

**AUTONOMY OF SCHOOLS IN DELHI**  
**A COMPARATIVE STUDY**



By

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## Acknowledgement

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In closing, I'd like to thank my family and friends who helped me, supported me, and guided me throughout this journey of understanding the schooling system of a place as diverse and distinct as Delhi.

## 1. Introduction

“Education should be imparted with a view to the type of society that we wish to build.”

– Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, Former President of India

This quote by former President, Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam underlines why education is, and always will, remain one of the most important facet of development of any nation. Considering the consistently poor performance of Indian students on international and national student evaluation reports, the subject has an even more dire implication for India. The very fact that Indian performance in the student assessment programmes has been *consistently* bad, (and has actually regressed according to the latest ASER report), points at the flaw in the wider systematic base of imparting education. The structure of imparting education, and the role and dimension of state in the same, is the most important determinant of the form of education provided to the public. The question of *how* to impart this education is an important one. Surprisingly, discussions in India have focused on one-off recommendations, rather than a wider policy based recommendations. Should education be a public domain, with no private interference? Or is a government schooling system bound to fail due to inherent inefficiencies in the system? Is a Public Private Partnership more efficient? Where do *we* stand presently, on that autonomy meter? These are questions that need to be answered, if we are to contribute meaningfully to the present discourse on education. This is what this paper aims to address.

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Why should we, as a nation, be worried? All (yes, all) the national and international student assessment reports underline the danger of an ignorant future that lays ahead. ASER 2012 reports the abysmal state of education, with more than half (53.2%, to be exact) of the grade V students could not read a grade II level text in 2012, (up from 51.8% in 2011 and 46.3% in 2010). In government schools, the same proportion is as high as 58.3% (up from 56.2% in 2011). India’s performance in reading, maths and science literacy was one of the worst in the PISA 2009 and 2009+ countries.

The general literature till date on this issue does address this need for urgency. However, how to focus on the improvement of schools; and more importantly, how to define the interaction between state and schools is still not the focal point of discussions and deliberations; in spite of the crucial role the latter plays in determining the progress of the former. This paper seeks to clarify the existing mechanism of schools, and how the state interference in the process of education impacts the process of schooling in India. Collaborating the conclusions of PISA 2009 study regarding the relationship between autonomy, accountability and student performances, with the autonomy of schooling models in India; we try to understand why the schools perform as bad as they do. The research paper analyses the autonomy of schools based on the definition of autonomy as defined by the PISA 2009 study. Based on that definition, the paper ranks the various schooling models on an autonomy scale based on their autonomy over their budget, over their course and assessment policies, and finally the net autonomy the institution has. Without a clear understanding of how the various schooling models work, and the level of autonomy (and consequently and amount and type of institutional decisions they can take), it is difficult to come up with a clear and logical 'ideal' model of schooling, that can develop from the present system of schooling. This research aims at closing the gaping gap that exists in the present discourse on the potential reforms in the Indian Education system. Without an objective measure of autonomy, and without understanding the relationship between autonomy and student performance, we cannot understand the aspects in the schooling system that needs to be worked upon. The type of government intervention in the schooling system is one of the most important aspect in determining the quality of education in a country; it is only when we determine which aspects to be overlooked by the government can we effectively determine the changes in the intricacies of the system.

## 2. Autonomy

Right off the bat, the first thing that we are concerned with, in this paper, is defining terms. What *is* autonomy? Considering the rather wide scope of the term, gaining a clear understanding of what exactly autonomy means in the context of a schooling system, is perhaps as important as trying to understand the grades of autonomy of the stakeholders in the education system.

### 2.1 Defining Autonomy

Oxford defines autonomy as the 'right or condition for self governance'. The definition is perfect, albeit a little broad in its scope. In the context of schooling systems, does it mean that the Principal of the school must be free to make any decision it wants without the fear of legal repercussions? Or does it mean that the teachers of the schools should be allowed to make autonomous decisions regarding teaching? Or does it imply autonomy of students regarding the course structure they study? It's interesting because complete autonomy of any of the stakeholder seems to impede on the autonomy of other stakeholders.

This is where we need to distinguish between personal autonomy and institutional autonomy. Considering that an institution is essentially a regulated<sup>1</sup> structure where various stakeholders cooperate and work towards fulfillment of their personal objectives, (and are guided by their specific incentives)- complete autonomy of all the stakeholders (within the institution) does not necessarily guarantee institutional autonomy. Neither does institutional autonomy guarantee personal autonomy of its stakeholders.

Institutional autonomy refers to autonomy of the institution to self regulate its functioning in the triangular relationship between the institution, society and the government.[1]

In this paper, since we are concerned with the autonomy of Delhi schools, we need to define the various parameters of measuring the institutional autonomy to make the study easily verifiable. To make the study more objective and integrated, school autonomy is defined by parameters defined by Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2009).

PISA (2009) considers school autonomy to consist of two major caveats, autonomy in budgetary allocations, and autonomy in pursuing course and curriculum.

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<sup>1</sup> The regulations need not be government regulations; any institution requires a set of rules to be followed by everyone for smooth functioning.

### 2.1.1 Budgetary allocations:

There are six major factors which the PISA 2009 [2] study takes into account while determining the level of school autonomy determined by budgetary allocations.

- a) *Who has the authority of formulating school budgets?* : This includes the authority to set school fees, pupil fees, and the power to decide whether or not there would be other sources of income.
- b) *Who has the authority of deciding on the budget allocations within the school?* This includes the power to allocate the formulated budgets within the schools.
- c) *Who has the authority to hire a teacher?* Here we are concerned with whether or not the institution (the school) has the power to choose the teachers it needs to hire, vis a vis being forced to take the teachers decided to be competitive by the government.
- d) *To fire a teacher?* Is the institution authorized to fire teachers if it deems them unfit for the position?
- e) *Of establishing teacher's salaries?*
- f) *Of determining teacher's salary increases?*

### 2.1.2 Curriculum and Assessment:

PISA 2009<sup>2</sup> study takes 4 factors into account while correlating the curriculum and assessment with the autonomy of the school:

- a) *Who is responsible for establishing school assessment policies?*
- b) *For the choice of the textbooks to use?*
- c) *For the course content to teach?*
- d) *For deciding which courses are offered?*

## 2.2 Comparison of autonomy of different schools:

In order to *objectively* compare the autonomy of various types of schools in Delhi, we need to have a definite numerical data we can look at. However, the nature of the study makes it difficult to have numerical data, considering we are looking at the *identity* of stakeholders controlling a specific function. In order to remedy this apparent glitch, PISA 2009 comes up with a unique solution. It devised a parameter (let's call it  $\alpha$ ) which can be defined as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> PISA (Programme for International Student assessment) is a worldwide study by the OECD in member and non member nations of 15 year old school pupils scholastic performance in reading, mathematics and science. India was not included in the PISA 2009 study. However, two Indian states (Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu) were studied on a reduced and delayed timeline in 2010. This is known as the PISA 2009+ project.

$\alpha$

$$= \frac{\text{The number of activities for which the principal or teachers have responsibility}}{\text{The number of activities for which a regional or local or central or national governmental authority has responsibility}}$$

The higher this value of alpha, the higher the autonomy of the school in that particular caveat! The value of alpha varies between 0 to infinity, with 0 implying no autonomy and infinity implying complete autonomy.

The reasoning is simple, it is assumed that having a government authority in charge of a particular function (be it budgetary, or curriculum and assessment) lowers the autonomy of the school, which is self evident- given that outsourcing the function to a government authority would lower the hold of school in taking its own decisions.

In trying to extrapolate this to Delhi schools, however, the standard used by PISA becomes cumbersome. This is because if we go by this black and white standard, there is no difference between the three models of government schools we explore. Everything there is controlled by the government, so the scope of comparison becomes limited.

How this study escapes this problem, is by allotting a number between 0 and 1 to the school, based on the level of autonomy it has in performing that specific action. Utmost care has been taken of using the same standard for all the schools, so that a comparison can take place. The reasons for allotment of a particular grade have been explained at every point.

#### **SCALE USED FOR REFERENCE**

'0' refers to an institution having no autonomy to decide anything regarding that particular parameter, '1' refers to an institution having complete autonomy to decide (without fear of legal repercussions), '0.75' refers to an institution having complete autonomy to decide, however there is a possibility of legal repercussion even though there is no law specifically against it, '0.5' refers to an institution having partial autonomy to decide, i.e. he can take the action he desires to, but he has to have government permission to do so.

