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## Is a 'Blocked Chimney' Impeding Access to Secondary Education in Some Cities and Inducing Dropout in Municipal Primary Schools?

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# Contents

# Is a 'Blocked Chimney' Impeding Access to Secondary Education in Some Cities and Inducing Dropout in Municipal Primary Schools?

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*Abstract*

*This paper examines contradictory trends of primary school enrolment reported by various city case studies and points out their relationship to the pattern of devolution of educational responsibility in cities and to structural factors that could be associated with problems of access to secondary education and to dropout at the primary level. The paper not only questions the assumption that it is the poor quality of municipal education that forces children to dropout from schools but also draws attention to the structure of education and the need to look at flows and dynamic movements within the system. It suggests, at the same time, that without a fine-tuned understanding of structures of and links to secondary education, we may see less than optimal primary schooling demand and supply.*

## Introduction

Most people are surprised to learn that a number of cities in India follow a system of educational provision that differs from that of the rest of the State. This differential system of provision dates back to the devolution, under British rule, of educational responsibilities to the Presidency Municipalities in the late 1800 and early 1900s. Unfortunately, neither the challenges of educational coordination resulting from this division and distribution of educational responsibility nor its implications for UEE in these bursting cities have been the subject of much research attention. However, NIEPA recently has compiled case studies of education in ten metropolitan cities, based on a common format, and researched by city based investigators (Juneja 2001). Curiously, some of the studies report contradictory trends in growth of primary school enrolment in different cities.

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The author would like to express her deep gratitude to Prof Kuldeep Kumar, former Professor, NCERT for the many discussions from which the metaphor of the blocked chimney and the inspiration for this paper emerged. She is also grateful to the anonymous reviewers of this paper and to Dr Kusum Premi, for their encouraging comments and suggestions that have helped to bring this paper to its present shape.

This paper presents these observed growth trends from the various cities, and attempts an explanation of what these contradictory trends in different cities could possibly mean. Although the paper offers a theory / hypothesis for the phenomenon presented, it also makes a case for the use of 'city' as a separate category of aggregation of educational data in general, and for a planned study of the phenomenon presented in particular.

One of the reasons for the paucity of research on education at a city level is, no doubt, that the data on education by 'city' is hard to come by. Official reporting of educational data is done for district and state levels, but not for 'city/town/municipal limits'. Published information by city is found only for municipal schools. For all other schools in cities, i.e., those of the Central Govt, state governments, private schools etc, information is published only by the 'district', and can be obtained 'through contacts' for the block congruent to the city. This paper, therefore, depends on data reported in different city case studies conducted by separate researchers, except for Delhi and Gwalior, from which data were collected specifically for this paper.

The first of the three sections in this paper presents the contradictory city enrolments trends, and the issues that arise from the findings. The trends are neither consistent nor in line with the presumed 'preference for private schools'. Unfortunately, the only leads for enquiry not dependant on (non existent) data were demographic trends in the cities and educational policy – both of which were explored. This investigation, put together with micro-level information gathered by this author during an earlier study of Mumbai, and with other reported findings, led to the crystallisation of the hunch that is presented here as a proposition that needs to be methodically explored in order to understand the dynamics of primary and secondary schooling in the urban context.

Section Two describes how, for reasons rooted in the history of educational decentralization in India, cities in some Indian states follow a different pattern of

educational provision from that of the rest of the State. It also explains how historical events have determined (a) the levels of education for which different municipalities are responsible, (b) the agencies responsible for provision of secondary education, and (c) the differences in the process of transition from the first cycle of education to the second. By pointing out that the observed contradictory growth trends in city primary schools mirror the structural arrangements in the cities for educational provision, this section suggests a link between the two. Relating this association further to the reported phenomenon from the field level, this section submits for consideration that the problem of declining municipal enrolments could possibly be due to what this paper metaphorically describes as a 'blocked chimney' and draws attention to the need to address the issue of access of primary school pupils to secondary education in these cities.

Section Three cites corroborations for the central theory proposed in this paper that it is the anticipated problems of crossover to secondary schools from the municipal primary schools of some cities that lead parents to enrol their children in private schools at the primary stage itself, and also to change over from municipal schools to other schools from which access to secondary education is easier. It is this combination of fear of crossover problems /non-enrolment / withdrawal ('blocked chimney syndrome'), which is posited as liable for the decline in enrolment seen only in the cities in which responsibility for secondary education was devolved to private aided institutions at some point in history. This section also submits that such a behaviour is driven by the greater aspiration and greater need for secondary schooling in urban areas in the emerging socio-economic context.

In conclusion, the second part of last section reiterates the need to explore the phenomenon of declining enrolments in cities and the theory proposed in this paper through rigorous research.

This paper makes a submission that as we move towards universalisation of education at the primary stage, it becomes all the more necessary to understand the importance of access to secondary education in decisions that poor parents make about the type of primary schools that their children attend, and the manner in which the division and dispersal of educational responsibility in the system affects equitable inter-cycle transition of children on the one hand, and the efficiency of primary schools on the other.

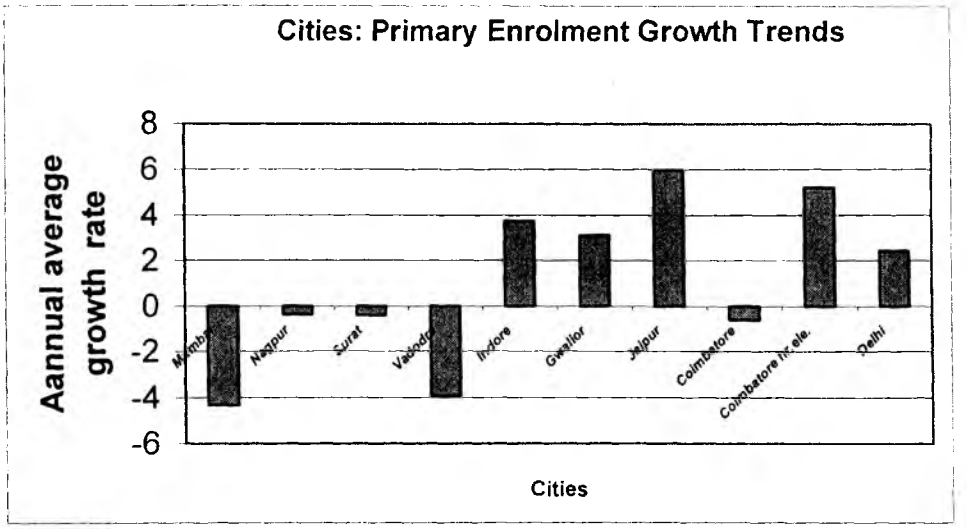
## Section I

### The Contradictory Trends in City Primary School Enrolments

It is commonly believed that, due to their poor image, there is a general trend away from government schools, and towards private English medium schools, especially in cities. Therefore, falling trends of enrolment in government primary schools cause no surprise. In consonance with this belief, efforts are made to improve the quality of instruction in such primary schools, to introduce the teaching of English, to make the schools beautiful, etc., in the hope of improving the image, reducing the dropout, and restoring the efficiency of state provided primary schools.

It was somewhat perplexing, therefore, to find that this assumed 'general trend away from government schools' does not apply equally to all cities. On the contrary, in many cities, state provided primary schools show positive growth trends. Fig. 1 depicts the trend of growth of enrolment observed in 'government' primary schools for nine cities.

**Fig. 1**
**Trend of Growth of Enrolment in 'Government' Primary Schools in Metropolitan Cities in India**




*Source: Tables presented in endnotes (see notes)*

Figure 1 above shows on the horizontal axis, the cities for which average annual growth rates for enrolment in primary schools (municipal corporation or state government, as applicable) were examined. For the sake of convenience, these primary schools are hereinafter referred to as 'government' schools.

The compilation of the pattern seen in Fig. 1 is based on data reported in different studies (see Table 1) on education in cities.[1]

[1] The study of education in Mumbai was conducted for the I.I.E.P, Paris, (Juneja, 2001), between 1999 and 2001. The remaining studies were part of a collaborative research of ten metropolitan cities in 2000 and were based on a common format (Juneja 2001a). Data from Delhi and Gwalior were collected especially for this paper by the author. The tables used for the calculation of the depicted average annual rates of growth of primary enrolment for each of the cities are presented in the endnotes (No. 1- 9) of this paper.

**Table 1**
**City Case Studies and Trend of Enrolment in Government/Municipal Primary Schools**

| | City | Study | Years for which Data Analyzed | Rate of Growth of Enrolment in Mun./ State Primary Schools (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mumbai | Juneja 2001 | 1994-1999 | Negative (-4.32) |
| 2 | Nagpur | Juneja and Nandi, 2001b | 1995-1998 | Negative (-0.37) |
| 3 | Surat | Shah and Mohite 2001a | 1992- 1997 | Negative (-0.39) |
| 4 | Vadodra | Shah and Mohite 2001b | 1992-1997 | Negative (-3.94) |
| 5 | Indore | Juneja and Nandi, 2001a | 1996-1999 | Positive (3.75) |
| 6 | Gwalior | | 1997-2000 | Positive (3.11) |
| 7 | Jaipur | Bodh Shiksha Samiti, 2001 | 1992-1996 | Positive (5.97) |
| 8 | Coimbatore | Arumugam, P, 2001 | 1995-1998 | Mixed (-0.61) (5.23) |
| 9 | Delhi | | 1998- 2002 | Positive (2.43) |

*Source: Mumbai-Education at a Glance, Table 4.2.1 (Various years).*
*Gwalior: Office of the DEO, 2001;Delhi: Office of the Dir. (Planning) MCD, 2003.*
*Others: Chapters in Juneja, 2001b.*

The collection of 'city specific' data is usually a challenge in a system that reports data only in reference to districts. However, this was straight forward in the case of municipal schools (for which data is reported separately) in Mumbai, Nagpur, Vadodra, Surat, Delhi, and Coimbatore. In case of Indore, Jaipur and Gwalior, where the state government provides primary education even in the city, the data was obtained for the blocks congruent with the municipal area. For Coimbatore city, there are two sets of data/bar graphs. One data-set is for municipal schools having classes up to the primary stage only, while the other set is for municipal higher elementary schools.

