicly funded school and it was accountable to the public and answerable to them.

Thus, it is seen that in India, while there are schools of varying structures running under public and private management, the picture become more complicated, where there are schools, which in order to benefit as both private and public funded schools, have been less than transparent and accountable.

4.4 The Growing Market for 'English Medium Schools'

English medium private schools have been referred to as 'passports to privilege' (Rahman, 2005) in Pakistan. In India it has been suggested that 'the English educated form a caste by themselves' (M.P. Desai, 1952, cited in Dakin, Tiffin and Widdowson, 1968:24). Markee (2002) has points out that there is a great desire among disadvantaged and marginalized communities to learn English and they are acutely aware of the economic importance of it. There is also increasing evidence to show that it is the medium of instruction and its implications for children's future roles in society that dominate the schooling choice of parents, rather than information about the quality of a school (Munshi and Rosenzwieg, 2006).

A survey by Munshi and Rosenzwieg (2006) asked parents the reasons for the choice of school for their child. Responses of 'quality of education' were relatively low and did not differ substantively across parents choosing English Medium schools and Marathi[7] schools (43.7 percent, versus 35.2 percent respectively). In contrast, almost 87 percent of parents who chose English as the medium of instruction for their child reported that better career opportunities were a factor in choosing those schools, whereas, around 62 percent of parents who had chosen Marathi language schools, listed closer community ties as important.

Similarly, De et al (2005) found that parents of children in private schools did not report significantly greater 'satisfaction with the quality of education'. Instead, they found that only 40 - 50 percent of parents choosing private schools, rated the school as good. Indeed, parents had little access to information about what goes on inside schools. When the researchers went inside the newer private schools in their study, they found that 'there was much imitation of elite private schools not only in belts and ties and benches but also in teaching of English' (De et al, 2005:105).

Miller (2005), in the context of Delhi, notes that, over the last decade, there has been a growth of private schools, which are often referred to as 'teaching shops' and are aimed at the urban poor. A key selling point is that they are English Medium'. One of the ways in which the English medium nature of the school is conveyed is through the use of the word 'public school' in their name. Jeffery et al (2005:54) describe how in Bijnor city, a number of schools 'appeal to a 'modern' constituency by including 'Public School' in their names, including a convent school, run by Catholics.

[7] Marathi is a language in India.

Yakkundimath (2003) in her paper on primary schools in the town of Dharwad, in Karnataka, points to the importance of English as a medium of instruction as a determining factor in school choice. Based on her interviews with stakeholders she found that:

> As English has become 'the language of social advantage and exciting economic opportunities', nowadays most of the parents in urban areas are willing to send their children to privately owned and managed private English–medium schools rather than to state-run vernacular-medium schools (Yakkundimath, 2003:304).

This demand has met with a corresponding response from private providers of education and Yakkundimath (2003) states that all English medium schools in that area were privately managed:

> In Hubli-Dharwad, there are 34 English-medium schools. All these, 34 schools are run by private management. Still there is a great demand for a few more English-medium schools, even though the cost of education in these schools is very high (Yakkundimath, 2003:304).

Existing schools too opened up English medium sections to existing schools in order to retain their clientele:

> The Headmistress of one the best Kannada-medium schools established in early 1940's told that, students felt that there are many advantages if they learn in English medium and many students migrated from their school to other English medium schools. Hence they are forced to start English medium section in 1994 (Yakkundimath, 2003:304).

Mehta (2005) in his study of unrecognised schools in seven districts of Punjab reports that there are a significantly higher percentage of English medium schools among them, compared to the newer recognised schools. The percentage of unrecognised English medium schools was 21.7 percent, as compared to 7.5 percent of recognised schools. This led Mehta (2005:35) to infer that, 'one of the reasons of attraction towards the unrecognised schools is the medium of instruction which is English in case of a good number of such schools.'

The attraction of English medium education is its perceived status and the better educational prospects it offers. Kamat (2007) considers the debate over English medium to be a national issue and fears that the:

> growth of the service sector, and the consequent demand for English proficiency has led to the unregulated growth of private coaching classes that focus on English conversational skills. The emphasis on rote learning and examinations has resulted in low proficiency not but in the English language but in regional languages as well (Kamat, 2007:227).

5. Diversity of Schooling Options and CREATE's Zones of Exclusion

The Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) looks at educational access through a framework of zones of exclusion. These are described in more detail in Lewin (2007) but consist of:

Zone 0 – children who are excluded from pre-schooling;
Zone 1 -children who have never been to school, and are unlikely to attend school; Zone 2 - children who enter primary schooling, but who drop out before completing the primary cycle;
Zone 3 - children who enter primary schooling and are enrolled but are "at risk" of dropping out before completion as a result of irregular attendance, low achievement, and silent exclusion from worthwhile learning;
Zone 4 – children who fail to make the transition to secondary school grades
Zone 5 children who enter secondary schooling but who drop out before completing the cycle;
Zone 6 children who enter secondary schooling and are enrolled but are "at risk" of dropping out before completion as a result of irregular attendance, low achievement and silent exclusion from worthwhile learning.

