

**The Swedish Model of Education**  
**Abhinaba Chatterjee**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This paper attempts to describe the education system in Sweden. Before the 90's the education system in Sweden was centralised and highly regularised. The reforms of 1991 saw the Centre handing the power over to the municipalities, the lowest tier of the government.

The reforms had several effects, but before any of those could be profoundly seen, there raged debates. There were arguments for and against the reforms. In the meantime, the effects became pronounced. New independent schools came up and they came up in numbers. The parents and students were more than satisfied; they now had a plethora of schools to choose from. And most importantly, the incoming government in 1994 did not make any amendments. The effects might just have started showing.

This paper tries to capture this event. It assesses the effectiveness of the educational reforms in Sweden, the pretext and the direct impact. Considerable research on the Swedish model of education, the decentralised approach, the voucher system and parental choice has already been done. My work involves explaining the previous system, the changes and its immediate and long-term effects. It also informs people about the schooling structure followed in Sweden. Finally it tries to figure out areas where Sweden did better than other countries as far as implementation is concerned, why it did better and what should other countries keep in mind while attempting to replicate the Swedish reforms.

The paper consists of five sections. First, the preface, the conditions that led the Swedish political parties to consider the reforms. Second, the Swedish School System, which gives an idea of the different levels of schooling and helps in understanding of the reforms. Third, The Reforms, where I have explained the changes, its implications, and the arguments that I have referenced from existing work to prove quantitatively that the reforms had positive effects. Fourth, the distinctive features of the reforms in Sweden, discusses how Sweden was different in implementing the voucher system and uses a comparative study to show how it fares against other countries. The final section is where I have discussed what other countries trying to replicate the reforms can learn from the Swedish experience.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research involves secondary research with insights from Swede educationists and researchers.

## **LIMITATIONS**

There has been a problem with data gathering and hence any quantitative study. I have hence quoted research papers, which have already done quantitative analysis.

1990's was a tumultuous period for Sweden. There was an economic downturn and uproar in the labour market. Quoting a National Agency for Education paper,

For the adult population, the 90's was a period of economic decline and great uncertainty, and for young persons this was the only social and economic reality they were familiar with. During the 90's, young people experienced developments in the society that provided them with a range of opportunities different to those that existed for the preceding generations. At the same time they also encountered obstacles, which did not exist to the same extent as for earlier generations...pupils encountered a school which by tradition shaped pupils for the future, but which as part of its mission put great emphasis on taking pupils' current experiences, their interests and preconditions and needs as its starting point.

As the quote rightly captures, one of the developments in 90's that provided young people with a range of opportunities was the concept of **'school-choice'**.

The Moderates and the Social Democrats had favourable views for school-choice over the last 20 years although the views were different as far as implementation was concerned. The moderates wanted all schools to be transformed to independent<sup>1</sup> and free, while the Social Democrats wanted a balance between the public schools and the independent schools.

The main reason as to why both the political parties preferred school-choice over any other reform was the sole aim to provide more choice and increase the number of independent schools, says Paula Blomqvist<sup>i</sup>.

The Social Democrats had already incorporated the idea of school choice from the 1980s. Then, school choice meant choice within the school. The perception changed in 1991 when the Moderates allowed a school-choice between the schools. This encouraged the opening up of a lot of independent schools and an improvement in the teaching methods.

At the same time the financial conditions of the schools became weaker. This led to cuts in the school budgets and also a fall in the teacher-pupil ratio by 20% between 1991 and 1996. This

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth we use this term to mean any non-public school.

took place at the same time as the economic crisis was plaguing the labour market. The situation has significantly improved after 2000.

All this ensured wider importance and extensive media coverage, which has some how led to increased activity on the part of the people with responsibilities. Education is now highly followed up and allocations monitored.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE SWEDISH EDUCATION SYSTEM<sup>ii</sup>**

The Swedish public schooling system consists of compulsory and non-compulsory schooling. Compulsory schooling includes regular compulsory school, *Sami* school, special school, and school for pupils with learning disabilities. Non-compulsory schooling consists of preschool class, upper secondary school, upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, municipal adult education and adult education for adults with learning disabilities.

Here I give a brief introduction to all the different forms of schooling enhance understanding of the later part of the paper.

### **1. PRE-SCHOOL AND WELFARE FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN**

PRE-SCHOOL

FAMILY DAY-CARE HOME

OPEN PRE-SCHOOL

### **2. PRE-SCHOOL CLASS**

### **3. COMPULSORY SCHOOL**

COMPULSORY COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

SPECIAL SCHOOL

SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

SAMI SCHOOL

### **4. UPPER-SECONDARY SCHOOL**

UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

## **5. ADULT EDUCATION**

BASIC ADULT EDUCATION

ADULT EDUCATION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

SWEDISH FOR IMMIGRANTS

UPPER SECONDARY ADULT EDUCATION

POST-SECONDARY TRAINING

SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION

## **6. UNIVERSITIES AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

### ***1. PRE-SCHOOL AND WELFARE FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN***

The municipalities in Sweden are responsible for providing compulsory pre-schooling and welfare for school children<sup>iii</sup>.

Pre-schooling is provided in the form of pre-school, family day care centres and open pre-school (supplementary pre-schooling) to children who do not attend school. Its purpose is to offer school children education and care through teaching activities. It helps to provide an environment that stimulates the children's learning when the parents are out at work or if they are unemployed. Pre-schooling is provided to children above the age of one.

