



Education

- Directorate of Education & Delhi Textbook Bureau
- Directorate of Higher Education

Directorate of Education

Education is important for one and all. The National Policy on Education formulated in 1986 and modified in 1992 aims at providing quality education to all students irrespective of their backgrounds. It lays stress on the need for a radical transformation of the education system to improve quality at all stages and gives much greater attention to science and technology. It proposes to provide free and compulsory education up to 14 years of age. The Directorate of Education endeavours to implement the policy.

The main objectives of the Directorate are to provide a common programme of education for the educational needs of children, initiate and promote experimentation and innovations in education, facilitate child centres, encourage learning and thinking in children as well as make Delhi fully literate. Educational facilities are provided in various stages, namely, pre-primary, primary, middle, secondary, senior secondary and university level. Pre-primary and primary education is mainly the responsibility of local bodies, namely, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, New Delhi Municipal Council and Delhi Cantonment Board. The Directorate primarily looks after middle, secondary and senior secondary education. Although pre-primary and primary education is mainly the responsibility of local bodies, Delhi Government has converted its 326 schools into composite schools now known as Sarvodaya Vidyalayas, providing education upto Class XII. NDMC, even though only concerned with primary education, does run some middle, secondary and senior secondary schools. The organisations get grants-in-aid from the Delhi Government to meet expenditure on education in Delhi.

The Directorate is responsible for implementing various laws and Acts relating to education in Delhi. As it mainly deals with primary education in the city, one of the main laws is The Delhi School Education Act 1973. The primary objective is to provide better organisation and development of school education in Delhi. It was enacted more than 30 years ago when there were few government, government-aided and

private schools, and exclusive attention was paid to regulation of aided and non-aided schools. However, with rapid expansion in Delhi and its population, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of both government and public schools. In such a scenario, the Act seems obsolete and incapable of meeting modern requirements.

Organisational Structure

The Secretary (Education) heads the Directorate, and is assisted by an Additional Director, Joint Director, Regional Director, Deputy Director and a Chief Sports Coordinator. The Deputy Controller of Accounts supervises the Directorate's accounts. The Additional Director is responsible for administration, schools, sports and estate whereas the Joint Director oversees the finances, universal elementary education and various exams. The hierarchy in the Directorate is multi-layered and intermingled with various functions. It has one of the highest numbers of employees in the Delhi Government and manages a large number of functions. The number of employees in the Directorate is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Information on Number of Employees

Year	Sanctioned Posts	Working Employees	Vacant Posts
2001	49,345	43,570	5,775
2002	48,911	41,999	6,912
2003-04	49,052	38,628	10,424

Source: Government of NCT Delhi. 2001, 2002, 2004. Census of Employees of Government of Delhi & Autonomous Bodies. Directorate of Economics & Statistics

Education and the Directorate: A Snapshot of Performance

The main goals of the Tenth Five Year Plan in elementary education are free and compulsory elementary education and eradication of illiteracy. Universalisation of elementary education has three major aspects: universal access and enrolment, universal education till 14 years of age and a substantial improvement in the quality of education to allow all children to achieve essential levels of learning. Table 2 gives a comparative picture of the primary, middle and secondary education in Delhi from 1980-81 to 2003-04.

Table 2: Comparative Data of Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools in Delhi

Year	Primary Schools		Middle-level Schools		Secondary/Sr. Secondary Schools	
	No. of Schools	Student Enrolment (lac)	No. of Schools	Student Enrolment (lac)	No. of Schools	Student Enrolment (lac)
1980-81	1,726	6.69	326	3.23	704	2.54
2003-04	2,535	15.29	650	8.44	1,689	7.25

Source: Government of NCT Delhi. 2004. *Economic Survey of Delhi 2003-04*. Department of Planning

MCD accounts for 90% of primary school enrolment and has a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:40. The teacher-pupil ratio in middle schools is 1:35. The Delhi Government mainly provides secondary/ senior secondary education in Delhi. Because of the space constraint, the majority of these schools run in double shift. The teacher-pupil ratio is around 1:10. Even though student enrolment has increased, it has not been satisfactory with respect to total number of children in the city. Table 3 gives the number of schools, teachers and total enrolment in all types of government run schools in Delhi.