These zones are helpful in discussing different types of exclusion and some of the following discussion draws on this schema. However, for the purpose of this review on diversity of provision, access issues have been divided into four arenas: patterns of access; drop outs; schooling processes and quality; and transition to secondary school.

5.1 Diversity of Schooling: Patterns of Access

This section examines the available research evidence on the diversity of schooling options and greater accessibility to all especially in terms of admission and choices of parents to a larger range of schools.

5.1.1 Separate access to different schools.

Access to elementary schooling has become more diverse as indicated in previous discussion. For some the process has led to increased stratification and hardening of boundaries between schooling associated with different social and economic groups. Thus Leclercq (2003) reports (on the basis of field study of public schools in Betul and Dewas districts of Madhya Pradesh in 2002), that the addition of private schooling and the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) schools has caused the schooling system to be 'extended and diversified' rather than 'universalised'. In these districts, the children of different socio economic backgrounds have separate access to schools of different types (Leclercq (2003:21).

The separate access referred to by Leclercq (2003), is also highlighted by Ramachandran (2004) as 'hierarchies of access' of different socio-economic groups to different categories of schools. She points out that as one goes down the social and economic pyramid, access and quality issues become more pronounced. In her experience, the vast numbers of the poor in rural and urban India have to rely on government schools of different types, and the quality of these may vary. The relatively better-off in rural and urban India either access better government schools or opt for private-aided and unaided schools. In urban areas too, the

schools in resettlement colonies are often under-resourced, with poor infrastructure while those in better-off areas have access to better facilities and better quality provision.

Thus increasingly it appears that there is more polarised demand for some types of schools. Elite schools at the top of the hierarchy are the most sought after. Socio-economic status becomes more or less correlated with certain types of schools to which children have access. Therefore, even a broad spectrum of school diversity becomes narrow and limited when children from low socio economic groups find themselves restricted to only certain types of schools. The imperative to gain access to better schools puts immense pressure on parents and little children alike. For example, admissions to better schools may involve children signing up to pre-school in order to prepare them for the admissions interview. Schooling choice in these contexts is the power enjoyed by schools to chose who they want to admit.

English medium schools are by and large fee-paying and as and a result exclusive. Therefore offering this kind of diversity tends not to be relevant to those who have no access. Equity of access is not important to these schools, but their perceived status is. Leclercq (2003:1867) notes that 'social differentiation and signalling are crucial outputs of these schools.'

One category of government schools to which admission is eagerly sought are the Kendriya Vidyalayas. These schools, as described earlier, were set up by the Central government for the benefit of its transferable employees, so children who have to move can transfer schools easily. These schools are better resourced than the average government school.

Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006) found that government schools were frequented more by lower caste groups. Similarly, Srivastava (2001) on the basis of studies in two districts of UP, had found that upper castes preferred private schools.

5.1.2 Growing demand for whole schools

Research evidence from cities also shows that primary schools offering secondary education, as well, are in demand compared to schools that offer only primary schooling. Data from Coimbatore (Arumugam, 2001 cited in Juneja, 2001b) shows that enrolment trends are slightly negative for primary (only) schools, but are positive for 'higher elementary schools', which offer schooling up to Class X. Similarly, in Calcutta, Nambissan (2003) found there was demand for schools that provide the opportunity of continued education:

> According to teachers, children often leave before grade four when they receive admission in primary schools that are located within a secondary/higher secondary school building. This is mainly because children from primary D.P.S.C (District Primary Schools Council) schools that are located within buildings that house secondary/higher secondary schools are usually given preference in admission to grade 5 in the upper primary sections of these schools. Such primary schools are hence in demand as they offer some possibility of children's physical continuity in schooling (Nambissan, 2003:19).

5.1.3 Access and demand in rural–urban locations

The vast diversity of providers in urban areas has resulted in hierarchies of access, corresponding to socio-economic status. In rural areas though, with less diversity available, there are different experiences of access. Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006) surveyed the eight

states with three-quarters of all out-of-school children in India. In these states, when examining enrolment by management type and rural urban location they found that almost all children in rural areas tend to go to government schools. The exceptions are in U.P. where over a fifth of the children in rural areas were found to be in private schools and in Tamil Nadu where private-aided schools have always been important. They found that in urban areas the share of government schools drops dramatically. They also found that initial access is less of an issue now as enrolment grew sharply in all states including the poorest ones in the 1990s. They point out that the private sector is unlikely to reach children in remote areas: 'private entrepreneurs are unlikely to go to remote corners of the country to build schools now to reach the un-reached' (Mehrotra and Panchmukhi, 2006:428).

EGS schools have contributed to expanded access. Thus, in the state of Madhya Pradesh, the introduction of the Educational Guarantee Schools has increased initial access by providing schools to small habitations which don't already have schools. Leclercq (2003) studied the provisioning and functioning of such schools in two districts, one dominated by backward castes, and the other by tribal groups. He found that in the more remote habitations in the districts, access to education improved through the introduction of the EGS schools. On the other hand, in areas which were already served by schools, the increase in diversity of schooling options, whether through the introduction of the EGS or private schools, has had the result of reproducing social divisions, rather than reducing them.