Welfare for school children is provided in the form of day centres and family day care centres and relates to children attending school up to and including the age of twelve<sup>iv</sup>. It should receive children during that part of the day when they are not at the school and during holidays<sup>v</sup>. The purpose of the welfare for schoolchildren is to supplement school and to offer children meaningful spare time and support in their development.

A place is to be made available to each child for at least 3 hours a day or 15 hours a week.

### ***2. PRE-SCHOOL CLASS***

Age: 6 years

Duration: 1 year

Education in pre-school class is to stimulate a child's development and learning. It forms the basis for further schooling<sup>vi</sup>. Pre-school class education is non-compulsory and prepares a child for the compulsory school. It combines the pedagogical methods of pre-school with those of compulsory school.

The municipality is responsible for providing pre-school class to a child before the autumn term of the year when the child is six years old and it covers 525 hours per year. Special support is given to children who need it<sup>vii</sup>. Children are offered a place as close as possible to their homes and the wishes of the parents are also taken care of. If a child is cared for in a hospital or in any other institution, the entity responsible for the institution is responsible for providing support in line with the pre-school class<sup>viii</sup>.

Pre-school class education is free of charge. The municipality however charges reasonable fees in accordance to the basis established and also in respect of the children admitted. The fees however do not exceed cost price to the municipality.

A company, association, foundation or private individual may also commercially operate pre-school class education but they are subject to approval by the National Agency for Education.

### ***3. COMPULSORY SCHOOL***

Every child who is a resident of Sweden is subject to compulsory schooling in accordance with the right to receive education in the national school system for children and young persons. Which in simple words mean that attendance at school is compulsory for children in the age group of 7-16. Children can start school at age 6, 7 or 8.

Children who are unable to attend compulsory school due to mental retardedness are admitted to the schools for mentally disabled and children who have impaired hearing or are deaf are admitted to special schools.

Compulsory schooling is free of charge and provides a platform for further studies.

It consists of compulsory comprehensive school, the *Sami* school, the special school and the compulsory school for children with learning disabilities.



#### **4. UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Pupils attend Upper Secondary School after having completed Compulsory Comprehensive School or equivalent until and including the first six calendar months of the year of their twentieth birthdays.

Upper secondary education consists of the regular upper secondary school and the upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities.

Upper Secondary School education consists of national programs, specially designed programs and individual programs, which are all completed in three years.

The local education board decides the time period for which the programs are to be spread. The national programs form the basis for further education at higher education level and for employment. These contain education, which are divided into mandatory courses, optional courses, individual choices core subjects and project works that may be determined nationally or locally. There are a total of 17 national programs.

A specially designed program is equivalent to the national program. It is designed specially for a pupil or a group of pupils. The local education board determines the plan and objectives of such a program.

An individual program specially prepares pupils for studies in the national program or specially designed program. It may be program-directed i.e. directed at studies in a national program or specially designed program or it may combine employment and studies or it may special education needs of a pupil. The local education board determines the plan for education in the individual program; the government may just order certain subjects to be included.

The Upper Secondary School has 138 subjects and each subject sets out its own objective. To obtain a leaving certificate a pupil has to complete his study plan.

The government sets the objectives of individual programs and the National Agency for Education adopts the syllabi.

#### **5. ADULT EDUCATION**

Education in Municipal Adult Education is provided in the form of courses<sup>ix</sup>. A person can begin upper secondary education in a regular upper secondary school until the year he/she turns 20. There are different types of adult education programs, namely municipal adult education (*komvux*) and education for adults with learning disabilities (*sarvux*). These are basic adult education and correspond to compulsory and regular upper secondary schooling and the schooling for pupils with learning disabilities respectively.

The Swedish Agency for Flexible Learning serves as a complement to the municipal adult education for the people who are not able to study in the place of their residence. Part of the program is done on distance-learning basis.

Swedish for Immigrants is designed to provide immigrants with an introduction to the Swedish language and culture. Municipalities are obliged to provide Swedish for Immigrants to new adult immigrants.

## **6. UNIVERSITY AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Around 38% of the students continue to study in the post secondary level within three years of completion of the upper secondary schooling. Specific courses are provided at this level. Most of the institutions in this level are state-run and are located in more than 20 towns and cities across Sweden.

### **THE REFORMS AND ITS EFFECTS**

In 1991, when the Moderates came to power they decided to give children and parents the opportunity to choose a school; the opportunity to choose an independent school, to choose within the municipal school system and to choose a school in another municipality.

Before 1991, public schools were operated by the local municipalities, but the funding and regulation was highly centralised. Local governments received funds from the central government and the teachers were central government employees. The students were assigned and had to attend municipality schools within a 'catchment' area. Although independent schools existed, they were very few in number, accounting for less than one percent of total enrolment<sup>x</sup>. These schools were independently governed.

In 1992, three key reforms were implemented.

First, the financial responsibility and organisational power was decentralised. The curriculum, national objectives and guidelines for public education system are laid down by the *Riksdag*<sup>2</sup>, but within the framework, individual municipalities may determine how its schools should be run. The Central Government provides local governments or municipalities with funds or block grants and they devise their own pattern of allocation. The teachers hence became local government employees.