'0.25' implies an action that is specifically against the DSEA<sup>1</sup> 1973, but there still IS a legal recourse for it happening, although it would be cumbersome and might involve courts and judges.

After grading the schools on every parameter under a factor of autonomy, these grades are added up, so that we get a factor of autonomy. The higher this grade is, the higher is the level of autonomy. In section 6 and 7, we compare the level of autonomy of these schools based on budgeting allocations, and on the curriculum and assessment.

Then, in the last section, we compare their overall autonomy, appropriately weighing both the parameters to equalise their weights in the final measure of autonomy.<sup>3</sup>

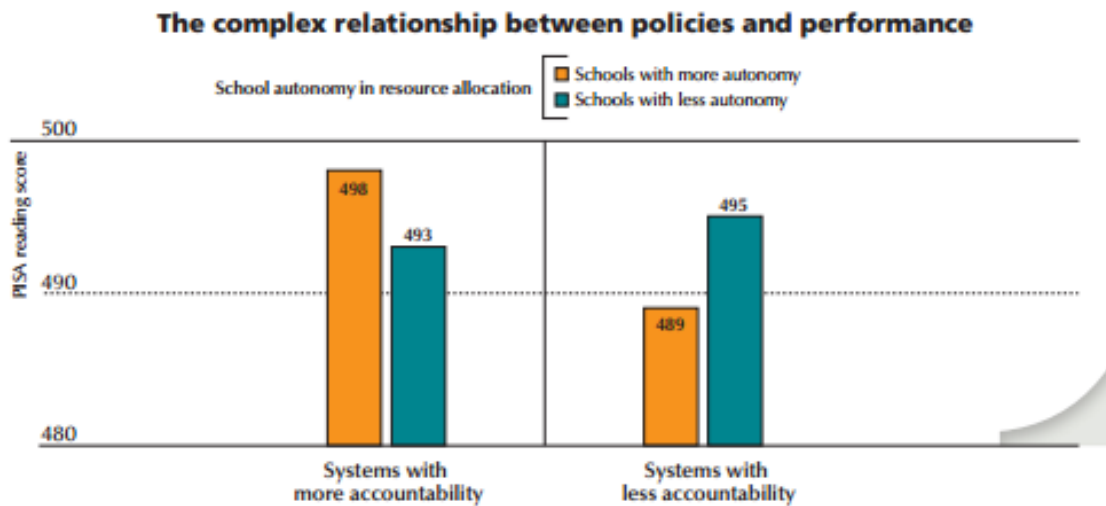
### **3. The relation between autonomy and student performance, according to PISA 2009**

PISA 2009 study concludes that "Autonomy and accountability go together: Greater autonomy in decisions regarding curriculum and assessments, and in budgetary allocations, lead to better student performance as long as the schools operate in a culture of accountability."

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<sup>3</sup> This is important because budgetary allocations use 6 parameters, while curriculum and assessment uses 4 parameters, undervaluing the importance of the latter in the measure of autonomy.





Source: OECD, PISA 2009 Database

As can be seen from the figure, schools with more autonomy outperform their counterparts in a system with more accountability by 5 reading points, whereas they actually underperform in a system with less accountability by as much as 6 reading points.

Thus accountability is an important distinction to be accounted for, while trying to form a relation between school autonomy and student performance. What does it mean, exactly? It has to do with the accountability of schools to general public and/ or the government. So a school accountable for its student assessment, by means of publically posting their achievement data, are better performing than those which are not accountable for their results to the general public. Similarly, accountability over course curricula by an external examination to test the student (coupled with internal school autonomy over the course structure and course books to be followed) led to better student performance.

#### 4. Stakeholders in the Delhi schooling system

To compare the autonomy of various schools, we first need to list the type of schools we are concerned with in this study; since the type of management of budgets and the curriculum and assessment policies are largely (although not completely) homogeneous across a particular schooling system.

For the purpose of the study, we are concerned with three types of private and government schools respectively: Private unrecognized schools, private recognized unaided schools, private recognized aided schools, Sarvodaya vidyalayas, Kendriya Vidyalayas, and MCD schools.

## 5. Methodology:

My major objective, during the primary research, was to understand *how* these schools work, so that we can distinguish between their levels of autonomy. The first step in the research was to identify various stakeholders in the Indian schooling systems. Following is a brief explanation of why the stakeholders that were chosen were chosen.

### 5.1 Why these stakeholders?

The major objective, while identifying the stakeholders, was to identify their importance as institutions of imparting education, and have a perceived diversity in their schooling model.<sup>4</sup> To identify the same, I conducted a preliminary unstructured interview of people<sup>5</sup> from different economic backgrounds, and compiled their views regarding various forms of schooling systems. The aim was to understand their perception regarding the schooling systems. The questions included queries about the school their children went to, why they went to that particular school, and which school would they send their children to, IF they had the necessary resources to. Their opinions regarding other forms of schooling systems were also noted down. The stakeholders identified in the process were: Private unrecognized schools, private recognized aided schools, private recognized unaided schools, MCD schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas, and Sarvodaya Vidyalayas.

### 5.2 Survey method:

After identifying the stakeholders, I went and interviewed the principals<sup>6</sup> of a sample of all the schools.

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<sup>4</sup> So as to effectively compare the schooling models.

<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of collaborating the stakeholders, I interviewed 7 people from Seelampur (an area which is, on an average, very poor and has a large influx of private unrecognized schools and government schools), and people from affluent colonies of Priyadarshini Vihar and Bank Enclave (East Delhi). The latter colony was chosen because of ease of conducting interviews.

<sup>6</sup> And vice principals, in 2 cases ( 1 of private recognized aided, and the other of private recognized unaided school)

The survey method was a mix of in person interviews and telephonic interviews. The interviews were structured, and the principals were asked questions from a questionnaire. They were questioned about their budget formulations, their budget allocations, their policies regarding hiring and firing of teachers, and their policies regarding salaries and increments given out to teachers. Apart from these there were questions about their assessment policies, and their curriculum.

The survey sample included 3 private unrecognized schools from Seelampur, 3 private recognized unaided schools from East Delhi, 2 private recognized aided schools, 8 Kendriya Vidyalayas, 3 Sarvodaya Vidyalayas and 2 MCD schools.

The proportion of Kendriya Vidyalayas had to be higher because I had to conduct telephonic interviews for them. Thus even though were usually cooperative in the beginning, there were some questions that went unanswered. To get clear and collaborative answers to the questionnaire, I had to call up more KV schools. Also, I believe telephonic interviews increase the chances of false information by the respondents; hence, there was a greater need to collaborate the data given out by the principals, in this case.

## **6. Analysis:**

This section analysis the system of schooling in all the stakeholders identified. The following sub sections grade each of the parameter based on the grading system devised in the second section, based on the definitions given by PISA in its 2009 report.

**6.1 Private unrecognized schools:** Private unrecognized schools are unique in their predicament, especially in Delhi. These are the schools that (as the name suggests) have not been recognized by the Government of India, either because they have not applied for recognition, or because they do not fulfil the infrastructural and resource requirements laid down by the government for recognition of a school. The second one is a more probable cause. For recognition, the school needs to ensure that it meets the conditions spelled out in the schedule at the back of the Right to education Act, and the conditions set out in the "Model Rules under the Right of Children to free and compulsory Education Act, 2009". Their predicament is interesting because, even though they are illegal- and not 'recognized',

they do thrive because of high demand. Their numbers are increasing fast <sup>7</sup>, perhaps bridging the gaps of the dissatisfaction with the quality of public schooling.

Regarding Budgetary allocations, because these schools are essentially illegal, they are not bound under any law or rule set down by the government. Their only source of income is school fees (and sometimes donations, but those remain few and far between).

The authority of setting the school fees, collecting the school fees and subsequently using the school fees in the school remains with the principal/ owner of the school. The principal/owner has the sole authority of hiring and firing the teachers, and setting the teacher salaries. There are annual increments to teacher's salaries<sup>8</sup>. The incentives for teachers to perform well vary from as little as clapping during the general assembly to monetary incentives like an early bonus, or an early increment to basic pay. The authority to decide the kind of incentive lies with the principal.