It is also the case that female enrolments appear to have increased more urban locations. Sengupta and Guha (2002) describe how girls are more likely to be enrolled in school if they live in urban areas. This is explained by a number of factors: living in urban areas reduces the need for girls to work on farms and be involved in family labour; most city jobs require some schooling and educated men tend to prefer to marry educated women. Moreover, parental education and income levels are higher in cities.

This finding is corroborated by the DISE data and the Gender Parity Index for elementary classes. The GPI differs significantly depending on urban/rural location, and the management type of schools (Mehta, 2006). Based on DISE data from 2004-5 in 539 districts, an overall GPI of 0.88 was found for the elementary level. In urban areas this index was 0.93, compared to 0.87 in rural areas, indicating that at the elementary level boys out number girls, especially in rural areas. Data disaggregated into primary level and upper primary level shows that there are even more boys at the upper primary level (GPI=0.82) than at the primary level (GPI=0.90). This disparity can have serious implications for the UEE.

The picture presented indicates that a diversity of schooling options has contributed to greater access to schooling, but not equally for children of different socio-economic groups or genders. In urban areas, diversity is enhanced by market forces (though private aided and unaided schools) and there is greater access for girls. However, children from lower socio-economic groups have less ability to access the wide range of options available, with many attending lower-quality government schools.

5.2 Diversity of Schooling: Options and Dropouts

There are few systematic studies on dropout in relation to different types of school provision (Hunt, 2008), and it is not clear in India how school type may affect drop out independent of the household backgrounds of children. More research is needed therefore to get beyond lists of probably causes of drop out to understand in more depth what existing patterns are and

how they relate to diverse school contexts. Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006) on the basis of their study of drop outs in eight states of India (those with the highest drop-out rates), found that drop-out rates by grade 8 in government schools were much higher than in private schools. In their view, 'private unaided schools take all precautions to retain children within the school (because they are the stakeholders)' (Mehrotra and Panchmukhi, 2006:437). This presumably can be interpreted in part as related to the need to maintain school income from fees paid by children. They found that in rural government primary schools the share of children dropping out was: Andhra Pradesh 10 percent (versus 0.5 percent in private unaided schools), Assam nine percent (versus 0.8 percent), Bihar 16 percent (versus 2.6 percent), Madhya Pradesh 12 percent (versus 8 percent), Rajasthan 17 percent (versus 1.1 percent), Tamil Nadu 17 percent (versus 7 percent) and Uttar Pradesh 10 percent (versus 3.5 percent). In urban schools, there were large differentials in dropout.

Subrahmanian (2005) considers the direct and indirect costs of schooling to be associated with dropout for dalit children, with the situation in urban areas being more complex because of the growth of the private sector in competition with government schools. She cites the case of Ujjain where measures were taken to reduce the high dropout by allowing children to move between government and private schools at will. She documents how children were often double enrolled, coming back to government schools when inability to pay fees at the private schools threatened their education. This unexpected altruism of the government system was because it enabled the government teachers to claim high enrolment figures in their schools and demonstrate the case for keeping their school open.

Juneja (2005) found that in municipal primary schools in many cities in India that enrolments were declining, despite positive growth in other types of schools. This was not children dropping out but transferring. Findings from Mumbai, had reported large dropouts (Juneja, 2001a; Research Unit (BMC) and Paranjpe, 1992; Pratham, 1998) from municipal schools with 'transfer certificates' (Lambay, 1998). Children were being prematurely withdrawn from such schools and placed in private schools (Banerji, 2000).

Juneja (2005) further found this phenomenon to be specific to cities in which transition to the upper primary stage required admission to private aided schools. Chavan (2000) also reported that in anticipation of difficulties in cycle transition involving crossing over to private sector many parents withdraw their children from municipal schools at some stage before the end of the primary cycle and place them in private schools from which transition to the upper primary stage would be easier.

There is little comparative research available on dropping out from different educational providers in India. What there is suggests that there are likely to be complex patterns related to school type, location, funding and level of schooling.

5.3 Diversity of Schooling: Processes and Quality

Many children are in school in India but their educational access is compromised by poor quality teaching, low levels of learning achievement, irregular attendance and enrolment over age. CREATE discusses these issues in terms of 'silent exclusion'.

5.3.1 Diversity and quality

Schools differ greatly in terms of types of organisation and pedagogy, the number of days in the school year and attendance and time on task, teacher qualifications and many other attributes.

In terms of teaching qualifications, teachers in government schools were found to be better qualified. Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006) for example found that over 90 percent of all teachers in government schools in both rural and urban areas are trained (with the exception of Assam, West Bengal and MP). While, the overwhelming majority of private unaided school teachers in both rural and urban areas in all states were untrained. The proportion of untrained teachers was found to be usually lower in private-aided schools compared to un-aided schools. De et al (2005) found that teachers were often very young in private aided schools, largely untrained (sometimes only secondary school qualified though there were graduates as well) and inexperienced. Many teachers they looked at had been teaching for less than a year.

Most primary schools in India are small. Over 80% have three teachers or less. Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006) in their survey found that 13 percent of government schools in Bihar and 11 percent of government schools in UP were single teacher schools. Nearly 17 percent of private aided schools in MP were single teacher schools. They also noted single teacher schools did not exist in the private-unaided sector. Size does matter for schools in India (Little, 2008) and has pedagogic consequences.