Second, every student was given the freedom to choose a school. Shifting from the previous system, where the students had to compulsorily attend the pre-assigned government school closest to their homes, the students were allowed a free choice. All students get a voucher that can be used to attend either a public school or an independent school. This voucher system was applicable to the compulsory education in the primary and secondary level.

Third and the most significant reform was the regulation entitling local governments to provide independent schools with grants. Every independent school recognised by the National Agency for Education is entitled to receive 75% of the average per-pupil expenditure in the public school. This made attending independent schools free of charge and thus independent schools are also called free-schools.

Also, the National Board of Education was replaced by the more liberal National Agency for Education. The National Agency for Education may approve any school irrespective of who owns or runs it provided it meets certain basic requirements.

The basic requirements are

1. An applicant must show that he possesses the ability to run the school.
2. An applicant should be reasonably well off.
3. They should adhere to the basic democratic principles.
4. They should provide education that goes in line with the requirements mentioned in the national curriculum.

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<sup>2</sup> The Swedish Parliamentary system

Few restrictions were also imposed on the management of the independent schools. They could not levy extra tuition fees and could not have any discriminatory approach at the time of admissions. Moreover there was also a strict limit on fees. The municipalities have a say in the opening up of new schools and if they anyhow affected the already existing schools in the region but they do not have the power to veto the decision of the NAE. Also the independent schools were bound to participate in the evaluation process undertaken by the NAE.

Let us consider the following case reported by Mike Baker for BBC<sup>xi</sup>.

Igner Svendsen is delighted with the school choice program of Sweden. Her 14-year old daughter, Paula, was unhappy at her local school in Stockholm. Under Sweden's school choice program Ignor was able to choose any other state run or independently run school of her choice at no extra cost. Paula now goes to an independent school, Kista Kunskapskolan, run by a commercial company whose expenses are borne totally by the government. Ignor now finds Paula happier and doing better.

This school choice virtually depends on the voucher that is equivalent in value to the cost of education in a state run school. Parents can use a voucher to avail of the opportunity of sending their children to the school of their choice. Moreover as already stated, any private school participating in the program cannot charge any extra tuition fee and have to select students on first-come-first-serve basis. Also the school chosen by Ignor is a product of the school choice program. It is run by Kunskapskolan Company, which was set up by a venture capitalist and entrepreneur to take advantage of the new source of funding. Kunskapskolan now runs 22 schools and has adopted a different approach than the conventional ethos. Anders Hultin, the chief executive of Kunskapskolan, points out that the different approach is only to attract parents and ensure more profit.

Private schools like Kista Kunskapskolan has left many state run schools behind. In some urban neighbourhoods 10% to 20% of the children use the voucher system to go to private schools.

The above case helps to understand how the voucher works. Every student in the primary and secondary level of education, which is compulsory, receives a voucher from his or her home municipality. They can take the voucher and approach any public school in their home

municipality or an independent school anywhere. So the choice between public schools is somewhat restricted. The amount of the voucher is equal to the amount of the per-pupil cost of education in a public school. If a pupil does not want to avail the facility, then he/she is assigned a public school nearest to her home by default.

The independent schools have to accept students on a first-come-first-serve basis and they cannot top-up on the voucher amount received.

Tests for selection are not allowed for grades 1-5 and for higher grades, tests are not allowed in subjects that are considered as core subjects of compulsory education.

An independent school, which has not been approved by the NAE, may receive a grant if the fees are not reasonably high. The grant is made by an amount per child that does not differ from the municipality's cost per child in similar education.

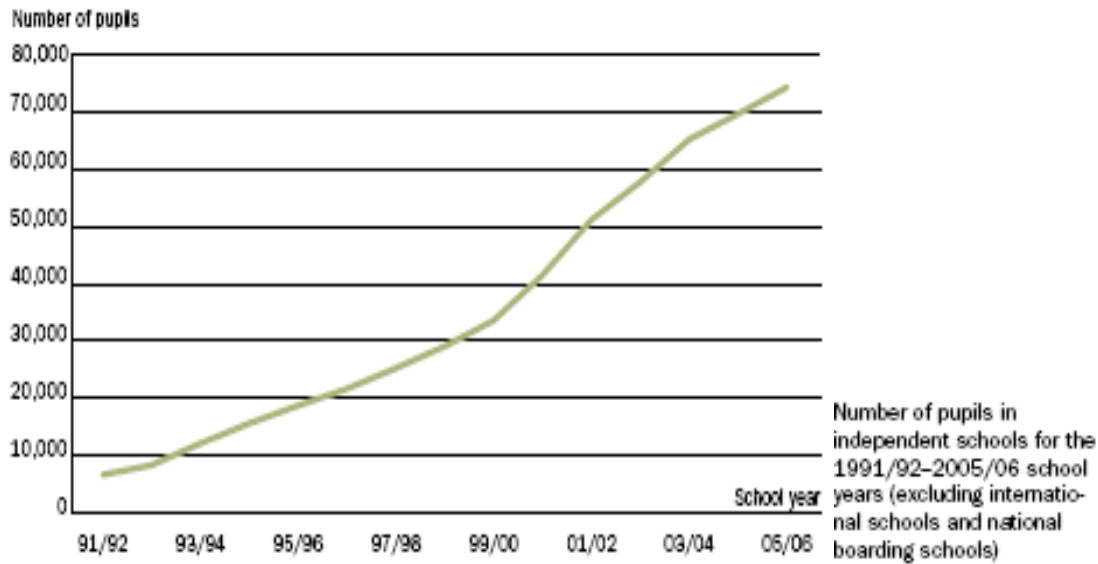
An independent school which has been approved shall be entitled to receive a grant if

1. It had applied for approval before 1<sup>st</sup> April of the calendar year before the start of the education.
2. It is free of charge for the pupils. Pupils should have access to books, writing materials etc. without incurring any additional expenses. Free school meals are provided. They can charge negligible additional fess, which should be reasonable with regard to the school's costs. The costs should be deemed to be reasonable for the activities.