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Private unrecognized schools</b>	<b>Reasons</b>
<b>Authority of formulating school Budgets</b>	Principal/ owner (1)	Given that these schools are not bound by any legal provisions, their entire funds come from the student fees, the amount of which is fixed by the school owner.
<b>Authority of Deciding Budget allocations</b>	Principal/ owner (1)	Again, because they are illegal in their existence, they are not bound by the 'Model Rules under the Right to free and compulsory education act, 2009', allowing the principal/ owner to use their funds in the way they deem profitable.
<b>Of hiring a teacher</b>	Principal/ owner (1)	The teachers are hired by principals, usually by word of mouth.
<b>Of firing a teacher</b>	Principal/ owner (1)	The principal (or the owner) has complete autonomy of firing a teacher.
<b>Of establishing teachers salaries</b>	Principal/ owner (1)	The principal establishes the teachers' salaries, which are usually far lower than the government mandated salaries <sup>9</sup> ( by the Sixth Pay commission)

<sup>7</sup> Geeta Kingdon,

<sup>8</sup> The average quoted to me by 3 Private unrecognized school principals during interviews was 10-20% of the basic pay.

<sup>9</sup> The range of teachers salary in my salary was Rs. 1000- 3000, whereas the Sixth pay Commission mandates the recognized private schools and government schools to pay primary teachers is Rs. 6000- 10500.

<b>Of determining increments in teachers' salaries</b>	Principal / owner (1)	The principal decides this increment too, depending on his financials. <sup>10</sup>
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	6	

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Private unrecognized schools</b>	<b>Reason for ranking</b>
<b>Assessment policies</b>	Teachers (1)	Because private unrecognized schools are not bound by any external board, the assessment policies are solely dictated by the teachers.
<b>Books</b>	Teachers/ principals (1)	For the same reasons, they can teach the students from any book they want to, there is no legal repercussion of choosing the 'wrong books', mainly because they shouldn't exist in the first place.
<b>Course Content</b>	Teachers (1)	There is no compulsion for them to teach according to any board, since they are not affiliated to any board. Although they do teach, given that they have internal exams to assess the students, the teachers have full autonomy to decide what to teach.
<b>Which courses</b>	Principal/ owner (1)	Again, because they are not affiliated to any board, the principal/ teachers have autonomy to choose the course.
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	<b>4</b>	

<sup>10</sup> These can range from appreciation by students clapping in the assembly to an early annual increment or a token pay ranging from Rs/. 50-100.

## 6.2 Private Recognized unaided schools

These are those schools that are recognized by the government of India<sup>11</sup>, however- they are not given any monetary aid by the government. Their primary sources of income are school fees<sup>12</sup>, and donations by parents/ benefactors. They have the autonomy to decide the amount of fees they charge from the students, however, *if* the Director of Education feels that the fee is too high, he has the authority to ask the school to refund and subsequently lower the fee.[3] <sup>13</sup>

The decisions regarding the amount of fees to be charged from the students, the allocation of the appropriated funds towards the development of schools, and the salaries to be paid to the teachers, (including the perks) has to be decided by a managing committee that is instituted at the school level.

The pupils' fee charged by the school is deposited in the pupils' fund of the school, which is monitored by the Pupils' fund advisory Committee. The function of this committee is to discuss and pass budget for expenditure from the pupils' funds, and proper utilisation of the pupils' fees as specified in the Delhi Education Act 1973.

The Managing Committee debits items from this fund, after deliberation upon the budget proposed by the PFAC, and formulates the budget allocation of all the other funds (school fund, development funds). The decisions taken by this managing committee are monitored by the trust/ society which runs the school. The Director of Education, however, has the supreme authority over the budgetary decisions of any private recognized unaided school.

Similarly, this managing committee has the authority over fixing the salaries of teachers, given that they lie in the range specified by the Pay Commission. The scales of pay and allowances, medical facilities, pension, gratuity, provident fund and other prescribed benefits of the employees of a recognised private school shall not be less than those of the employees of the corresponding status in school run by the appropriate authority. [7]

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<sup>11</sup> Because they fulfill the conditions laid out in the schedule at the end of RTE and the "Model Rules Under the right to free and compulsory education act, 2009"

<sup>12</sup> The fees charged from the students comes under 3 heads: tuition fees, development charges, annual fees.

<sup>13</sup> A notice asking all the private recognized unaided schools to appear before the Justice Anil Dev Singh Committee, so that the question of fee hike by respected schools could be deliberated and ruled upon. The advertisement for the same can be accessed at [http://www.edudel.nic.in/upload\\_2011\\_12/pub\\_notice\\_dt\\_27012012.pdf](http://www.edudel.nic.in/upload_2011_12/pub_notice_dt_27012012.pdf). The report had not been published as of 8<sup>th</sup> August 2013.

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Private recognized aided schools</b>	<b>Reason for grading</b>
<b>Authority of formulating school Budgets</b>	Managing Committee (0.75)	The authority of formulating the school budget lies solely with the <b>managing committee</b> , (through school fees and/ or donations). However the DE has the authority of overruling the fee if he 'deems it too high'. Thus even though the MC doesn't have a complete autonomy, the level of autonomy is still higher than a 50-50 distribution of power between the MC and the government, given the fact that Director of Education would have to respond to complaints in order to intervene, rather than having a definite say in the way the budget is formulated.
<b>Authority of Deciding Budget allocations</b>	Managing Committee (0.75)	Given that the private schools set their fees, and do not depend on the government for any aid, all they have to do is to ensure that abide by the laws laid down in the Delhi School Education Act, 1973, 18 (4). It CAN, for example, allocate smart boards in classes without having to ask the government for permission to do so. <sup>14</sup> But again, IF the fee increment and the subsequent allocation is deemed 'not for' student interests, there is a possibility of legal action.
<b>Of hiring a teacher</b>	Managing Committee (1)	One of the functions of the managing committee is to hire a teacher. <sup>15</sup> There is no government interference in the process.
<b>Of firing a teacher</b>	Government <sup>16</sup> (0.25)	IF there are cases of sexual harassment, or fraud, there is a legal recourse of firing. Also, both the schools we interviewed for the process had past cases of firing, even though it was illegal.
<b>Of establishing</b>	Government (0.25)	Again, even though according to DSEA

<sup>14</sup> Care has been taken that the subsequent grades on this parameter take 0.5 as the standard grade for the autonomy in an institution where you have to follow some government restrictions while allocating budget, but can use these funds to install capital without having to ask for the government permission to do the same.

<sup>15</sup> The standard procedure adopted is an advertisement in the paper, followed by a written test or an interview, depending on the response, followed by a trial teaching week.

<sup>16</sup> Not possible without prior permission of the DE, according to the DSEA 1973, 8 (2).

<b>teachers salaries</b>		1973, the schools have to pay salaries and perks equal to those paid to the teachers in comparable government schools, through the survey, I found that there was a very high rate of defaulting this particular provision. <sup>17</sup> So even though technically, the rating should be 0, given that government has mandated the salary structure, we need to acknowledge the fact that there is a high rate of defaulting here, so need to nudge up the level of autonomy. <sup>18</sup> [4] [5] [6]
<b>Of determining increments in teachers' salaries</b>	Managing Committee (1)	Managing committee has complete say over the salary increments of the teachers.
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	4	

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Private recognized unaided schools</b>	<b>Reason for grading</b>
<b>Assessment policies</b>	Teachers (0.5)	This is because even though they have complete autonomy regarding their assessment policies in primary and middle classes, there have been a government mandated system of assessment in Class 9 <sup>th</sup> and 10 <sup>th</sup> , plus the external board exams to be given in class 12 <sup>th</sup> , there is a partial autonomy of assessment policies of the school.
<b>Books</b>	Managing Committee (0.5)	Has to be based on the standard of the board you are affiliated to, but you have autonomy of deciding the books to be taught from in middle and senior classes. Some schools still opt for NCERT, but others base their teachings

<sup>17</sup> Teachers are given a cheque of the salary amount determined by the sixth pay commission, however, they is a cash back of a specific amount. These cases were common in both the schools we visited, and surprisingly well known among the staff.

