

School Education Reforms in Delhi

2015 - 2020

Interventions Handbook

BCG BOSTON
CONSULTING
GROUP





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Abbreviations

ART	Academic Resource Teams
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BCG	Boston Consulting Group
BoQ	Bill of Quantity
CAU	Core Academic Unit
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CLDP	Cluster Level Leadership Development Programme
CPWD	Central Public Works Department
CRCC	Cluster Resource Centre Coordinator
CTB	Caretaking Branch
DC	District Coordinator
DCM	Deputy Chief Minister
DCPCR	Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights
DDE	Deputy Director of Education
DIET	District Institute of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
DR	Direct Recruitment
DRG	District Resource Group
DSSSB	Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board
DTTDC	Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation
EFC	Expenditure Finance Committee
EM	Education Minister
EMC	Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum
ETF	Education Task Force
EWS	Economically Weaker Section

FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FLN	Foundational Learning & Numeracy
GeM	Government e-Marketplace
HC	Happiness Curriculum
HoS	Head of School
JAM	Just A Minute
JVS	Jeevan Vidya Shivar
KASE	Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence
KRP	Key Resource Personnel
LEI	Live Entrepreneur Interactions
LEP	Learning Enhancement Programme
LIC	Learning Improvement Cycle
MCD	Municipal Corporation of Delhi
MIS	Management Information System
MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
MT	Mentor Teacher
NEP	National Education Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCBP	Online Capacity Building Programme
ORC	Our Responsibility to Children
OSD	Officer on Special Duty
P.P.	Percentage Points
PGMS	Public Grievances Management System
PGT	Post Graduate Teacher
PTM	Parent Teacher Meeting
PTR	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
PWD	Public Works Department
RP	Resource Personnel
RTE	Right to Education

RWA	Resident Welfare Association
SA	Summative Assessment
SCERT	State Council of Educational Research and Training
SCPCR	State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
SCR	Student-Classroom-Ratio
SEL	Socio-Emotional Learning
SMC	School Management Committee
SoW	Scope of Work
TDC	Teacher Development Coordinator
TGELF	The Global Education and Leadership Foundation
TGT	Trained Graduate Teacher
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
UGC	University Grants Commission
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
VSC	Vidhan Sabha Coordinators

Introduction

Delhi's education reforms have generated significant buzz within the education community in India. However, there is limited detailed documentation on the various initiatives and processes adopted in Delhi. This report is an effort to address that gap. The big-picture learnings from Delhi's education reforms (2015-2020) have been laid out in the 'Learnings Document'. However, several states and stakeholders may also want to understand the finer details of individual initiatives, especially if they wish to replicate such interventions or are looking for precedent and best practices to implement similar measures in their states. This report provides an easy reference for the same.

In the following pages, we have tried to lay down each of Delhi's initiatives in a 'deconstructed' format, with objectives, design elements, and implementation considerations separated out into distinct sections. We have also tried to anticipate implications for other states in a Question and Answer (Q&A) format at the end of each chapter. This format has been chosen to make it easy to understand what Delhi did, while simultaneously posing critical questions that should be considered while adapting an initiative to another state.

We wish to emphasise that this report should be considered only as a starting point. Every state's context and history are different. Therefore, adapting any initiative will need to go beyond a 'copy-and-paste' approach. The Mentor Teacher (MT) concept, for example, is uniquely situated in Delhi's compact schooling context and may need to be radically redesigned in much larger states with high teacher vacancies and contractual cluster cadres. In such circumstances, the chapter will serve as a broad guide and inspiration to understand the key success factors to institutionalise such a cadre. In other chapters, the specific details of principal and leadership development programs may perhaps be replicated completely in some states.

It is also important to remember that education is a sector where change and genuine impact is a long-term process. It takes 12 years for a child studying in class 1 to graduate from school. Many times, the successes and failures of class 12 are driven by a child's experience in primary classes. We urge readers to keep this lens in mind as they read sections of the report that discuss impact, challenges, and the way forward. Education reforms need to be given gestation time before 'sweeping verdicts' can be announced. In this gestation period, constructive inputs and continued positive momentum are essential and we hope that every reader takes that lens as they go through this report.

This report covers 12 major interventions that Delhi undertook between 2015 and 2020.

1. Budget Outlays and Human Resources: Investing in Essential Inputs

1.1 Introduction

From the very beginning of its tenure, Delhi government had expressed its intention to significantly increase investment into education. This was believed to be critical to deliver against the education transformation agenda. In addition to increasing the budget, Delhi took several steps to enhance flexibility and ease of expenditure.

Delhi also addressed human resource constraints – be it **recruitment of teachers** or the **administrative staff inside schools**. The scale, speed, and efficacy of these recruitment efforts hold valuable learnings for other states.

Both these inputs played a significant role in Delhi's transformation journey and are thus described in this chapter.

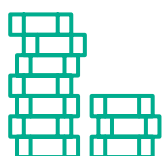


The basic principle driving the growth in standards of Delhi is the investment in education. We have viewed education as an investment and not as an expenditure.

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government¹



1.2 Delhi's education budget increased 2X between 2014-15 and 2019-20

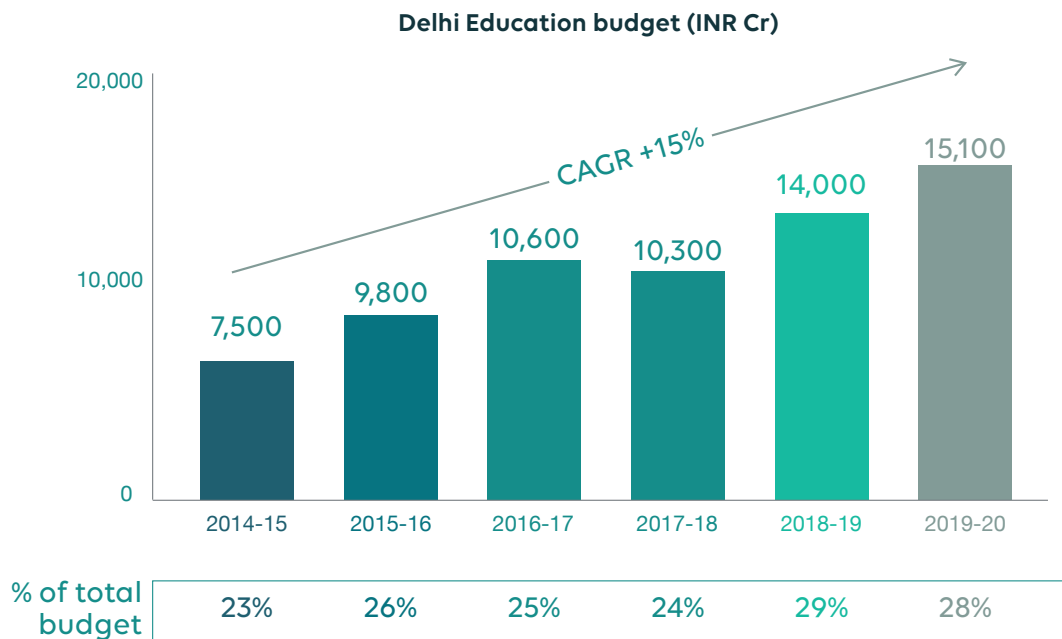


Delhi substantially increased the budget for education in absolute terms from INR 7,500 crore in 2014-15 to over INR 15,100 crore in 2019-20. While the budget nearly doubled in absolute terms, in terms of percentage of overall budget, it went from 23 to 28 percent over these years.

¹ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Annual Budget documents. Retrieved from <https://finance.delhigovt.nic.in/content/budget>

Exhibit 1.1

Delhi's education budget increased by INR 7,600 crores over the last six years



The increased share of budget was a clear sign of priority given to education in the state's agenda. Delhi's percentage allocation to education is highest compared to other benchmarked states (see Table 1.1) even though a few states such as Assam, Bihar, and Meghalaya have also spent 23 to 27 percent of their budgets on education in select years.² Delhi's spend per child on school education in 2018-19 (around INR 73,000)³ was also much higher as compared to that of Gujarat (around INR 34,000), but lesser than the comparable spend for Kerala (around INR 1.15 lakh).

Table 1.1

Delhi has the highest share of education in overall state budget⁴

Year	Delhi	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Gujarat
2014-15	23%	16%	17%	16%
2015-16	26%	17%	17%	15%
2016-17	25%	16%	18%	15%
2017-18	26%	17%	16%	14%
2018-19	29%	16%	16%	15%
2019-20	28%	15%	15%	15%

² Jain, D. (2017, March 23). Has Delhi seen a notable increase in spending on education under AAP? <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/Uo-Krratoe1TIL0ciJFmleP/Has-Delhi-seen-a-notable-increase-in-spending-on-education-u.html>

³ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Demand for Grants documents - DoE. Retrieved from <https://finance.delhigovt.nic.in/content/budget>, U-DISE data, BCG analysis

⁴ Governments of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat respectively. Retrieved from <https://finance.delhigovt.nic.in/content/budget>, <http://www.finance.kerala.gov.in/bdgtDcs.jsp>, http://www.finance.mp.gov.in/budget_publication.html, <https://financedepartment.gujarat.gov.in/Budget.html>.

Delhi government's overall state budget also increased by 46 percent (Rs. 41,000 crore to Rs. 60,000 crores) between 2015-16 and 2019-20. As a result, Delhi was able to increase the share of budget for education without significantly compromising on the budget of other departments.

1.3 Select sub-categories have seen disproportionate increase in budgets

The budget increase in education has not been split uniformly across categories. Some categories have seen disproportionate share of increase.

Infrastructure revamp

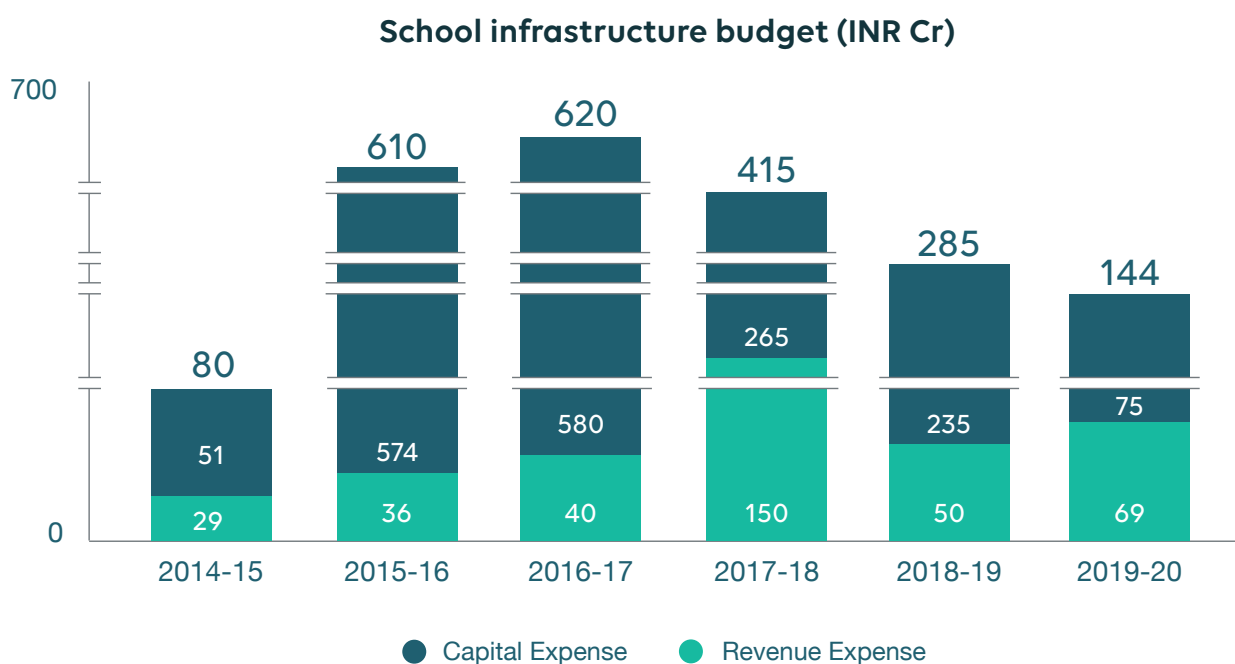


Allocation for capital expense for infrastructure increased from around INR 51 crore in 2014-15 to around INR 346 crore annualised between 2015-16 and 2019-20.⁵

Given that infrastructure creation happened during the early part of the reforms, we also see infrastructure budget going up significantly in year one (2015-16) and year two (2016-17) and then subsequently stabilising and coming down, as can be seen in Exhibit 1.2. The increased capital expense primarily included construction of around 20,000 additional rooms in new as well as existing school buildings, upgradation of furniture (for example, benches and desks) and sports facilities (for example, playgrounds and swimming pools), and later, installation of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras.