Primary classes mean Classes 1-IV in the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, and Classes 1-V elsewhere[2].

[2] The term 'elementary education' usually refers to education in Classes 1-8, although in some states such as Maharashtra (Mumbai and Nagpur city) and Gujarat (Surat and Vadodra city), it includes Classes 1-7 only. In Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) 'elementary' schools have Classes 1-5; whereas the 'Higher Elementary' schools have Classes 1-8

Enrolment data for private schools was available in a few of the studies (Mumbai, Nagpur, Vadodra, Surat, and Indore). However this data on private enrolment (though important, but not crucial to the main point of this paper), is not reproduced here. Nevertheless, it may be mentioned that enrolment in private schools showed a positive trend of growth in *all* these cities, even in the cities where the 'government' schools showed a declining trend.

From Fig. 1, it is interesting to note that in some cities the primary school enrolment has been growing every year, whereas in other cities, the enrolment is successively declining. The cities in which government schools show a positive trend are: – Delhi, Coimbatore (HE schools), Jaipur, Gwalior and Indore. Schools in Mumbai, Nagpur, Surat, and Vadodra show a 'failing' trend, i.e. their enrolment shows has been declining.

**Moot Points**

Such trends elicited the obvious question - Why were 'government' primary schools showing positive enrolment trends in some cities but not in others? What is it in some cities that attracts and sustains enrolment in government schools? What is it that causes enrolment to decline in other cities? Could it be that people in these cities prefer private schools and at the same time, reject government schools? In that case, why is this preference and rejection restricted to some cities specifically, but not to all the cities?

At one time there was a temptation to dismiss this 'up' and 'down' picture as just an artefact of the data. The lack of control over the gathering of the data by different researchers did not exactly inspire confidence in reading too much into the phenomenon. But since different people, collected the data contributing to this picture at dissimilar periods of time, this very 'lack of control', perhaps may actually have reduced the chances of a 'bias' operating to cause this pattern. Secondly, the fact that this data was collected from government sources, (which are

usually doubted of *inflating* data) but still shows declining enrolments, could indicate authenticity of the trend.

**Search for Explanation**

The exploration for a solution was conducted in the premise that no single factor or could possibly explain the whole picture. Even for a partial explanation, any indicator would need to differentiate between the two groups of cities- those in which enrolment was rising and those in which it was falling.

A number of questions arise, some of which may need demographic or social investigation. For example, one may like to know what kind of demographic/economic changes distinguish the two groups of cities, such as the greater capacity of particular city dwellers to 'afford' private primary schools in the 'failing' cities or inability of dwellers to afford private primary schools in the 'positive growth' cities. Are there more private school seats (so that everyone is able to get admission) in the cities in which demand for government schools is falling? Is it that private primary schools are cheaper (more affordable) in these cities? Or is it that the 'quality' of education of government primary schools is 'better' in the cities where schools are still showing positive trends? And vice versa.

However, all of these questions require variables to be correlated with school information, aggregated by city. Such data is not available. One of the reasons for the scanty research in this area is that data is not published on education by 'city', and data about private schools especially, is notoriously elusive. Thus, the lack of data at the city level, and the lack of city educational research form a vicious cycle perpetuating the 'grey' area surrounding the dynamics of multi provider interaction in cities.

The only quarter for investigation, not dependant on city educational data, was whether the observed enrolment trends were following the population trend.

*Enrolment and Population Trend*

Census data was tabulated in order to examine whether the pattern observed in city school enrolments could be a reflection of the population trends, especially in the 0-6 years' age groups (Table 2). The 0-6 age group populations were studied with the rationale that the children born between the two censuses would be in primary schools in this period.

**Table 2: Population (Total), and (0-6 years) in the Municipal Corporation Areas of the Cities for 1991 and 2001**

| City | Total Population in Municipal Corporation Area | | | Whether Direction of Growth Corresponds to City Pattern of Enrolment | Population of 0-6 Age Group in Municipal Corporation Area | | Whether Direction of Growth Corresponds to City Pattern of Enrolment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *1991* | *2001* | ***Increase in population between 2001 and 1991*** | | *1991* | *2001* | |
| Mumbai (Gr. Mumbai .Mun. Corp) | 9925891 | 11,914,398 | 2,670,993 | No | 1350008 | 1313010 | Yes |
| Nagpur | 1624752 | 2,051,320 | 426,568 | No | 240980 | 241605 | No |
| Vadodra | 1031346 | 1,306,035 | 274,689 | No | 140858 | 140493 | Yes |
| Surat | 1498817 | 2,433,787 | 934,970 | No | 251889 | 328426 | No |
| Indore | 1091674 | 1,597,441 | 505,767 | Yes | 174843 | 203236 | Yes |
| Gwalior | 690,765 | 826,919 | 136,154 | Yes | 118821 | 109028 | No |
| Jaipur | 1458483 | 2,324,319 | 865,836 | Yes | 247627 | 340298 | Yes |
| Coimbatore | 816321 | 923,085 | 106,764 | Yes | 91421 | 101447 | Yes |
| Delhi | 7206704 | 9,817,439 | 2610735 | Yes | 1176871 | 1279698 | Yes |

Source: All India Town Directory, (Census of India, 1991), December 1998.
Census of India 2001 (Provisional).
Census of India 2001, Maharashtra, Series 28, Provisional Population Tables, paper 2 of 2001 Rural Urban District Populations.

It is seen from Table 2 above, that the pattern of population growth (total population/'0-6' age group) in the cities – does not correspond to their respective patterns of school enrolment. Thus it discourages the consideration of population growth trends as the likely explanation for the observed trends in school enrolment in the cities.

## Assumptions, Questions and Hunches

With demographic explanations ruled out, the two types of enrolment trends appeared even more intriguing. Even researchers tended to assume that in all cities there was a 'preference' for private and English medium schools. They also believed this to be the cause of declining enrolment in the government schools. This is borne out by studies on Mumbai by Research Unit, BMC, & Rajni Paranjpe, (1992); Juneja (2001); Pratham, (1998) and by Chavan (2000). In fact, so fixed has been this perceptual tendency, that it was not until some other studies (Juneja and Nandi 2001a) showed positive enrolment trends in both the government and the private schools in the *same* city, that it came to be realised that rising enrolments in private schools did not necessarily cause a declining trend in government schools. The enrolments in the private school and the government schools were not like two ends of a seesaw, ie, if one goes up the other *must* come down. In Indore, enrolment trends in both the government *and* the private schools were positive. However, the city of Indore does not have municipal schools, therefore, the suspicion arose that declining trends might be a 'municipal' phenomenon.

This question of link to devolution of education to municipalities, led to the collection of enrolment data from municipal schools in Delhi (where the Municipal Corporation runs primary schools). Here it was found that municipal school enrolment trends were positive. Thus devolution per se, of education to the municipality was not necessarily linked to declining enrolments.

The need was therefore felt to examine enrolment growth trends in some other cities. Secondly, now that it had been 'realised' that government school enrolment could be a phenomenon independent of private school enrolment, other data from the ten-city study, presenting time series data from government schools only were also re-examined, and their growth trends calculated. Thus data from the

Coimbatore city study (Arumugam, 2001) and from the Jaipur city study (Bodh Shiksha Samiti, 2001) were looked at afresh.

The data from municipal schools in Coimbatore confirmed the Delhi findings – that, despite what Mumbai, Nagpur, Vadodra and Surat showed, growth trends in municipal schools need not necessarily be negative. In Jaipur where, like Indore, the government runs primary schools in the city, the growth trends were also found to be positive.

Coimbatore, interestingly, showed a negative trend in its municipal primary schools, but positive trends in its municipal higher elementary schools. This added another dimension to the puzzle of contradictory growth trends. 'Length of schooling offered', was a factor suggested by the contradictory patterns seen in the two types of municipal schools in Coimbatore. However, it being a single example, this was seen as nothing more than another hunch for future investigation. Another point that was noted was that all the failing cities – Mumbai, Nagpur, Vadodra and Surat – were in the western region, another fact that may or may not have any relevance, but which indicated that a closer examination of regional issues and/or of factors operating within these cities might provide some clues.

This led to the re-examination of the studies on these cities. Unfortunately, with the exception of Mumbai, the case studies did not appear to offer much by way of analysis of causes of dropouts.

The Mumbai study (Juneja 2001) presented diverse information, in different parts of the book, related to enrolment and dropout. On re-reading the study with the new 'insight' that preference for private schools and English medium schools did not necessarily explain decline of enrolment in municipal schools and that declining trends in government schools was not typical of all cities, much of the information on dropout and trends of enrolment suggested that there must be an alternate explanation for the drop out from municipal schools. Then, some other

observations from the Mumbai study led to the development of the hunch, that the 'chimney was blocked' in Mumbai. The freshly interpreted information from the Mumbai study, and other studies quoted in it, as well as the hind-sight gained, are presented in this paper in Section III, under evidence corroborating the 'blocked chimney' theory.

***Historical Link?***

Acquaintance with the history of education in India, and in view of the author's association with work on the history of compulsory primary education (Juneja, 1996, 97, 98, 2001, 02, 03), enabled her to note the link between the enrolment patterns and the pattern of educational provision and to form the impression that the origin of this phenomenon might lie in the devolution of educational responsibility to municipalities during the British Raj. Later, the same historical linkages led her to intuit that what was posited for Mumbai might be applicable to Nagpur, Vadodra and Surat as well. The correlation of enrolment trends in cities with the history of devolution of education is presented in section II of this paper.