<sup>18</sup> Secondary research showed that the cases of underpaying teachers of private unaided schools has been widely documented. See: Kremer and Murlidharan (2006), LEAPS 2007.



		on NCERT/ ICSE/ state board based private publisher books. However, in senior classes, when the student has to appear for external board exams, the school has to teach from the books prescribed by the board. <sup>19</sup>
<b>Course Content</b>	Teachers (0.5)	If a school is affiliated to a board, the course content to be taught to the students is to be guided by the board. However, given that in primary and middle classes the assessment is internal, the teacher has a partial autonomy over the course content s/he'd teach in those classes, given that the paper would be set within the institution itself. <sup>20</sup> However, in senior classes, she has to teach whatever the board demands.
<b>Which courses</b>	Principal/ owner (1)	The school decides which board to affiliate to, which dictates their course structure.
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	<b>2.5</b>	

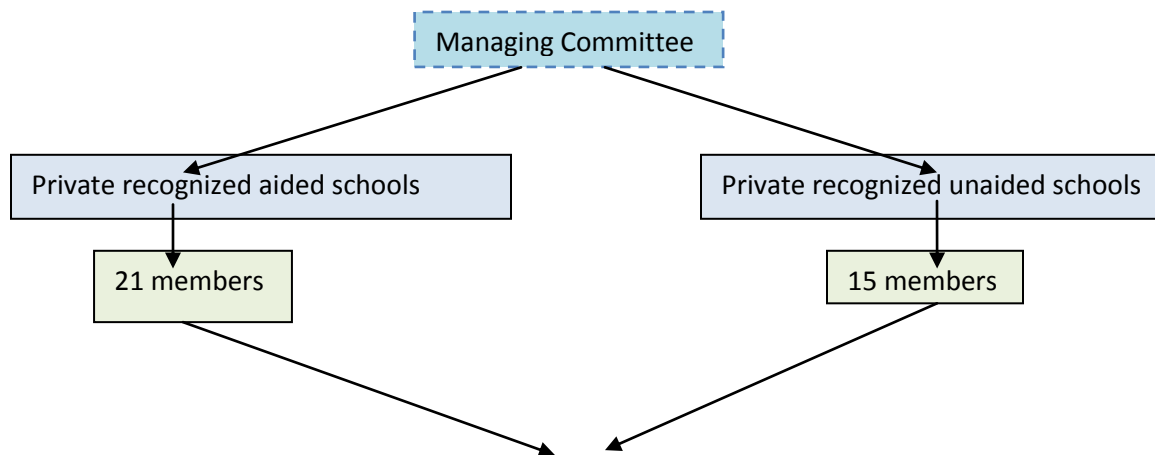
### 6.3 Private recognized aided schools:

The structure of private recognized unaided schools is quite similar to the structure of the private recognized aided schools, plus some state restrictions which are different in nature to the ones put on private unaided schools.

<sup>19</sup> According to the CBSE curriculum Volume 1, "It is obligatory for the Schools and the students preparing for the Board's examination of a particular year to follow the syllabi, courses and the books prescribed by it for that year. No deviation from the ones prescribed is permissible." [http://cbseacademic.in/web\\_material/Curriculum/Secondary/Secondary\\_Sch\\_Curriculum-vol-1-2014.pdf](http://cbseacademic.in/web_material/Curriculum/Secondary/Secondary_Sch_Curriculum-vol-1-2014.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> A school I went to had 7 branches throughout Delhi, and a teacher recounted of a time when she could not finish her course, hence had to appeal to the Managing Committee who allowed her to skip a chapter, and told her that she could adjust the marking scheme in the final paper (which had to be set in another branch), so that the students could skip the question from the chapter they had not been taught.

There is a Managing Committee responsible for the Budgetary decisions of the school, the composition of the Managing Committee is largely the same, except there can be maximum 15 members in the Committee. The fee charged by the school is fixed in its composition and amount, by the state government. The Managing Committee chalks up the budget and the some proportion of it is funded through the fees (as fixed by the DSEA 1973), and the remaining proportion is reimbursed by the Director of Education, after due auditing of the budget.



1. Head of school
2. One parent, member of Parent teachers associations- elected by the association.
3. Two teachers of the school, elected amongst themselves
4. Two other people, one of them women, who are/ were teachers of other schools/ college- nominated by Advisory board.
5. Two people nominated by the Director of Education, one of them must be an educationist, other should be a representative of the Director.
6. Remaining members nominated by an elected official in accordance with rules and regulations of the society under which the school exists.

Parameters	Private recognized aided schools	Reasons for the rating.
<b>Authority of formulating school Budgets</b>	Managing Committee + Director of Education (0.5)	95% of the funding comes from the government, and 5% from the trust/ society under which the school exists. <b>The Managing Committee formulates the budget, and the government grants the aid after due auditing.</b> The Managing Committee has to ensure that the school uses a part of the funds to ensure that the school follows the conditions laid down in the DSEA 1973, in order for it to avail the aid.
<b>Authority of Deciding Budget allocations</b>	Government (0.5)	Considering that the Management committee formulates the budget, it does have some autonomy over deciding where the budget is allocated. However, a part of the funds are allocated according to the rules laid down by DoE for continuous availment of the grant-in-aid, <i>and</i> the budget has to be audited by the DoE, thus, the school has partial autonomy.
<b>Of hiring a teacher</b>	Selection Committee (0.5)	In case of recruitment of the teacher: the selection committee consists of chairman of MC, head of school, one educationist <u>nominated by the director</u> , <u>one representative of the director</u> , an expert on the subject <u>nominated by the director</u> . <sup>21</sup>
<b>Of firing a teacher</b>	Government (0.25)	According to DSEA 1973, 8 (2), private aided/ unaided schools cannot fire school teachers. Except in cases of fraud or criminal charges.
<b>Of establishing teacher's salaries</b>	Government (0)	The salaries are established, and financed by the government.
<b>Of determining increments in teachers' salaries</b>	Government (0.25)	The director can provide aid for increment in the salary of employees only in special cases. Thus, although not impossible, it is extremely difficult <sup>22</sup>
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	2	

Parameters	Private recognized aided schools	Reason for grading
<b>Assessment policies</b>	Teachers (0.5)	Apart from the external boards the students have to give, they have complete autonomy over the assessment policies of the course.

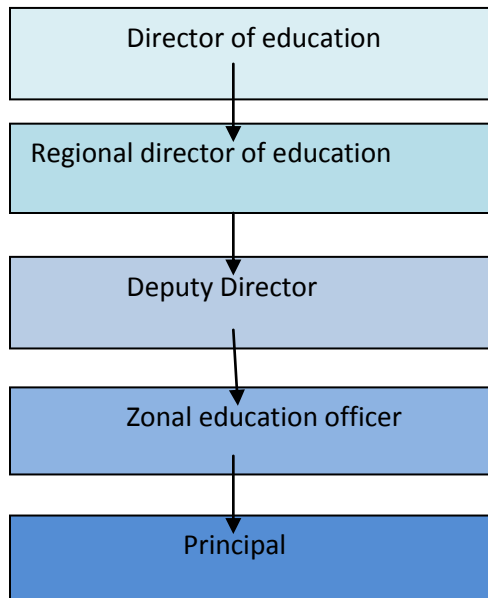
<sup>21</sup> Chapter VIII, DSEA 1973. Can be accessed at [http://edudel.nic.in/act\\_and\\_rules/rules8.pdf](http://edudel.nic.in/act_and_rules/rules8.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> DSEA 1973, 92 (1) "No aid shall be admissible on any special increment, allowance or financial benefit given to the employees unless the same has been previously approved by the Director sub-rule (1) shall be made only in special cases."

<b>Books</b>	Teachers (0.5)	Again, although they have to teach from the CBSE mandated books in classes 10 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> , they can chose to teach from books which are based on NCERT/ CCE/ ICSE/ state board pattern.
<b>Course Content</b>	Teachers (0.5)	Apart from class 10 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> , the students had to give internal exams, which are set by the teachers themselves. They might not choose to teach less, but they do have the autonomy to. However, because the students have to appear for an external exam in specific classes, they don't have autonomy over choosing the course content in those specific classes. Thus there is autonomy in certain classes, and no autonomy in others (Usually class 9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> are taken as the classes where you have to teach based on NCERT) because 9 <sup>th</sup> forms the base for class 10 <sup>th</sup> , and 11 <sup>th</sup> the base for class 12 <sup>th</sup> .
<b>Which courses*</b>	(0)	The school has to affiliate to government board.
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	<b>1.5</b>	

#### 6.4 Sarvodaya Vidyalayas:

The structure of Sarvodaya Vidyalayas is a bit more complex, and bureaucratic. During an interview with the Principal of a Sarvodaya Vidyalaya, I discovered that if a specific school wants to get additional grant for some infrastructural improvement in his school, he has to send the letter of approval, outlining his need for the same to the Education Officer, who forwards it to the Deputy Director, who forwards it to the Regional Director, who ultimately forwards it to the Director of Education. The Budget is granted only if all the members of the grant-in chain stamp on the letter. If it gets stuck at any level of the chain, the grant is stopped.