Table 3: Statistics on Government Schools in Delhi as of 2003-04

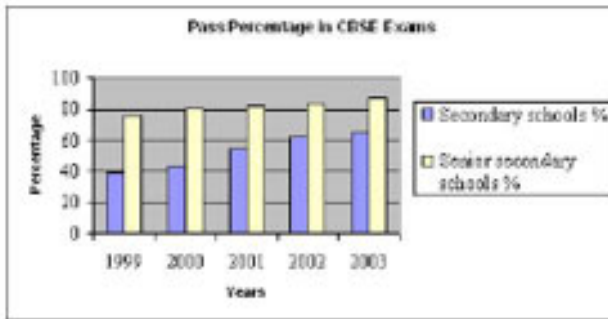
	No. of Schools	No. of Teachers	Enrolment
Government Schools	974	36,656	10,21,374
Government Aided Schools	217	3,956	1,43,383
Unaided Public Schools	1,100	35,896	7,60,557
Municipal Corporation of Delhi	2,118	19,280	9,32,320
New Delhi Municipal Council	80	1,362	30,272
Delhi Cantonment Board	8	88	3,809
Kendriya Vidyalas	40	1,716	64,858

Source: Government of NCT Delhi. Statistics Department. Directorate of Education

It would be relevant to add here that 1.87 lac (1.03 lac in the age group 6-10 and 0.84 lac in the age group 11-14 years) children were out of school in 2003.¹ The Delhi Government has launched Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to identify such out-of-school children and provide for their education. This is also necessary in view of the dismal performance of government-run schools due to reasons like low attendance, teacher absenteeism and poor exam results. The pass percentage of government schools is the most obvious parameter to evaluate the performance.

The pass percentages of government-run schools in secondary and senior secondary exams are listed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Pass percentage in CBSE results



Source: Government of NCT Delhi. 2004. Economic Survey 2003-04. Department of Planning

Financial Profile

The Delhi Government allocates huge funds for expenditure on government schools and runs various schemes for improving the outreach and quality of education in Delhi. Approved outlay for the Tenth Five Year Plan is Rs 886 crore. The approved outlay for the year 2005-06 is Rs 207 crore, out of which Rs 20.5 crore has been spent till August 2005.² Table 4 details the budget estimates and actual expenditure of the Directorate over the last seven years.

Table 4: Budget Estimates and Expenditure (Rs in lac)

Year	Budget Estimate		Actual Expenditure	
	Plan	Non-Plan	Plan	Non-Plan
1999-00	9,164	86,500	3,257	83,127
2000-01	10,145	92,769	5,068	73,323
2001-02	24,002	83,309	15,664	73,897
2002-03	26,145	78,125	18,506	75,853
2003-04	28,243	80,778	14,887	79,078
2004-05	31,347	88,510	—	—
2005-06	31,360	96,000	—	—

Source: Government of NCT Delhi. Data abstracted from the Detailed Demand for Grants for the years of 1999-00, 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06

The expenditure of the Directorate out of the approved outlay suggests underutilisation of funds. Whereas in 2003-04, the Directorate spent Rs 147 crore out of an outlay of Rs 170 crore, it spent only Rs 95 crore out of Rs 198 crore in the next year 2004-05.³ The per capita expenditure

on education is much higher than the national average.⁴ In 2003-04, the per capita expenditure in Delhi was Rs 927 whereas per capita expenditure in India was only Rs 749.

Schemes and Programmes

The Directorate runs several schemes and programs in primary, middle and secondary schools for improving the quality of education and student enrolment in schools. Some of the main schemes, their finances and performances are discussed below.

- **Free Supply of Textbooks**

The objective of the scheme is to reduce dropout rate, increase retention and provide incentives for admission at primary level to children who cannot afford to purchase books. Approved outlay for the Tenth Five Year Plan is Rs 11 crore and Rs 10 crore has been allocated for the year 2004-05.⁵ Under this scheme, textbooks and five notebooks are proposed to be provided free of cost to each student studying in the primary classes of government and government-aided schools. The scheme had targeted six lac students for the year 2004-05.

- **Provision of Primary Classes in the Existing Government Schools (Conversion into Sarvodaya Schools)**

To provide quality education to children from class I to XII, the Directorate plans to introduce primary classes in existing schools wherever necessary and convert them into Sarvodaya Vidyalayas. Approved outlay for the Tenth Five-Year Plan is Rs 825 lac and a sum of Rs 100 lac was provided for 2004-05. The scheme is interlinked with various other schemes. For instance, the cost of constructing an extra building comes from the scheme "Construction of School Building" and the funds required for paying extra salary to teacher and other staff come from funds available under the scheme "Additional Schooling Facilities." This overlapping of functions and schemes can lead to wastage of resources and allocated funds.