Once the hunch began to crystallise, it seemed almost possible to predict and name the cities in which one may expect to find declining enrolments in state run primary schools. However, because of lack of published data on enrolment in cities, such testing of 'prediction'/hypothesis was not readily feasible, except in a rare case. One of these rare cases was Maharashtra, and the 'hunch' suggested that declining trends would be applicable to all cities in Maharashtra. Maharashtra annually publishes enrolment data by city (municipal schools). Reference was made to Maharashtra state's publication 'Education at a Glance', to compile growth trends (1994/5-1998/9) for all providers of education in the state. The growth rates for municipal primary enrolments confirmed a negative trend of enrolments in municipal primary schools all over the state. (*See Table 5, Section III in this paper*).

Another opportunity for access to city data presented itself, when 'through contacts[3]' data for Gwalior city was obtained. Gwalior city does not have the same structural features for provision of education as cities in Maharashtra. It was, therefore, premised that growth rates for primary education in its government run schools would be positive – and, as the graph shows, this was indeed the case.

However, such hunches and their informal verification are not 'research'. They can, at best serve to suggest hypothesis for testing. In the absence of published data aggregated by city, such research may require multiple city level studies, which it is hoped, will be taken up by at least one or more readers of this paper.

[3] The assistance of old college friend, Sh. Bimal Jhulka, (at that time, Commissioner, Gwalior) in facilitating access to data, is gratefully acknowledged.

## Section II

### Educational System in Cities and Enrolment Trends – The Historical Link

The organizational structure for education found in cities in India today is a legacy from the British colonial rule, with the result that the system of educational provision in cities is often different from that of the rest of the state. Surprisingly, this exceptional arrangement for administration of education finds little mention in the literature surveying educational administration in India[4]. In 1870, Lord Mayo, the then Governor General of India, introduced administrative decentralization under which general powers of education were transferred to provincial governments. A decade later, the Indian Education Commission (1881-82) recommended that the control of primary education be transferred to District and Municipal Boards (Mukerji, 1964; Kaur, 1985) with the view that primary education of the masses should be considered as the *first charge* on "the fostering care of the state", while all government secondary schools should be transferred to local, native management.

Various Municipal and Local Board Acts were passed in 1883-84 in pursuance of Lord Ripon's Policy of Local Self-Government. Under these Acts, the control of local bodies over local resources was greatly enlarged and the government divested itself more and more, of the responsibility of direct management of primary education by making over its schools to municipalities and district boards. Secondary education, as per the recommendations of the Education

[4] The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration has published a series on educational administration in the various states of India. Each of these state-wise publications contains a chapter on local bodies. In addition, there is an edited volume titled 'Governance of School Education in India' [Mukhopadhyay and Tyagi, (eds.), 2001]. Neither of these publications contains details about education in cities. In the latter volume, although there is a chapter titled 'Role of Local Bodies, Private Effort and Community Participation in Education', this chapter does not deal with education under Municipal Corporations, as the title may lead one to expect, but with the panchayats and the development of their role in education in the rural context.

Commission, was increasingly turned over to private institutions in urban areas under a system of grants in aid. At that time, the large municipalities were those of the Presidency Cities of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta.

### *Municipal Responsibility for Compulsory Education*

It was also in these large municipalities that compulsory education Acts were first passed following the acceptance of provision of compulsory primary education by the British rulers, shortly after 1916. These Acts, to be implemented by the local authorities, were restricted to specified areas (Juneja, 1997). Between February 1918 and October 1920, seven of the major provinces of India passed Acts for compulsory education that applied first to the *Municipal areas*. Sharma (1994) points out that the Bombay and UP Acts applied only to municipalities, while the Bengal Act began with the municipalities but could be extended to other areas. Subsequently, Municipal Acts proper, made elaborate provision for administration of education, especially for free and compulsory education, and a number of schools came to be 'maintained' in the leading "Presidency Municipalities".

### *Different Municipalities, Differing Responsibilities*

Different municipalities evolved their own unique patterns for provision of education and also differed in the amount of responsibility assumed by them and the system of grants-in-aid to private bodies. In Bombay city, for example, where the responsibility for primary education in the city was entrusted to the municipality by an Act in 1888, Sharma (1989) mentions that there were a number of aided schools even at the turn of the twentieth century. The Madras Municipal Corporation apparently viewed its educational responsibilities from a broader perspective, and introduced vocational education in the city schools and the Madras Municipal Corporation even aided four reading rooms in the city (Sharma, 1994).

The expansion of government responsibility for provision of education in rural areas occurred later, and the structural pattern for educational provision in rural areas was not necessarily the same as the pattern in the large municipalities of a province. This difference continues to this day. The legacy of these historical patterns of provision of primary and secondary education manifests itself even today in the diverse systems of municipal responsibility for education in different states.

The case of Delhi is unique among the present mega cities with municipal responsibility of education. Delhi was not a major Presidency city in the 1880s, the period in which such responsibility was devolved. Delhi was not even a separate province until after it was made the capital of India in 1911-1912. Before that, it had been one of the administrative divisions of Punjab from 1901 to 1911. Several agencies managed primary education in Delhi before independence, and it was not until 1958 that the number of agencies entrusted with the responsibility of primary education in the city, was reduced to 'only three' viz. the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, the New Delhi Municipal Committee and the Delhi Cantonment Board (Sharma, 1989).

***Present State-Wise Pattern of Municipal Responsibility***

After India achieved independence, the erstwhile British provinces were reorganized along linguistic lines, into the states we see today. For example, when the present state of Gujarat was separated from the Province of Bombay, both Maharashtra and Gujarat adopted the educational legislation and policies (including the pattern of municipal responsibility for primary education) of the erstwhile Bombay Province. The pattern of municipal responsibility for primary education thus established in colonial times continues even today (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Agency Responsible for Primary Education in the Cities**

| | City | Responsible Agency |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Coimbatore | Mun. Corp |
| 2. | Delhi | Mun. Corp |
| 3. | Gwalior | State Govt |
| 4. | Indore | State Govt |
| 5. | Jaipur | State Govt |
| 6. | Mumbai | Mun. Corp |
| 7. | Nagpur | Mun. Corp |
| 8. | Surat | Mun. Corp |
| 9. | Vadodra | Mun. Corp |

***Responsibility for Secondary Education***

The fact that each Province had expressed its own responsibility for education differently, also accounts for the fact that in many cities today different levels of government may have responsibility for different stages of education. For example, Madras did not restrict itself to the provision of only primary education, with the result that municipalities in Tamil Nadu, unlike most other municipalities today, provide 'Higher Elementary schools' as may be noticed in the case of the schools in Coimbatore city. However, municipal corporations in general assumed responsibility only for primary education while the state government provided post-primary education in the cities.

***Secondary Education: 'Provision' vs. 'Production' by the State***

State governments provided secondary education in cities in one of two ways (although both ways are at state cost). One, through directly running the schools, (i.e. by 'producing' education) as is the case of secondary education in Delhi; or two, by providing grants to aid private bodies in running the schools for the state governments, as is the case in Bombay. The example of these two cities,

Delhi and Mumbai, can be used to demonstrate the educational implications of these two different models of city educational administration.

The educational pattern in both Delhi and Mumbai, are similar to the extent that the municipal corporations run their primary schools. However, the two cities differ in the manner in which secondary education is provided by their state governments. In Delhi, the state government directly runs the secondary schools, while in Mumbai, there are no[5] state-run secondary schools and private aided schools are the main providers of secondary education.

***Transition from Municipal Primary to 'State Provided' Secondary***

The difference in the pattern of provision of primary and secondary education affects the manner of transition from the primary to the secondary cycle of education. In Delhi, children from the municipal primary progress on to secondary schools run by the state government. In Mumbai, however, the child has to crossover to the private sector, i.e., to a secondary school run under private management (although paid for by the state government).

States, such as Madhya Pradesh, Punjab etc., which did not have large municipalities and therefore had no 'tradition' of primary education under urban local bodies, provide government run primary and secondary schools even in their cities. In the city of Indore in Madhya Pradesh for example, a child can attend a state government primary school and proceed on the state government secondary school.

[5] Strictly speaking, although there are 51 municipal secondary schools in Mumbai, (as may be seen in Table 4, Section III of this paper), this number is negligible compared to the 1254 municipal primary schools.

**Educational System in Cities and Enrolment Trends – Is There a Link?**

In Section I, the likelihood of link between the pattern of education in the city and the trend of enrolment was suggested. Among the cities studied, government responsibility for secondary education was organized differently in different cities. Looking at both the cycles of schooling together, it is seen that in some cities:

- There is *no devolution* by the state government of either of the cycles of education - (Indore, Gwalior, and Jaipur).
- Only the *primary cycle is devolved* (Delhi).
- *Both primary and secondary cycles are devolved*, (Coimbatore, Mumbai, Nagpur, Vadodra, and Surat).

Simple 2x2 tables (Tables 4, 5, and 6 below) enabled observation of the (rough) correspondence between structure of education (on the horizontal dimension) and the observed trends of primary enrolment on the vertical dimension. In the four squares (cells) so formed, the cities conforming to each square are placed.

**Table 4: City Structure for Primary Education and Growth Trends in City Government Schools**

| | | **Structure for Primary Education** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Growth Trend in Govt. Primary** | | **Devolved** | **State Govt Primary Schools** |
| | **+ive** | a<br>Delhi<br>Coimbatore (H.E. schools) | b.<br>Gwalior<br>Indore<br>Jaipur |
| | **-ive** | d. Mumbai<br>Nagpur<br>Vadodra<br>Surat<br>Coimbatore (primary schools) | c. |

**Table 5: City Structure for Secondary Education and Growth Trends in City Government Schools**

| | | Structure for Secondary Education | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Growth Trend in Govt Primary** | | **Devolved** | **State Govt Runs Secondary Schools** |
| | **+ive** | a. Coimbatore (H.E. schools) | b. Delhi<br>Gwalior<br>Indore<br>Jaipur |
| | **-ive** | d. Mumbai<br>Nagpur<br>Vadodra<br>Surat<br>Coimbatore (primary) | c. |

An attempt has been made in Table 4 to show the correspondence between the structure of primary education in the 9 cities and their trend of enrolment in the government primary schools. It may be seen that in all the cities in which the state government runs primary schools, the trend of growth in enrolments was positive (Cell b). There was no city where government ran the schools, but with negative growth, (cell c). Among the cities in which primary education had been devolved to municipalities, Delhi and Coimbatore (H.E. Schools) had positive growth, while the rest had negative trend of enrolment. *Thus devolution of primary education to the municipalities was not seen to be a factor effectively differentiating between directions of enrolment trend in government primary schools in cities.*

The structure for secondary education in the cities was examined (Table 5) for its correspondence with directions of enrolment trend in government primary schools in cities.

