

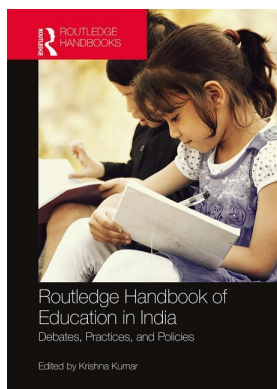
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Education in urban areas

Nalini Juneja

The urban population worldwide exceeded, for the first time, its rural population in 2009. In India, although only 27.8 per cent of the population is as yet 'urban', the growth of urban population also exceeded rural growth for the first time in the Indian Census of 2011. Theoretically this urban population is spread among 7,935 towns.¹ In reality, however, the distribution is 'top heavy' (Kundu 2014: 202), with about a quarter of the urbanites concentrated only in five 'mega' cities – Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, and Bengaluru. The rest are distributed among towns and cities of varying sizes. Fifty-three of these cities are large enough, with populations exceeding one million, to be called metropolitan cities.

In India, urban areas are generally assumed to be well resourced and privileged – a logic which suggests that policy interventions might be more useful if focused on the *real* problems of education of those residing in villages. Any 'theory' of rural location of educational problems would soon find itself at odds when confronted with the enrolment data of urban schools (Table 2.1), showing that their share of enrolment in the private sector (comprising the aided, unaided and unrecognised) far exceeds enrolment in government ones. Among them, unaided schools have the largest share of both schools and enrolment, while the enrolment share of aided schools (18 per cent) is remarkable in comparison to their much lower share of schools (11 per cent).

Table 2.1 is also testimony to 'trouble in (the urban) paradise', for it shows that privately managed schools, which nationally constitute only 23 per cent of all schools in India,² constitute over 63 per cent of all schools in urban areas, and accommodate over 70 per cent of enrolment. In the 'believed-to-be-privileged' urban areas, government schools – which are the only ones providing free and accessible education to the poorest – are far fewer than fee-charging private schools, despite 26.4 per cent of the urban population (in 2011–12) estimated to be living below the poverty line (Rangarajan 2014: 5) and the presence of huge slum populations. According to the 2011 census, the slum population is estimated to be 41.3 per cent of all households in Mumbai; 29.6 per cent in Kolkata (Municipal Corporation (MC)); 28.5 per cent in Chennai (MC).

The Census information, along with Table 2.1, provides a glimpse of much that one might expect to see in cities in India – high population density, congestion, large numbers living in poverty, slums, a disproportionate ratio of free government schools to fee-charging private schools – and hence, inequity and disparity next to abundance for some.

Table 2.1 Elementary education: urban schools and enrolment 2014–15

<i>Management</i>	<i>Schools</i>	<i>Enrolment</i>
Government	83,320 (36.3%)	21,169,853 (29.8%)
Private aided	25,196 (11.0%)	12,793,024 (18.0%)
Private unaided	111,419 (48.5%)	35,489,823 (49.9%)
Others (Madrasas, recognised and unrecognised; unrecognised schools)	9,559 (4.2%)	1,655,665 (2.3%)
Total	229,494 (100%)	71,108,365 (100%)

Source: As on 30 September 2014. Table obtained by special request to DISE, NUEPA.

In order to understand the origin of some current issues in education belonging uniquely to the city in India, this chapter will take a brief look at the developmental history of Indian cities with a focus on education. From this perspective, in subsequent sections it will first attempt to present as inevitable the growing stratification among schools; it will then highlight the consequences of a unique and surviving pattern of education imposed on the ‘presidency cities’ during the British Raj; and finally, it will throw light on the effects of city master plans on the education scene and on the RTE Act of 2009. At the outset, however, this chapter attempts to clarify the terms ‘urban schools’ and ‘urban education’, which in American educational journals may carry a meaning rooted in the history of US cities, but are interpreted and used very differently in India and in this chapter.

‘Urban education’ (USA)

The terms ‘urban schools’ and ‘urban education’ carry different meanings in the USA and India. In the American context, reference is made to ‘inner city schools’ attended by children of the poorer sections, usually of ‘colour’ (a euphemism for African-Americans and Asians) and migrants, whereas the better schools attended by the socio-economically privileged usually lie outside the city ‘in the suburbs’. In Indian cities, on the other hand, it is the poor who tend to live on the outskirts of cities in slums, while the so-called posh areas and the ‘best’ schools may be found in the heart of the city. These differences might be ascribed to the processes of urbanisation and to the funding pattern of schools in the USA.