Exhibit 1.2

Capital expense was maximum in 2016-17 and has since decreased



⁵ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Demand for Grants documents - DoE. Retrieved from <https://finance.delhigovt.nic.in/content/budget>.

Similarly, increased revenue expenses were also allocated to upgrade other school facilities such as computer labs with budget of around INR 100 crore allocated in 2017-18 for this purpose.⁶ To ensure upkeep of this infrastructure, allocation was increased from around INR 29 crore in 2014-15 to around INR 69 crore in 2019-20 under the School Management Committee (SMC) fund to undertake minor maintenance related work at the school level.

Teacher salary and recruitment

Expenditure on teacher salaries for both primary and secondary education was also prioritised. Firstly, salaries for around 14,400 guest teachers were increased in 2017-18 with consequent allocation for wages⁷ increasing from around INR 230 crore in 2016-17 and reaching around INR 500 crore in 2017-18. Increase in teacher salary over the years has been shown in Exhibit 1.3.

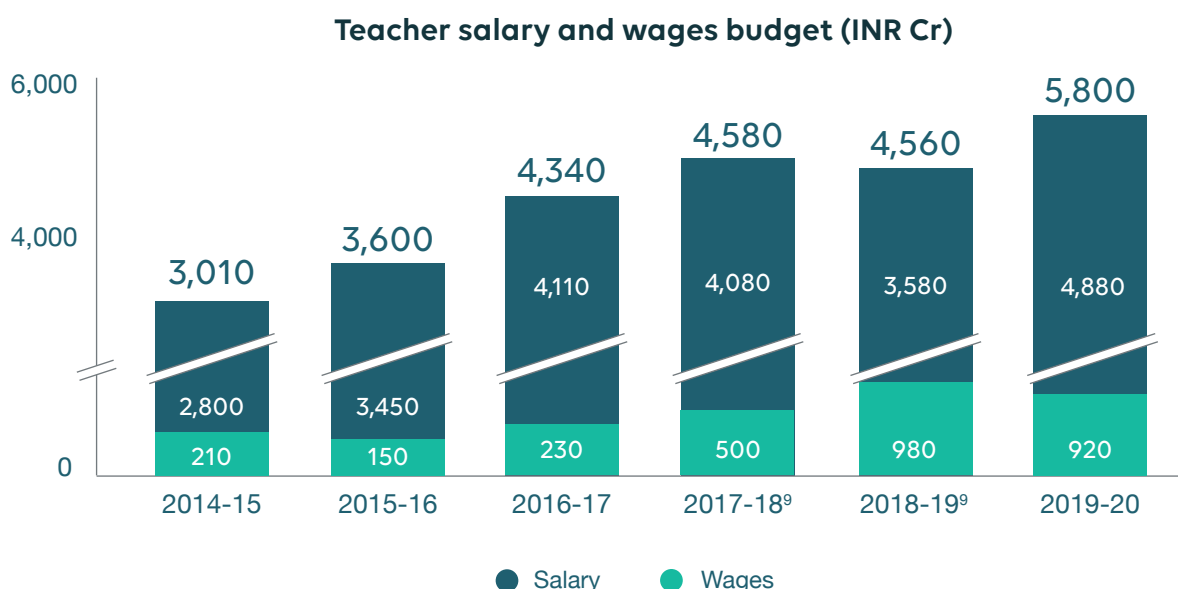


Secondly, in order to ensure adequate number of teachers in classrooms, 17,200 teachers were recruited between 2014-15 and 2019-20. This helped improve overall Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) from 31.2 to 25.8.⁸

Additionally, administrative staff (two to three per school) called ‘ministerial staff’ was also hired to free up teachers from non-academic work of school.

Exhibit 1.3

Total teacher salary budget increased by INR 2,790 crore in the last 6 years



⁶ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Demand for Grants documents - DoE. Retrieved from <https://finance.delhigovt.nic.in/content/budget>.

⁷ Wages include compensation for guest teachers, estate manager, and ministerial staff

⁸ Between 2015 and 2020, 13298 regular teachers were hired and net increase in total number of guest teachers was 3940. Source: Directorate of Education

⁹ Doubling of wages between 2017-18 and 2018-19 due to recruitment of ~7k guest teachers.

Teacher training and professional development



Another key budgetary priority was teacher training and professional development, where allocation increased from around INR 27 crore in 2014-15 to around INR 75 crore in 2018-19, as shown in Exhibit 1.4, an increase from around INR 5,400 per teacher in 2014-15 to around INR 13,100 per teacher in 2018-19.

This was considerably higher than around INR 800 per teacher for Madhya Pradesh and around INR 1,800 for Gujarat but comparable to around INR 12,000 for Kerala.¹⁰

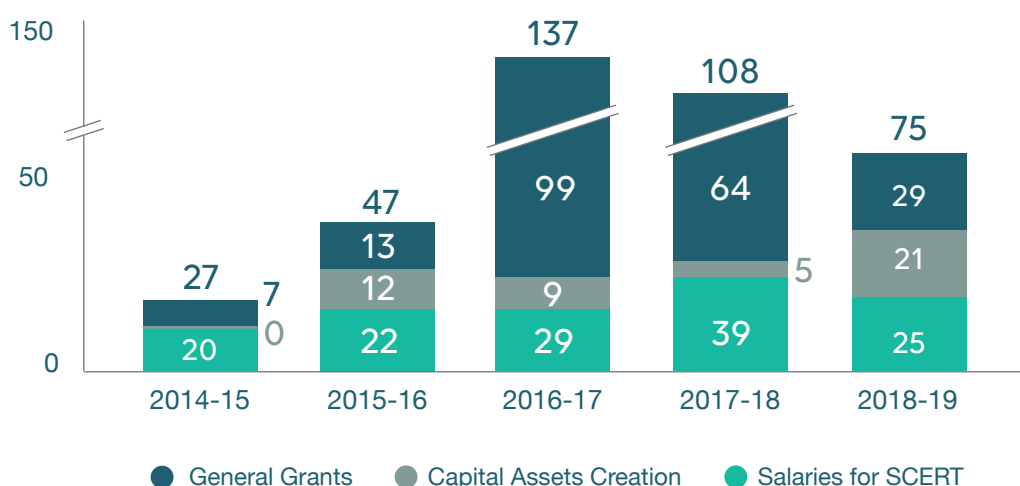
One part of this expense included allocation for capacity building of teachers and Heads of School (HoS) as well as the MT Programme. As part of these programmes, teachers and HoS were also sent for their professional development to renowned domestic and international institutions such as IIMs, Oxford University, Cambridge University, and to Finland, etc.

Another part of the allocation included overhauling the training content and infrastructure of State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and District Institutes for Education and Training (DIETs), that is used for training the teachers. A cumulative amount of around INR 38 crore was allocated between 2015-16 and 2018-19 for creation of capital assets for this purpose.¹¹

Exhibit 1.4

TPD budget increased by INR 48 crore between 2014-15 and 2018-19

Teacher training and professional development budget (INR Cr)



¹⁰ Government of Kerala, State planning board – Economic Review document. Retrieved from <http://spb.kerala.gov.in/>, Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Demand for Grants documents - DoE. Retrieved from <https://finance.delhigovt.nic.in/content/budget>, (n.d.). <https://www.indiastat.com/>, BCG analysis

¹¹ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Demand for Grants documents - DoE. Retrieved from <https://finance.delhigovt.nic.in/content/budget>.



Other areas where spend also increased

Apart from the spends mentioned above, there was also an increase in budget allocations in other areas.

Assistance to local bodies for primary education increased from around INR 350 crore in 2014-15 to around INR 1,550 crore in 2019-20, as municipal (MCD) schools¹² were given additional grants to support primary teacher salaries. Similarly, **assistance to the Government aided schools for salaries**¹³ of employees in secondary education was increased from around INR 430 crore to around INR 700 crore. **Office expenses** of secondary schools also saw an uptick from around INR 85 crore in 2014-15 to around INR 450 crore in 2019-20, as schools were given higher spend caps to ensure availability of general services such as high-speed internet for the school. Finally, welfare schemes have also seen substantial increase in allocation. Budget for **textbooks** increased from around INR 100 crore in 2014-15 to around INR 160 crore in 2019-20 driven by increased focus on ensuring quality libraries in schools.

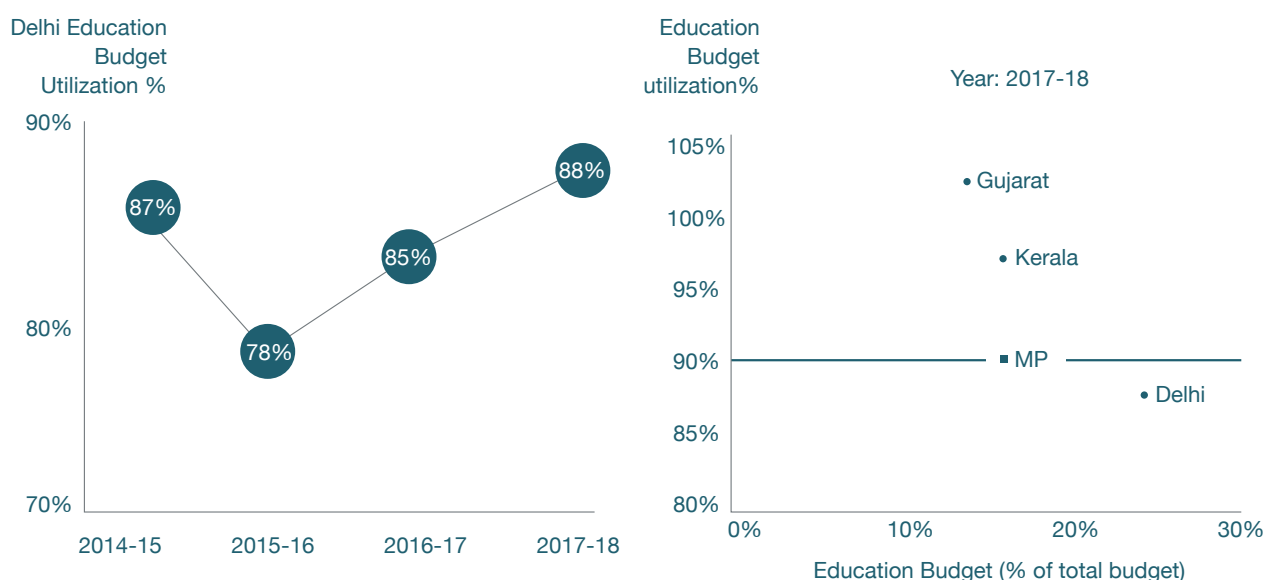
The above expenses have been highlighted because they flow seamlessly into the three pillars that Delhi administration had set out to improve education: providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, ensuring adequate number of capable and dynamic teachers, and lastly, improving the curriculum and teaching practices for students.