Now, the process of allotment of fund goes like this:

The Directorate of Education has two branches: Plan and Non-Plan. These two branches allot the funds to the schools under the DoE. The principals make the requisitions of funds, which has to be calculated depending on the number of students in the school, and this requisition is sent to the DoE (through various intermediaries). This allotment is sent to the districts and the districts then make this information available to the schools.

The authority of hiring a teacher lies with the Delhi Subordinate Selection Board, through examinations. There are two major types of examinations, DIET, and CTET. DIET is the district level examination conducted by the SCERT, whereas CTET is conducted by the CBSE. The Sarvodaya Vidyalaya has no autonomy over the teachers it gets, it merely sends in the number of vacancies in its schools, and it is the duty of the DSSB to send in those teachers.

Firing a teacher, although extremely cumbersome, IS possible for offences like sexual harassment, fudging the financial statements (fraud, misappropriation, theft) and offences of this degree.

<b>Parameters</b>	Sarvodaya Vidyalaya	Reason for grading
<b>Authority of formulating school Budgets</b>	Government (0.25)	If a principal wants to avail some extra funds not specified by the government, there is an elaborate procedure for procurement. (As depicted in the flowchart above)
<b>Authority of Deciding Budget allocations</b>	Government (0)	Once you have the budget allocated, you HAVE to use them for the purposes indicated in the budget statement. So no autonomy for the principal.
<b>Of hiring a teacher *</b>	Government (0)*	The institution has no authority over hiring any teacher, there is no choice, it has to employ the ones sent from the DSSB.
<b>Of firing a teacher</b>	Government (0.25)	Through government mechanism.
<b>Of establishing teacher's salaries</b>	Government (0)	The salaries are set by the Sixth Pay Commission, and the funds for the salaries are also allocated by the DoE.
<b>Of determining increments in teachers' salaries</b>	Government (0)	The promotion scheme, and salary increment scheme is mandated by the government.
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	0.5	
<b>Parameters</b>		
<b>Assessment policies</b>	Government (0)	The teachers are given a test schedule, which they have to

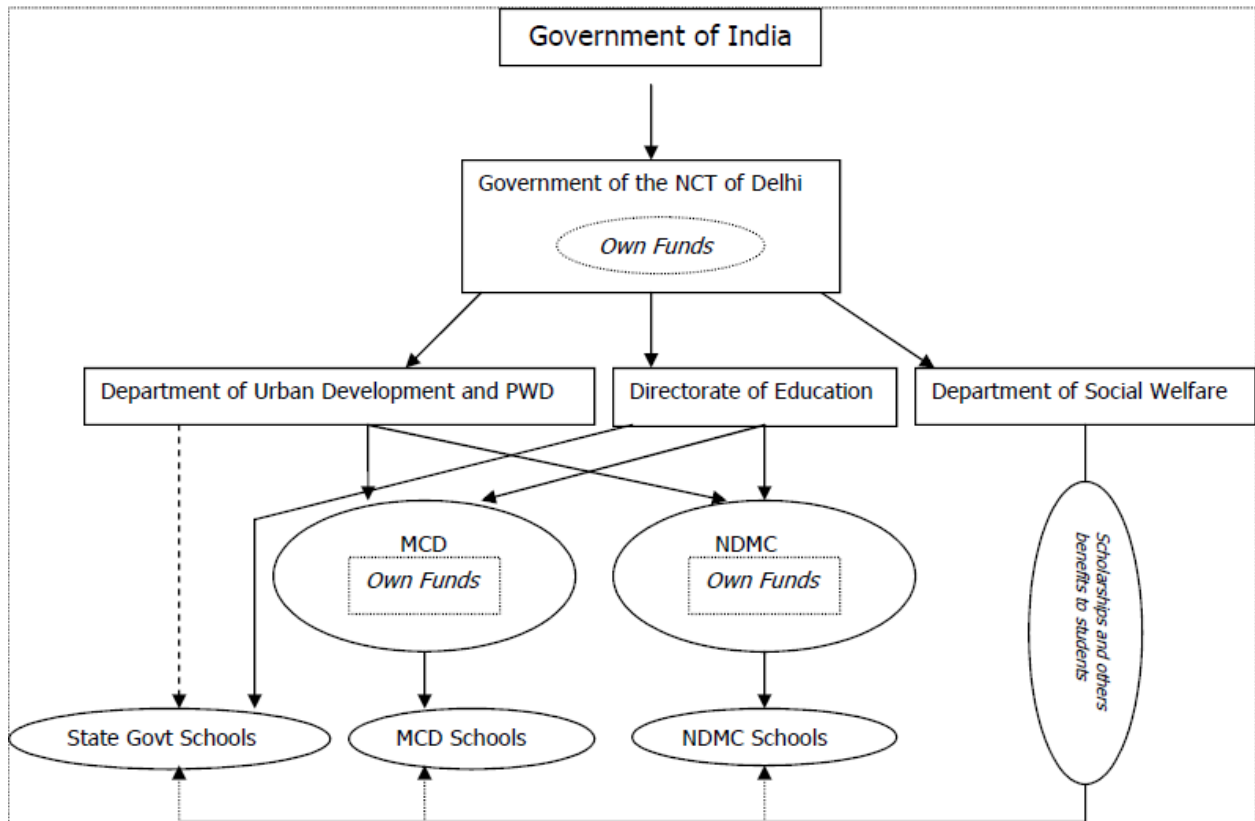
		adhere to.
<b>Books</b>	Government (0)	The books are provided by the government to the students. Although the teachers still can suggest reference books, the teachers have to teach from the CBSE/ ICSE/ state board books.
<b>Course Content</b>	Teachers (0)	The entire teaching schedule is mandated by the government. <sup>23</sup> Plus, the final examination question paper is set by the centre.
<b>Which courses</b>	CBSE/ state (0)	You have to be affiliated to a government board.
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	<b>0</b>	

## 6.5 MCD schools:

MCD schools are primary schools, which have to be developed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The funds for the development are allocated by the Government of India (the flow of funds is explained in the flow chart below). An interesting thing to note here is that the MCD gets its funds through the directorate of education and the department of urban development and PWD, even through the department of social welfare, apart from having its own funds, which would be important in our analysis below.

<sup>23</sup> Week wise teaching schedule of maths. Can be accessed at [http://www.edudel.nic.in/asg\\_file/2013\\_14/class\\_12/Math\\_12\\_eng.pdf](http://www.edudel.nic.in/asg_file/2013_14/class_12/Math_12_eng.pdf)

Diagram 1: Flow of Funds



Source: Vipin Veetil, CCS

Another important point in our analysis is that the MCD schools are only till primary class, which implies that the students are not evaluated through a external exam. There is no accountability of the results, because of a particular provision under the Right to Education, which states that no student till class 8<sup>th</sup> can be failed. Since all of them pass, there is no estimate of student performance.

Parameters	MCD	Reason for grading
Authority of formulating school Budgets	MCD (0.25)*	MCD schools are allocated budgets based on the number of students they have. However, they do have the power to ask the MCD for extra funds, but the application has to be approved by the



		MCD, who would have to ask for extra funds from the DoE and/ or the department of Urban development, and/or the PWD. These departments would have to avail funds/ permission from the government of NCT of Delhi. <sup>24</sup>
<b>Authority of Deciding Budget allocations</b>	MCD (0)	Where they are to allot that money is also decided by the government.
<b>Of hiring a teacher</b>	MCD (0)	Through DIET or CTET exams. Don't really select the teacher they want, but then- satisfied by the quality.
<b>Of firing a teacher</b>	Government (0.25)	Cannot, especially because student performance is not measureable.
<b>Of establishing teacher's salaries</b>	Government (0)	The pay to be paid to the teachers is fixed by the Sixth Pay commission and the principal of any MCD school has no say over that, especially given that the funds are allocated entirely by MCD.
<b>Of determining increments in teachers' salaries</b>	Government (0)	Again, the funds are allocated by the MCD. Hence, the entire pay structure is determined by the MCD officials, based on the rules laid down by the government.
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	0.5	

<sup>24</sup> Notice that we are only concerned with the autonomy of an institution in the triangular realm of society, government and school, not the ranking of the government authorities. So even though the MCD might get a part of its funds from the Director of Education, adding an additional layer of bureaucracy in the availment of funds by the MCD schools, we are concerned with the fact the MCD schools have no control over their finances. They have to go through a bureaucratic process in order to avail funds needed for the school. This is why both Sarvodaya Vidyalayas and MCD schools have been given the same ratings in this regard. We are only concerned with the autonomy of schools, not with the various layers of government their funds have to filter through.