A grant is paid by the home municipality of the pupil in respect of each pupil who undertakes education. The grant shall be determined with regard to the school's provision of education and pupils' needs. The minimum required funding is 75%. It is less than 100% because it is calculated that there is some extra cost involved for the public schools regarding special education. The idea is to subject the public and private schools to equal funding.

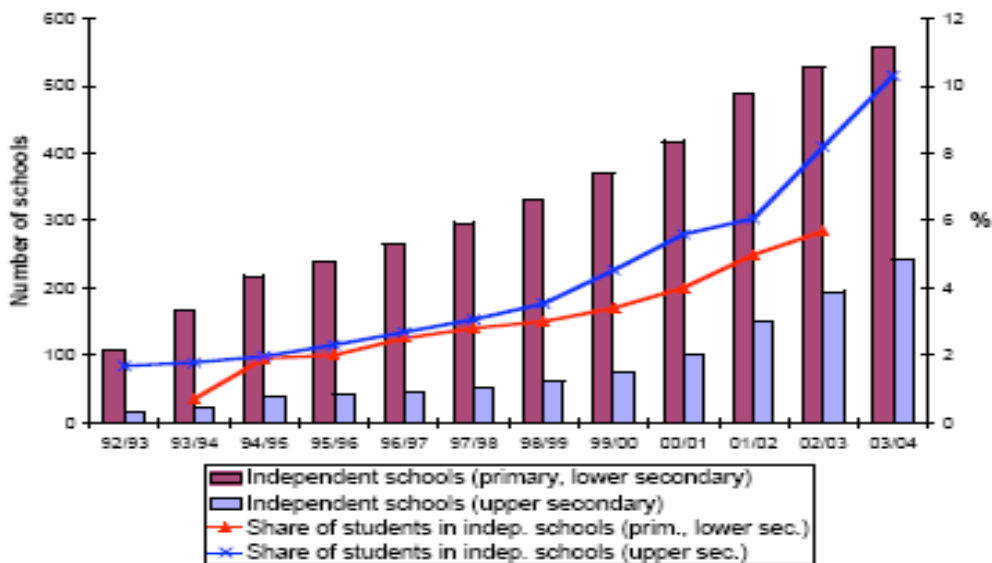
All these reforms significantly affected the Swedish education system. Independent schools were encouraged to open up. The direct consequence was a huge increase in the number of applications for approval of the independent schools from the NAE, which in turn gave rise to a massive competition bringing down costs. In 2005-06 there were 585 independent schools at compulsory level. The proportion of all compulsory school pupils who attended independent schools was 7.4 percent. Refer to Figure 1 for the increase in the number of pupils in the

independent schools and Chart 2 for the percentage growth in the number of independent schools and the proportion of students in the independent schools.



**Figure 1**

**Source:** Descriptive data on pre-school activities, school-age childcare, schools and adult education in Sweden 2006. Swedish National Agency for Education report no. 283



**Figure 2**

**Source:** Stanfield, J. with Sandstrom, F.M., Tooley, J. and Dixon, P.2006 *The Right to Choose*.

Adam Smith Institute. Accessed on 29 May 2007 at

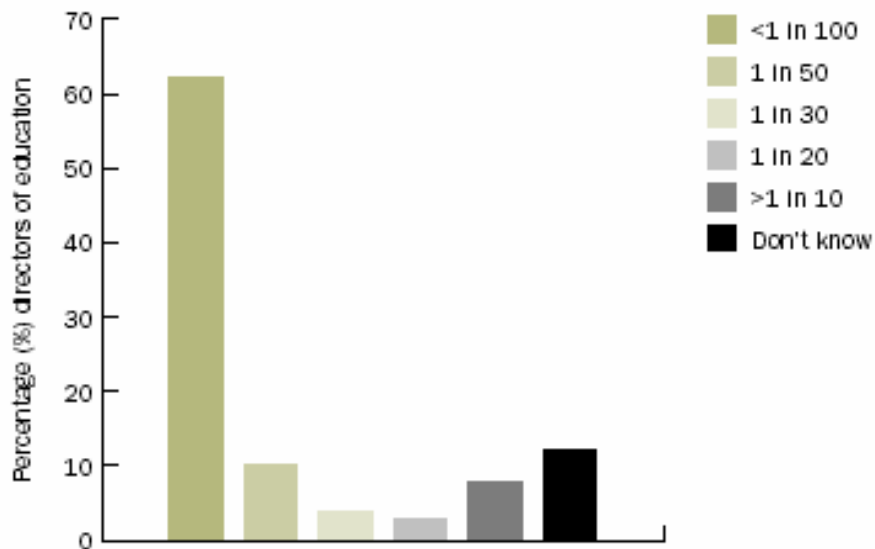
[http://www.adamsmith.org/education/index.php/publications/details/the\\_right\\_to\\_choose\\_yes\\_prime\\_minister/](http://www.adamsmith.org/education/index.php/publications/details/the_right_to_choose_yes_prime_minister/)