1.4 Several efforts made to enhance budget utilisations

In 2015-16, the budget utilisation in Delhi dipped significantly to 78 percent (9 percent decline from the previous year), partly because of procurement challenges that stymied effective utilisation of the large infrastructure allocation. As processes stabilised, the budget utilisation has over time consistently increased to reach 88 percent in 2017-18. It still lags the utilisation seen across a few other states, as seen in Exhibit 1.5. However, other states also have greater administrative power relative to Delhi¹⁴ and considerably less percentage budget allocation to education.

Exhibit 1.5

Delhi's current education budget utilization of 88% lags other states



¹² While in 2012, Municipal Corporation of Delhi was split into three new bodies, we use MCD as a blanket term across the report to denote municipal schools.

¹³ Increase in Grants-in-aid between 2014-15 and 2015-16 due to redirection of funds for MCD schools from the Urban Development Department budget to the Department of Education budget

¹⁴ Delhi, being a city-state, has a unique political and administrative structure as outlined in Article 239 of the Indian Constitution. Retrieved from <http://delhiassembly.nic.in/constitution.htm>.

Nonetheless, it is important to explore the reasons behind this upward trajectory in utilisation.

Devolution of power

The power to approve budgetary spends has been decentralised across various levels.



At the highest level, financial powers of Secretary have been increased to approve expenditure of up to INR 50 crore from the older figure of INR 5 crore. This has enabled the Secretary to sanction expenditure for construction of a new school building which typically costs about INR 40 crore.



Similarly, financial powers of Director have been increased from INR 2 crore to INR 10 crore that has allowed for sanctioning expenditure such as upgradation of a school, including addition of classrooms. Earlier, any expenditure proposal above INR 5 crore required Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) approval and above INR 25 crore required Cabinet approval.



Financial powers have also been devolved at the school level. HoS have been given increased powers to spend up to INR 50,000 from INR 5,000 earlier.



Finally, SMCs have been given more power (between INR five and seven lakh) to spend on maintenance of infrastructure and hiring of guest teachers.

Such structural provisions have ensured that proposals for expenditure are expedited and not delayed for want of bureaucratic approvals.

Streamlined procurement processes

Given the range of initiatives that Delhi administration wanted to launch and fast track, it required support from external parties and contractors. A range of measures were undertaken to ease tendering process and ensure wider participation from contractors. Qualification criteria to apply for tenders was relaxed judiciously.¹⁵ Non-Central Public Works Department (CPWD) contractors were allowed to apply for tenders. The criteria of prior experience of certain contract value and turnover of the firm were also relaxed. Finally, officers were given increased flexibility to convert large Scope of Work (SoW) contracts into bite-sized contracts, which enabled adequate number of proposals even from medium-sized vendors.

Increased digitisation across processes

Delhi also leveraged key digital practices to bring increased transparency and enable faster budgetary spends. For instance, HoS have been empowered to directly place orders for their schools through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) up to a limit of INR 50,000. The portal also automatically ensures these expenditure limits. Similarly, rollout of welfare schemes has been made faster through the use of Aadhaar-linked direct benefit transfers, such as in the case of student uniforms.

Review and monitoring mechanism with a shift towards outcomes

Delhi administration also introduced a rigorous review mechanism with middle management to discuss status of planned expenditure. Early on, a weekly review cadence was institutionalised with field officers and chaired

¹⁵ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Public Works Department (2016). GO No. Pr.CE(M)/PWD/W/E-Tend/3314. Retrieved from https://pwwdelhi.gov.in/writeread/Circular/Cir_201606151221388483.pdf.

by Directors. HoS were also invited to these meetings to share their field challenges and come up with solutions together which also helped prevent coordination challenges amongst them, if any.

Dependency on the Deputy Directors of Education (DDEs) was further reduced by empowering HoS with stronger role to review project progress at the school level. For example, they were provided with the power to approve completion certificates for projects on the basis of which contractors could raise invoices. This power bestowed to HoS ensured that work was completed on time and to their satisfaction at the ground level, only post which the review committee approved payments to contractors.

In all of this, the Finance Minister doubling up as the Education Minister certainly made things easier and faster. This not only eased the process of budget increment but also facilitated adequate usage of budgets. One can imagine a scenario where expenses like international immersion trips for HoS may not have found favour in the Finance Department without convergence across both Departments.

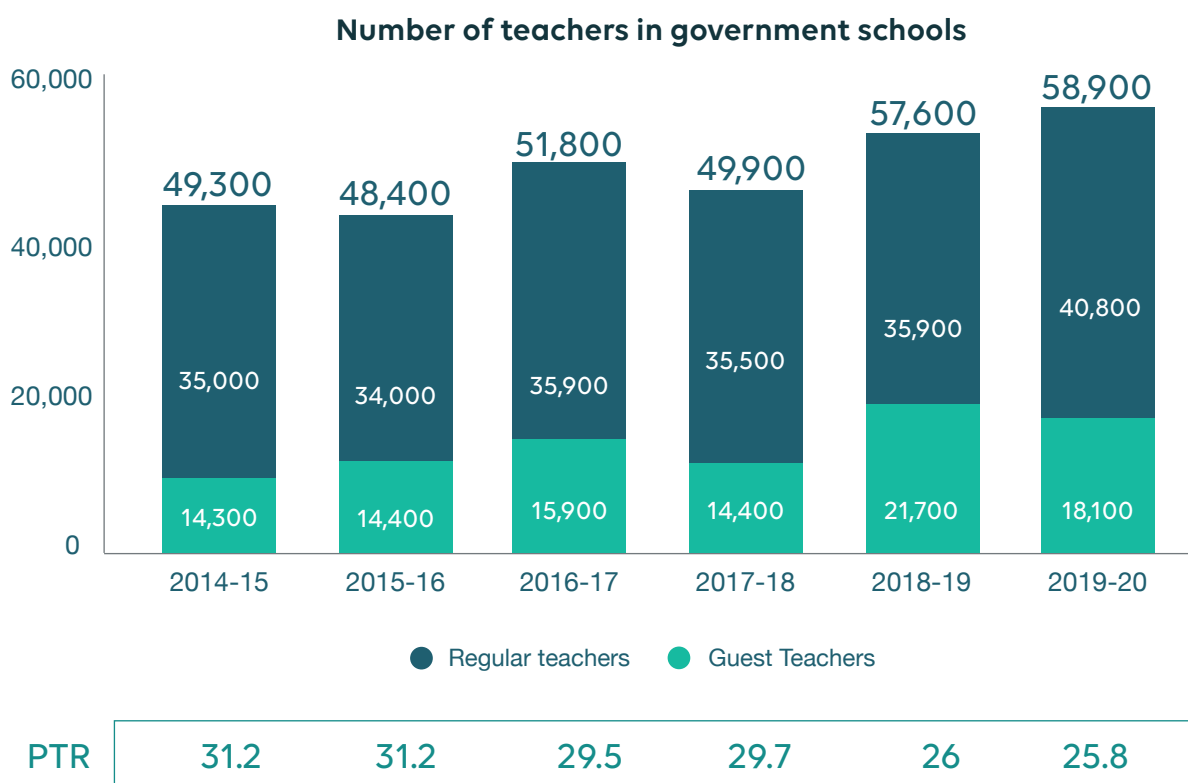
1.5 Delhi invested significantly in its workforce as well

Addressing teacher shortages

Delhi was very clear in recognising that education cannot be improved without ensuring an adequate supply of teachers. Over the past five years, the teacher shortage was systematically addressed through the recruitment of around 13,300 regular and around 3,900 guest teachers.¹⁶ The increase in number of teachers in Delhi has been shown in Exhibit 1.6.¹⁷

Exhibit 1.6

The total number of teachers has gone up by 9,600 in the last six years



¹⁶ Does not include Lab Assistants and Librarians

¹⁷ The total increase in teachers is not equal to total recruitment because of teachers retiring and some guest teachers being replaced by regular teachers

This was achieved through various methods:



Shortening the process of regular teacher recruitment: The hiring of regular teachers consisted of a recruitment process conducted by Delhi Subordinate Services Selection Board (DSSSB) and a subsequent appointment process that involved verification of candidate dossiers and issue of offers or memorandums to candidates in case they don't wish to join. This process was streamlined by creation a Direct Recruitment (DR) Cell for proactively closing this loop. This significantly reduced the time to hire teachers. What took upwards of six months earlier was completed within 10 days as document verification and candidate onboarding were conducted in "camp-mode". As a result, about 6,300 appointments were made in 2019-20 compared to around 1,800 in 2018-19.



Hiring of guest teachers: A comprehensive process was established to hire guest teachers through a centralised merit list and district-level hiring. Applications were invited for guest teachers, where candidates chose their preferred district for deployment. Merit list was created centrally to shortlist candidates. The criteria for merit list had equal weightage for Board exam results (classes 10 and 12), graduation, and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) Merit list, all of which was shared with respective districts to conduct the hiring at district level. This helped in hiring around 7,400 guest teachers in 2017-18.



Benefits for guest teachers: Compensation benefits of guest teachers have been brought more in line with regular teachers. Their compensation has been moved from a pay-per-day basis to annual pay, along with compensation for holidays. Maternity leaves are also provided for female guest teachers. These upgraded benefits helped retain more guest teachers in the system.



Opportunity for guest teachers to become regular teachers: A comprehensive process was worked out with DSSSB for this. Since many guest teachers had reached the threshold age that is typical for fresh teacher recruitment, age concessions were given to them basis their tenure as a guest teacher. For every 120 days per year served in tenure, one year of age relaxation was given to them. This allowed many experienced and qualified guest teachers to participate in the regular teacher recruitment process which was otherwise not accessible to them.



SMC was given powers to hire resource person: In 2018, SMC fund was introduced through which SMCs, alongside other benefits were also given powers to appoint few resource persons in their school for teaching a subject for up to 200 hours per year. Largely, 50% of the SMC fund is earmarked for infrastructure/ repair related work and 50% for supporting students. Given non-availability of teachers or support staff can have a detrimental impact on a school's functioning, SMCs in Delhi were enabled to hire guest faculty/ safai karamcharis on temporary basis. For example, interaction with an SMC member revealed how hiring of guest faculty had helped class 11-12 students in her school when the regular teachers were promoted and transferred to a different school.