*As may be seen in Table 5, devolution of secondary education too does not effectively differentiate between directions of enrolment growth in government primary schools in the cities.* In Coimbatore for example, secondary education is

also a municipal function, but unlike the cities in cell (d), higher elementary schools in Coimbatore show positive growth.

However, attention may be drawn to another concept at this point. It may be noted that in all the cities, while the primary schools are run by the state government / municipal corporation, secondary education is not similarly always 'directly produced'.

Brown, 1995, explains the distinction between the 'production' and the 'provision' of a good. According to him, governments can 'provide' i.e. bear the costs of provision, of many goods that they may not necessarily directly 'produce'. He thus makes a distinction between providing by 'directly *producing*' – in this case, it would mean directly running the schools, and '*indirectly* providing' i.e. by paying someone else to run on their behalf, e.g. a contractor for the office canteen, or in this case, a private managing body that may actually run the school, while the government paid them 'grants-in-aid' to do so on their behalf.)

**Table 6: Production vs. Indirect Provision of Secondary Education and Growth Trends in City Government Schools**

| | | **Structure for Secondary Education** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Growth Trend in Govt Primary** | | **Devolved to and Produced by Private Sector** | **Produced by 'State'** |
| | **+ive** | A | b. Delhi<br>Gwalior<br>Indore<br>Jaipur<br>Coimbatore (H.E. Schools) |
| | **-ive** | d. Mumbai<br>Nagpur<br>Vadodra<br>Surat | c.<br>Coimbatore (primary) |

It may be recalled also that under the British government, responsibility for secondary education was transferred to private management in

some of the presidency cities, and Bombay was one such city. Therefore, the third element in the context of structure of educational provision direct – production vs. indirect provision i.e. devolution to the private sector - was examined (Table 6).

Here, the distinction examined is between devolution of secondary education to the private sector, and the production of secondary education (running of schools) directly by 'the state' – whether by state government or local body. *As may be seen in Table 6, it is this distinction which successfully polarizes the growing cities from the failing cities.*

*The three Tables (4, 5 and 6) above suggest that the growth trends in primary schools in the cities reflect structural arrangements for provision of secondary education. Further, with the exception of Coimbatore (primary), growth trends in municipal schools are negative only in those cities where responsibility for secondary education was devolved to private bodies.*

With the development of one linkage, it becomes even more intriguing (and incredible) as to how and why the devolution of one level of education to the private sector could have a depressive effect on the *previous* level. Secondly, also curious is the fact that one of the two categories of municipal schools of Coimbatore, those up to the primary level only, shows negative enrolment. An explanation for Coimbatore (primary) is presented later in Section III, whereas the linkage between devolution of the secondary stage to the private sector and loss of enrolment in the municipal primary, (which is crucial to the development of the theory presented in this paper), is presented below.

**Crossover Problems in Mumbai - Is There a Link?**

A number of fragments of information collected during the author's study on Mumbai appeared to 'fit in' to suggest the manner in which the secondary schools in the city of Mumbai could be playing a role in depressing enrolments in the municipal primary schools. Reproduced below is a quote from a book by

Madhav Chavan, (2000), the founder of the Pratham Education Initiative, who is regarded as having done pioneering work in addressing the problems of urban education. About education in Mumbai, Madhav Chavan wrote:

> "Primary education for school Grades I to IV is the responsibility of the MCGM. MCGM runs close to 1,250 schools of its own, housed in nearly 450 premises; in addition, it provides a 100 per cent grant to privately managed schools. In addition, there are unaided private schools, which cater for the upper income population in most cases. Secondary education is the responsibility of the state government. However, the MCGM schools do cater for Grades V to VII. *There are only 51 municipal-run schools for Grades VIII to X in Mumbai; all others for the same grades are privately managed, either supported by state government grants or unaided by the government. The crossover from Standard VII in a municipal school to a private-aided school is difficult. Hence it is common for parents to withdraw their children from municipal schools well before Standard VII if they can get admission in a private school. This is more true of children who do better in their studies."*
>
> - Chavan (2000) (page 18-19.)

The statement that "*The crossover from Standard VII in a municipal school to a private-aided school is difficult*" and the linkage made by Chavan to the resultant tendency of parents to withdraw the child and place him/her in a private school to assure access to secondary education, may be the pertinent clue to the role played by the private managed secondary schools, - that of creating conditions of anxiety regarding access to secondary education.

In the light of submissions up to now, it may not be premature to suggest that if researched from this perspective, studies might be able substantiate a linkage between anticipated problems of crossover to an aided secondary school, non-enrolment of children to municipal schools, and transfer from municipal schools to private schools from which access to private aided secondary schools is easier.

What about the other cities – could such a hypothesis be hopefully substantiated in other cities with declining primary enrolments and public provision-private sector production of secondary education? All cities in

Maharashtra and Gujarat, have more or less the same pattern. Therefore, it would not be surprising to find similar apprehensions regarding access to private aided secondary schools. As seen in Fig. 1, they all certainly show declining enrolments in their municipal primary schools. However, Table 7 below was constructed to examine the pattern of education observed in the cities in relation to 'who produces primary/ secondary education' and, as suggested by Chavan (2000), whether or not a 'crossover' to the private sector is required at the end of the primary cycle.

**Table 7**

**Cities: Pattern of Education and Growth Trend of Enrolment in 'Government' Primary Schools**

| Sl. No. | City | Provision of Schooling in the City | | Is the Child from 'Government' Primary Schools Required to Crossover to Private Aided Schools for Accessing Cheapest Available Secondary Education? | Rate of Growth of Enrolment in Mun / State Primary Schools (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Who Directly Runs Primary Schools? | Who Directly Runs Secondary Schools? | | |
| 1 | Mumbai | Mun. C | Aided | *Yes* | *Negative (-4.32)* |
| 2 | Nagpur | Mun. C | Aided | *Yes* | *Negative (-0.37)* |
| 3 | Surat | Mun. C | Aided | *Yes* | *Negative (-0.39)* |
| 4 | Vadodra | Mun. C | Aided | *Yes* | *Negative (-3.94)* |
| 5 | Indore | State Govt. | State Govt. | No | Positive (3.75) |
| 6 | Gwalior | State Govt. | State Govt. | No | Positive (3.11) |
| 7 | Jaipur | State Govt. | State Govt. | No | Positive (5.97) |
| 8 | Coimbatore | Mun. C | Mun. C | No | Mixed (-0.61) (5.23) |
| 9 | Delhi | Mun. C | State Govt. | No | Positive (2.43) |

Source: Mumbai-Education at a Glance, Table 4.2.1 (Various Years; Gwalior: Office of the DEO, 2001;Delhi: Office of the Dir. (Planning) MCD, 2003; Others: Chapters in Juneja, 2001b.

As may be seen in Table 7, there is a correspondence between the need tc crossover to private secondary schools, and declining enrolments in municipa primary schools in these cities.

Thus the contrary trend of enrolment seen in these cities, interpreted in the light of their linkage to the structural context of education existing only in such cities, suggests that the trend of enrolment in the primary cycle of public education in cities, is related to whether or not a crossover is required to private sector schools for the second cycle of schooling. *Thus this supports field observations that decreased enrolment/pull out from municipal primary schools happens in anticipation of problems of access to secondary schools.*

**Is the Chimney Blocked?**

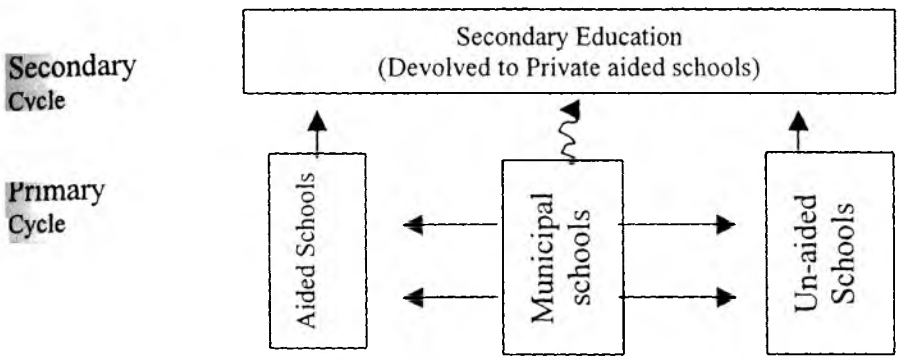
Transferring to another school in the apprehension that the municipal route may not lead onward to a secondary school can be likened to smoke billowing backwards from a chimney and into the room. *In the case of chimney smoke, it is an indicator of something blocking the chimney and preventing the smoke from going upwards.*

The metaphor of a blocked chimney could be used to aptly portray this phenomenon, because it is only when smoke is unable to find its natural upward exit (i.e. through the chimney), does smoke seek a lower exit such as a door or a window. Similarly, it is suggested here, that dropout from municipal schools, (seen here like an exit from a lower door), is being resorted to in the absence of upward access, (in this case to secondary education). *As in the case of the backward flowing chimney smoke, this paper suggests, that the dropout from municipal schools, only in the cities with a particular structural arrangement for secondary education, could be an indicator of the presence of a 'blockage' in the educational path of children. Otherwise, why else would they need to leave one particular kind of school (if they are not leaving the system) to go to another type of school – if not*

*for better upward access? The fact that this does not happen in government primary schools in other cities having a different structural design for upward access strongly indicates that this structural feature might be the cause of the problem.*

A diagrammatical model of what is posited above is depicted in Figure 2 below:

**Fig. 2: The Blocked Chimney Theory**




The Blocked Chimney theory: According to this theoretical proposition, the anticipated problems of crossover to secondary education in the private aided schools causes parents to enrol their children in private schools at the primary stage itself. They also change from municipal schools to other schools from which access to secondary education is easier. It is this non-enrolment / withdrawal which is responsible for the decline in enrolment seen in cities where responsibility for secondary education was devolved to private aided institutions at some point in history.