Public schools in the USA were truly public in the way they served their local communities and, at least initially, were usually financed by voluntary contributions and later through local property taxes. ‘This tradition had real advantages because many families were living in small, relatively isolated communities with similar standards of living’ (Biddle and Berliner 2002: 49). With increasing urbanisation, people from these small communities moved to cities. When these cities became overcrowded, those who were well-off moved to the expanding suburbs and in doing so reduced the tax base of the cities. It was at this point, according to Biddle and Berliner, that the system developed faults:

Parents who moved to affluent suburbs were generally willing to fund well-equipped, well-staffed public schools for their own children, but – familiar only with the tradition that public schools should be funded locally – they saw little reason to pay additional taxes to fund equivalent schools for the impoverished students left behind in city centres or rural towns.

(Biddle and Berliner 2002: 49)

With those who were better-off moving to the more desirable living environments of the suburbs, the 'urban schools', as the schools in the cities came to be known, were left to serve neighbourhoods 'in which there were high concentrations of poverty ... accompanied by the concentration of undesirable conditions to which children were exposed, such as education failure, violence, crime, welfare dependency, and family disruption' (NCES 1996: 3).

Adding insult to injury as it were, 'children raised in these surroundings were labeled "deprived" or "disadvantaged" and ... depicted as requiring special educational interventions' (Rury and Mirel 1977: 61).

One may wonder if it is merely a coincidence that the term used in the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) for children needing special educational interventions in cities in India is 'urban deprived', whereas there is no corresponding label for children needing special interventions in rural areas.

Development of cities and education in India

The process of India's urbanisation differed from that of the West. Patel (2006) points out that cities were first developed by the colonial state, and later through the intervention of the independent nation state. Under the British Raj, caste and hierarchy in new forms were created when the traditionally landed elite became the propertied class in the new cities as well (Patel 2006). Thus cities like Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras 'became the prime cities which were also the seats of imported culture' (Das 1981: 54).

In the creation of these cities, the intention of the colonial rulers, according to Kundu (2014), was to provide high-quality civic amenities to themselves, to the elites linked to them, and to those who could afford high prices. Consequently 'public facilities were concentrated in towns and cities and were available to the privileged sections of the urban community with access to the rural population being negligible' (Kundu 2014: 194). Cities in India continue to have better social and physical infrastructure, including more educational facilities,

as is reflected in a higher percentage of literate and educated persons in these cities and [they] are also able to attract educated migrants from all over the country seeking higher education or skilled employment in modern and capital-intensive activities that have grown significantly in recent years.

(Kundu 2014: 209)

Schools, concentrated in urban areas, underwent an administrative change when the management of government schools, following the recommendation of the Indian Education Commission (1881–82), was transferred to district and municipal boards with the view that primary education of the masses should be the first charge in the care of the state, while all government secondary schools should be transferred to local, native management. Soon, under a system of grants-in-aid, the government devolved greater responsibility of the direct management of education by handing over its primary schools to municipalities and the secondary ones to private institutions in the urban areas. At that time, the large municipalities were those of the presidency cities of Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta.

From the presidency cities, this pattern of municipal primary followed by private-aided provisioning of secondary education spread to all municipal corporations in the provinces in which these cities were located, and continued thus even after Independence. For example, primary education first became a municipal function in the presidency city of Bombay, then in all other municipal corporations in the province of Bombay (which at one time included Gujarat); and

ultimately after the reorganisation of states, this pattern continued in all municipal corporations in both Gujarat and Maharashtra, even though the arrangement outside of such cities was different. Thus, in some cities, the educational devolution to municipal corporations had been a reality for almost 100 years by the time primary education was devolved to rural local bodies.

After Independence, one of the features distinguishing cities as they evolved was the idea during the third plan period that their spatial development should be guided by a ‘master plan’. The city master plans that evolved during this period created a rightful place, literally, for schools within the planned cities by providing for land allotments, virtually free of cost, for public purposes such as schools (Juneja 2005a).

Today, as will be seen in the sections that follow, these historical characteristics of cities continue to bear on education in the urban context in India.

Section I

Stratification

Despite the global trend towards the adoption of market-led ideas and growing popularity of private schools, Table 2.1, showing the share of private schools to be over 63 per cent of all urban schools in India and their enrolment share to be exceeding 70 per cent of all urban enrolment, does indeed generate concerns for equality and equity of educational opportunity, especially in cities where private schools are concentrated. Cities especially have seen increasing economic differentiation, linguistic dichotomisation, and segregation among schooling opportunities. In its largest cities, the variety of schools to be seen in India perhaps leaves behind almost every city in the world. The variation among schools has been oft described and commented upon by Juneja (2003, 2005a, 2010, 2014).

The type of school attended, and the medium of instruction, apart from being signifiers of status, have important implications for life outcomes, a fact well-recognised by ‘the affluent and the middle class [who] had forsaken state-run schools in the 1960s and 1970s’ (Farooqui 1998: 329), and increasingly by the poor seeking to enrol their children in one of the ‘mushrooming private schools, aimed at the urban poor whose key selling point is often the provision of English as a medium of instruction’ (Miller 2005: 115); or in an elite private school through admission by lottery under the quota reserved under Section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act 2009.