“

I didn't have a science teacher in my school and the guest teacher left in the middle of the year; the revised power allowed me to get another teacher through the SMC fund which led to 33 percent improvement in results.

- Head of School, Delhi government school

”

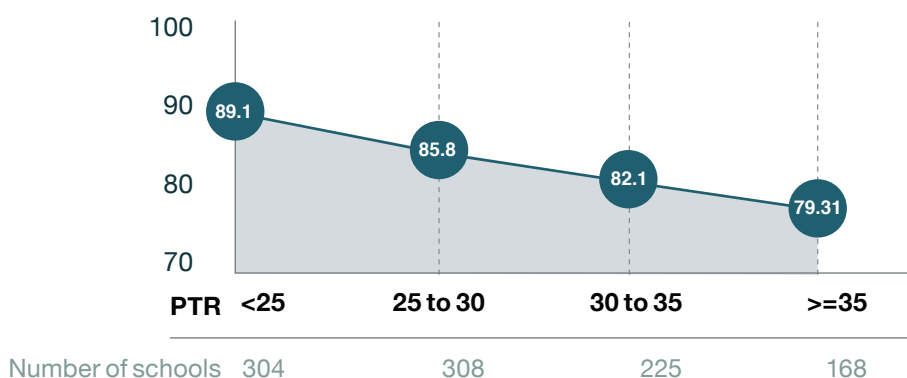


The importance of teacher recruitment is impossible to overstate. There is a very clear correlation between Delhi's Board results in both Class 10 and 12 and the provision of adequate teachers in the school.¹⁸

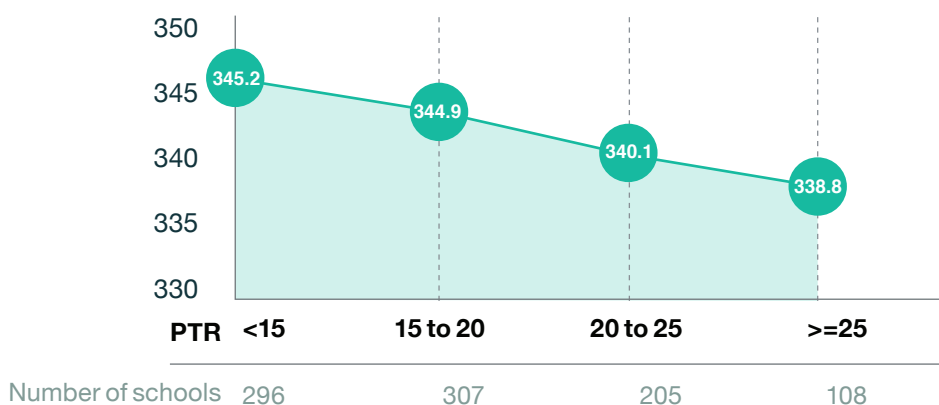
Exhibit 1.7

Board Results were significantly higher in schools with better PTR

Average pass percentage in Class 10



Average Quality Index (QI) score in Class 12



¹⁸ Such trends may need to be investigated further before inferring a causal linkage.

Addressing other workforce requirements



In addition to teachers, Delhi realised that the system needed day-to-day resources for a variety of tasks. Regular government recruitment would have been too time consuming and expensive. Therefore, a strategic decision was made to absorb contractual talent and outsource the workforce wherever and whenever possible.

- **DIET/SCERT:** Firstly, qualifications and pay scales for staff was increased to match the University Grants Commission (UGC) standards. All staff were also brought under a common Teacher-Educator cadre allowing for seamless movement and integration of staff from other departments and even universities. Finally, subject-specific contractual staff was also hired through a process that involved shortlisting based on educational qualification and experience and a final interview. Their contract included clear terms against any future claims for regularisation. While the above reforms have been approved and notified, implementation of some is yet to be completed.
- **Sanitisation:** Ensuring cleanliness of a school requires a combination of modern-day equipment and supporting workforce. To avoid the need to purchase any such equipment, Delhi decided to outsource the entire sanitisation work to an agency. Tenders were released dividing Delhi into four zones, with one contractor for each of the zones, each working on the lowest cost proposed by one of the vendors of the four zones. The agency essentially charged a service fee to provide the necessary cleanliness equipment as well as manage the recruitment of contractual staff for cleaning, i.e. 'safai karamcharis'. The number of staff ranged from one to six depending on the enrolment and area of the school premises. The salaries for contractual staff were paid by the contractor and was reimbursed by the government to the contractor. The staff was also provided with uniforms to ensure they have a sense of pride towards their job.



Toilets were never clean in our school. Over my 15 years as a female teacher, I used to hold myself the entire day and could only go to the washroom after I reached back home. Today we have clean toilets - No salary or compensation benefit can ever match this convenience.

- Head of School, Delhi government school



Security: Similar to sanitisation, recruitment for security staff was also outsourced to agencies. The payroll of security staff was again managed by the contractor with benefits such as uniforms also provided to them to ensure that school members, students, and parents could clearly identify the security staff for safety purposes. The number of security staff ranged from 1-4 according to the school's enrolment and area of premises.

“**Maine kitni baar complaint ki thi ke school ke aas paas kitne anjaan log ghoomte rehte hai. Jab bhi main beti ko lene mein late ho jaati thi toh badi ghabrahat hoti thi. Female security guard aane ke baad se bohat shaanti hai ki bacche ko sirf unke parents ke saath he jaane diya jaata hai.**”

- Parent, Delhi government school

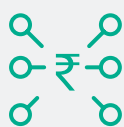
["I had complained multiple times that many unknown people roam around the school. I felt scared whenever I got late in picking up my daughter. I feel a sense of security after a female guard has been appointed in the school."]

Estate Managers¹⁹: Every school was given the freedom to hire an Estate Manager who was exclusively in charge of supervising all infrastructure and maintenance related work. The provision of Estate Managers has been a significant contributing factor towards the visible infrastructural face-lift in several Department of Education (DoE) schools and also freed up the Principal's time to focus on academics.

As mentioned during this chapter, staffing additions have truly acted as a key support pillar to help move towards the vision that Delhi had for its schools and was explicitly referenced as a key factor behind improving learning outcomes by some teachers during our Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The contractual model particularly, has enabled faster ramp-up as full-time positions get addressed over time.

1.6 Implications for other states

Q. Should other states also consider increasing financial investment into similar areas as Delhi?



The key lesson from Delhi is that increasing budgetary allocations to infrastructure, teacher recruitment, and teacher training, and devolving financial powers has had an impact on both outcomes as well as public perception.

¹⁹ Estate managers were retired personnel from the services of Central/Delhi/State Government, Local Bodies, Defense service or equivalent services such as LIC, GIC, BHEL, Public Sector Banks etc. Preference of hiring was assigned to ex-servicemen from the Indian Armed Forces.

Unlike some other states, Delhi did not prioritise investments into areas such as smart classes or student entitlements.

However, the budgetary constraints and objectives of each state should determine their individual investment priorities. For example, for states with limited funding available, investing in teacher training will be more feasible than more costly investments in infrastructure or teacher recruitment. Many states in India limit teacher training to SSA funds rather than invest state funds significantly which is a trend that should change. Infrastructure on the other hand will require a larger infusion of money but is unlikely to be strongly correlated to learning outcome improvements. Delhi's experience however indicates that it plays an essential role in building the momentum and motivation of the system, generates positivity, and is also publicly appreciated.



That said, the final lesson from Delhi is that there is no substitute to providing adequate teachers if the immediate objective is to increase learning outcomes. Delhi's Board result improvement can be partially credited to addressing teacher vacancies.

The link between adequate PTR and learning outcomes also holds true in most other states. This should be a priority for all states if adequate funding is available.

Q. Is hiring contractual staff a sustainable model to address vacancies?

As contractual staff grows disproportionately inside the system, it could possibly lead to unionisation claims for regularisation and equal benefits. While each state is best placed to decide on such matters as per specific state context, this has also led to a reluctance to increase 'contractualisation' in the system. However, while Delhi's efforts to recruit through outsourcing and on contract was also driven partly by the unique circumstances of Delhi's administrative power distribution between the government and the Lieutenant Governor, there are a few key lessons that states may want to reflect on:

- Entire roles (security and sanitation) were outsourced where the State dealt directly with an agency rather than individual employees.
- These outsourced agencies were tied to outcomes. For example, in case the work of safai karamcharis or security guards was deemed unfit, the agency was instructed to replace these staff members. In extreme cases, on escalation, even monetary penalties were levied against these agencies.
- Even for the 'Estate Manager' role, mostly retired professionals were hired who were not eligible for regular recruitment. Moreover, these staff were hired by the school and not by the state.
- Contractual staff for SCERT/DIET had clear terms built into their agreement, preventing any future claims.
- Lastly, guest teachers were given a high salary which attracted qualified staff, provided increased job satisfaction and reduced the probability of resistance or strikes.

Q. What are implications that outsourcing of work creates in terms of increased need for monitoring and performance review?

With increased outsourcing of work, there emerges a greater need to understand whether delivery of work has happened as per satisfaction. For this, grassroot stakeholders need to play a more active role in performance review and monitoring. In Delhi, as contractual staff was hired for security and sanitisation, they reported to EMs who then tracked their work and attendance. A monthly report on this was shared with the HoS for their final sign-off for contractual staff payments. Hence, an active role played by the HoS became crucial and the monitoring system was maintained in a decentralised manner.

2. Chunauti: A New Academic Plan

2.1 Need

In June 2016, the Director of Education for Delhi issued a circular²⁰ with the following subject – ‘Chunauti 2018: New academic plan to support class 9’. This circular declared the need for a ‘new academic plan’ that could help improve the steadily deteriorating class 9 results, which had declined to a state of 49.2 percent students failing in 2015-16. The reasons cited in the circular were:

- Huge variation in basic skills like reading/writing in a single classroom
- No detention policy
- Years of accumulated learning deficit, especially in classes 6 to 8
- Pressure on teachers to complete the ‘syllabus’, culminating in an inability to bring weaker students to the desired level

In addition to the above-mentioned challenges, the learning gaps in classes 6 to 8 and consequent poor results in classes 9 and 10 were prioritised because these were widespread challenges that every stakeholder in the system (from teachers to HoS to middle-management) could relate to. Highlighting these challenges provided the unifying ‘burning platform’ to orient the system towards mission-mode implementation.



Through Chunauti 2018, the Government aims to build a strong foundation amongst all students in reading, writing, arithmetic, bridging the gap between current learning levels and the academic demands of their class.

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government



2.2 Objective

Against this background, a slew of academic changes²¹ was introduced under the umbrella term – ‘Chunauti 2018’, taking on the challenge to address these gaps between 2016 and 2018. The objectives of these interventions were to improve class 9 results over time, reduce dropouts, and shift the teaching-learning methodology from ‘syllabus completion’ towards ‘developing competencies and learning outcomes’. In the initial years after 2016, interventions were concentrated in classes 6 to 9. However, over time the scope was expanded to include classes 3 to 5 as well, due to the realisation that, “to solve learning challenges in higher classes, the gaps needed to be fixed much earlier”.