Parameters	MCD schools	Reason for grading
Assessment policies	Teachers (1)	No external exams.
Books	Government (0)	Books are given out to the students.
Course Content	Teachers (1)	No external exams.
Which courses	Government (0)	The schools have to be affiliated to the government board.
Autonomy factor	2	

## 6.6 Kendriya Vidyalayas:

Kendriya Vidyalayas are schools managed by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, which is a society registered under the Societies Registration Act (XXI of 1860). The Sangathan administers the scheme of Kendriya Vidyalayas formulated by the Government of India in the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It has a three tier management structure with Headquarters at New Delhi, Regional Offices to manage a cluster of schools and Kendriya Vidyalayas spread all over the country and abroad.

The case of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathans is interesting because even though they are not directly controlled by the government, there is a hierarchical structure of power delegation that goes way beyond a Kendriya Vidyalaya school. Thus, even though government might not mandate everything, there is an Education Code for Kendriya Vidyalayas that governs everything, and takes away a considerable amount of power from the school. Thus, while determining the grading of each parameter, we'll focus on whether or not the school has autonomy to decide on the specific policies.

Parameters	Kendriya Vidyalayas	Reason for grading
Authority of formulating school	Management Committee (plus the Executive	Management committee has to prepare budget estimates for the next year

<b>Budgets</b>	committee of the management committee <sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> ) (0.5)	detailing all the recurring and non recurring expenditures.
<b>Authority of Deciding Budget allocations</b>	Board of governors + Management Committee (+ executive committee) (0.5)	<p>The management committee is delegated with the task to control the expenditure of funds released by the KVS, in the manner specified in their general rules.</p> <p>Once the budget has been procured, it is allotted in the school according to the rules laid down by the KVS. However, the school has the autonomy of deciding where a part of its funds go, considering the school management committee formulates the budget for the next session. However, these budgets are audited by the Board of governor. Thus the budget is allocated according to the rules laid down by the KVS and the MC has some power to decide where some of the funds would go, provided the BOG agree to their formulations.</p>

<sup>25</sup> Executive committee consists of

- a) Chairman , V M C or his nominee : Chairman
- b) One Educationist Member of VMC : Member
- c) One Parent Representative Member of VMC: Member
- d) One Teacher Representative Member of VMC : Member
- e) Principal of the Vidyalaya: Member secretary

<sup>26</sup> The functions of executive committee include:

- (i) Analysis of strengths and weaknesses of the K.V (ii) Progress with regard to the annual calendar of activities of the K.V.
- (iii) Audit objections and their settlement. (iv) Discipline. (v) Analysis of results of KV including initiation of steps for their improvement (vi) Utilisation of funds including Vidyalaya Vikas Nidhi. (vii) Adherence to the instructions issued from time to time by the KVS(Hqrs.) and Regional office.

<b>Of hiring a teacher</b>	Deputy Commissioner of KVS [8](Regional Officer) (0)	Primary teacher: 100% Recruitment after interviews from RIE  PGT: 50% recruitment, 50% promotion through interdepartmental exams  An institution has no autonomy of hiring a principal.
<b>Of firing a teacher</b>	KVS (0.25)	Not possible, except in cases of fraud, sexual harassment, or any other criminal charges.
<b>Of establishing teacher's salaries</b>	KVS (0)	The salary is fixed according to the rules laid down by the KVS (which are equivalent to those laid out in the 6 <sup>th</sup> pay commission) No autonomy of the KV school to decide the salary of the teacher by its own discretion.
<b>Of determining increments in teachers' salaries *</b>	Principals (complete autonomy) (1)	According to rules laid down by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan.[9]
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	2.25	

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Kendriya Vidyalaya</b>	<b>Reason for grading</b>
<b>Assessment policies</b>	KVS (0)	No autonomy to decide the test structure. The entire test module is decided by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan. <sup>27</sup>
<b>Books</b>	Teachers (0.5)	Because CBSE based, and bought by the students. (similar to pvt schools)
<b>Course Content</b>	Teachers (0)	Because the test schedule is fixed, and

<sup>27</sup> Chapter XII, Rules of examination and promotion.

		the entire structure of examinations is conducted on the sangathan level, right from class 1, the teachers have no autonomy over the course they have to teach. They have to complete specific course contents before the evaluations held by the sangathan.
<b>Which courses</b>	KVS, CBSE (0)	There is no choice here, all KVS are CBSE affiliated, (or in some stations, they are affiliated to the state board.)
<b>Autonomy factor</b>	<b>0.5</b>	

## 7. Final comparison between all the stakeholders of the schooling system

Finally, we collaborate all the rankings in a comprehensive chart, so that we can deduce conclusions from the extensive analysis of every schooling system.

Parameters	Budgetary allocations ( $\beta$ )	Curriculum and assessment ( $\eta$ )	Net ( $\omega$ )
<b>Pvt. Unrecognized</b>	6 (1)	4 (1)	2 (1)
<b>Pvt. recg. Unaided</b>	4 (0.667)	2.5 (0.625)	1.292 (0.646)
<b>Pvt. Recog. Aided</b>	1.5 (0.25)	3 (0.333)	0.583 (0.291)
<b>MCD</b>	0.5 (0.08)	2 (0.5)	0.58 (0.29)
<b>Sarvodaya</b>	0.5(0.08)	0 (0)	0.08 (0.04)
<b>KV</b>	2.25 (0.375)	0.5 (0.125)	0.5 (0.25)

The figures in the parenthesis of the first column (let's call it  $\beta$ ) is equal to the (autonomy factor 1)/ 6. The parenthesis of the second column ( $\eta$ , say) = (autonomy factor 2)/ 4.

The figures in the parenthesis in the last column ( $\omega$ ) depict the percentage of net autonomy the institution has.

$$\omega = \frac{\text{Autonomy score}}{\text{Total number of parameters}}$$

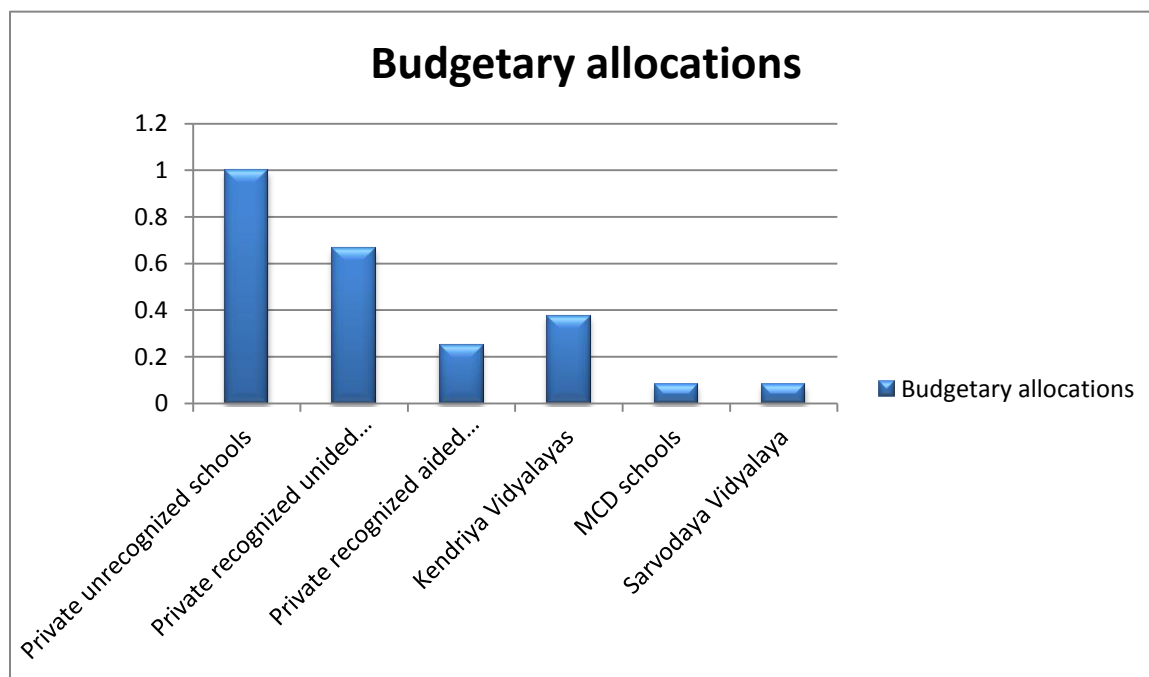
Thus,  $\omega = 0$  would imply that the institution has no autonomy over that particular factor, whereas an  $\omega = 1$  would imply that the institution has complete autonomy over the factor. The raw autonomy factor has been converted to  $\omega$ , so that the weight of both the factors in the net autonomy measure is equalized. This is important because the budgetary allocation uses 6

parameters to measure autonomy, whereas curriculum and assessment uses 4 parameters; undervaluing the importance of the latter in the final autonomy measure.