English has been the language of power since colonial times; even now, with market forces and globalisation, since ‘English functions as a major business tongue’ (Nilekeni 2009: xii) and is seen as key to economic success and getting a good job; this trend, Miller (2005) notes, has continued and even been reinforced in post-colonial India, especially in large urban centres, as confirmed empirically by Munshi and Rosenzweig (2006) in the city of Mumbai.

Private schools

Private schools can range from the large elite ones to unrecognised, low-fee ones in the bylanes. The elite schools, many set up before Independence, were once usually either missionary schools or the ‘public schools’ established in the colonial tradition to ‘adapt the good things of British public school life and administration to the Indian ways of life’ (Srivastava 2005: 3). In cities like Delhi, according to Farooqui (1998), even in the 1960s ‘private enterprise in a key area like school education was a reality of life long before liberalisation became fashionable’ (p. 328). Now, increasingly the most prestigious schools in cities tend to belong to national or even international chains of schools, and could even be affiliated to foreign boards such as the International Baccalaureate

(IB) and Cambridge International Examination (CIE). Such is the popularity of these international schools that their numbers have seen tenfold growth in the past decade (Panda 2015).

Low-fee private and unrecognised schools

Not all of the urban children attending private schools are enrolled in elite schools. Of late, a large number of new, non-elite, low-fee, and often unrecognised private schools have arisen in cities, towns, and even in rural areas to accommodate the demand that government schools cannot or do not meet. De *et al.* (2002), in a study conducted in three northern states, found that 117 (70 per cent) of the 167 unaided private schools that had come up in recent years were in urban areas, where ‘in the last 10 years, no new government schools have been set up’ (De *et al.* 2002: 5231). These schools served the less privileged sections of the population who were left with little choice because ‘government schools are few in number and hard to find’ (Noronha *et al.* 2005: 107). In urban areas especially, they held the government to blame for the spawn and spread of private schools:

What children have today in these towns is a government primary system in which little investment is being made, in spite of the new demands of Education for All. Schools are dwindling in quantity and often in quality, ignoring the problems of constant immigration to urban areas. It is no wonder that children are flocking to the new private cram schools.... All kinds of shoddy arrangements are flowering in the name of private schools.

(Noronha et al. 2005: 111)

A study by Juneja (2001a) bears out the tardy pace of growth in government provisioning in cities. This study found that in Kanpur, over a four-year period, no new government school had come up although 80 new private schools had been established. Similarly, in Surat, 81 per cent, in Nagpur 70.6 per cent, and in Indore, 55 per cent of new schools were in the private sector.

A major attraction of these low-fee private schools is that they purport to teach in English as a medium of instruction; Noronha *et al.* (2005) report ‘much imitation of elite private schools not only in belts and ties and benches but also in the teaching of English’ (p. 105), a finding supported by other researchers on private schools in towns and cities across India (Miller 2005; Ohara 2012; Srivastava 2008; Tooley 2009; Tooley and Dixon 2003). Nilekeni (2009: xii) sees in the low-fee private schools an instrument ‘for not just more choice, but also greater power’.

Although schools in India are ‘non-profit’ organisations, or at least by law they are supposed to be, efforts are reportedly underway to study how low-fee private schools catering to the city poor can function as tools of ‘social capitalism’.³ Research by Tooley and Dixon (2003) and Tooley (2009) made no secret of their profit motive and their search for a business model for use across India and in other developing countries. Similar research in other parts of India and advocacy of for-profit private schools for the poor through state-supported vouchers to enable children to access schools of their choice has also grown – a phenomenon perceived by Nambissan and Ball (2010) and Nambissan (2015) as part of organised attempts to ‘institutionalise market principles in education’ and to create ‘pressure for legal changes for for-profit schooling and vouchers’ (Nambissan and Ball 2010: 17).

As it is, about 4 per cent of urban schools were identified in Table 2.1 as ‘unrecognised’ – i.e. not registered by local authorities. (Madrasas are included in that category on account of their exemption from registration under the RTE Act 2009.) It is generally believed, however, that

the number of unrecognised schools is far greater than officially estimated, and the fact that these schools are able to attract students further testifies to the ability of such schools to cater to demand not met by the government despite the RTE Act 2009.

'Quasi government' schools

Another category of schools identifying themselves neither as straight-forwardly 'government' nor plainly 'private' has emerged in the past few decades. These could be referred to as 'quasi-government' (Juneja 2010: 21) which, despite the availability of schools under the cantonment board and central government for children of transferable employees (these schools now increasingly being left to the patronage of lower ranks) were established by registered societies for children of 'officers' of the defence, police, and civil services.