²⁰ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, DoE (2016). GO No. PS/DE/2016/230 Retrieved from http://edudel.nic.in/up-load_2015_16/230_dt_29062016.pdf

²¹ The Hindu. (2016, July 1). AAP govt. unveils major education reform policy. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/AAP-govt.-unveils-major-education-reform-policy/article14464410.ece>

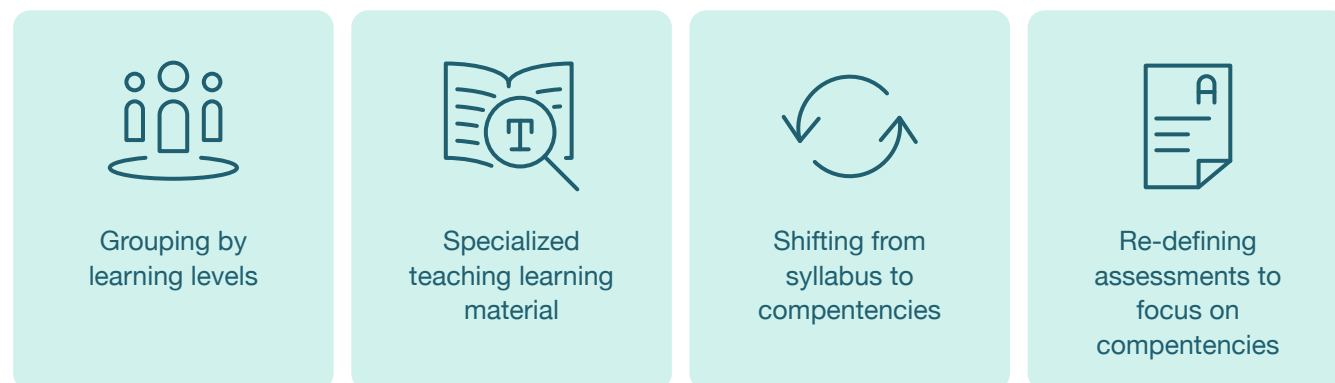
2.2 Design

Chunauti has four major design elements, as shown in Exhibit 2.1.

Exhibit 2.1

Chunauti's four major design elements

Chunauti 2018: New academic plan to support class 9



There are students who are intelligent but there are also who are weak in writing, reading, and others. Under 'Chunauti 2018', we will map these students and divide them into different groups. Thereafter, government will work on improving their skills.

Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government



Grouping by learning levels

There is wide variation in learning levels in a single classroom.²² For example, a baseline assessment of all students of class 6 conducted in Delhi by the DoE in 2016 suggested that while 32 percent students could read/ write only characters and words, 43 percent students could read/ write paragraphs/ stories and 25 percent students could read advanced stories. To address these variations, students in classes 6 to 9 were re-grouped as per learning levels within each class. This was inspired by Pratham's *teaching at the right level* approach.



Delhi divided students in each class between 6 and 9 into three separate sections based on learning levels: Pratibha, Nishtha, and Neo-Nishtha/Vishwas.

During Year 1, this grouping was largely based (in Classes 7-9 specifically) on student performance in the Summative Assessment (SA) of the previous year, which was used as a proxy for foundational learning skills. From next academic year, it was on the basis of reading and math levels only. The basis for grouping across different classes is detailed below (see Exhibit 2.2)

²² Delhi government introduces 'Chunauti 2018' education reform plan. (2016, June 30). India Today. <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-to-day/news/story/education-reform-plan-chunauti-2018-17312-2016-06-30>

Exhibit 2.2
Grouping across classes (2016-17)

Competency	Neo-Nishtha		Nishtha		Pratibha
Class 6	-		<i>Based on FLN assesment</i>		<i>Based on FLN assesment</i>
Class 7	-	>	<i>Students scoring <33% in SA</i>	>	<i>Students scoring >33% in SA</i>
Class 8	-		<i>Students scoring <33% in SA</i>		<i>Students scoring >33% in SA</i>
Class 9	Students who failed class 9 twice or more		<i><33% marks in SA OR failed class 9 once</i>		<i>Students scoring >33% in SA</i>

Competency-wise grouping across classes (2017-18 onwards)

Class-Subject/ Groups	Neo-Nishtha		Nishtha		Pratibha
3, 4, 5 (Hindi)	Words and below		<i>Read Paragraph</i>		<i>Read Story</i>
3, 4, 5 (Math)	Number recognition and below	>	<i>Subtraction</i>	>	<i>Can solve simple division</i>
6, 7, 8, 9 (Hindi)	Words or below		<i>Paragraph + Story</i>		<i>Read grade appropriate text</i>
6, 7, 8, 9 (Math)	Number recognition and below		<i>Subtraction</i>		<i>Can solve 3 digit by 1 digit division</i>

The grouping was intentionally kept fluid to account for changing learning levels of students. Over time, Delhi kept making slight changes to the grouping mechanism based on feedback from the field. For example, introduction of the Neo-Nishtha group (students who cannot recognise numbers or read words) in classes 6 to 8 and change in grouping criteria from SA-based to competency-based assessments. To account for improvement in learning levels in basic skills, Neo-Nishtha students were later merged with the Nishtha group.



The design of Chunauti revolved around instilling a key mindset shift in teachers: ‘Every child can learn’. The focus on Neo-Nishtha or Nishtha students reinforced this message to teachers and made them pay attention to the very last child, not just in classes 6 to 8, but over time across the entire schooling ecosystem.

Teachers were encouraged to spend more time and effort helping Nishtha and Neo-Nishtha students learn, using pedagogical techniques which were more suited to learning levels of these students (for example, Barakhadi charts instead of advanced stories). Pratibha students were encouraged to complete practice material on their own, enabling self-learning with lower focus from teachers.

Specialised teaching-learning material

‘At-class level’ textbooks often only benefit the ‘top-of-the-class’ as only they can keep up with the syllabus. To address this challenge, Delhi introduced multiple specialised Teaching Learning Material (TLM) which were more accessible than textbooks for students, as well as teachers. This material was often mapped to targeted learning levels and competencies.

Pragati was one such set of material. While the Pragati books mirrored the NCERT curriculum, they differed from textbooks in four key aspects, as shown in Exhibit 2.3.

Exhibit 2.3

The four key differences between Pragati and CBSE textbooks

A Town Mouse and a Country Mouse

A Town Mouse and a Country Mouse were friends. The Country Mouse one day invited his friend to come and see him at his home in the fields. The Town Mouse came and they sat down to a dinner of ladoos and jalebis, honey and almonds the latter of which had a nice flavour.

The flavour was not much to the taste of the guest and he said, “My poor dear friend, you live here no better than the ants. Now, you should just see how I live! My kitchen has a lot to eat. You must come and stay with me and I promise you will feel very good.”

So when he returned to town he took the Country Mouse with him and showed him into a kitchen containing flour and pizzas and burger.

The Country Mouse had never seen anything like it and sat down to enjoy the luxuries his friend provided. But before they had well begun, the door of the kitchen opened and someone came in. The two Mice ran off and hid themselves in a narrow and small hole. When all was quiet, they came out again. But someone else came in, and off they ran again. This was too much for the visitor. “Good bye,” said he, “I’m off. You live in the lap of luxury, I can see, but you are surrounded by dangers whereas at home I can enjoy my simple dinner of ladoos and jalebis in peace.”

The language had been simplified and made easy-to-understand, even for behind class-level students. Pragati’s easy-to-understand language and self-explanatory exercises ensured that students in the Pratibha group could use the material themselves, without the teachers’ assistance. It also helped Nishtha and Neo-Nishtha connect better with the content.

आओ गलती ढूँढ़ें

बिल्लू को एक प्रश्न दिया गया जिसमें उसे $\frac{1}{5}$ तथा $\frac{2}{5}$ को जोड़ना था।

नीचे दिए गए हल में बिल्लू से कुछ गलती हुई हैं। की गई गलती को पहचानिए तथा उस पर गोला कीजिए। दिए गए बॉक्स में हल को ठीक करके लिखिए।

$$\frac{1}{5} + \frac{2}{5} = \frac{1+2}{5+5} = \frac{3}{10}$$

Learning Outcomes (अधिगम सम्प्राप्ति)

1. भिन्न की समझ बनाना।
2. भिन्नों के जोड़ तथा घटा की समझ विकसित करना तथा वास्तविक जीवन में भिन्नों का प्रयोग करना।
3. भिन्नों के गुणा तथा भाग की समझ विकसित करना।

The questions linked to any chapter were designed to test a variety of competencies, instead of just testing students' ability to recall the contents of a chapter. This also resulted in a single chapter helping students learn multiple concepts over many more lessons rather than speeding through syllabus based on 'rote-learning'.



अब आप व आपके साथी एक-एक पर्ची उठाएँ एवं आशुभाषण (extempore) (किसी एक विषय पर 1 मिनट बोलना) दीजिए।

Pragati books followed a 'Doing-and-Learning' approach, instead of the 'Learning-before-Doing' approach of textbooks. This allowed students to build conceptual knowledge from the very beginning of any particular chapter.

Pragati material had been divided into phases, based on difficulty level. For example, 'Phase-one' exercises provided additional practice and 'recap' to Nishtha/Neo-Nishtha students on foundational competencies and topics, while students in Pratibha could directly start with 'Phase-two' exercises.

Delhi also distributed additional material beyond the Pragati books. For example, in class 9, instead of Pragati, students and teachers were given 'Learning Enhancement Programme' (LEP) material and question banks of previous years' examination questions, as issued by the Examination Branch. Students and teachers in classes 6 to 9 were also given specialised TLM for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) (for example, language books with progressions from letters to sentences to stories, number charts etc.).

The basic idea was to not restrict teachers and students with one type of material. Rather, teachers were given the freedom to choose from a plethora of material, with the core focus shifting from 'completing the syllabus and textbooks' to 'achieving learning outcomes and competencies for every child'.

Shifting from syllabus to competencies



In many schools across India, it has been observed that teachers move on to the 'next chapter' even if the key learnings of the previous chapter have not been absorbed by all students. Often times, the teaching of a 'chapter' is divorced from an appreciation of the 'learning outcome' that is linked to it. The most common manifestation of this method of teaching-learning are multiple complaints of questions being 'out of syllabus'.

The New Academic Plan was premised on the understanding that this problem arises because of the pressure on teachers to 'complete the syllabus'. Therefore, it was apparent that this tyranny of syllabus completion needed to be addressed to ensure that teachers focus on ensuring that children absorbed the key competencies or outcomes first. Firstly, Delhi reduced the curriculum for classes 1 to 8 by 25 percent. To determine how to reduce the curriculum, the administration ran a mass-scale consultation process inviting comments from all teachers on how and where they believed curriculum could be reduced. Feedback from the field indicated that curriculum could be reduced by up to 50 percent. However, to ensure stability, in the first tranche Delhi reduced the curriculum by just 25 percent, with most chapters being shortened/simplified based on feedback. This reduction in curriculum manifested as each core-subject shifting from five to six periods to four to five periods per week.

Secondly, beyond universal reduction of the syllabus, students in Nishtha and Neo-Nishtha groups were given even shorter curricular targets (for example, marking only 60 or 20 percent of the syllabus for assessments) so that they could gain the required foundational competencies. In order to enable this, the Department even issued a circular withdrawing the weekly syllabus completion schedule that had been mandated before.