The final column measures net autonomy of the institution.

$$\text{Thus } \omega = \frac{\beta + \eta}{2}$$

## 7.1 Autonomy over budgetary allocations



We first focus on the autonomy of the three classes of schools based on their budgetary allocations. We notice that the Private unrecognized schools are most autonomous, followed by private recognized unaided schools, followed by (surprisingly) Kendriya Vidyalayas. Autonomy of private unrecognized schools follow the KVs. The autonomy of Sarvodaya Vidyalayas and the MCD schools is equal, and they are the least autonomous of the lot.

The private unaided schools have maximum autonomy because they are bound under no government rule<sup>28</sup>. The second most autonomous schools in this regard are private unaided schools, because even though they are recognized by the government, they are bound by rules under the Delhi School Education Act 1973. They have to pay their teachers salaries as specified

<sup>28</sup> As technically, they shouldn't exist!

in the sixth pay commission, although they have the authority to set their student fees, the DoE can ask them to return the fees if it deems it 'unfair'. They have the authority of deciding the increments of the teachers' salaries.

An interesting thing to notice here is that the Kendriya Vidyalayas have the more autonomy than the private aided schools. This makes sense because the principal in KVs have complete autonomy of determining increments in teachers' salaries, whereas private schools do not have that autonomy. Although the managing committee in private aided schools has autonomy over hiring their teachers, most members of the selection committee have to be elected by the DoE. Also, the teachers appointed by the selection Committee have to be approved by the DoE<sup>29</sup>, in order for the teacher to be appointed. This gives KVs a significant advantage in terms of autonomy in this parameter.<sup>30</sup>

The autonomy of Sarvodaya Vidyalayas is equal to that of MCD schools, because neither of them has the autonomy over their school fees, over the salaries to be paid to teachers, or over the hiring of the teachers. Although both of them can avail funds, OR fire their teachers, the process of doing the same is very cumbersome.<sup>31</sup> They have to ask the government for every extra rupee they would want to spend. The salaries of teachers in both the schools are fixed by the Sixth Pay commission.

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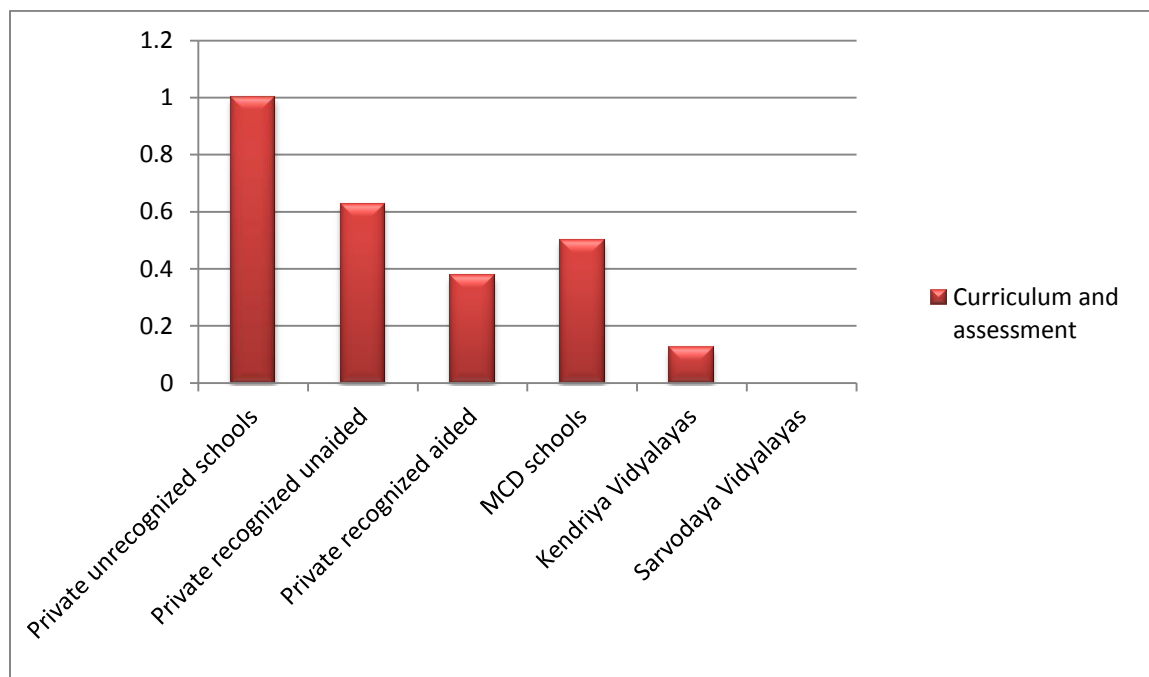
<sup>29</sup> In 14 days.

<sup>30</sup> It is interesting to note that the autonomy of formulation and allocation of budget is the same in both private aided schools and KVs, because both of them are bound by rules of DoE and the KVS for their budgetary allocation. And both of them have a limited autonomy in deciding their allocations, as long as they are approved by the higher authority.

<sup>31</sup> As they require filing criminal report against the said teacher. Firing a teacher merely because s/he isn't performing well is not an option. In the case a teacher isn't performing well, the same is reflected in their annual performance reports.



## 7.2 Autonomy of Curriculum and Assessment of schools

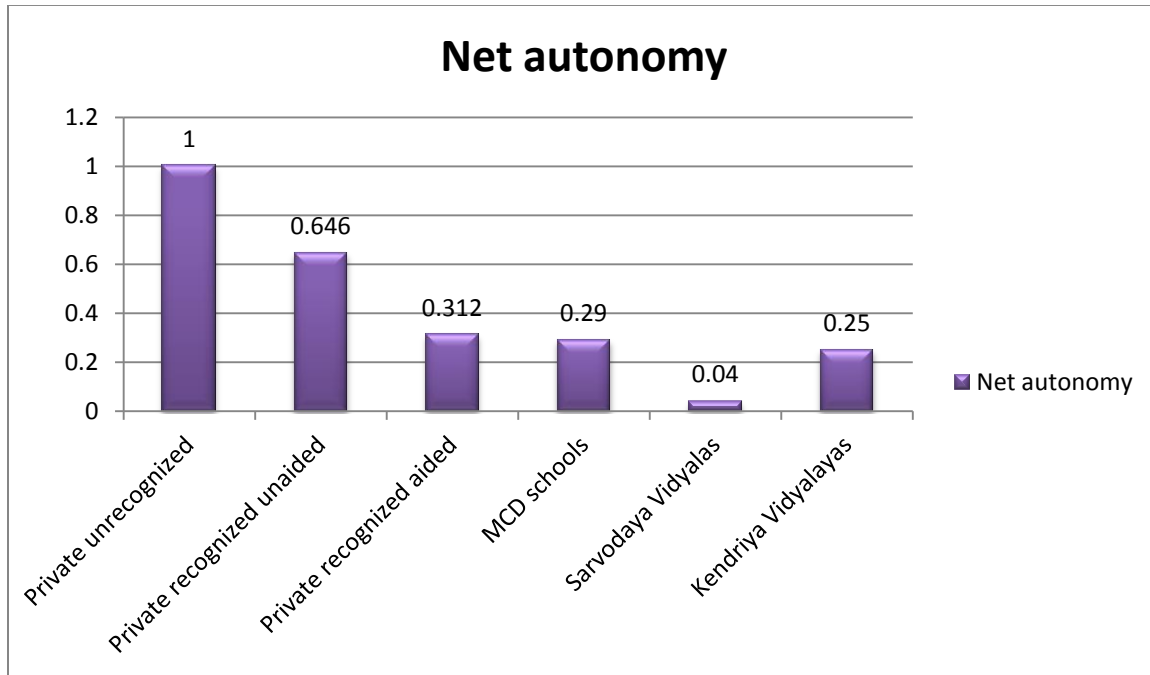


The curriculum, and assessment data has interesting conclusions too. Private unrecognized schools have complete autonomy regarding the course they have to teach, and the assessment policies of the school because they are not bound by any government rules. Private recognized unaided schools, predictably, have a little less autonomy than private unrecognized schools, mainly because they have to follow government recognized curriculum, and assessment policies in some senior classes. Interestingly, the autonomy of private aided schools is less than the autonomy of MCD schools. It makes sense since the MCD schools are schools only till class 5<sup>th</sup>, thus they do not have to give any external exams. Because student assessment can't technically be assessed<sup>32</sup>, the school teachers have an enormous amount of autonomy regarding the course content and assessment policies. They are followed by private aided schools, followed by Kendriya Vidyalayas. Kendriya Vidyalayas are a curious case, because the assessment policies of any individual KV school are determined by the KV sangathan, effectively giving no autonomy to the individual schools to decide their assessment structure and course curriculum. Lastly, Sarvodaya Vidyalayas have no autonomy, given that they are provided with the books by the