***The 'Blocked Chimney Syndrome'***

The lack of upward access to the secondary cycle coupled with a depression in enrolment in the primary cycle, as suggested by the hypothesis of the 'blocked chimney' (Fig.2), hints at not just one symptom in the system, but a veritable syndrome to be diagnosed and remedied if equity and efficiency are to be restored to it.

Observations in the field (unfortunately available only for Mumbai), indicate that many parents realize, that the students passing out of municipal schools usually face problems in getting admission in the private aided secondary schools. To avoid this problem of crossover altogether, many parents prefer not to enrol their children in the municipal school at all, or failing that, they tend to withdraw their children *before* they pass out of the municipal schools; they enrol them in the primary sections of the private aided secondary schools instead.

*It is inferred that it is this combined effect of lack of enrolment and early withdrawal of children from municipal schools due to the anticipated problem of crossover, that is showing up in the macro level data as declining municipal enrolments at the whole city level.*

Since city specific data, for cities in different parts of the country, was never available before, it was not recognised earlier that the trend in primary education in some cities was different from others. The essential elements for a blocked chimney to occur, appear to be:

- The devolution of responsibility for school education along horizontal sub-stages of schooling;
- Entrusting private management with the public responsibility of education of the poor; and
- The lack of attendant legislation/ monitoring and regulation required for ensuring that devolution does not adversely affect the rights of the poor to education.

Empirical confirmation of the blocked chimney syndrome will require detailed comparison of micro level experiences of transition from primary to secondary, in many locations and in many different school systems. It will also require examination of the conditions of aid to secondary schools, and identification of the beneficiaries in these schools, in order to establish whether or not the poor passing out of municipal schools are benefiting from aid to secondary schools. It is hoped that some researchers will take up the study of these issues.

## Section III

### The 'Blocked Chimney Syndrome'- Corroborations and Implications

This section cites findings and observations supporting the 'blocked-chimney' theory proposed in this paper to explain the declining enrolments in municipal schools in some cities. This theory asserts that the anticipated problems of crossover to secondary education in the private aided schools cause parents to enrol their children in private schools at the primary stage itself. Children also change from municipal schools to other schools from which access to secondary education is easier. It is this non-enrolment / withdrawal which is responsible for the decline in enrolment seen in the cities in which responsibility for secondary education was devolved to private aided institutions at some point in history. The metaphor of a 'blocked chimney' is being used to portray this phenomenon because only when unable to find upward exit (through the chimney), does smoke seek a lower exit, such as a door or a window. Dropout from municipal schools is seen here like an exit from a lower orifice, resorted to only in the absence of access to upward exit.

The phenomenon of declining enrolment in municipal schools and the reasons for it needs investigation through specially designed research studies. However, some existing research and other corroborating evidence are cited here to show, firstly, that children in cities have a greater need of secondary education in order to compete in the urban labour market; and secondly, that, in Mumbai, children do indeed leave municipal primary schools in order to get into other schools that can offer them secure access to secondary education. The pattern of education, and the observed decline in enrolments being common factors for the cities of Mumbai, Nagpur, Vadodra and Surat, it is possible that what is happening in Mumbai may also be causing similar problems in the other three cities as well.

Research from Calcutta is also cited to support the finding from Coimbatore of the preference for schools offering secondary education, and the greater dropout in primary (only) schools.

**Urban Poor and the Critical Importance of Secondary Education**

It has been pointed out that, in the developing world, as primary schooling becomes near universal, the rates of return to primary education are likely to fall, and where secondary school graduates remain relatively scarce, the rate of return on their schooling is likely to rise (Lewin and Caillods, 2001).

Pradhan et al (2000) have found that this is already the case in urban India. Based on their study on 'Micro impact of Macro and Adjustment Policies (MIMAP),' they came to the conclusion that the level of education at which the share of income as compared to population share increases, is the primary level in rural areas *and secondary level in urban areas.* This study focused on primary household level data obtained from a survey in rural and urban India, and found that households with lower than average level of education finds it difficult to compete. More than 55 per cent of the heads of households reported attaining at least secondary level in urban areas as compared to 15 per cent in the rural areas.

Amis (1995), in his work on the conceptualization of urban poverty, too emphasizes the importance of understanding urban poverty in relation to labour market changes. Similarly, in the urban child labour market in India, Swaminathan (1998) reported that low levels of education are not rewarded in terms of higher earnings and concluded "earnings will only improve when there is substantial investment in schooling and where workers can move beyond the restricted jobs and occupations available to child workers". In order to improve their prospects, she found in a city in Gujarat that 17% (972) of all child workers were also attending school, and that "many children managed a long work day with school attendance."

Research evidence shows that schools that offer secondary education are in greater demand as compared to schools that offer only primary schooling. Data from Coimbatore (Arumugam, 2001), as seen in Fig. I of this paper, shows that enrolment trends are slightly negative for primary schools, but are positive for 'Higher elementary schools'. Similarly, in Calcutta, Nambissan (2003) found there to be a greater 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) (page 19)

**Mumbai: Dropout and the Difficulty of 'Crossover'**

The statement from a book written by Madhav Chavan, the founder of 'Pratham' a Mumbai based 'education' NGO, testifying that children (especially those who do well in their studies) leave municipal schools on account of the anticipated problems of crossover, has already been presented in the previous section. This section presents evidences of children leaving municipal schools – and not with the intention of leaving the system[6]. It also presents data from the author's research on Mumbai that shows that even at that time it was clear (a) that the city was aware of the problem of crossover; and (b) that despite what officials stated and believed at that time, the data could have shown them that the decline in

[6] Prof. J. Hallak, former Director of UNESCO's 'International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris, who was consulted on the picture emerging from some of the cities, commented that it was not at all implausible to connect this phenomenon to access to the next cycle, since this was often seen to happen even in France. Some schools had a better record of admissions to the more desirable colleges than others, and therefore students where eager to shift from their present schools and sought admission, not always successfully, to such schools.

municipal enrolment could not be attributed to population decline alone, but that municipal schools were losing their enrolment to private schools.

It is possible that more published or unpublished research evidence exists. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the phenomenon of declining enrolments and to suggest its linkage to a 'blocked chimney' hypothesis, with the hope of generating further corroborating or contradicting research.

*Dropout or Transfer?*

A study was conducted between 1987-1991 on the problems of wastage and stagnation in the BMC (Research Unit, BMC & Paranjpe, 1992). This study followed one cohort through its four-year journey through primary school. The study found that of all the students admitted in Class I, only 29 per cent passed Class IV. A total of 25 per cent failed to pass Class IV. About 25 per cent of children dropped out somewhere between Class I and Class IV, and 21 per cent of the children left school with a school leaving certificate. (A school-leaving certificate enables the child to transfer to another school).

In hindsight one may now like to put this information together with a Pratham study (Pratham, 1998) of follow-up of dropouts. It found that while 63 percent of the dropouts had given a wrong address or had changed residence, a significant 13 per cent had changed school.

Lambay (1998) had reported that the number of children who leave school with 'School Leaving Certificates' is on the increase each year. Banerji (2000) had reported that many poor parents are taking on the additional expenditure of private schooling, and that in one of the slums, she found that about 17% of children went to schools other than the free municipal schools. At that time, this was seen as a city phenomenon of preference for private schools in recognition of their better quality of teaching. In the absence of comparisons with other studies, there was no way of knowing that in other cities the trend was different.

## Anecdotal Evidence Suggesting Crossover as Common Phenomenon

The following anecdote was published in Juneja (2001). At that time, the link with the decline of municipal enrolment was not suspected: -

> "During a visit to one school building which houses four Municipal Primary Schools teaching in four different media of instruction, the following chart (Table * below) was displayed showing the number of children in each class of the schools W, X, Y, and Z running in that building:

**Table***
**Class-wise Enrolment in Primary Schools W, X, Y, and Z in the Same Building**

| School (Medium) | Class 1 | Class 2 | Class 3 | Class 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| W (Marathi) | 68 | 66 | 68 | 69 |
| X (Gujarati) | 19 | 16 | 25 | 15 |
| Y (Urdu) | 95 | 101 | 85 | 77 |
| Z (English) | 65 | 49 | 29 | 26 |

*Source: Juneja 2001*

> The pattern of enrolment in each class was intriguing. While enrolment in Marathi medium was more or less constant in each class, in Urdu and Gujarati medium, the enrolments in the different classes tapered down gradually. However, the enrolments in the English medium in Classes 3 and 4 were but a fraction of the size of Class 1. Class 1 (English medium) showed as healthy an intake as the other languages. So, if a similar number enrol in Class 1 each year in the English medium, why were there such a few children in Classes 3 and 4?
>
> The teachers in this school had various explanations for this phenomenon. Some said that the children probably find it difficult to cope with English as a medium of instruction and therefore drop out of English medium classes. *Others said that the children in English medium Municipal Schools are merely biding their time until they get admission in a privately managed Municipal aided (and therefore also free from tuition fees) English medium school of their choice.* Which of the explanations is correct? Do these children leave to private schools, or does the English curriculum present difficulties?"

At that time even though the enrolment in Class 3 English medium was seen to be less than half the size of the enrolment in Class 1, one did not seriously consider (even though some of the teachers suggested it) that people enrol their

children in English medium with the intention and hope of facilitating their transfer to private schools.