Re-designing assessments to focus on competencies

In classes 6 to 8, Delhi attempted to improve the quality of assessment questions by incorporating questions that tested for conceptual understanding (competency-based) rather than ones which tested for rote learning. This has been shown in Exhibit 2.4. Even though the shift has been initiated, it needs to be further strengthened and extended to all classes in coming years.

Delhi also frequently conducted specialised competency-based assessments, using tools tailored to measure FLN competencies. These tools – for example, reading cards with a progression of letters, sentences, paragraphs, and stories are adapted from the tools used during the well-known Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) survey.

Lastly, the assessments for Nishtha and Neo-Nishtha students were also modified and made far simpler, since they were expected to focus on foundational competencies and had to cover only a limited part of the syllabus.

Exhibit 2.4
Improvement in learning levels across classes 6 to 8 (2016-17)

Competency	Old Question	Modified Question
Addition (Math)	$2 + 3 = ?$	$____ + ____ = 5$
Writing (English)	Identify conjunctions: <i>“Manoj and Gaurav are brothers”</i>	Fill appropriate conjunctions: <i>“Manoj $____$ Gaurav are brothers.”</i>

2.4 Implementation

While the implementation plan consisted of a strong initial rollout through cluster-level teacher trainings, the key differentiating factor in Delhi’s context was the in-school follow-up process, after the initial launch. The overall implementation plan consisted of the following elements –

Training design and rollout

Teacher trainings were conducted at the **cluster-level** and were performed in a **‘workshop-format’**. This represented a significant shift from earlier trainings which were conducted as ‘seminars’ by external experts. Earlier, someone unknown to teachers used to deliver a one-sided lesson through pre-packaged disjointed content. But now teachers saw their own peers acting as workshop facilitators making the trainings more relatable.

Three-tier follow-up process inside schools

- In-school processes via the Teacher Development Coordinators (TDCs) and ART:** Academic Resource Teams (ARTs) were formed in each school, typically consisting of one teacher per subject. Coordinated by the TDC, these teachers formed an in-school body which adapted interventions to their school’s context, including individualised attention to each teacher in the school.
- Mentor Teachers:** This cadre ensured regular in-school follow-ups after teacher trainings. These MTs were the on-ground ‘change agents’ and ‘advocates’ who influenced their peer teachers to shift to new pedagogy. They also played a critical role in clarifying Departmental instructions and circulars and building a common language of the program on the ground.
- Heads of Schools:** HoS served as the last line of escalation if neither ART/TDC nor MT were able to sufficiently guide a teacher.

To further reinforce the importance of the initiative, several HoS deputed the best teachers to Neo-Nishtha sections and the state also awarded high performing teachers to motivate others in the system.

Community Involvement

During the launch of academic interventions, Delhi also conducted Mega Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) and activated SMCs, who ensured that both teachers and students were 'alert' to an intervention and were empowered to adopt it

Assessments

Regular baseline/end-line assessments were key to both, measuring progress and ensuring focus on the intervention. Delhi strategically used additional measures such as announcing verification of assessment data via DIET students to ensure robustness of the assessment data over time. As mentioned earlier, typical FAs/SAs were also supplemented with monthly assessments that tested for specific FLN competencies.

Building departmental capacity via the core academic unit

Several institutional structures were created to execute the new academic plan. For example, a core academic unit was setup within the Examination Branch to work more actively on assessments. Similarly, working teams were established within the SCERT and Directorate to work on other pieces such as developing Pragati material.

2.5 Impact

The impact of the interventions under the new academic plan launched in 2016-17 has been manifold.

Firstly, there has been a significant improvement in learning levels, ranging from 11 percent for classes 6 to 19 percent for class 8 in the launch year, as illustrated in Exhibit 2.5.

Exhibit 2.5

Improvement in learning levels across classes 6 to 8
(2016-17)

11 p.p.	Class 6
16 p.p.	Class 7
19 p.p.	Class 8

Chunauti has been very effective as around 20 to 30 percent students of my school have been able to improve their fundamental skills significantly.

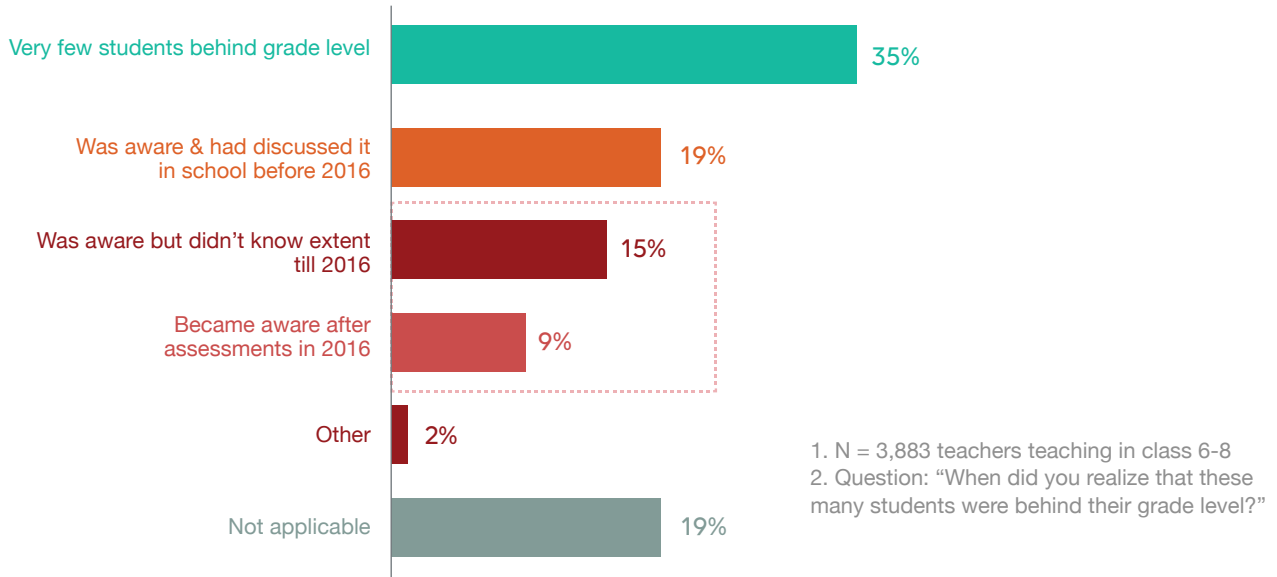
- Teacher, Delhi government school

Secondly, there has been a gradual change in teachers' and students' mindsets and a deeper appreciation of the depth of the learning crisis in schools. Assessments to identify competency levels of children and grouping of students in Chunauti made many teachers aware of the underlying learning-level gaps for the first time (Exhibit 2.6). As many as 24 percent of all teachers credited the intervention with reinforcing this realisation in them.

Exhibit 2.6

Understanding of teachers of FLN levels before launch of Chunauti

24% teachers **had** lack of clarity on 'behind grade students' before the 2016 FLN assessments



"Teachers are more mindful of every individual child's progress and are able to teach accordingly. This was not the case earlier where teachers taught every child in a similar manner."

- Parent, Delhi government school

"Teachers now give individual attention to students with lower learning levels and this has improved their reading and writing skills tremendously."

- Student, Delhi government school

Thirdly, the shift in focus to the belief that "every child can learn" resulted in a corresponding change in class dynamics. There has been a pedagogical change with the classroom model shifting from 'one-way teaching for a few students' to 'two-way teaching learning'. Students now feel more confident in attending school and participating in classes. It is natural that a student with improved foundational learning will develop a 'can do' attitude over time.

"The new textbooks [Pragati] have more activities which make learning fun. In science we did experiments to understand concepts."

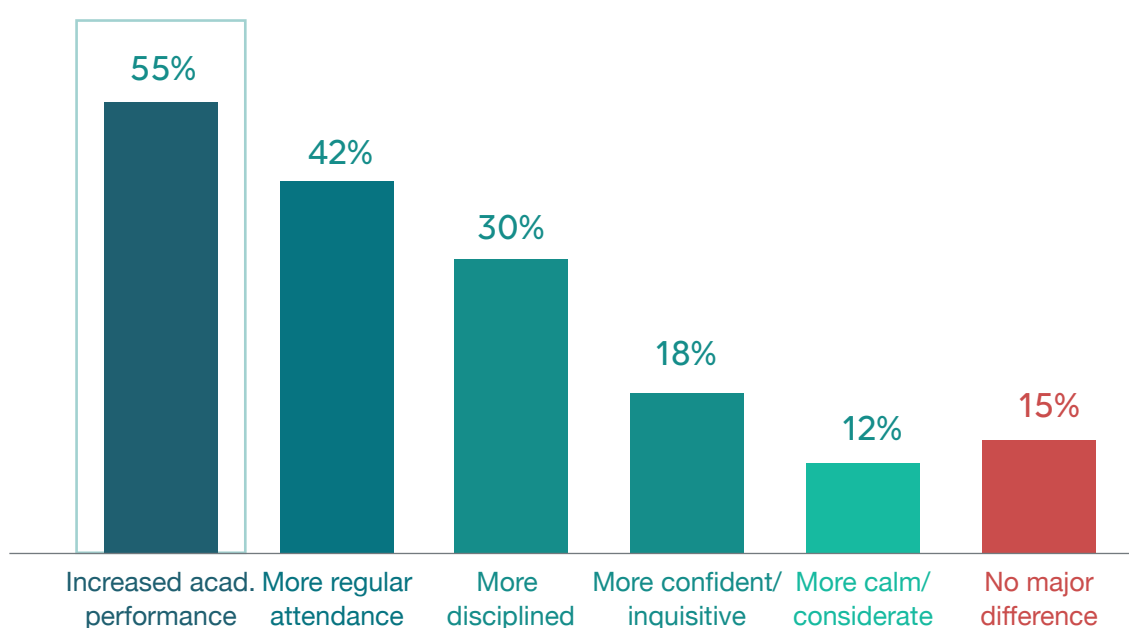
- Student, Delhi government school

"Earlier only students who knew the topics well would answer the questions and rest of the class would not take interest. Now we interact freely with teachers."

- Student, Delhi government school

Exhibit 2.7

55% parents cited 'increased academic performance' over the last five years



1. N = 551 parents - Who saw positive change

2. Question: "What change have you witnessed in your child over the past 5 years?"

Lastly, parents²³ have also appreciated the increased academic fervour and focus in schools, as shown in Exhibit 2.7. Many now believe that their children are in 'safe, caring, and energetic hands' in government schools.

²³ The survey covered parents of students across classes, thus, the overall responses include impact driven by both FLN learning interventions and Boards results in higher classes.



There is much greater focus on academics in government schools now.

- Parent, Delhi government school



2.6 Challenges

There are several challenges given the scope, scale, and recency of reforms under Chunauti. Based on feedback from the senior leadership, department officials, and teachers, including a survey of more than 7,000 teachers, the biggest challenges faced by the 'Delhi model' have been listed below.

Complexity of grouping

In the first year of the intervention, Delhi used SAs for grouping students instead of competency-based assessments, which are directly linked to the FLN learning levels of students. This led to confusion in the field, as SAs are not aligned with foundational learning competencies. We observed that many teachers were unable to clearly articulate the basis of grouping students in our conversations with them.