Ramachandran (2004) points out that in multi-grade schools actual teaching time is 'fairly low'. This claim is reiterated by Leclercq (2003). He found in similar in his study of the EGS schools in Madhya Pradesh, where 'Gurujis'[8] teach two to five grades simultaneously (with text books suited for separate grades). Leclercq (2003) notes that the teaching methods were inadequate, because Gurujis spent more time supervising children than teaching:

> They sit at their desk busy with registers, talk to visitors, or do nothing but check notebooks and slates. Meanwhile, pupils do basic exercise (e.g. writing the Devanagari script) or chat with each other (Leclercq, 2003:1860).

When actually teaching, Leclercq (2003:1860) notes that:

> Gurujis rarely address all children of a grade together, they check exercises individually and do not organise games or sports. Blackboards are mostly used for teaching the Devanagari script and numbers: The Guruji (or a pupil) reads aloud letters, syllables, words or numbers, and children repeat after her. When using books, Guruji read aloud and ask children to repeat bits of the text after them, but do not necessarily make sure the text is understood (e.g. in one school, pupils had to repeat after each word separately).

In some cases better practices were observed and most children knew poems or songs. One of the Gurujis in Shahpur would read aloud stories, and relate them to her (Gond) pupils'

[8] While the epithet Guruji traditionally referred to a revered, usually religious teacher, the term has been used for the in the State of Madhya Pradesh to refer to the teachers in the Education Guarantee Schools, who were identified by the community and trained by the education department of the government.

everyday life, asking them for Gondi equivalents of some of the key Hindi words in the text (Leclercq, 2003).

Leclercq (2003:1866) observed that Shiksha Karmis and Gurujis often neglected the interests of their pupils and their teaching methods were sometimes inappropriate. He states that, 'rote learning remains essential; it is the logic of the education teachers received themselves. Training is too limited to challenge this conception'. Children are taught to decipher characters rather than understand sentences and texts.

Leclercq (2003:1860) found many Gurujis especially male ones 'are obviously bored of spending time with children. They neglect the interests of their pupils. They treat their pupils with neglect and excessive authority'. He states, for example, that they shout rather than talk, and they slap children. De et al (2005) also report that government primary schools have a 'generally negligent atmosphere', whereas teachers in private schools were generally, hard at work. Jeffery et al (2005:50) report that many teachers in government schools 'reserve their energy for tuition' and many with heavy tuition loads, are also allegedly found sleeping during their school classes.

De et al (2005) found that teachers were often absent from school. For example, in two of the nine government primary schools in their Bhiwani sample, most teachers were away for training for the polio programme during the fieldwork. This resulted in students not being taught. Of the five primary schools in Rampur, one was closed as the head teacher had some official work. In this respect, the presence of the teachers in these school, and therefore teaching-learning activities could not be taken for granted.

In their study, De et al (2005) found that teachers in private schools were present and engaged with students. However, the teaching methods were conventional and there was much emphasis on rote learning and written work. Regular testing was a common feature of these schools and contributed to students' progress in gaining some mastery in reading and writing. There was little visible emphasis on non-academic activities although most schools claimed to have extra-curricular activities. In one very neat and orderly school, the investigator commented that children were 'all busy mugging; no room for extra-curricular activities' (De et al, 2005:106). In respect of curriculum too, the low-fee private schools used the standard curriculum of other schools. De et al (2005:105) thought 'there was much imitation of elite private schools not only in belts and ties and benches but also in teaching of English'.

Teaching time on task was found to differ according to school type in some studies (although it is difficult to conclude whether this difference is accounted for by systemic, teacher, or student characteristics, or a combination of all of them). Private unaided schools were found in most studies to have the most number of working days. In their study of eight states, Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006) found the number of working days in private unaided schools to be greater than those in government schools. There were fewer school working days in government schools (and in many schools the actual number of working days is below the recommended 180). De et al (2005) reported many private schools have fewer holidays than government schools; some reported giving no holidays in the summer, to attract parents into enrolling their children. Even when schools functioned, Leclercq (2003) found, the quantity and quality of teaching in government schools often to be insufficient. In one of the schools in his sample, official times were 11:00 to 17:00 with a lunch break, but a quarter of teaching time was lost by teachers arriving late in the morning, spending time doing paperwork, or talking to each other, or to visitors. A girls' school operated in afternoon shifts,

from 12:00 to 16:30 with a break from 14:00 to 14:30. Here teachers commuted from Dewas city, but owing to bus timings, they arrived in the morning before 12:00 but left just before 16:00.

Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006) argue that compared to private schools, teachers, in government schools might have high absence rates and poor teaching activities because their low accountability. They are accountable, not to the local community or parents, but to district education officers. The supervision of these teachers is weak. By contrast the accountability of private school teachers is to fee paying parents.

Some studies have reported children have poor attendance or attendance for only part of the day. Banerjee et al (2007) found in their survey of Jaunpur district that out of the last 12 working days, on an average, children had attended school only for a little over six days. Only one out of 10 children had attended school for at least 10 days in the preceding two weeks. They also found no significant difference between the number of days missed by children in the public and private schools.