Government schools and differentiation

The label 'government school' too can cover a broad range of schools, often in the same city. Of late, even government schools have been diversifying and differentiating hierarchically in an unconcealed mimicry of 'public' (elite private) ones. In Delhi, for example, 'Sarvodaya Vidyalayas' were created after the fashion of private whole schools with the justification of providing education from grades 1 to 12 'under one roof as is being provided in the private public schools'.⁴ Then in 1996, 'In order to have at least some government schools, to begin with, having standards comparable to those available in the so-called better public schools',⁵ the government provided one Rajkiya Pratibha Vidyalaya in each of the districts of the state to which children were admitted at primary by selection. The differential infrastructure, finances, clientele, and even the prestige enjoyed by these different types of government schools ensures they have little in common other than the label 'government school'.

Absence of a 'school map'

The presence and functioning of such a large and differentiated variety of schools each catering to a niche clientele inevitably precludes the possibility of the operation by educational authorities of a 'school map' which determines 'school zones' and restricts schooling choices, if any, to within these zones. Consequently, it is common in all towns and cities in India to find large numbers of children being ferried from one end of the city to the other in order to attend the school chosen by their parents, or as is more likely to be the case, the school to which they have been able to secure admission. 'It is not uncommon for children to daily traverse a distance of 50 kms to and from school' (Farooqui 1998: 328).

This large-scale movement of children has in turn given rise to yet another set of phenomena related uniquely to education in the city, namely the school transport lobby, road accidents, and toxic fumes causing lung diseases among children.

School transport lobby

According to a news report of Delhi (Bhatnagar 2013), an estimated 4,200 school buses are involved in the daily task of ferrying 1.6 million children, using enormous amounts of fuel and time. This does not include the numbers of children who use other means of transport such as public buses, vans, cars, taxis, autos, two wheelers, rickshaws, etc. to reach school – a task which 'often acquires greater significance than the activity related to actually imparting education and

the charges for which far exceed tuition fees – which are by no means nominal in private schools’ (Farooqui 1998: 328).

Road accidents

The costs of lack of operation of school catchment areas are not limited to time and money alone. According to the *Global Status Report on Road Safety 2013* (WHO 2014), India has the highest number of road accidents in the world. Most of these accidents happen in cities. Despite an estimated 30 per cent of accidents going unreported, the child traffic death rate in India is 4–5 times higher than in other developed nations; 41 per cent of child deaths every year are in transportation accidents (Mahajan 2014). These alarming statistics are despite the fact that these do not take into account injuries or cases in which death occurred a few days after the accident.

Toxic fumes and lung diseases

According to the WHO, 13 of the 20 most polluted cities in the world are in India, with Delhi being the worst among them (CSE 2014; WHO 2014). Children are at greater risk as their vital organs are not mature enough to deal with it, the worst affected being those who commute in unpacked (open) vehicles as they are more exposed to dust particles in the air. A recent report in 2015 on child lung health found that about 35 per cent of all school children tested across metropolitan cities in India fared badly in screening tests, indicating poor air quality across India (‘Delhi’s children have the weakest lungs’ 2015).

Section II

Devolution of upper primary to the private sector

The pattern of provision of education can differ from that of the state in many cities. These cities are mainly those which owed their educational pattern to the ‘presidency city’ tradition – under which, as presented earlier, in addition to devolution of primary education to municipal bodies, post-primary education was similarly devolved to private schools with grant-in-aid from the government. Consequently in such cities, a transition⁶ to the private-aided secondary schools was (and still is) required of all children for the completion of elementary education – now their fundamental right. It was neither noted nor studied until recently that such a pattern could be implicated in the large-scale decline of primary school enrolments in cities (Juneja 2005b, 2007).

The blocked chimney syndrome

Juneja (2001a; see Figure 2.1) noted in studies from nine metropolitan cities in a research project coordinated by her that trends of enrolment in government primary schools were positive in some cities (Delhi, Indore, Jaipur, Coimbatore, and Gwalior), but negative for the other cities (Mumbai, Nagpur, Surat, and Vadodara). These inconsistent growth trends defied conventional explanation such as of differential demographic growth.