### City Aware of Crossover Problem to Secondary: Municipal Secondary Schools

It was learnt (Juneja 2001), that the Municipal Corporation opened 51 secondary schools 'in response to popular demand'. Children passing out of municipal primary schools have to compete with others from private primary schools for secondary education (in aided secondary schools). Therefore, when further admission to the secondary stage was found to be a problem for the pass outs from the municipal school system, the BMED opened some secondary schools. (Table 8)

**Table 8**
**Primary and Secondary Schools in Mumbai (1998)**
**by Different Providers**

| | BMED/State | Aided | Unaided | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary* | 1254 | 344 | 576 | 2174 |
| Secondary** | 51 | 749 | 455 | 1255 |

* *B.M. Yearbook 1998-99.*
** *Office of the Deputy Director Education (Private Secondary Schools), Maharashtra State Govt (1999).*
*Source: Juneja 2001.*

Fifty-one municipal secondary schools cannot absorb all the out flow from 1254 municipal primary schools – and is at best a token effort. However, they do at least serve the purpose of providing the evidence needed by this paper to corroborate that access to secondary education is a problem in the city, and that this fact is known and recognised by the authorities.

### Comparative Share of Enrolment: Private vs. Municipal Schools (1994-99)

In Juneja (2001), the number of municipal schools and enrolment in them was compared, ward-by-ward, for 1994/5, and 1998/9. At that time, the municipal authorities pointed out that the combined effect of population decline, shift of the

city population northwards, and the preference for private schools, had caused them to close down a number of schools and to open new ones in areas of new population settlements. Indeed it was seen that between 1994/5-1998/9, there were 90,000 less children in municipal schools. However, when the shares of enrolment of private and municipal schools were compared for the period 1994-1999 (under the same conditions of 'population decline' and shift of population) from the data published by the state government, it was seen that the loss of percentage share of enrolment in municipal schools equalled the share gained by the private schools, suggesting thereby that municipal schools were losing their clients to the private sector.

**The Syndrome and Decentralisation in Rural Areas**

It is possible that the 'blocked chimney' phenomenon may not be restricted to cities alone, and there is no reason why it should be. Logically, according to the 'theory' of the syndrome, blocked access at any stage should induce avoidance of the route leading up to the blockage- as indicated by negative enrolment trends. In the course of computation of enrolment trends for different providers of education in Maharashtra to examine whole state trends for municipal schools, it was found (Table 9 below) that not only was enrolment in municipal schools declining all over the state, but in Zilla Parishad schools too, negative growth could be seen.

**Table 9: Maharashtra: Average Annual Growth Rates for Different Education Providers (1994/5- 1998/9)**

| Provider of Primary Education | Average Annual Growth Rate (Per cent) (1994/5 to 1998/9) |
|---|---|
| State govt. | 1.90 |
| Zilla Parishad | **-0.10** |
| Municipal | **-4.24** |
| Private aided | 4.85 |
| Private unaided | 1.43 |

Source: Directorate of Maharashtra. Education at a Glance (Various years)

Maharashtra is one of the few states that regularly publishes district-wise educational data and provides enrolment figures by stage and management (but which, unlike the sporadic NCERT All India Surveys on Education, does not club Zilla Parishads and Municipalities under one head of 'local body'). This enables one to examine enrolment trends for all the different providers of education at the level of the whole state.

The fact that municipal enrolment is declining all over the state, (Table 9) is surely an evidence, if more is needed, of a problem affecting city (municipal) areas in the state of Maharashtra, where, as we all know, a crossover to the private sector is required for the secondary stage education in all cities.

Secondly, the Table also shows that even in Zilla Parishad schools (District/ Panchayat Administration schools in rural areas), there is a slight decline in growth rates of enrolment. The question arises why should this be happening in rural areas?

A recent study of the Indian Institute of Education (IIE), Pune (2002), may have the answer: "In the last two decades or so, a new trend has emerged in Maharashtra under which the upper primary section is made a part of the secondary section by joining the upper primary section to the secondary schools. It is noticed in the four selected districts that the majority of secondary schools are run by private institutes (aided or unaided) while almost all the primary schools are run by the Panchayati Raj bodies."

The study explains that "in Maharashtra where primary education is the responsibility of the Zilla Parishad in the rural areas, a primary school may have Classes I-IV, or I to VII. There is no separate upper primary alone". Case study based data points out that facilities for continuing with upper primary education are usually not situated in the villages:

> "In one of our selected districts (Nandurbar), there are 95 high schools of which 90 have UP (upper primary) sections attached to them. These high schools are located at taluka towns or bigger villages, and run by influential groups who collect fees and donations on one pretext or the other."

Thus the IIE study asserts that even in the rural areas, equity of access is being compromised. Only the better off students have access to upper primary schools, which are placed at some distance in the towns:

> "Only those parents, who can afford, 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."

The rural finding came as a serendipitous revelation – since it was only by chance that this negative trend was found. Just as the blocked chimney syndrome postulates, this negative trend too was supported by micro level reports of impediments to onward education from the Jila Parishad schools. It would have been interesting to also know about the strategies used by children in villages without access to upper primary. Unfortunately, this IIE study went into deeper case studies only of villages having upper primary schools.

**Systemic Problems Need Systemic Solutions**

All the above findings are derived from studies having diverse objectives it is and only incidental that they also support the hypothesis of a blocked chimney. As may be seen, in the absence of comparative data from other cities in other states, and without the 'realisation' that government schools could grow in spite of growth in the private sector schools, it was logical to interpret transfer from municipal schools in terms of 'preference for private schools', and to not probe further.

Even when faced with the evidence of the decline in enrolment trends, *and* the crossover problem, it is still difficult to link this phenomenon with its more distal cause - the pattern of provision of education in cities. Such phenomenon was commonly interpreted in terms of the more familiar 'city preference for private schools'. For example, in his book, Chavan (2000), in the very next paragraph to the one quoted earlier, says:

> " Of late, Indian-language private schools have been losing students to the new craze for English-medium schools. Also, municipal schools have been slowly closing down in southern and central Mumbai areas due to lack of students. This is partly due to the population shifting northwards and also due to a general trend away from government schools due to their poor image and towards private, English-medium schools."
>
> - Chavan (2000), page 19.

In fact, more often than not, it is found that people tend to identify the causes of problems in terms of lower order constructs that touch their own lives. (Handy 1988) More distant but generic causes of problems often remain unrecognised on account of the root causes of problems being far removed from the situation in which their impact is felt. It is argued that unless the true systemic nature of problems is identified and addressed, the problems persist in the face of local, but inadequate strategies, which inevitably fail.

**Uncertainty of Access to Secondary Education - Implications**

The remaining part of this paper points out some ramifications of 'blocking access' to secondary education. These are: (a) the violation of the right of such children to free and compulsory education up to the age of fourteen (b) the inference that state subsidy to the secondary schools did not reach the right sections, and that the interests of the poor were inadequately regulated; (c) the loss of efficiency of municipal schools; and (d), "inefficient functioning" of schools being used by vested interests to instigate state withdrawal and gain access to valuable city land.

The implications of this at the policy-making level are obvious - that 'Decentralization' per se does not necessarily promise good governance; it needs to be closely monitored. The doubt, if not the confirmation, that the chimney was blocked, could have arisen years ago, had policy analysis and monitoring been institutionalized as a routine feature of educational administration, especially in cities, the oldest example of decentralised educational administration in India.

**Violations of Right of the Poor to Education**

Every child in India now has a constitutional guarantee to free and compulsory education between the ages of 6 to 14 years (Juneja 2003). Every child has the right to enter Class 1 at the age of six years and continue on ward to complete Class VIII by the age of fourteen, the age up to which the Constitution of India guarantees education as a fundamental right. Any structural disconnect in the educational system requiring 'readmission' to the next stage, raises the question: where is the guarantee that a child at the end of Class IV/V, will continue to receive education – free or otherwise? Thus any educational system which 'graduates' children before the age of fourteen years, and does not ensure their continued schooling up to the age of fourteen, could be in violation of their fundamental right to education.

Then, if because of structural problems, (e.g. private aided secondary schools, creating admission problems for the outputs of the municipal schools) children aspiring for secondary education are forced to 'opt' for private schooling, at greater personal cost, it implies that such a system discriminates against the children of the poor, firstly by making them struggle to receive a stage of education, which should be compulsory, and secondly, by needlessly forcing them to pay (in a private school) for a stage of education that should be free.

Lest municipalities contemplate, as a 'solution', the provision only of 'compulsory' education up to class eight, it would be well to remember that it was

the failure of their structure to lead to the secondary stage, a necessity for survival in the urban market, that led to the 'decline' of some municipal schools in the first place. A dead end at any stage of schooling may cause children to avoid the route having a blocked exit.

The answer perhaps may lie in going the way Delhi did. In Delhi, it is now the responsibility of municipal primary schools to admit their pass outs in the nearest/ designated government secondary school – and thus also achieve a cent percent transition rate.

Lack of onward access to a stage of free and compulsory education, which is supplied as a public good, could also give rise to questions about (a) abuse of subsidy, and (b) about the role of the state in safe-guarding the interests of the poor.

**Abuse of Subsidy by Aided Schools**

Private aided schools, according to Tilak (2000), "receive aid from government to meet nearly all their full recurring expenditures and are expected to provide free education". Kamdar (2002), on the other hand reports that the detailed budgeted revenue expenditure on secondary education in Maharashtra indicated that the bulk of public spending is incurred on grants to aided secondary schools. Despite this, in her study of grants-in-aid in secondary education, several villages in Maharashtra were found to still have no access to secondary schools (pg.52). In this context, Kamdar raises the question, 'Who benefits from grant-in-aid to education?' In a situation where the poor do not complete primary education, it also means that the poor do not benefit from subsidies to secondary and tertiary education.

Similarly, the IIE study cited earlier (IIE 2002) points out that by locating upper primary classes in private aided schools (which in turn are located mainly in bigger villages or in towns), such schools become out of reach of many. It also

questioned that if the poor are not able to take advantage of the education provided by subsidizing private schools, then whose education is being subsidized in the private aided schools?