This finding differed from Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006), who found in their survey, that attendance rates for government schools in all states were invariably lower than for private unaided schools, in both rural and urban areas. The attendance registers usually showed higher attendance rates than the actual head count. The drop-out rates were also higher and the attendance rates lower in all States in government schools than for private unaided schools. Leclercq (2003) found in addition, that in some of the schools, about 40 percent of the pupils did not come back after the break and thus attended for only two hours a day.

On the indicator of grade attainment, i.e. years spent at school / grades completed, Leclercq (2003:1860) found that in the government and the EGS schools:

> Average ratios hover between 1.0 (no grade repetition) and 1.6; most children enrol on time, at the age of six, but many stagnate several years in Classes I to III. As a result, children are almost adolescents when they complete the primary curriculum, which limits their ability to study further.

5.3.2 Schooling Diversity: Learning Achievement

Often the parents of children in government schools have little idea that their child has not learned much (De et al, 2005). Parents often have little access to information about what goes on inside schools, and this problem is particularly severe for the many illiterate parents. The fact that there were no centralized exams at the end of primary or upper primary stage, made it more difficult for parents to judge school quality. De et al, (2005:111) also report cases, where parents were disillusioned with private schools and moved helplessly from one to the other, and even went back to the government school. They remark that: 'the wastage of school years through the meaningless school transitions was a common feature in several households'.

Another problem, highlighted by Banerjee et al (2007) is that a large section of children (in the age group six to 14) in the villages surveyed by them in Jaunpur District could not read simple texts or do basic arithmetic operations and were unable to write a simple dictated sentence correctly. However, parents, teachers and the VEC members seem not to be fully

aware of the scale of the problem. Neither had they given much thought to the role of local communities, and/or to the possibility of local participation in improving outcomes.

Most studies report little difference between the different types of schools and pupils' achievement rates. Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006) examined studies on school quality using cognitive achievement as an indicator. They cite Bashir (1997 cited in Mehrotra and Panchmukhi, 2006:435) who states that 'Indian studies using single-level models, seemed to show private schools were more effective'. Having said this, Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006) argue that studies using hierarchical or multi-level models do not show a clear positive effect in favour of the private sector. In fact, they say that regardless of the models used, the inclusion of peer group characteristics and certain school variables (which cannot be manipulated by policy) reduce, if not entirely eliminate, the private school advantage. Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006:436) note that, 'these models tell us more about the possible variables that influence cognitive test achievement than the private-public comparison'

This finding was confirmed by Jeffery et al (2007), who in their study on education in the city of Bijnor, expected better results from private schools. Jeffery et al (2007) found that in each of the three years 1998-99 to 2000-01, government school children performed better than children in aided schools in Class X.

Banerjee et al (2007) found significant differences in learning outcomes by the type of school especially in the lower grades. Close to 60 percent of children in grades two and five in government schools in Jaunpur were not able to read paragraphs or stories, while the corresponding figures in the private schools were much lower at 30 percent. Differences between private schools and government schools in basic learning outcomes continue in higher grades, but the gap is narrower for children in grades six to eight. Leclercq (2003) quoting the headmaster of a middle school in Tonk Khurd block, suggests that most pupils were underachieving Class VI whether they studied in the EGS, government, or private schools.

The consistent lack of difference reported by many studies in learning outcomes between government and private schools has not escaped the attention of researchers. Banerjee et al (2007) emphasize that the level of learning even in private schools is low. For example, in private schools, 50 percent of children in grades two to five are able to read a story at a grade two level of difficulty. This low performance is despite having parents who are motivated to pay fees for schooling. Mehrotra and Panchmukhi (2006:436) consider this lack of difference to be as expected considering the fact that private school teachers are both poorly paid and inadequately trained. It is therefore 'hardly surprising that there is no clear evidence that cognitive achievement in private schools is better than in government ones.' The lack of consistent differences in performance in the data may arise at least in part because the private and public sectors are not homogeneous. High quality private schools coexist with low quality ones.

Part of the problems of accountability and awareness of levels of achievement relate to Village Education Committees (VECs) and their efficacy. Thus knowledge among villagers about the VECs, was found by Banerjee et al (2007) to be dismal in the Jaunpur district. Household respondents were asked whether there was any committee in the village to deal with issues related to education services. A startling 92 percent responded that they did not know of any such committee. Only two percent could name actual members of the VEC. Among the families surveyed by them, there were practically no cases of parents contributing

funds or their time for any activities in the school or to any activities that were aimed at improving school functioning. Almost all the parents interviewed (98 percent) also were unaware of how much money is provided to their child's school from the government for its maintenance.

Findings reported by Leclercq (2003) suggest that this lack of knowledge of the VEC could be deliberate. He remarks that teachers, one of whom is (statutorily) the secretary of the committee, have no interest in parents controlling them, hence the tendency not to inform parents of the dates of the meetings and not to engage in a dialogue with them. He also reported that Gram Panchayats were usually said to take little interest in the functioning of public schools. Their members are not regular visitors to schools, though they interact informally with teachers. They tend to belong to the same social circles, which limit the control they may be willing to exert on them. Leclercq (2003:1865) points out: 'A Rajput sarpanch or upsarpanch of Tonk Khurd block has little interest in confronting a Rajput guruji appointed to an EGS school'.