History and serendipity led to the realisation that negative trends corresponded to the ‘presidency city pattern’ of ‘municipal primary–private aided post primary’ education, whereas in cities with a positive primary trend the secondary schools were run directly by the government

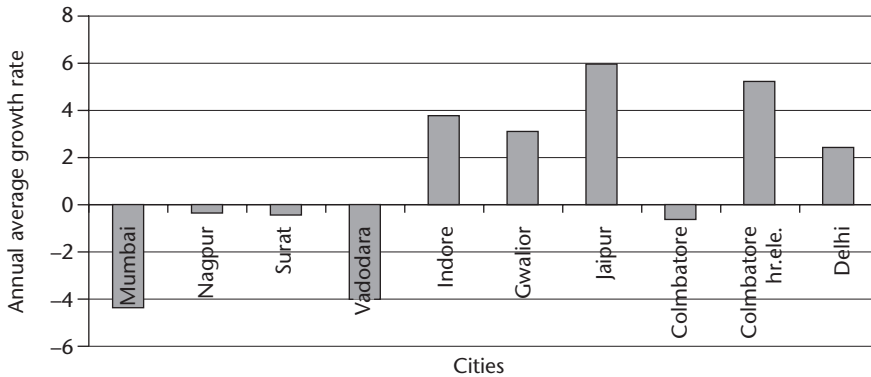


Figure 2.1 Government primary school enrolment trends in cities.

Source: Juneja 2001a.

and not devolved to the private sector. In the absence of state intervention to ensure access to subsidised private-aided secondary schools, children left free municipal schools for the fee-charging primary stage of aided secondary schools. A study of Calcutta (Nambissan 2003) also confirmed a much lower dropout rate among children in schools offering classes beyond the primary stage.

This phenomenon was termed by Juneja (2005b) as the 'Blocked Chimney Syndrome' (using the metaphor of smoke in a chimney, which tends to 'back flow' (dropout) if its upward path is blocked).

The city of Delhi, on the other hand, after a Delhi High Court Order in 2002 (CWP 4400/1997) has designated all municipal primary schools as 'feeder schools' to a 'parent' government secondary school within a neighbourhood admission plan. Now, every child completing grade five in a municipal school, knows she has a secured seat in grade six of a nearby state government secondary school.

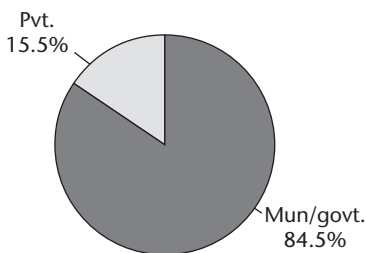
However, despite the RTE Act 2009, there is still no such transition plan operational for children in the municipal schools of Mumbai, or other such cities where primary education has been devolved to the municipal corporations, even though the state continues to pay for secondary education in its aided schools. Kingdon (1996) had raised the issue of misplaced subsidies as early as 1996. Kamdar (2002) too had raised this question for, 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.

Juneja (2011) conducted a study in Delhi and in Mumbai to find out whose education was being subsidised in private-aided schools if the poor are not able to take advantage of these (see Figure 2.2). In both of these cities, primary education is provided by municipal corporations but, as seen above, the Delhi government provided secondary education but, unlike Mumbai, had also instituted a transition plan. Data from 4,100 children in 42 secondary schools showed that the children in grade six in government secondary schools in Delhi (where a transition plan had been operationalised) came predominantly (almost 85 per cent) from its municipal schools where they had availed of free education. In Mumbai, however, instead of the imagined large-scale crossover of children from the municipal schools to the private-aided sector, less than 15 per cent in grade five (the first post-primary grade) came from municipal primary schools.

Delhi: children from municipal schools constitute 84.5 per cent of enrolment in the post-primary grade of state-provided secondary schools.

Mumbai: children from municipal schools constitute less than 15 per cent of enrolment in post-primary grade of state-provided secondary schools.

**State Govt.
Delhi: Standalone secondary schools**



Mumbai: Grade 5: Standalone secondary schools

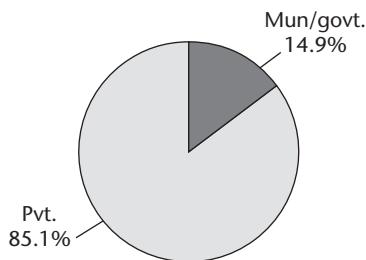


Figure 2.2 Children from municipal primary schools in Delhi and Mumbai in the lowest grade of state-provided secondary schools.

Source: Juneja 2011.

Section III

City master plans

City master plans are another distinct and historical feature of Indian cities. The first ‘model’ master plan of Delhi (1960) envisaged an egalitarian and an integrated society, as did the Educational Commission (1964–66), which had expected education to bring ‘different social groups and classes together’ (Educational Commission 1966: para 1.36).

The preparation and implementation of the ‘model’ master plan was supported by foreign experts, bylaws, and regulations for implementation (Das 1981; Shaw 1996; Wood 1958). The foreign professional planners, according to Shaw (1996: 225) had a distaste for congestion, crowded cities, and ‘an obsession with order and homogeneity . . . , [and a tendency] to erase slums because of their unsightly presence and the preference for low-density spread out cities’. Nevertheless, the demarcation of land for different planned activities created spaces also for schools – both government and private.