Social justice is denied when there is inequitable access of the poor to education that they have indirectly paid for. Adiseshiah (1987) had referred to subsidy to secondary education as "a straight transfer of resources from the poor majority to the rich minority". According to him, in our country, unlike in industrialized countries, 90 per cent of the tax revenues are raised by indirect taxation, which is paid by the 80 per cent of the poor and middle classes. Muzamil (2001) too has highlighted numerous situations in private aided schools where interests other than those of the children of the poor have determined policies and practices in elementary education. George et al (2003) have gone so far as to assert that grant-in-aid schools only 'promote their personal and sectarian interests'. Referring in particular to grant-in-aid schools in Kerala, George et al (2003) reported that private aided school managements, instead of having altruistic motives, are attracted by the opportunity of owning and managing an institution and in the process exercising power and extending patronage, without investing money on their own.

Therefore, findings such as presented in this paper, join these voices in raising questions regarding the role of governments in safeguarding the interests of the poor majority on the one hand, and on the reliance placed on the private sector for the provision of public and 'quasi–public' goods (goods that yield both private and public benefits) on the other.

**Lack of Protective Regulation to Ensure Interests of Weaker Sections**

According to James (1991), public policies regulate private education in most countries because the goals and the information of different groups within society can differ. Government actions encouraging or discouraging private schools (e.g.

by subsidizing and /or controlling them) may be one way of achieving the goals desired by central planners. The normative rationale for regulating subsidy is that "society has a right (duty) to exert some control over how these funds are spent. Private schools should not be able to do things with public funds that would be out of bounds to the public schools, which are presumably being run to maximize social welfare."

Lewin et al (2001) give an example of the controls exercised in China where some of the local government schools are allowed to earn extra income through admitting 'choice' (as opposed to assigned) fee paying students. For these schools, "the State Education Commission has issued a note on the principles of compulsory education provision, which makes it clear that the implementation of compulsory education is firstly the responsibility of the local government, which has a duty to provide adequate resources, including financial support and qualified teachers, for schools. All public schools within the compulsory education cycle are expected to adhere to the principles of 'free of tuition charges', 'proximity enrolments' and 'equal opportunity".

Equity and access regulations are also exerted in the UK and France. After the public shift to comprehensives, subsidized voluntary aided schools in the UK can no longer use 'academic ability' as grounds for exclusion in English voluntary aided schools. In France, private schools are eligible for subsidy only if they agree to become part of the regional educational plan and accept students *assigned* to them from their catchment area. In Holland, France and the UK, regulations designed to control the decision making structure have placed teachers, parents, students and government representatives on governing boards (James, 1991). Such controls, according to James, were "designed to ensure democratic accountability in a situation where public funds and production responsibilities are turned over to private organisations".

In this context of almost worldwide exercise of regulatory power of governments, it needs to be questioned if our governments - Local, State and Central – in the light of constitutional directives for free and compulsory education up to the age of fourteen, for social justice, for minimization of inequalities and for protection of the interests of the poor, can be absolved of the duty of monitoring equity in education through private aided schools in its cities.

**Loss of Efficiency of Municipal Schools**

A major inference of the blocked chimney theory is that public money spent on municipal schools in such cities, is being spent inefficiently. Efficiency is compromised in two ways. First, when children leave municipal schools without completing the cycle, there is wastage of educational resources of the municipal corporation. Secondly, lower growth rates of enrolment mean that fewer children are enrolled than the capacity of the system. If the enrolment in the previous year can be taken as the benchmark of the capacity of the municipal corporation schools, then the schools with negative growth are underutilized and running inefficiently.

**'Inefficient Functioning' being Used to Justify State Withdrawal**

Insult is added to injury when the argument of 'failure' of the schools is extended to justify the withdrawal of the state, and thus further reduce what the poor may expect from it. Such withdrawal has been noted in both decentralised municipal schools in Mumbai and Zila Parishad schools in rural areas. This excerpt from an editorial in a prominent newspaper in Mumbai shows that the downward enrolment trends in Mumbai municipal schools were used firstly to rationalize the decision of not investing in providing more schools, and secondly to justify transfer of valuable city land for schools to the powerful private school lobby:

> "So abysmal is the level of teaching and facilities, that even the impoverished taxi drivers and paan walas are willing to pay substantial fees to enrol their children in unrecognised teaching shops rather than state run schools. But, instead of working overtime to amend this shameful

> situation and contain spiralling dropout rates, the BMC has gratefully seized upon the fall in enrolments to explain its waning commitments to education. The unrepentant corporation has already announced that it cannot afford to establish more schools and will instead hand over plots of land to private trusts – where once again poorer students will be hedged out by the hefty fees and class barriers. Meanwhile, the BMC has agreed to build "military style barracks and shelters on the terraces" to accommodate the spill over from burgeoning classrooms. Clearly if this is the best the wealthiest corporation can do for its students, we have a long way to go before education for all becomes a reality."
>
> Editorial: Times of India (April 26, 1999)

The operation of the very same tendency in the rural areas was reported in its study by the IIE, Pune, (2002):

> "There is a general impression *created* in the last two decades or so that the schools run by the Zilla Parishad are not efficiently managed, are not properly supervised and the quality of education imparted is rather poor."
>
> -IIE, (2002) (Italics mine)

Explaining the role played by the powerful private school lobby in reducing infrastructures in rural schools, the study reports:

> "The enrolment in ZP schools gets considerably reduced at the upper primary stage which affects quality education. The low enrolment does not permit additional teachers or infrastructure facilities."
>
> -IIE, (2002)

Thus, it is submitted that the implications of blocked access to secondary education in the context of the present need and aspiration for the same, extend to issues of child rights, social justice, good governance, efficient management of resources, and even to issues of subversion of state interests and resources to narrow vested interests. In the context of policy making, therefore, the implications and effects of such division and dispersal of educational responsibility in education need to be seriously considered.

**Decentralization is About Potential, it Guarantees Nothing**

The implications of 'blocking' as an unintended outcome of decentralisation brings to mind the following statement in a USAID manual (quoted in Petrasek, 2002), which rightly pointed out that 'Decentralisation is about potential, it guarantees nothing.' The benefits and the failures of decentralization depend on who is using it, for what purpose, and with what precautions. Similarly, Brown (1995) has questioned whether government can effectively privatize a human service, such as education, with benefit to public schools. He considers education to be a public good, and that 'schools are designed not only to educate children but also to promote racial, gender and social class equity'. Lewin and Caillods (2001) have rightly cautioned developing countries that 'depending on how it is financed and who benefits, it (secondary education) may be neither equitable nor efficient in meeting national needs. If this is so, reform is needed."

**Implications for Action**

Petrasek, (2002) points out that governments have an obligation to ensure that other parties, including local government officials, do not harm the access that people have to education, health, housing and other economic and social rights that people should enjoy. In order to do so, governments are obliged to monitor the effects on services to which people have access. "In order to do this, it must make sure that enjoyments of these rights improve rather than regress. All this implies a reporting and a monitoring system. Without information, government cannot tell whether it is meeting its obligations or not. Without an enforcement system, it cannot take action to stop violations or abuses (both intended and unintended) where they occur".

One of the objectives of this paper was to highlight the need for regularly collecting information on cities, the oldest example of educational devolution. In

India the numbers affected are not negligible. The urban population of India exceeds the total population of countries, such as the USA, Australia, Canada, etc.

It is suggested in this paper, that even now, a system of monitoring, and for that, a database to appraise what is happening, be instituted to enable policy analysis and reform.

**Aggregate Data by 'City'**

At present educational data is collected at the unit of the block and published only for the district, state and national levels. It is neither collected nor analyzed at the city level, and therefore, pictures such as Fig. I were not seen before. In the absence of reporting of educational data by city:

- Simple indicators for educational planning, such as the gross enrolment ratio, cannot at present, be calculated at the city level. Even though the census provides population data for the cities, and now even for the slums, educational indicators of access, enrolment and retention for the city and the slums cannot be computed in the absence of corresponding aggregation of educational data at these levels.

- Planning for the effects of the increasing urbanization and pressures of in-migration on educational infrastructure (public as well as private) cannot be done except through city specific information. For example, decisions of school enrolment and of school choice are 'local specific' decisions, made with the consideration in mind of the convenience of daily commuting. This is precisely the reason why data on school availability by habitation is collected – but we do not know the types, number of schools, and their capacity in a city.

- The dynamics of interaction between the local population and the locally available educational infrastructures cannot be analyzed and reviewed. Research questions, such as 'who goes to which school' and 'which socio-economic class accesses which providers of education', 'who does not benefit from subsidised education', require city specific educational data, but such data is not available.

- The state is unable to ensure that decentralization maintains the rights of particular groups or particular regions, to education.

The only agency that collects data in reference to the city level is the municipal corporation. However, the municipal corporation concerns itself only with the collection and publishing of data related to the primary levels, and to schools under its 'jurisdiction'. Similarly, the districts are limited to their own 'jurisdiction' – that is, 'government schools' - and usually private schools do not consider themselves 'answerable' to the district education officer. Therefore, even though municipal data is aggregated by 'city', what is needed is data from the whole city, and all the schools, and not just from government schools.

The data from a city then needs to be studied in comparative perspective. As pointed out in this paper, when seen in isolation, there is likelihood of phenomenon such as declining municipal enrolments being interpreted as 'preference for private schooling' when cross-comparisons may suggest otherwise. The question of searching and finding an alternate explanation can only arise if it is noticed that other cities with different patterns of educational provision, show different trends in government schools. Seen in isolation, patterns cannot emerge, and questions cannot arise, thereby increasing the risk of misinterpretation or even misuse of limited information to rationalize the most expedient course of action.

**Conclusion**

This paper has juxtaposed findings of contradictory trends of primary school enrolment in cities, historical information about their unique structure of educational responsibility originating from devolution under the British Raj, and field level observations of dropout municipal primary schools, to suggest that structural factors could be associated with problems of access to secondary education in some cities which simultaneously depresses primary school enrolment.