- **Strengthening of Book Bank**

The Delhi Government allocates funds to provide prescribed course books to students at large, especially to children who are unable to meet expenditure on books due to dearth of resources. The books are issued to students of classes VI-XII for one academic session

after which they have to be returned to the school. Boys whose parental income is less than Rs 4,000 per month and girls whose parental income is under Rs 5,000 per month are eligible for these schemes. Approved outlay for the Tenth Five Year Plan is Rs 825 lac and Rs 100 lac was allocated for the year 2004-05. The Directorate aims to help 90,000 students under this scheme in the year 2004-05.

- **Subsidy for School Uniform (Free Supply Of Uniforms)**

The Delhi Government provides subsidy for school uniforms to children belonging to economically weaker sections. Under this plan scheme, cash subsidy of Rs 300 per annum per student is given to students whose parental income is less than Rs 4,000 per month for boys and Rs 5,000 per month for girls. This scheme is implemented in both government and government-aided schools. Rs 12 crore for the Tenth Five Year Plan and Rs 850 lac for 2004-05 have been allocated under this scheme.

- **Stipend to Girls Students**

The literacy rate amongst females in Delhi is less than males, accompanied by higher dropout rates, as parents show strong reluctance to send their girl children to school due to social and economic backwardness. Thus, the Directorate gives a cash stipend of Rs 200 in primary classes, Rs 400 in middle classes and Rs 600 in secondary classes to girl students who passed the previous class in all government and government-aided schools in rural, resettlement colonies and JJ clusters. Disbursement is through Deputy Directors of the Directorate and Principals/ Vice-Principals of schools. Approved outlay for the Tenth Five Year Plan is Rs 4,500 lac.

- **Mid-day Meals**

The National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, also known as Mid-day Meals, was launched in 1995. The target group was all students in primary classes in government, local bodies and government-aided schools. Three kg per student per month subject to a minimum attendance of 80 percent was distributed. This is a centrally sponsored programme and food grain is supplied free of cost by the Food Corporation of India, whereas the transportation cost is payable by the district administration. In Delhi, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi provides mid-day meals through NGOs and private caterers. The

cost is Rs 2.40 per child and is sponsored by the Ministry of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs as well as the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Financial Imprudence

According to the CAG (Comptroller and Auditor General Office) Reports, there have been inefficiencies regarding the functioning and associated finances by the Directorate. Some of them are listed below.

- Directorate of Education released excess grants of Rs 1 crore to an aided school Gadodia Girls Sr Secondary, Chandni Chowk during 1997-98 to 2003-04, even though student enrolment came down from 409 to just 10 in March 2003. In view of the minuscule number of students and staff as of November 2004, it is evident that the grant could have been utilised elsewhere in support of educational activities and the students/ staff of this school could have been shifted to another school.
- According to CAG Report 2004, transport allowance totalling Rs 61.97 lac was irregularly allowed by 138 schools to their teachers. The amount calculated to be Rs 62 lac is yet to be recovered. The Directorate of Education awarded the work of hiring of tin sheds without ascertaining competitive rates in market, resulting in avoidable extra expenditure of Rs 50.44 lac.
- The Directorate of Education purchased 1,247 cupboards during 1998-99 from the open market without calling for tenders, the bill being Rs 40 lac more than the DGS&D costs. He purchased 691 of these almirahs in March 1999, costing Rs 50.86 lac.

Education: Problems all around

Schools managed by the authorities in Delhi are not only very poor in terms of basic quality of education but also with respect to infrastructure and teachers. In several MCD schools there are around 70 students in one class, and half of them sit on the floor. Buildings are incomplete and have unfinished roofs, and some are even unsafe. A good MCD primary school has one toilet (mostly common to boys and girls), otherwise in general there are no toilets. The teacher-pupil ratio is too low, leading to further deterioration in the standard of education.

Remuneration paid to workers for implementation of the schemes is very poor, leading to shortage of manpower. In case of mid-day meals, a worker gets 30 paise per student to prepare food. The sole reason for inefficient disbursement of functions is lack of coordination between the Directorate, schools and principals.

Delhi's education system is fraught with many institutional and regulatory problems as well. The Delhi School Education Act, 1973 features stifling regulations and opportunities for needy children in the Capital. The licensing process and restrictions on opening and running schools are just a few examples of these regulations. The decision process is also very centralised and creates inevitable delays, as often schools are located in far-flung areas without basic infrastructure. The non-profit motive as a prerequisite in the education sector, either in school or college education, often creates corruption and illegality in the system. The regulated system of the sector is also one of the major problems.