Grouping of students created a feeling of disconnect among peers and eventually led to feeling of 'inferiority' among Nishtha students.

- Teacher, Delhi government school



FLN – a new focus:

Focus on FLN competencies is a relatively recent phenomenon. While there has been commendable progress, it is yet to garner universal acceptance from teachers across the state. DIET/SCERT officials all cite changing teacher mindsets as their top challenge.

Complaints of discrimination in some schools

The Delhi-model's choice to use year-round all-day grouping has led to significant resistance from both teachers and parents, as students in lower learning groups may feel discriminated against and demotivated. 55 percent teachers out of ~3,800 upper primary teachers in our survey asserted that students in Nishtha and Neo-Nishtha feel discriminated against, indicating that this is an issue which needs to be addressed over time.

This was reinforced during our teacher FGDs, where several teachers narrated instances of discrimination, while acknowledging that the implementation of teaching at the right level is a well-intentioned pedagogical tool. We heard similar voices in our FGDs with students.

Assessments continue to have outsized focus on syllabus-based questions

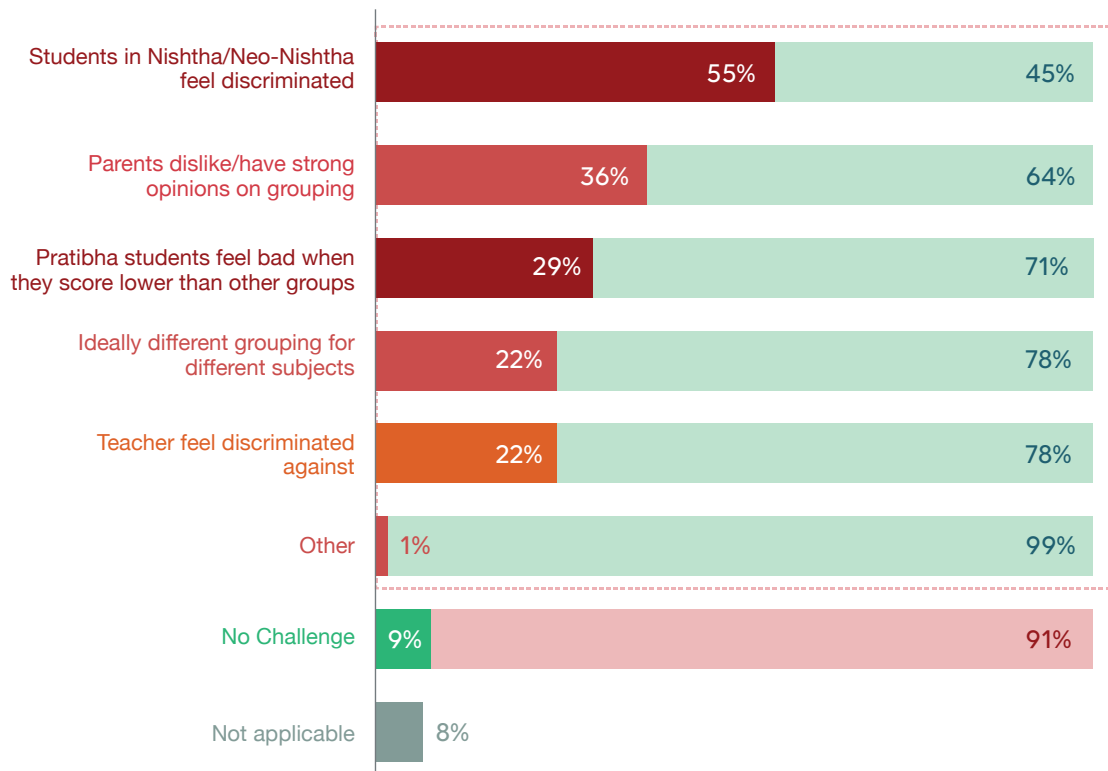
DIET and SCERT officials have all cited additional assessments reforms as high priority between 2015 and 2020. Despite some positive changes made by the Examination Branch, a significant share of questions in the SA exams continue to test for rote-learning rather than conceptual understanding, which limits the impact of the new learning interventions.

Multiplicity of instructions and TLM leading to in-school confusion

Our conversations with teachers revealed that multiple learning instructions and TLM led to significant in-school confusion. This is further corroborated by our teacher survey which suggests variance in understanding of material usage by teachers (44 percent teachers report that both Pragati material and textbook are used equally by all groups while others have a different opinion). Going forward, streamlining operations will help improve adoption of multiple TLM in schools.

Exhibit 2.8

Challenges of grouping students by learning levels as cited by teachers



1. N = 3,883 teachers teaching in class 6-8

2. Question: "What do you think are the challenges of grouping students by learning level?"

Yet to achieve stated objective

The Chunauti programme has been unable to make a dent in the poor performing class 9 pass percentage (52 percent in 2016-17 to 58 percent in 2018-19), which was the stated aim of the intervention. Marginal improvement suggests that even though considerable number of students have developed basic FLN competencies, Chunauti has not equipped them to address grade-level learning deficiencies. While design

changes and additional reforms can help address some of these challenges (for example, assessments) many of these challenges require more time for mindsets to shift (for example, scepticism from some teachers). This is also why it is crucial to persist with education reforms for a long time-span.

2.7 Implications for other states

The Delhi-model made several decisions when rolling out the Chunauti programme. Many of these design decisions are not set in stone and need to be customised as per state context. When designing their own programmes, states can consider the following questions.

Q. For how long should students be grouped by learning level?

In Delhi, students were grouped for the entire academic year and for the entire school-day, as students in every class were split into sections based on learning levels. This was done to make operations as simple as possible. When students are split by section, then teaching-learning material, teacher allocations, and even assessments can be customised by learning-level, with negligible operational difficulties. Full-time grouping also provides the most designated time for students at lower learning levels to receive specialised attention.

However, while the learning impact is undeniable, full-time grouping by learning levels creates some challenges. Instances of discrimination and demotivation have been reported, where children and parents have resisted being classified into 'lower-level groups'. While this challenge can be partially addressed by improving communication of the rationale for grouping/sensitising parents, an alternate design option can also be considered:



Students can be grouped by learning levels for just one to two hours every day instead of grouping them into different sections for the entire school day.

This adds operational complexity, but also reduces discrimination and potential pushback from teachers, parents, and students.

States can consider both alternatives based on field and state context. For example, the size of the school and availability of teachers will determine the ability to divide students into groups and teach in a differentiated manner.

Q. How should students be classified into different groups?²⁴

In the first year, Delhi based most of its grouping on student performance in SA for quicker allocation to groups. However, SAs are based on the at-class curriculum, whereas the student grouping and the TLM distributed in each group is based on achievement of FLN competencies,

²⁴ The need for grouping of students is explained in the early part of this chapter.

often from earlier classes. This difference creates a disconnect in the field. Ideally, assessments and grouping rationale should be in-sync to avoid confusion in schools.

However, other states can consider a bolder and proactive focus on FLN, especially in light of the FLN focus of the NEP, released in 2020.



We would recommend that grouping be done on the basis of key learning outcomes, as opposed to SA performance. Delhi itself did not use SA for grouping of students from second year onwards.

Q. Should curriculum and assessments be completely redesigned and shifted away from their existing pattern?

Reorienting curriculum and assessments are among the most important changes for any education reform to work. Delhi undertook only partial changes: Assessments partially redesigned for classes 6 to 8 only and curriculum reduced by 25 percent (Delhi's own internal consultation process indicated that curriculum could be reduced by up to 50 percent), only for classes 1 to 8. These limitations were largely because of the dependence on the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in classes 9 to 12 and dependence on MCD in primary classes.

Most states have their own independent Boards and hence can consider more comprehensive assessment and curriculum reforms, covering ECE to class 12. Based on the experiences of Delhi, we would recommend:

- A reduction in core syllabus
- Redesign of textbooks to ensure that chapters and content are clearly linked to key competencies and learning outcomes (especially in language subjects) and should contain simpler language, suitable for even behind-class students
- Redesign of assessments to test for conceptual understanding



Our own experience in other states also indicates that states should consider developing personalised learning material for the different student groups.

This would imply that students in Nistha, Neo-Nistha, and Pratibha groups each receive customised material based on their learning levels and projected learning pathway.

3. Mission Buniyaad: Bridging Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Gaps

3.1 Need

The gaps in FLN across classes and states in India have often been highlighted by ASER and have been reinforced in the recently released National Education Policy (NEP), 2020²⁵ as well. Though Delhi had already launched Chunauti, i.e. grouping students based on learning levels, which helped behind-class students to catch up, there was also a recognition that learning could only happen once all children obtained the basic skills of reading, writing, and numeracy.

“The immediate reason of launching Mission Buniyaad was the National Achievement Survey, 2017 report which pointed that large proportion of Government school students of classes 3, 5, and 8 are way below their class level.

- Official Press Release, Delhi government

Chunauti helped improve learning levels over the first two years, but:

- Its impact was limited to only classes 6 to 9, whereas learning backlog gets created in primary classes itself.
- These gains were not enough and needed to be further amplified. For example, as of 2018, 37 percent of class 8 students still did not know how to conduct division.



Delhi launched multiple ‘mission-mode’ initiatives between 2015 and 2020 targeted at creating awareness and shifting systemic focus to bridge the FLN gap across primary and upper primary classes

In 2016, Delhi launched a ‘Reading Campaign’ with the objective of helping all children in classes 6 to 8, read an ‘advanced story’ – a proxy for class appropriate reading ability (as per a baseline assessment, 56 percent of all students in classes 6 to 8 did not have class appropriate reading ability). In 2018-19, ‘Mission Buniyaad’, a four-month flagship annual campaign focused exclusively on strengthening reading, writing, and basic numeracy skills of the weakest students, was launched across classes 3 to 9.

²⁵ Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. (2020). National Education Policy 2020. Retrieved from https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

3.2 Objective

Having conducted regular baseline and endline assessments since the launch of Chunauti in 2016, Delhi knew that significant learning gaps still existed and that a focused intervention was required along with Chunauti to accrue larger learning gains.

A March 2018 circular²⁶, from DoE, captures the rationale for launching Mission Buniyaad – “There are still about 2.5 lakh students of classes 6 to 8 who need support to develop fluency in reading class-level text and about 2.2 lakh students need more focused practice to solve basic Math operations with confidence. In order to bring alive the vision, with effect from 1st July, 2018, there would be no child in DoE schools who is not able to read fluently or solve basic Math operations, it has been decided to launch ‘Mission Buniyaad’”.