This section briefly touches upon issues in education arising out of such notions of legitimacy, and then goes on to a more recent bequest of master planning in India – Section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act 2009, better known as the clause that sought to reduce educational segregation by making it mandatory for every private school to admit and give free education to 25 per cent of its enrolment from economically weaker sections and disadvantaged groups.

Land and privilege

Today, the spread of slums beyond planned city boundaries is calling into question the planning models borrowed from the West. As cities grew, they tended to become more segregated, and as seen in the previous section, so did the schools. Many schools in the heart of the city now occupy valuable real estate, while increasing land prices have relegated the poor that would

attend the government schools in the cities to its peripheries. Even the SSA does not seem immune to the idea of the city as a legitimate space only for the privileged. Against all norms of holistic planning, the SSA 'city plan' appears to be an exercise not of mapping all educational provisioning in the city, but to devise innovative schemes for the education of those arbitrarily categorised as 'urban deprived', and therefore living not in 'the city' but in its slums and on the streets.

Slums, the poor, and education

While finding land for school sites poses a problem in cities, so does the problem of what to do with emptying schools in the heart of cities whose clientele has moved to cheaper housing on the city outskirts. On the other hand, classes become overcrowded in the few schools that come up on the fringes of the city, and teachers who normally come from a different socio-economic background are reluctant to be posted to new schools (Juneja 2001a).

In Delhi, Tsujita (2013) found schools to be situated outside slums, but all children from the same slums do not necessarily attend the same school, and hardly any children from slums attend private schools.

Banerji (2000), in her study of Mumbai slums, found that the 'non legal' nature of slum dwellings adds to the precariousness of existence for the poor and keeps children away from schools, while teachers are less than supportive of their problems. Even those who do attend schools often find no peaceful place to study because of constant noise and sounds (Desai 1989). Similar findings continue to be echoed in the work of Tsujita (2013) in relation to children living in slums; the work of Monika Banerjee (2014) in the context of the SSA and children of the urban poor; and of Ramachandran (2005), Mooij (2008), and Dalal (2015) in the context of teacher social distance and its manifestations in classroom situations.

Street children, children out of school

As if born of the city, some children are known as 'street children' and are a common sight even today in almost all cities in India. They are engaged in occupations such as rag picking, street vending, begging, and working in roadside repair shops and *dhabas* and in manufacturing units (Bhaskaran and Mehta 2011; Kaur and Javed 2015). Notoriously numerically underestimated, a recent study (Bhaskaran and Mehta 2011) found only 50,923 such children in Delhi. 'Street children' are not necessarily without families, nor do all of them live on the street. Typically these children, as found by Bhaskaran and Mehta (2011), are not even literate (50.5 per cent), although about one-fifth of them had had some formal education, while one-quarter had received some kind of non-formal education.

Exclusive 'colonies'

Despite the lofty ideals of master plans and education policies, 'planned' colonies and private schools in cities share in common the belief that neither are for the poor. An RTI supplication⁷ in 2012 revealed, for example, in the case of Faridabad, one of the oldest planned cities in India, that across three planned 'sectors' for the privileged, the only school accessible for free to children of domestic servants and petty tradesmen who serviced the posh houses was a three-roomed dilapidated primary one about 3 km away, while all the school sites in the sectors had been given to fee-charging private schools.

Similarly, in a colony in Delhi with 12 elite private schools there was not a single municipal primary school to be found in any of the 'sectors' of the colony. One of the highest officers of

the municipal corporation revealed under conditions of anonymity that they had indeed planned to set up municipal primary schools in the sectors, but the RWAs (Resident Welfare Associations) told them not to do so, for they did not want the presence of the children of the poorer sections of society causing ‘disturbances’ in their colony when none of ‘their own’ children would attend such schools. The municipal primary schools were finally set up only in the urban villages in that area.

School land/valuable real estate

A recent news report (Siddiqui 2015) tells of school land being grabbed in the outskirts of Kanpur by land mafia, of chopping down of trees in the yard, uprooting of swings in the playground, and intimidation of children and parents, resulting in the school having a deserted look as the children stay away in fear.

Another rare instance of documentation of diversion of school land for commercial ventures, as city land prices escalated, was reproduced by Verma (2004) in her blog, quoting from a booklet produced by activists protesting against closure of schools in the heart of Indore city:

Well-attended and well-equipped schools have been closed down for merger in the name of ‘rationalisation’ in areas where, incidentally, massive commercial development is proposed. Commercialisation of school premises has been trumpeted as a necessary ‘radical’ way of raising resources for education, even as state allocations for the purpose have lapsed and earlier similar exercises have not ploughed profits back to schools. And for doing all this, the administration has won plaudits simply because it has ‘opened 103 new schools’ in the city’s slums by writing ‘school’ in chalk on the door of each of the existing community halls.