Several arguments against school choice have been forwarded. As Michael Sandstrom points out in his paper<sup>xii</sup>, the arguments against school choice can be listed as follows:

- The depletion argument
- The segregation argument
- The democracy argument
- The cost argument
- The anti-profit argument

The *depletion argument*, which means that the independent schools would take the best teachers and the students away from the public schools causing depletion, basically does not hold. Using simple logic, every student through the education voucher has been empowered to choose whichever school they want and every school has to admit students on first-come-first-serve basis. Also independent schools cannot charge extra fees, so this rules out any competition in price dimension. Hence there does not arise any question of differential treatment. A look at a government report<sup>xiii</sup> provides different insights.

Diagram 2:1. Directors of education's answers to the question "Roughly how large a proportion of your municipality's pupils switched from a municipal to an independent compulsory school before or during the school year 2003/04?"



**Figure 3**

**Source: Schools like any other? Independent Schools as a part of the system 1991-2004**

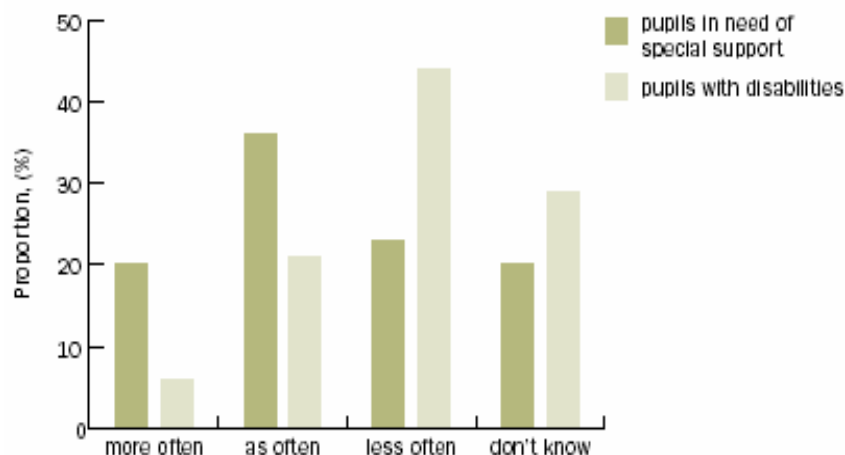
The report on independent schools based on the opinions of the municipality heads provides the graph as above. It shows that over 60% of the municipality heads believe that less than 1 in 100 people leave a municipal school for an independent school in 2003-04. This means that there is insignificant amount of displacement in majority of municipalities. But it also shows that about 8% of municipality heads believe that more than 1 in 10 people leave a municipal school for an independent school. But these municipalities were primarily in cities and suburbs where there was large number of schools to choose from.

Opponents of the school choice program put forward the *segregation argument* saying that school choice would lead to segregation between different socio-economic groups, between the original residents and the immigrants and between the regular students and the students with learning disabilities. Michael Sandstrom in his paper, 'The Right To Choose', has used a statement given by a government appointed committee to prove that reality is far from the rhetoric. The statement made is that none of the committee's findings conform to the general idea that students with special need choose independent schools to a lesser extent. To the contrary, independent schools



have many students with special needs. Parents who feel that government schools can't provide proper support take their children to independent schools. The graph below also supports the findings.

Diagram 2:2. Answers to the question "What do the switching patterns look like, in your view, for pupils in need of special support/pupils with disabilities in your municipality?"



**Figure 4**

**Source: Schools like any other? Independent Schools as a part of the system 1991-2004**

The graph shows that, almost 56% of the municipal education directors believe that the students with learning disabilities shift from public to independent schools as often as or more often than the regular students. This clearly suggests that independent schools do not segregate.

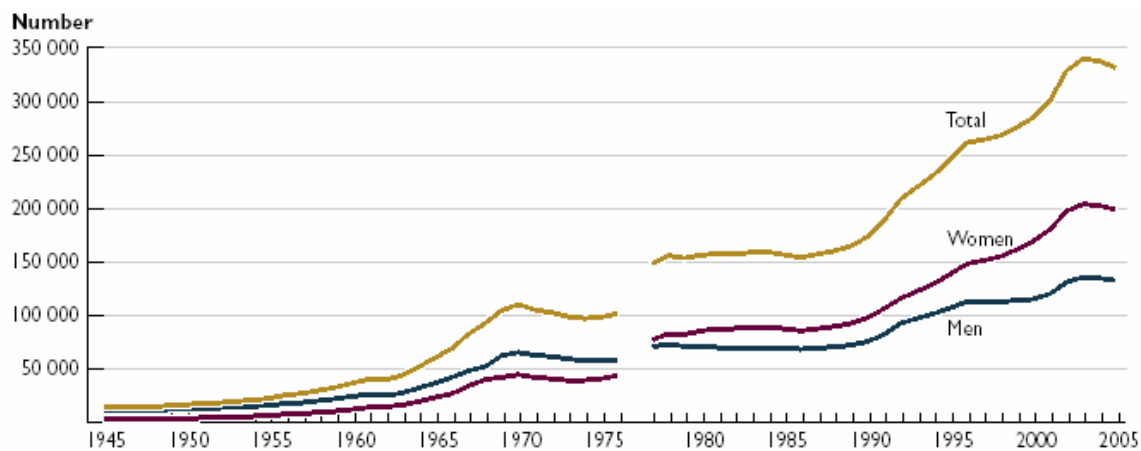
The *democracy argument*, which states that independent schools do not share the basic democratic principles, can also be easily brushed off. To get the initial approval from National Agency for Education, a school has to adhere to the basic guidelines laid down by the NAE. And, one of the guidelines mentions that an independent school has to go by the basic democratic principles. Also, every independent school is entitled to grants if and only if they adhere to the basic requirements<sup>xiv</sup> and the declaration to the right to grants shall be revoked if they no longer fulfil the requirements<sup>xv</sup>. That quite explains why the democracy argument is invalid.