Few studies of achievement have looked at private tuition, which is said to affect examination outcomes. Jeffery et al (2005) report on these in the context of the city of Bijnor, where they found that while tuition is relatively uncommon for pupils in Classes VI - VIII, most pupils who can afford to do so take regular tuition in science, English and maths for Class X exams, paying a total of around Rs. 500-700 per month. Most tuition takes place with individual school teachers in their homes, outside formal school hours, in the early morning or the early evening, and the numbers of children involved increase rapidly in January as the UP Board examinations approach. They also claim that some teachers will not pass pupils through their annual exams unless the pupils take tuition from them. During school hours, some teachers with heavy tuition loads reportedly sleep so as 'to reserve their energy for tuition' (Jeffery et al, 2005:50).

Diversity between schools results in many different patterns of pedagogy and learning outcomes. Some key issues revolve around school size, pedagogy, time on task, absenteeism, learning achievement, differences and similarities between government and private schools, and accountability to local authorities and Village Education Committees.

5.4 Diversity of Schooling: Options and Transitions

The issue of transitions to upper primary school has not been looked at in detail by many researchers looking at schooling diversity. As a result this section broadens its scope to look at how transition is affected by the structural aspects of the system, such as its pyramidal design; its dissection (between the primary and upper primary cycles); and the devolution of the two cycles to different providers in the name of decentralisation. It then examines research evidence that comments on how access to the upper primary stage is affected directly or indirectly by the constricted supply, high costs and restrictions imposed to regulate access to a selected few.

5.4.1 Access and Design of Structure

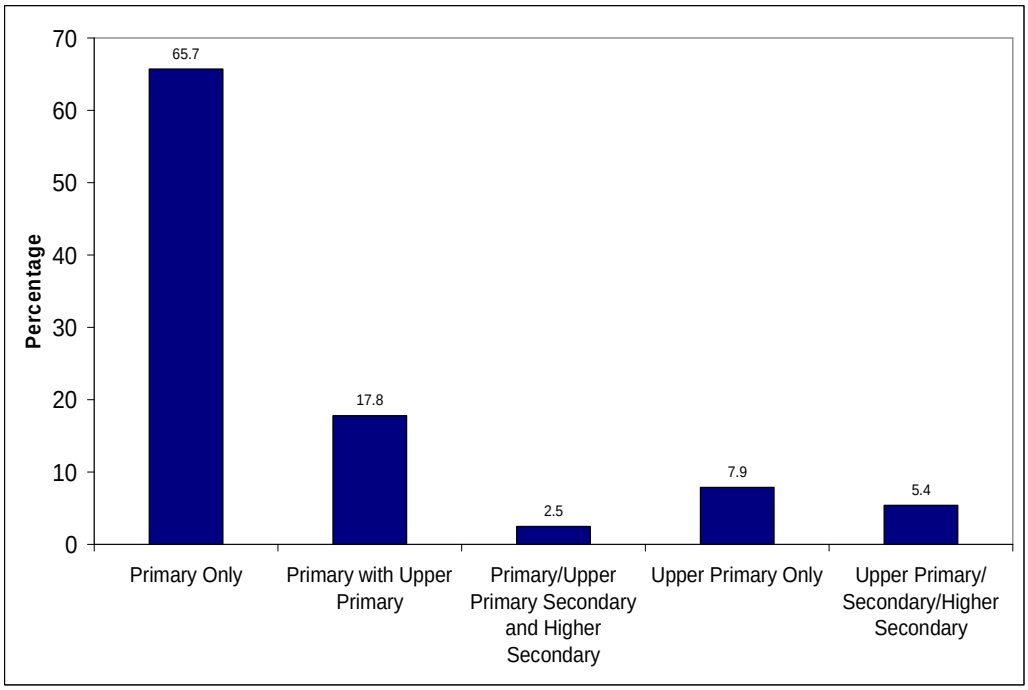
School supply and the different cycles of schooling can affect access of children to the upper primary stage. Ramachandran (2004) talks of an 'insidious pyramid' shape in education. To explain using educational statistics of 2001-02, she reveals that there are 664,041 recognised primary schools; 219,626 upper primary schools and 133,492 high schools in India. She

counted 8,737 colleges for general education, 2,409 professional institutions and 272 institutions of national importance. This means that was only one upper primary school for three primary schools; and one high school for approximately five primary schools (if one included the EGS primary schools, it would make the situation even more alarming). Ramachandran (2004:7) concludes that 'given that the competition to enrol at higher levels is tougher, children from poor quality government formal and alternative schools are the ones who are left out – almost as if by design.'

Such a pyramid shape for the structure of education may seem normal rather than insidious or alarming for a reader in a developed country, where there are primary schools feeding into middle schools, and high schools. What is problematic in the case of India is the absence of any policy or practice of feeding one stage into the next. The onus is on parents (often illiterate) to appreciate the need for more than five years of education, to find the next school and apply to it, fill an admissions form and pay the fees. There are often slip ups, especially for girls.