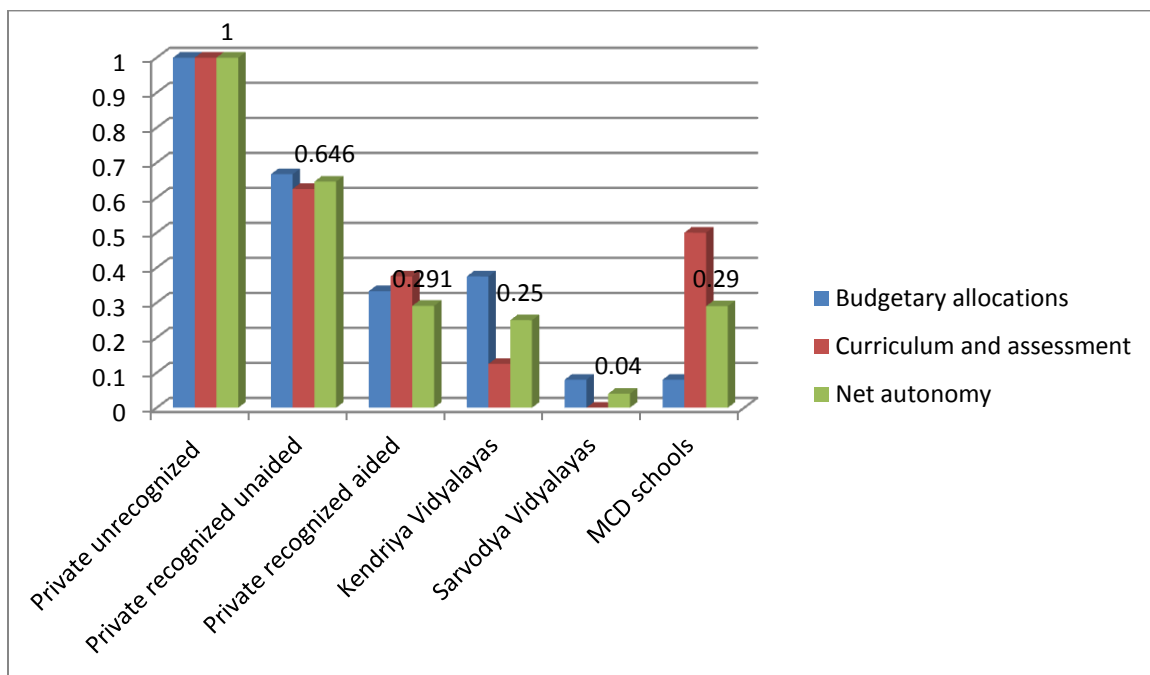
<sup>32</sup> Under RTE, no student under class 8<sup>th</sup> can be failed.

government, the assessment and teaching schedule is mandated by the government, and they have to be affiliated to the CBSE board.

### 7.3 Net Autonomy



Thus, overall, Private unrecognized schools have the maximum autonomy. They are followed by private recognized unaided schools, followed by private recognized aided schools. MCD schools come next, followed by Kendriya Vidyalayas. Sarvodaya Vidyalayas have the least amount of autonomy.



**IN CONCLUSION**, it is interesting to note the interplay of autonomy of budgetary constraints and the course curriculum and assessment over the net autonomy of the institutions.

1. Private unrecognized schools have maximum amount of autonomy in all the parameters. However, according to PISA 2009 study, high autonomy would translate to better student performance *only* if there was accountability. Considering the large variety of private unrecognized schools, it is debatable whether they have accountability or not. On one hand, usually they are usually primary schools, so their student performance cannot be measured.

However, the reason they have mushroomed is because the parents find the teaching standards in government schools unsatisfactory. Hence the only reason parents would be willing to pay fees, however minimal, (as opposed to getting money for sending their kids to government schools) is if they were satisfied by their teaching standards. Thus, private unrecognized schools have a level of accountability to the public, perhaps not in the form of objective evaluation, but through satisfaction of parents. However without objective of student performance, it cannot be conclusively determined whether the high level of autonomy translates to better student performance.

2. Private recognized unaided schools have a large amount of autonomy, when compared to other forms of schooling systems.
3. The autonomy of private recognized aided schools is less than the autonomy of all other private schools. Moreover, although it has high autonomy of course and curriculum, its autonomy over its budgetary allocations is even less than that of Kendriya Vidyalayas.
4. The autonomy of MCD schools follow that of all the private schools. This is interesting because even though they have comparatively very low autonomy regarding their budgetary allocations, their autonomy in the curriculum and assessment makes up for it. Although it should be noted that they have a relatively high autonomy of course and curriculum because MCD schools are only till class 5<sup>th</sup>, and thus the students in these schools do not have to give external exams. Also, the students cannot be failed in the exams, lowering the accountability of their institutions. PISA 2009 states that if an institution has low accountability, high autonomy leads to adverse student performance, thus in this case, high autonomy would not be desirable.

5. The autonomy of Kendriya Vidyalayas follow that the MCD schools. A major contributor to this lack of autonomy is the lack of autonomy of curriculum and assessment policies. All the policies regarding the curriculum and assessment are decided by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan.
6. The Sarvodaya Vidyalayas have the least amount of autonomy. Sarvodaya Vidyalaya schools have minimal autonomy regarding in their budgetary allocations, and they have no autonomy in setting their curriculum and assessment.

## 7. The way forward

Now that we have an objective measure of autonomy of various schooling systems, we can effectively look at the 'ideal' form of government intervention into the schooling sector. The way forward would be to look at the various ways in which an institution can improve autonomy, without compromising on its student performance. An important facet here would be to racquet up the accountability of the institutions.

There are two major avenues of future research and policy recommendations that arise from this paper.

**First**, we need to look at ways that would make the institutions more autonomous in deciding their budget formulations and allocations **without** compromising with the accountability of these institutions. It does not mean abolition of state from the education sector. In fact, it means that there must be more innovative ways to ensure that government aid does not mean government reliance. As long as the aid is linked to a parameter that ensures accountability (student performance, for example), the schools would be much better off.

**Second**, we need to look at ways that ensure more autonomy in curriculum and assessment, without compromising on the accountability of the institutions regarding the same. Presently, the autonomy of institutions like Sarvodaya Vidyalayas is non-existent.

MCD schools get the worse of the lot, because they have neither any accountability of student performance, NOR any autonomy regarding books or budget. The only reason they score high on the autonomy scale is because they have low level of accountability, which defeats the very purpose of autonomy. Thus, what further discourse should focus on, is to improve autonomy of institutions in course structure **without** compromising on the institutions being accountable for their performance.

In layman terms, schools do not need the government to ensure that they have a set number of bathrooms, a set size of rooms, or a government mandated teachers' salaries, because that would not improve the student performance. And this has been seen in the general literature regarding school performances in India. What we need to do is to ensure that the school is accountable for its result. We need to decentralize the power structure and give the power to the schools, rather than government controlling the *functioning* of schools. Government still has an important stake in the education system (a k a ensuring accountability); however, running schools is not the way to ensure student performance.

**The research shows that effectively, not even the private recognized unaided schools have enough autonomy,** thus there is a huge scope of improvement in the aforementioned parameters. Now that we have outlined the various parameters where the schools are lacking in autonomy and accountability, further research can suggest policies that would plug in these deficiencies.

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