The *cost argument* states that if the government has to fund an independent school along with the public schools then the overall expenditure of public money increases. Sandstrom in his paper has used Waldo<sup>xvi</sup>'s finding, efficiency measured as the result of the students in relation to costs,

increases due to competition. Also, an NAE report says that the expenditure for tuition fell by almost 20 percent between 1991 and 1996<sup>xvii</sup>.

Along with these, the opponents of school choice also argued that competition caused by school choice has an adverse effect on the education system of Sweden. But Bergstrom and Sandstrom in their paper, 'School Vouchers in Practice: Competition Won't Hurt You'<sup>xviii</sup>, have outlined the various benefits of school choice instead. Increased competition gives the public schools incentive to improve and encourages experimentation. It also encourages the teachers to increase effort and thereby decrease x-inefficiency<sup>3</sup>. Also if public schools form a *monopsony*<sup>4</sup> of teachers' services, competition may lead to higher salaries for the teachers and draw competent people to the profession. Bergstrom and Sandstrom used empirical analysis to conclude that greater competition increases the standards of public schools.

The following graphs also demonstrate the positive effects of education.



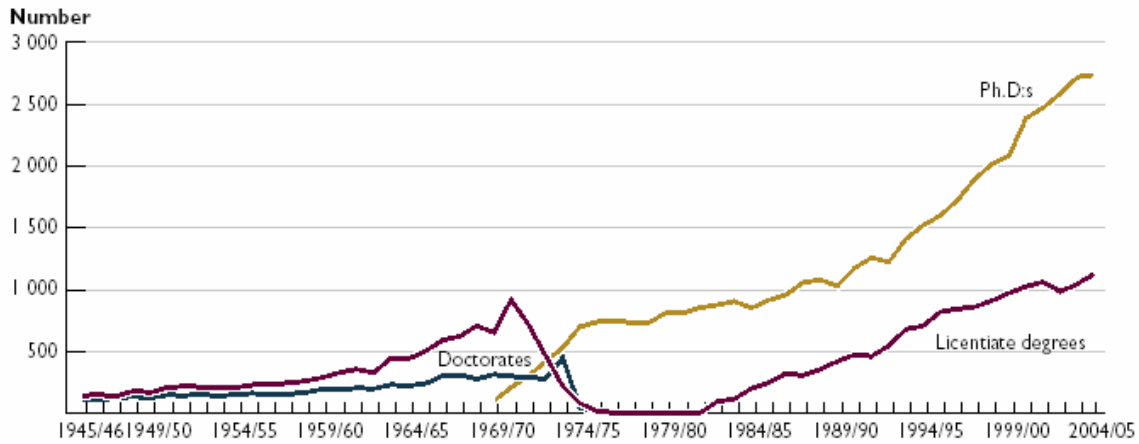
The number of students in undergraduate education autumn terms 1945–2005. The greatest expansion occurred in the 1960s and the 1990s.

## Figure 5

Source: Report 2006: 38R Swedish universities and University colleges, *Hogskoleverket*

<sup>3</sup> X-inefficiency is the difference between efficient behaviours of firms assumed or as implied by economic theory and their observed behaviour in practice.

<sup>4</sup> Market-form where there is one buyer and many sellers.



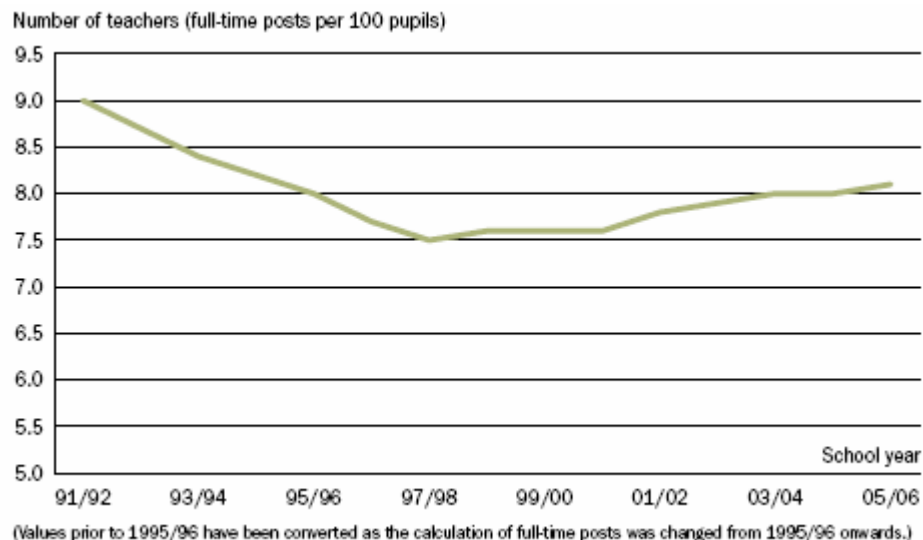
The number of postgraduate degrees 1945/46–2004/2005. The number of postgraduate degrees doubled in the 1990s.