Whole schools are important as they provide continuous education and do not have transition issues experienced in other schools The absence of a policy for transition means that transition to the next school is the responsibility of the parent/student**.** Table 2 shows that transition usually starts after primary school, with 67 percent of the schools teaching at the elementary stage, primary only.

Figure 2: Distribution of school type (2006) (percentage)



Data Source: TableB1, Mehta, 2007.

Only 2.5 percent of all schools are 'whole schools' – and offer all stages of education on the basis of a one-time admission. Table 10 indicates who provides whole schools.

Table 10: Providers of whole schools in India (percent)

Private		Govt.			Others
Aided	**Unaided**	**Dept. of education**	**Tribal/ social welfare department**	**Local body**	
12.9 %	48.0%	29.1%	3.8	3.8%	2.3%

Table source: Table B8, Mehta 2006.

As seen in Table 10, about 55 percent of whole schools are under private management. It is not government, but the private unaided (fee charging) schools that provide almost half of the whole schools that ensure continuity of education.

Given the diverse decentralised system of education in India, transition processes might be difficult to navigate for students. The devolution of responsibility for education in India means the transfer of responsibility of each cycle of education to a different tier of administration (instead of the transfer of responsibility for all educational institutions in the region to the administrative body governing the region). In some cases responsibility for provision of some cycles of education has been devolved to the private sector. This devolution of responsibility is especially complex in cities (Juneja, 2005). In some situations, transition between primary, upper primary, secondary, and higher secondary cycles of education may involve negotiation with the diverse (and not always coordinated) administrative processes of the multiple bodies governing the different cycles of education. The process of negotiation with successive layers of providers involves transfer certificates, application forms, documents showing marks obtained, admission tests, admission fees, etc. The onus of all this falls upon the child and parents.

For example, in many cities responsibility for primary and secondary education are run by two different bodies. In Mumbai, the municipal corporation runs primary schools (three quarters of these being only up to Class IV), while upper primary and secondary education is provided by private schools through institutions aided by the government for the payment of teachers and all recurring costs.

Juneja (2005) suggests that this devolution of responsibility for the upper primary stage to the private sector has implications for transitions. She indicates a link between the negative growth of enrolment in Mumbai municipal primary schools and the phenomenon observed by Chavan (2000) of children (especially those doing better at their studies), being withdrawn from municipal primary schools and placed in private schools. From there access to the aided secondary stage is expected to be easier. The transition from municipal primary schools to aided secondary schools presents difficulties for many children, to ease this, the municipal corporation opened a small number of secondary schools (Juneja, 2001a). Juneja (2005) describes this phenomenon as 'the blocked chimney syndrome' (as uses the metaphor of smoke which is forced to flow down and out of a blocked chimney in its efforts to rise upwards). She points out that in cities, where there is no need for children to transit to the private sector for the upper primary stage, enrolment trends in government primary schools is positive.

In Delhi, the state government provides secondary education and the municipal corporation provides primary education. Municipal enrolment trends into primary schooling are positive.

The government implemented a new online admission procedure from April 1, 2005 for the academic session 2005-06 to help ensure convenient, hassle-free and compulsory admissions from 'feeder' to 'parent' secondary schools. The children in municipal primary schools automatically progress to Class VI in a designated neighbourhood secondary school, taking pressure off parents for transition to secondary. Policy intervention in this context has ensured the smooth transition, despite different providers for the two cycles of education.

5.4.2 Differential Accessibility

In the context of diversity of educational provision, the limited supply of cheap options for upper primary education, the distance to the school, and the devolution of the upper primary stage to different providers has implications for children's access to upper primary education. These are discussed below.

De et al (2005) in their study on schools UP, where the most affordable education is obtainable from government aided private secondary schools. The few secondary level aided schools run from Class VI to class X or XII are sought after and there is competition for places. Children with poorer educational attainment levels are often excluded.

Jha and Subrahmanian (2006) state that the availability of single-sex secondary schools are critical as parents are often reluctant to send their adolescent daughters to co-educational schools. They suggest that the availability of secondary schools encourages enrolment and completion at earlier stages of education. A comparison of statistics in UP showing girls' enrolment in the primary stage, where only primary education was available, compared to girls enrolment in primary schools where secondary schools were available, showed that more girls enrolled in primary school where there were secondary schools available.

The lack of a nearby school and the cost of travel to the school are highlighted by the Indian Institute of Education (IIE, 2002) as factors in influencing upper primary enrolments. Their study takes place in Maharashtra and highlights the fact upper primary schools are usually not situated in villages, but are linked to high schools in larger villages or towns and often have expenses linked to them. It states:

> Only those parents, who can afford (sic.), send their children/ wards to private schools after the lower primary level as this involves additional expenditure (bus fares, fees, food, etc.) In the process, the children of the poorer sections of rural society, who are in majority, suffer. The private secondary schools are located in taluka towns/bigger villages and are controlled by socio-politically powerful groups or individuals (IIE, 2002:10).