(Verma 2004)

From master plan to RTE Act: breaching the barriers of private schools

The city master plans, implemented by the urban development authority of the state, provided for the allotment of free land to educational institutions subject to terms and conditions specified in the land allotment letter (Juneja 2005a, 2007, 2014). One of these conditions was that schools receiving free land would admit and give free education to 25 per cent of their enrolment.

From the late 1960s until January 2004, although schools continued to obtain land, the existence of the conditional clause appeared to have been forgotten till the matter was brought up in a public interest litigation (PIL) in 2002.

The issue of cheating the poor out of the seats due to them being in private schools made newspaper headlines and ultimately influenced the insertion of a similar clause mandating inclusion of the poor into private schools all over India – see Section 12(i)(c) of The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009. This clause in the national Act has evoked enormous research interest (Juneja 2014; Mehendale *et al.* 2015; Sarin and Gupta 2013).

Section IV

Researching the city

Research with an educational policy focus is limited; policy research on education in urban areas even more so. There could be at least three reasons for this. First, as mentioned at the beginning

of this chapter, urban areas are generally assumed to be privileged, and not so much in need of research as the rural where the *real* problems in Indian education may be found.

Urban: not seen as a 'problem'

Support for the unassailability of such rationale comes from the exclusively rural focus of 'the state', as seen for example in the educational data presented through the official educational statistics system, 'DISE' – an acronym for District Information System for Education. This rural focus of DISE constitutes the second impediment to educational policy research in towns and cities. DISE, save for two separate publications on aggregated 'urban' and 'rural' educational data, disaggregates its sub-district data on its 'School Report Cards' site only by levels of rural habitation and rural administration, while ignoring their urban equivalents. Similarly, centrally sponsored educational schemes such as the DPEP and the SSA are 'district' focused. (Although the latter did concede an arbitrarily defined segment called 'urban deprived' as a component for funding within the district plan.)

Confusion between 'urban' and 'city/town' statistics

The average researcher, attempting to study *education in cities*, such as Indore, may find confusing the fact that the Census of India offers population statistics for the district using four different terms. There are data for 'Indore District', 'Indore District Urban', 'Indore Urban Agglomeration', and 'Indore (M.C.)' (Table 2.2; Figure 2.3).

'District urban' comprises the total population of all the towns of various sizes within Indore District, separated by rural areas – represented in Figure 2.3 by blobs of different sizes. The implications of this diagrammatic representation becomes meaningful when one realises that from the child's perspective, aggregating information for separate towns even within one district is of little value considering that for most children schools are accessible, or not, only within a 'local area' within easy access.

Lack of disaggregated educational data

The third problem is presented by the type of *educational* data available. According to the Census of India, 'Village or Town is recognised as the basic area of habitation. In all censuses throughout the world this dichotomy of Rural and Urban areas is recognised and the data are generally presented for the rural and urban areas separately.'⁸ Official educational statistics (from DISE), on the other hand, publish educational data for national, state, and district levels only, while 'School Report Cards' data can be aggregated online for state, district, block, a special SSA

Table 2.2 Population Indore 2011

<i>Indore population</i>	<i>2011</i>
Indore District	3,276,697
Indore District Urban	2,427,709
Indore Urban Agglomeration	2,170,295
Indore (M.C.)	1,964,086

Source: www.census2011.co.in/census/metropolitan/242-indore.html.

Fig. 2.3a.

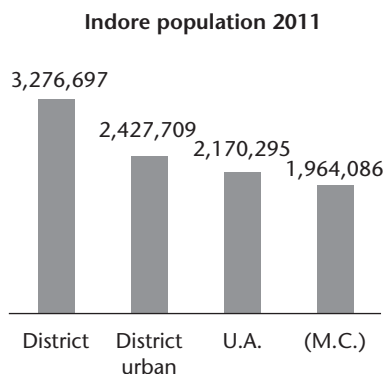


Fig. 2.3b.

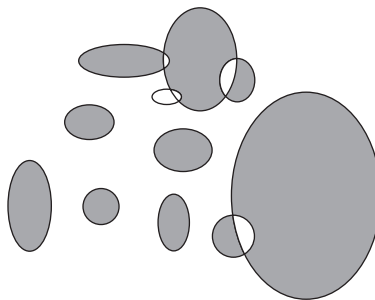


Figure 2.3 (a) Showing difference between populations of district, district urban, urban agglomeration, and municipal corporation areas. (b) Diagrammatical representation of Indore District Urban comprising 11 towns.

Source: www.census2011.co.in/census/metropolitan/242-indore.html.

categorisation known as a ‘cluster’, and for the village level, but not for *urban* sub-district levels such as towns and cities. Thus the official presentation of educational statistics in India permits only the rural to be observed, while rendering towns and cities invisible.