Reforms

Education in Delhi needs a major overhaul in terms of regulatory framework, decision-making and political control. A radical suggestion is deregulation -- devolution of funds and decentralised decision-making should be made the norm. The schools those are not regulated i.e. are unrecognised should also have the right to exist, and thus stifling regulations of licenses and aided/ unaided should be removed. However, they can display a disclaimer, which would make the citizens aware of the risks involved. The budget should be provided to the front-line managers rather entrusted to distant officials who tend to sanction inappropriate spending. Also, the Government can contract out the management of these schools to private parties with clearly defined performance benchmarks. This would ensure better services at more competitive prices.

Some operational reforms are needed immediately. Transparency in expenditure, performance budgets and details of establishment charges of the Directorate are required. The data on per student expenditure, allocation of money under various heads and schemes in more detail should be made public. End-providers should be made directly accountable to end-users.

Introduction of choice, competition and entrepreneurship to the sector of education are ideas that will benefit customers, both students and parents. Education vouchers to cover the cost of their children's education can be given to parents. They can choose the school they want and the school can encash the voucher from the Government. Free bus passes could be also provided to students to facilitate mobility to the chosen school. This would only increase the choice to parents as well as substantially reduce the budget of the providing education. The concept of edupreneurs (educational entrepreneurs) should be encouraged or facilitating more competition and better services.

De-politicisation of the education sector is another important requirement. Control of political parties on the curriculum and other significant aspects should be removed. All the aforementioned principles, if implemented, would lead to better quality education, infrastructure, fund utilisation and more satisfied students and parents.

Delhi Bureau of Textbooks

The Delhi Bureau of Textbooks (DBT) was established in May 1970 under the Societies Registration Act, 1960 as an autonomous government body supervised by the Directorate of Education. Its primary function is to print the books required by all government schools in Delhi. Before 1970, there was a private publication division under which publication was done. But due to poor quality of paper, printing and deficiency in the number of books, the Bureau was formed.

Education is a state subject and thus a State Curriculum Committee designs syllabus for each state. However, in the absence of such a Committee in Delhi, National Council for Education, Research, and Training (NCERT) books were adapted and printed to meet the educational needs.

Till 2002-03, the manuscript of the proposed publications were made available by the textbook branch of the Directorate of Education to DBT either adopting/ adapting or transliterating the textbooks published by NCERT or preparing its own drafts developed by academic experts. However, NCERT withdrew its copyright permission from DBT for printing textbooks in January 2003. In view of the denial of copyright permission, the Bureau got textual material prepared by

SCERT for all titles from classes I to VIII for the academic session 2004-05.

Quality textbooks at a comparatively low price and their timely supply are the hallmark of the Bureau. It aims to aid and promote the advancement of primary and secondary education by producing high quality textbooks and other material, to print, publish stock and distribute textbooks, as well as evaluate and conduct research for improvement of curricula, books and other material.

The books printed by DBT are sold to all government/government aided schools namely Sarvodaya Vidyalayas, MCD schools, government secondary and senior secondary schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas and government-aided schools. Such schools must necessarily use textbooks prescribed by the Directorate of Education. The DBT's method of distributing books is two-pronged: textbooks for MCD schools, Sarvodaya Vidyalayas, and government secondary schools are bought by the MCD and Directorate of Education respectively, and then distributed to students free of cost. For them, the DBT prints textbooks on an order basis. However, for government aided and government senior secondary schools, students must buy textbooks, which are distributed by the DBT through a network of 8 wholesale and 22 retail dealers.

The Delhi Bureau of Textbooks has a Board of Directors that consists of Director of SCERT, Finance Secretary of the Delhi Government, Deputy and Additional Director from the textbook branch of the Directorate of Education. The Bureau also has an Executive Committee, which has a nominated director, a deputy and an additional director, as well as the Finance Secretary of the Delhi Government.

One of the stated aims of the DBT is the "evaluation and research for improvement of curricula and books." However, till date, no evidence has been seen of any "improvement of books" undertaken by the DBT. Private schools do not use DBT's books, clearly indicating the poor quality of textbooks. DBT cannot change the curricula as it does not fall under its purview.

Of Pricing and Profits

The main stance of all DBT officials is that although they are simply

reproducing SCERT textbooks, their contribution lies in printing the same textbooks at much lower prices for poor students studying in government schools.

The production of textbooks is done through purchase of printing paper and cover paper directly from the mills by open tender system. The tender is invited in the month of October and November every year. There is no argument against the fact that they do indeed produce books at a considerably lower price than the NCERT. The price range for all the books published by the DBT is between Rs 8-20. However, the amazing aspect is that despite printing at such low rates, the DBT is still able to make a profit. Table 5 details the total number of print order and total annual sale and profits made by the DBT.