**Figure 6**

**Source: Report 2006: 38R Swedish universities and University colleges, Hogskoleverket**

Deeper perusal of the graphs shows that, the steepest rise in the curves happened post 1990. Both the number of students in undergraduate education and postgraduate increased.

As a direct consequence to the reforms, the expenditure of the municipalities increased and they had to cut down the budget for education. But this is also attributed to the economic crisis in Sweden at that time. There was also a decrease in the teacher-pupil ratio given the troubles in the labour market. But it gradually caught up and post 2000 it has increased rapidly. Refer to the following chart.



## **Figure 7**

**Source:** Descriptive data on pre-school activities, school-age childcare, schools and adult education in Sweden 2006. Swedish National Agency for Education report no. 283

### **INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS**

The reforms of 1991 led to a new breed of education providers in Sweden – the independent schools. These schools take various forms, from small parental cooperatives to schools with particular educational approach and schools, which are by large, for-profit companies.

An independent school is characterised by having an owner different from a school run by the state, a municipality or a county council<sup>xix</sup>. There is a particular chapter in the 'Education Act' that regulates the independent schools. Although the independent schools need not follow the national curriculum or syllabus, the education they provide must comply with the values expressed in the national documents. The independent schools, which have been approved, are awarded funding on the basis of the school's provision of education and the needs of each pupil. They are obliged to participate in the evaluations, reviews and inspections as well as the national tests as laid down by the government or NAE. The independent schools have greater freedom to organise their operations than the municipality schools.

### **DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

The reforms of 1991 were conceived to increase the number of independent schools and provide more choice to the parents. The voucher system, one of the significant components of the reforms, was drawn from the model existent in USA. But Sweden differed in the way it implemented the voucher programme. The voucher system in USA is applicable only to the low-income group but in Sweden it has a universal coverage. Also, the reason as to why the reforms had such a significant effect on the education system is the fast legislation. The consensus between the Moderates and the Social Democrats also held significant importance. Although the parties favoured school-choice, their notion of implementation was entirely different. Yet, when the Social Democrats came in power in 1994, they did not reverse the implementation. Only the grant amount was affected. Now the independent schools receive 75% of the average per-pupil expenditure in the public school from the previous 85%.

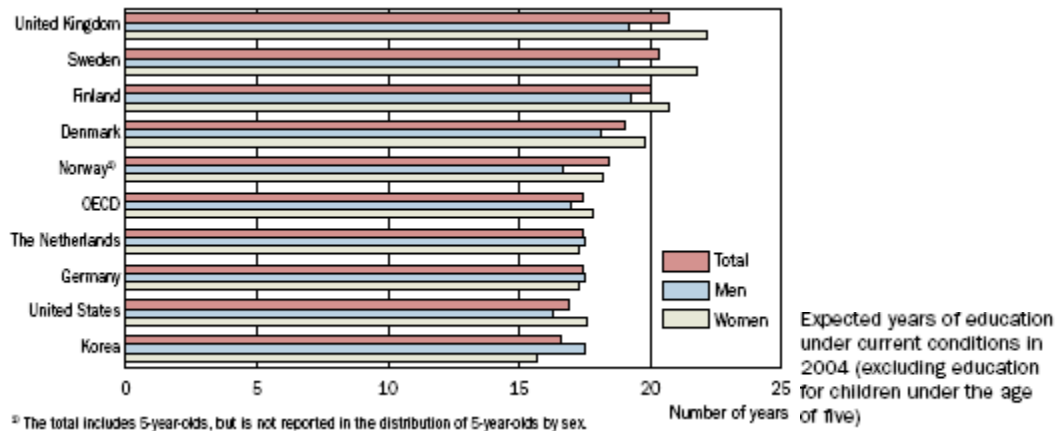
Other than this, the combination of school choice and grants for the independent schools was a huge impetus for the growth of the independent schools.

The reforms also did not put any restriction on the nature of the independent schools. Denmark does not allow corporations of private schools, but Sweden does. Also, the independent schools can have any religious orientation.