The dropout from municipal schools was likened to the backward flow of smoke, which occurs only in the absence of upward access, and the metaphor of a

'blocked chimney' was employed to portray this phenomenon and to postulate that the anticipated problems of crossover to secondary education in the private aided schools in some cities, cause parents to enrol their children in private schools at the primary stage itself. Children also change from municipal schools to other schools from which access to secondary education is easier. It is this non-enrolment / withdrawal which is responsible for the decline in enrolment seen in the cities in which responsibility for secondary education has been devolved to private aided institutions at some point in history.

Thus this paper not only questions the assumption that it is the poor quality of municipal education that forces children to drop out from schools but also focuses attention on the structure of education and the need to look at flows and dynamic movements within the system. It thus supports research evidence worldwide of the higher educational aspirations of the urban poor in order to compete in the urban labour market. It suggests at the same time that without a fine-tuned understanding of structures of and links to secondary education, we may see less than optimal primary schooling demand and supply.

In conclusion, this paper raises questions regarding the role of governments in safeguarding the interests of the poor on the one hand, and on the unquestioning reliance placed on the private sector for the provision of public goods on the other. It also points to the need to continually monitor how the division and dispersal of responsibility along horizontal stages of education affects inter-cycle transition of children and the efficiency of primary schools.

## Notes

### *1. Mumbai*

**Table i**
**Mumbai: Enrolment in Municipal primary Schools and Average Annual Growth (1995-2000)**

| Year | 1994/5 | 1995/6 | 1996/7 | 1997/8 | 1998/9 | 1999/2000 | Average Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Municipal primary school enrolment | 495940 | 451000 | 452953 | Not available | 415612 | 389951 | -4.32 |

Source: Govt of Maharashtra; Directorate of Education (Various Years); Table 4.2.1. (Education at a Glance).

Table (*i*) above shows total enrolment in municipal primary Classes I-IV for the years 1994/5 to 1999/2000. By inspection, the figures are seen to be declining. The average annual growth rate of enrolment is calculated to be -4.32. This figure is negative. It confirms a declining trend in enrolment in municipal primary in Mumbai

### *2. Nagpur City*

**Table ii**
**Nagpur: Municipal Primary Schools: Annual Growth Rates and Average Annual Growth (1995-99)**

| Year | 1994/5 - 1995/6 | 1995/6 - 1996/7 | 1996/7 1997/8 - | 1997/8 1998/9 - | Average Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual growth rate | 3.6 | -4.97 | -1.12 | 1.18 | **-0.37** |

*Source: Juneja and Nandi, 2001b*

Table ii above shows data pertaining to Municipal Primary School Enrolment in Nagpur. The rate of growth of enrolment as seen them the Table tends to be in the negative direction for the period under consideration. The corresponding figure for Average Annual Growth Rates of enrolment in primary aided schools in Nagpur was 1.2 and that of private unaided schools for the same place and same period was 4.12 in contrast to the declining trends in the municipal schools.

### 3. *Surat*

**Table iii**
**Surat: Committee Primary Schools: Annual Growth Rates and Average Annual Growth (1995-99)**

| Year | 1992/3 | 1993/4 | 1994/5 | 1995/6 | 1996/7 | 1997/8 | Average Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual growth rate | | -5.49 | -1.02 | -4.17 | 0.88 | 6.71 | -0.39 |

*Source: Shah & Mohite 2001 in Juneja 2001.*

Overall annual average growth rate for the city is negative. For the same period, the figure for annual average growth rate for private managed schools was 6.3. Even so, Surat's is an interesting case because the data period presented above includes the year in which the plague struck Surat. On September 20th, 1994, a plague epidemic was declared in Surat. A new Municipal Commissioner set to work to clean up the city and to restore the faith of the people in the municipal corporation. Interestingly, the data in table above shows the annual growth rates for municipal primary schools enrolment to be negative for 1993-94, 94/95 and 95/96. Then in 1996/97, a year after the clean up, the enrolment growth rate turns mildly positive and then strongly so in 1997/98. It will require a detailed case study to examine the changes that took place in Surat and to find out what caused the turn around in enrolment rates.

### 4. *Vadodra*

In Vadodra, a crossover to private management schools is required for the secondary stage of education. Table iv below shows that enrolment in the Committee primary schools in Vadodra registered an annual average growth rate of -3.9.

**Table iv: Vadodra**
**Committee Primary Schools: Annual Growth Rates And Average Annual Growth (1995-99)**

| Year | 1992/3 | 1993/4 | 1994/5 | 1995/6 | 1996/7 | 1997/8 | Average Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual growth rate | | -1.89 | -7.13 | -2.72 | -3.31 | -4.71 | -3.94 |

*Source: Shah & Mohite 2001b in Juneja 2001.*

## The Positive Cities

In the cities of Indore, Gwalior and Jaipur, the municipal government does not provide education. The state government provides both primary and secondary schooling in these cities.

In the case of Coimbatore and Delhi, although the Municipal Corporation provides primary education, there is no need to crossover to the private sector for the secondary stage. In Delhi, the State Government runs secondary schools and in the case of Coimbatore, the Municipal Corporation runs upper primary (known as higher elementary schools), high and higher secondary schools as well.

The growth rates for government / municipal primary enrolment for these 'positive cities are presented blow.

### 5. *Indore*

**Table v**
**Indore: Annual Growth Rate**
**and Average Annual Growth (1996-2000)**

| Year | 1996/7 | 1997/8 | 1998/99 | 1999/00 | Average Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual growth rate | | 4.78 | 6.24 | 2.04 | **3.75** |

*Source: Juneja and Nandi 2001.*

Table v: above shows annual growth rates of government primary school enrolment in Indore for the years 1995-2000. As may be noted from the table, all the annual growth rates are positive and the figure for average annual growth rate for government primary schools for this period is 3.75. The average annual growth rate for private schools was also the same.

### 6. *Gwalior*

**Table vi**
**Gwalior: Annual Growth Rates**
**and Average Annual Growth (1997-2001)**

| Year | 1997/8 | 1998/99 | 1999/00 | 2000/01 | Average Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annual growth rate | | 4.71 | -14.9 | 33.78 | **3.11** |

*Source: DEO's Office, Gwalior, 2001.*

As may be seen for Gwalior city in Table vi above, the annual growth rates show fluctuation but the average annual growth rate for government primary school enrolment is 3.11. The average annual growth rate for private managed schools for the same place and the same period was also positive and at 8.01. The two figures together indicate that though enrolment in the private sector grew faster at a pace, the enrolment in government schools also did not suffer.

### 7. *Jaipur*

**Table vii**
**Jaipur: Annual Growth Rates**
**and Average Annual Growth (1992-1997)**

| Year | 1992/3 | 1993/4 | 1994/5 | 1995/6 | 1996/7 | Average Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enrolment (Govt. primary) | **294356** | **396610** | **402958** | **354312** | **371178** | |
| Annual growth rate | | 34.74 | 1.60 | -12.07 | 4.76 | **5.97** |

*Source: Bodh Shiksha Samiti, 2001, in Juneja 2001.*

Table vii above shows extreme fluctuations in the annual growth rates of enrolment at the city level. The annual average rates for government primary schools enrolment for the period works out to 5.97. Data could not be obtained from private management schools.

### 8. *Coimbatore*

In Coimbatore, the Municipal Corporation provides primary education through two types of schools. Municipal Elementary Schools provide education in Classes

I to V and these are the most common schools which enrol over 20,000 children each year in these classes. The Municipal Corporation also runs a few Higher Elementary Schools which have Classes I to VIII. These schools enrol only about 2500-3000 students. The annual growth rates of enrolment in each of these types of schools are presented in Table viii below.

**Table viii**
**Coimbatore: Annual Growth Rates of Municipal School Enrolment and Average Annual Growth Rate for the Period.**

| Annual Growth Rate/Years | 1995/6 | 1996/7 | 1997/8 | 1998/9 | Average Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary | | 9.44 | -6.73 | -7.68 | -0.61 |
| Hr. Elementary | | 8.77 | -0.45 | 7.61 | 5.23 |

*Source: Data presented in (Arumugam 2001).*

It is seen from Table viii above that enrolment in municipal primary schools with only Classes up to V show a slightly negative trend of enrolment growth, whereas the enrolment in schools up to Class VIII shows a positive trend. The available data is indicative of a preference for continuous unbroken transition from class to class, with a growth trend in the case of schools that offer education up to Class VIII. A closer look at the whole picture in Coimbatore would be able to provide a better explanation for the results.

### 9. *Delhi*

In Delhi, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi is the largest single provider of primary education from Classes I to V in the city, while the state government provides secondary education from Classes VI to XII. Two other municipalities also provide primary education – the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and the Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB) but they do not compare with the MCD in size and scale.

Table ix below shows that the figure for the average annual growth rate of MCD primary school enrolment for the past five years is 2.43.

**Table ix**
**Growth of Enrolment in Primary Schools of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (1998-2003)**

| Year | 1998/99 | 99/2000 | 2000/01 | 2001/02 | 2002/03 | Average Annual Growth Rate (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enrolment in MCD primary schools | 807333 | 829390 | 847087 | 886938 | 888852 | |
| Annual growth rate | | 2.73 | 2.13 | 4.70 | 0.22 | 2.43 |

*Source: Office of the Deputy Director (Planning) MCD. 2003.*

It may also be noted from the above table that the annual rate of growth between 2001/2 and 2002/03 has come down substantially. The Deputy Director (Planning) MCD, Sh BC Narula attributed this drop in enrolment in MCD schools to the fact that, in this year, the Delhi Administration (state government) started 100 new composite schools. Composite schools provide education from Classes I to XII without the need to change school at all. Narula explained that because of the people's preference for un-interrupted schooling facilities till the end of the secondary stage, the MCD primary schools witnessed a drop in enrolment in this year - evidence indeed of the aspiration of the urban poor for hassle-free primary and secondary schooling.

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