Table 5: Print Order and Total Annual Sale of DBT

<i>Year</i>	<i>Print Orders (In lac)</i>	<i>Sale (Rs in lac)</i>	<i>Total Annual Operational Surplus</i>
1995-96	58	582	
1999-2000	61	669	206
2000-01	72	789	253
2001-02	87	936	290
2002-03	66	739	271
2003-04	120	654	208

Source: Government of NCT Delhi. 2003, 2004. Annual Report 2002-03 and 2003-04. Delhi Textbook Bureau

The Bureau claims that it is not a commercial organisation and aims only at producing quality textbooks at a very narrow margin, just sufficient to have adequate working capital for its daily transactions and arranging for materials, transport, freight and establishment expenses.

The Bureau registered a sale of Rs 9.6 crore till September 2004⁶ and has printed approximately 1.24 crore copies of 77 titles in Hindi and English medium in the year 2005. The operational surplus is utilised in welfare schemes and development of academic material to be supplied free of cost to institutions and students, as well as Braille books for sightless students prepared by the Braille institutes.

Obviously, a question arises about how DBT is able to make such large profits if it sells books at considerably lower prices. The answer lies in the fact that although DBT sells books at a lower price, it also has lower costs. When it buys paper, it is exempt from paying

excise, the effective price of paper is significantly less. Also, the cost of the book includes cost of paper, printing charges and an addition of 60%, thus making wholesome profits on the books printed. The simple economic truth that the DBT has not grasped is that an excise exemption is an effective subsidy, and since profits are being derived from a subsidy, ultimately some arm of the government is paying the price. The Bureau has 23 printers and 26 wholesale dealers who cater to almost 3,500 retailers. In the year 2005-06, one wholesale dealer has been appointed for each zone and for the four non-represented zones.

Welfare Schemes of the Bureau

The Bureau earmarks a portion of its operational surplus for the welfare of meritorious student of all government and government-aided schools by awarding several sets of textbooks for classes VI- XII, free schoolbags and other schemes. Details of various welfare schemes and expenditure over these schemes are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Expenditures on Schemes of Delhi Bureau of Textbooks

<i>Items</i>	<i>Classes</i>	<i>Expenditure 2002-03 (Rs in lac)</i>	<i>Expenditure 2003-04 (Rs in lac)</i>
Books to meritorious students	VI, VII, VIII	10	12
Pocket Dictionaries	X & XII		2
Exercise Note Books	VI-XII		3
School Bags	For Class I in all Sarvodaya Vidyalayas	13	12
Who is Kalam? (Book)	For all Schools		3
Diaries	Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas	0.31	
Encyclopaedia			0.23

Source: Government of NCT Delhi. 2003, 2004. Annual Reports 2002-03 and 2003-04. Delhi Textbook Bureau

Problems and Solutions

The main aims of the DBT relate to the printing and publishing of textbooks. Two points can be made in this regard: first, the printing of textbooks can in no way be thought of as an essential activity, or core area, where the presence of a government body is justifiable. Second, a government agency already works in this field: NCERT. It also prints and publishes school textbooks as prescribed by the Directorate of Education in English and Hindi. Its presence renders DBT completely

redundant and superfluous.

If the ultimate aim of the government is simply to make textbooks cheaper for poor people, there are much simpler ways to achieve this. The government could allow schools to get the direct benefit of such a subsidy by distributing textbook vouchers to various schools. This voucher could be a discount slip, which would enable schools to buy books at a lower price: lower by the amount of the slip. If schools must spend a lower part of their budget on textbooks, the relative cost of textbooks is reduced. Hence the end-result is the same as that gained by printing cheaper books.

Vouchers score over the present system in number of ways. They remove red-tape, bring market forces into play and give schools the power of choosing books that suit their teaching style and other requirements. The important thing is that even government and government-aided schools would have the freedom to choose which textbooks they would like to use, and they would be able to still provide them to students at affordable prices. A voucher system would be more cost-effective too, since it would eliminate all costs of running an organisation: administrative costs, salary of employees, land costs, and various miscellaneous costs that crop up on a day-to-day basis.

*—Prepared by Susmita Pratibast
With inputs from Karuna Shankar, Baani Choudhary,
Reema Rangoli and Akanksha Shivhare*

Notes

- ¹ Government of NCT Delhi. 2004. *Economic Survey 2003-04*. Department of Planning
- ² Government of NCT Delhi. 2005. *Annual Plan 2005-06: Plan Outlay & Expenditure*. Department of Planning
- ³ Government of NCT Delhi. 2003, 2004. *Annual Plan: Plan Outlay & Expenditure*. Department of Planning
- ⁴ Government of NCT Delhi. 2004. *Economic Survey 2003-04*. Department of Planning
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