At the upper primary stage, De et al (2005) found in their study of UP that the total number of children attending school was much smaller, both in government and private schools. The cost of schooling was one of the main exclusionary factors, since upper primary school costs more to households than primary. More children go to government schools, but the expenditure at this level is larger than that in low-fee primary schools at the primary stage. De et al (2005) point out that the expenditure in private schools at the upper primary level is much higher, particularly because there are hardly any low fee private schools in the area of study. They state:

> for parents who are with difficulty meeting the private schools fee (about Rs. 1400 annually) of their child enrolled in primary stage, keeping it up at the next stage becomes very difficult. Failures add to these costs, and many children in these households had to drop out (De et al, 2005:109).

They reported that the few children who continue to go to private schools are mostly enrolled in high fee schools.

The increased focus on privatising secondary education was perceived by Jha and Subrahmanian (2006) as having negative implications for girls' participation. They found that:

> in a situation where girls' education is not valued, the demand for fee-charging school system is bound to be low as parents would not be willing to pay high charges for their daughters' education (Jha and Subrahmanian, 2006:13).

They emphasised the need for state support for secondary education to help girls from poorer socio-economic groups make the transition to secondary.

Transition to the upper primary stage is also affected by the screening of children. De et al (2005) report that, some government/aided schools at the secondary level prefer to take children from private primary schools. It is a common perception, that children from private schools reach higher attainment levels. As a result of this forward linkage, many parents enrol their children in private primary schools and some, as reported by Aggarwal (2000), enrol their children in both private unrecognised schools and government primary schools at the same time. Jeffery et al (2005) in their study on education in Bijnor report that in primary schools a substantial proportion of the students registered as attending government schools, especially in Class V, probably attend unrecognised schools, and collect the Transfer Certificate (TC) from the government school, in order to enter a recognised secondary school.

There is little research on how multiple providers affect transitions to upper primary and secondary stages of education. Nevertheless available research suggests that transition is affected by: structural aspects of the system; the availability of whole schools; decentralised systems of provision; demand and supply dynamics; cost of education and the screening of children.

6. Conclusions

This paper highlights the vast array of schools in India and some of the constraints to access in the context of multiple providers. While there is great diversity, not all schools are equally available to all. Choice is often limited for parents from low socio-economic groups.

While the diversity of supply has made some form of schooling available for most children, this paper points out that it has also fostered inequalities in the quality of access. Facilities in the different schools are disparate in terms of infrastructure, resources and outcomes. The quality of schooling available contributes to who continues in school, who leaves, who learns, who is silently excluded and who is able to transit to the next stage. Research evidence presented here suggests that the differential supply of education appears to be splitting the schooled population, with an elite section of an increasing number of children attending private schools, with English as a main language; and other students with less choice and access to schools with poorer facilities.

In effect, as Ramachandran & Saihjee have termed it, there is a 'new kind of segregation' in place (Ramachandran & Saihjee, 2002:1600) where not only do children from different socio-economic groups attend different types of schools, but even within the government primary system there is evidence of vast differences in quality, physical facilities, community participation, allocation of funds, etc. Such factors within schools place some children at risk of low achievement and dropout.

This paper points out that if the elementary education system continues to create parallel schools for the poor and disadvantaged, and if all schools are not improved in terms of their quality and transitions to secondary, universal elementary education will continue to be difficult to achieve. In addition, the lack of single-sex and affordable secondary schools mean that more girls are pushed out of education early.

Accompanying the increasing diversification of supply has been the increasing erosion of the role of the government as provider of education. Concomitant to this increasing diversification of supply is the government failure to provide normative and regulatory frameworks for equitable standards in schooling. The growth in numbers of alternative government schools, recognised and unrecognised private schools, government schools and a variety of quasi-government schools, has not been met with a standardised framework for provision. Rather, the concern has been more with coverage and enabling access for all, rather than quality concerns.

The proliferation of different types of schools reveals the lack of an overall government plan on multiple providers. In terms of national policy-making, the central government has focused on the government school system, rather than private schooling at the elementary level. Similarly state governments have tended towards a *laissez faire* policy in relation to the private sector. With the universalisation of initial enrolment in reach, it is hoped that in future government will look at the quality of diverse suppliers. Currently, diversity of supply does not mean choice for all, rather it leads to unequal provision, leading to unequal life chances and inequitable outcomes.

This study sees the need for further research on diversification on schooling supply and dropping out from school. Specifically it would be interesting to look at the rural poor, why

they are disproportionately excluded and how diversification of supply affects their access to education.

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Consortium for Research on
Educational Access, Transitions & Equity

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Report summary:
India has witnessed substantial diversification of provision to basic education. Policy changes from 1980s onwards, has seen the creation of para-formal delivery systems and the inclusion in the system of non state providers. The Education Guarantee Scheme and the Alternate Initiatives in Education programmes have generated new pathways to access. The paper examines the different educational providers and looks at the spread of provision, the enrolment shares, the different structure, costs and facilities. It also looks at unrecognised schools, quasi-government schools, perceived hierarchies in government schools and English-medium private schools. Diversification is contributing to improved access, but is also generating new challenges for equity and meaningful participation.

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