Had data been readily available for towns and cities, ‘the blocked chimney syndrome’ that could manifest itself in city data but is subsumed when aggregated with district data, might have revealed itself much earlier.

Town-/city-specific data are important for use within districts. Private schools are concentrated in cities. For example, a study of Indore showed that while district educational statistics revealed the share of government schools in Indore *district* to be 73 per cent, in Indore *city* the share of government schools was only 33 per cent due to the greater concentration of private schools (Juneja 2001b). The same study also found that there was little increase in the number of government schools within the city, whereas at the district level government schools showed a healthy growth in the same period.

Some districts in India are fully urban and could spell hope for the urban researcher. Unfortunately, this hope is belied if trying to study Mumbai, comprising two fully urban districts in the Census – Mumbai and Mumbai Suburban. For DISE, however, ‘Mumbai Suburban’ is not a ‘district’ but a *code*, and contains data not of schools in the Mumbai suburban area, but only of *municipal schools across both districts*. Similarly, for reasons best known to itself (and kept to itself, for nowhere is this ‘coding system’ revealed), for DISE ‘District Mumbai’ contains data of *private* schools, i.e. schools recognised by the State Directorate of Education *in both districts*.

Thus, even the organisation of official educational statistics can put a spanner into the works for educational policy research efforts in urban areas.

Conclusion

The vicious cycle of assumptions of ‘all is well’ in education in urban contexts diminishes the likelihood of research attention to towns and cities, and reinforces the disinclination to provide disaggregated urban educational data. This cycle impacts ultimately the availability of research on towns and cities, thus reinforcing and perpetuating the belief that all is indeed well in urban areas. Schooling problems are therefore believed to be negligible here except perhaps for problems of a segment known as the ‘urban deprived’ – already being ably addressed by the SSA.

However, as seen in this chapter, the concept of the ‘urban deprived’ is imported and ill-fitting when viewed in the historical context of educational development in cities under colonial rule in India – a policy path that continues to shape education in cities today. The remarkable diversity of schooling opportunities masks the disparity of availability, accessibility, and affordability of these schools, while contributing to stratification and inequity in education. The right to choice enjoyed only by some adds risk to children’s lives and lungs due to accidents and toxic fumes caused in the process of mass transportation to schools at the far end of towns.

Devolution of responsibility for post-primary education to the private sector in presidency cities, under British rule (seen also as the first public–private partnership in education once grant-in-aid was instituted) continues, as seen in this chapter, to affect children’s access to free primary education on the one hand, and the perception of municipal primary schools as failing on the other.

City master plans demarcated school spaces and made land available to schools, both government and private, in cities. Even so, lands and schools continue to be at risk due to tendencies towards segregation and greed, while forces which rose up to counter them gave birth to a revolutionary clause for inclusion of the poor and private schools in the 2009 historic legislation for the right to education in India and continue to be a beacon of hope in the neoliberal, privatised educational cityscape.

Notes

- 1 Analogous to ‘village’, which is the basic unit of rural habitation; ‘town’ is the basic unit of urban habitation. In terms of population, habitations having at least 5,000 inhabitants, living in densities of at least 400 persons per square kilometre with 75 per cent of males engaged in non-agricultural occupations may be classified as urban.
- 2 <http://dise.in/Downloads/Trends-ElementaryEducation-2014-15/AllIndia.pdf>.
- 3 A term said to have been used by Bill Gates to describe ‘the use of the profit motive to solve social problems’ (Ball *et al.* 2015: 22).
- 4 www.edudel.nic.in/welcome_folder/aboutdep.htm (accessed 19 April 2015).
- 5 Cabinet Note No. F.DE-15/Act/140/97 dated 27 March 1997 of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD), quoted in the High Court of Delhi CM No. 5202/2012 in W.P.(C) No. 7796/2011. <http://delhicourts.nic.in/July12/Social%20Jurist%20Vs.%20govt.%20of%20NCT.pdf> (accessed 19 April 2015).
- 6 The term *transition* is applied only for change of *stage* of education such as between the terminal stage of primary to the beginning of the upper primary stage; between the terminal stages of secondary to the beginning of the tertiary stage, etc. Thus it usually refers to movement of a whole class (i.e. cohorts) of children, or groups of children rather than one child. For this reason, ‘transition’ requires planning and monitoring in order to ensure successful transition at critical points such as between sub-cycles in elementary education, using indicators of transition such as ‘Transition Rate’.
- 7 Appeal Case No. 5016 of 2012: letter No. RTI/13/357 dt.4.7.13.
- 8 http://censusindia.gov.in/Data_Products/Library/Indian_perceptive_link/Census_Terms_link/censusterm.html.

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