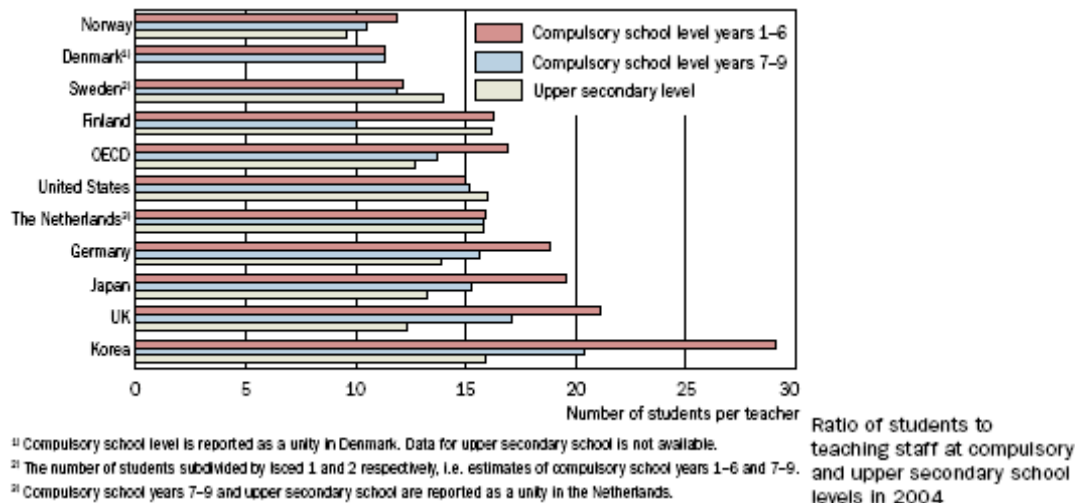
Equal funding to the private and public school is another distinctive feature. In countries like Denmark and Czech Republic, public schools receive more funding as compared to the private schools. Equal funding leads to a competition for resources between the public and the independent schools since it puts them both on an equal footing flattening the playing field, and enhances performance.

All these distinctive features gave Sweden an edge over the other countries that used the voucher system. The following charts give a comparative picture.

### Educational participation

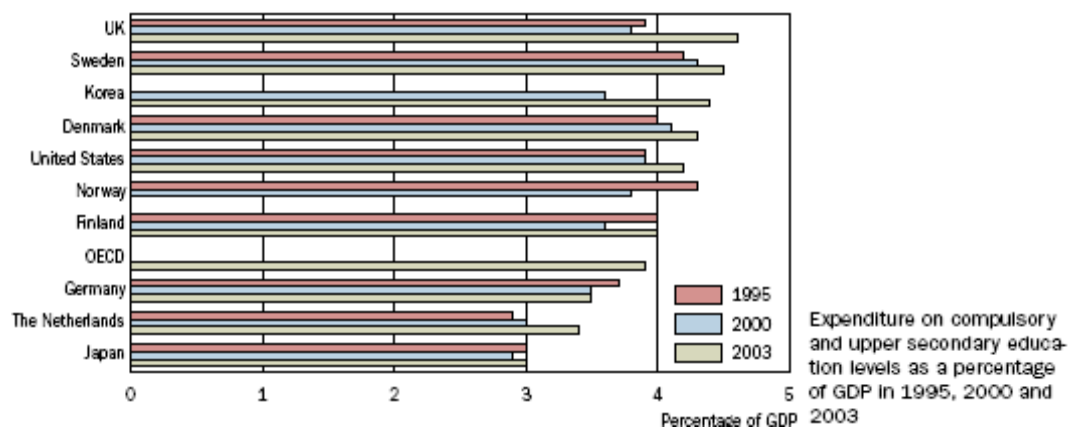


**Figure 8**  
**Pupil-teacher ratio**



**Figure 9**

## Expenditure



**Figure 10**

**Source 8, 9, 10:** Descriptive data on pre-school activities, school-age childcare, schools and adult education in Sweden 2006. Swedish National Agency for Education report no. 283

Although there does not exist any comparative study on the quality of education of different countries, the PISA (an international study of reading, mathematics and science literacy among 15 years old) can be used as a parameter. In 2003, 41 countries participated in the PISA which focussed on mathematics. 185 schools from all over Sweden participated in PISA 2003. The final average score obtained by Sweden was 509 while the OECD average was 500<sup>xx</sup>. The proficiency was divided into six levels and 36% of the Swedish students attained the three highest levels. Sweden belonged to one of the nine OECD countries, in which between 64 to 80 percent of

students attained level three or higher. This indicates that Sweden has a high level of educational competence.

### **CONCLUSION: THINGS TO LEARN**

Sweden followed few things when they conceptualised and implemented the reforms. They were very sure that they wanted to provide choice to the pupils and parents and thereby involve and empower them. Also, they thought of the independent schools as the possible alternative to the state run monopoly. Although the Moderates wanted all schools to be independent, it could not be totally achieved. Still the public schools got a lot of freedom after the reforms in terms of organizational capabilities. The Social Democrats believed in cooperation along with competition. Both the parties together went a long way to improve the education scene in Sweden. The three reforms together increased the number of independent schools, provided choice to the pupils, brought about efficiency and accountability in the system. Both the parties now agree that the independent schools contributed a lot to the betterment of the education system. Though there exist pros and cons of school choice, over the years the pros have outweighed the cons in Sweden. Competition has proved to be immensely helpful for the system and has helped in bringing down the cost and also increasing innovativeness and diversity in education while maintaining the quality.

So, the few things to learn from the Swedish education system and the reforms are

- Parents should be in the driving seat. Provide them with the choice.
- Schools should be self-governing.
- Monopoly and choice cannot co-exist, Abolish government monopoly.
- Free choice between public and private schools.
- Any school-provider to be allowed to participate in the funding process. Encouraging for-profit education chains.

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