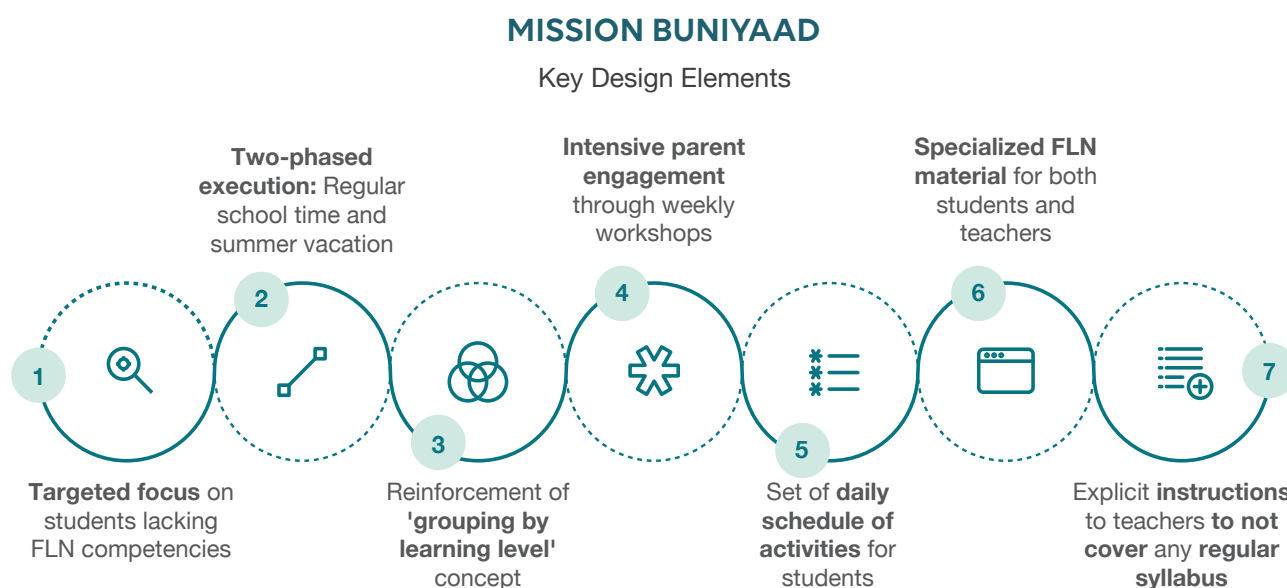
Further, Delhi had set a goal of ‘No Neo-Nishtha group’ in the session 2018-19 and needed to move immediately on achieving this goal. The Mission Buniyaad circular clearly defined the learning goals in terms of competencies – **all students must reach ‘advanced story level’ in first language and ‘division level’ in mathematics**. These goals of Mission Buniyaad aligned well with the overall objectives of other major academic interventions including Chunauti.

3.3 Design

The seven key design elements of Mission Buniyaad are presented in Exhibit 3.1.

Exhibit 3.1

The seven key design elements of Mission Buniyaad



²⁶ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, DoE (2018). GO No. De.23(632)/ Sch. Br./2018/265 Retrieved from http://www.edudel.nic.in/upload/upload_2017_18/265_dt_05032018a.pdf

Targeted focus on students who lacked foundational skills

While Chunauti addressed all students, Mission Buniyaad targeted **students who lacked foundational skills**. The two target segments were:

- All students of classes 3 to 5
- All students of classes 6 to 9 who were below 'advance story level' in first language and 'division level' in mathematics based on the final learning assessment

Two Phases: Regular school and summer vacation

The campaign-like intervention was organised in two phases: **The first phase during the regular school schedule (April-May) was augmented with a second phase during the summer vacation (May-July) where it was merged with a Summer Camp.**



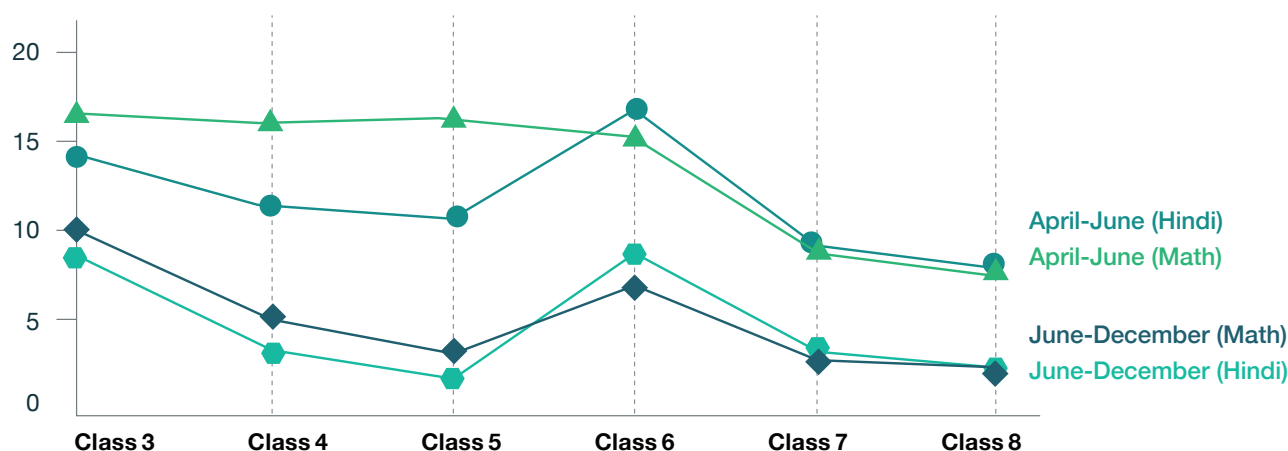
The Summer Camp proved to be critical given the additional one-and-a-half to two months it provided for dedicated FLN bridging, without the pressures of day-to-day schooling. As seen later during impact assessments, this additional time devotion had an outsized effect on the impact of Mission Buniyaad (Exhibit 3.2).

For example: there was 15 percent improvement in class 6 Math from April to June (during the Summer Camp), compared to 7 percent point from June to December between 2018 and 2020.

Exhibit 3.2

Class and domain wise average FLN improvement between April - June (summer vacation) and June - December (regular school) over 2018-19 and 2019-20

Percentage Point Increase²⁷



²⁷ Percentage point changes have been calculated as averages over two years: 2018-19 and 2019-20

Reinforcement of ‘grouping by learning level’ concept

The ‘grouping by learning level’ concept was further reinforced during Mission Buniyaad. Delhi created competency-based micro-groups, within the target group, for Buniyaad as well. For example, students at ‘number recognition’ and at ‘multiplication’ levels were grouped and taught separately.

Intensive parent engagement through weekly workshops

Parents were provided progress updates on their children and were encouraged to ensure their children attended the sessions. This engagement was especially critical in driving student attendance during the summer vacation period.

Recommended schedule of activities for students

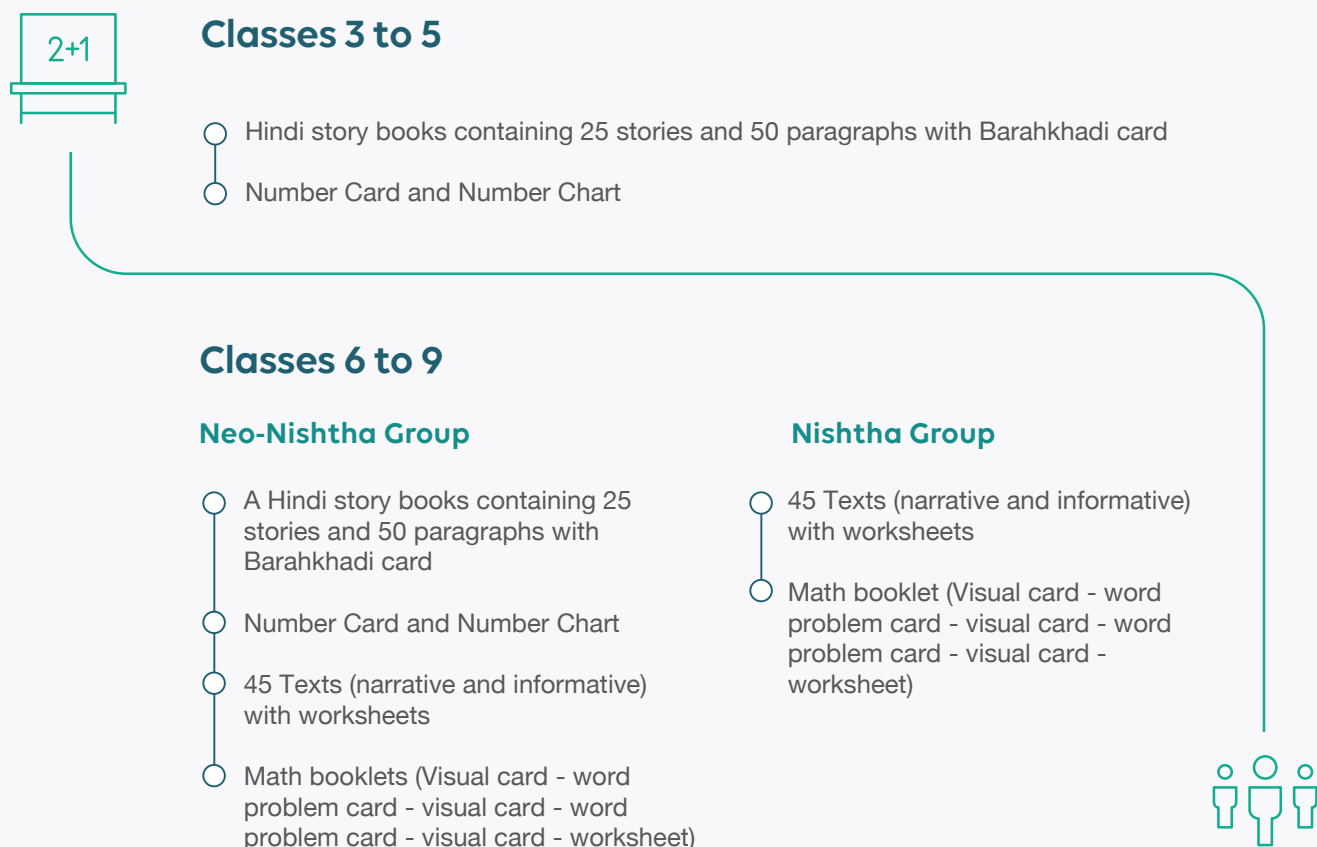
Specific sets of activities were posed as a ‘recommended schedule of activities’. These included three key activities – daily reading/writing activities in Hindi or Urdu, daily activities to strengthen basic mathematic competencies, and library activities encouraging students to also read on their own.

Specialized FLN material for both students and teachers

A variety of specialised FLN material was shared with all teachers and students: Group-wise FLN material, teacher guidebooks, activity booklets for teachers and other TLM such as number cards were provided. These materials were prepared by Mentor Teachers with assistance from Pratham and vetted by SCERT. The specific list of material shared with teachers is shown in Exhibit 3.3.

Exhibit 3.3

List of TLM shared with teachers of different classes and groups



Explicit instructions to teachers to not cover any regular syllabus

Teachers were also explicitly instructed to not cover any regular syllabus. An April 2018 circular²⁸ sent to schools regarding Mission Buniyaad included the following:

“ No regular syllabus of any subject shall be introduced for students covered under ‘Mission Buniyaad’ during this period. For the target group of ‘Mission Buniyaad’, only Hindi/Urdu reading writing, Math activities and foundational English activities using ‘Let’s learn English’ and recently provided ‘Grammar Book’ should be conducted till June end. ”

3.4 Implementation

Fundamentally, the implementation of Mission Buniyaad²⁹ involved the following basic components:

Ensuring timely execution of ‘pre-requisites’

Baseline assessments, distribution of customised FLN material and specialised teacher trainings focused on FLN-related pedagogy were completed one month in advance of the intervention period. Ensuring these implementation pre-requisites helped Delhi achieve the most out of the short-campaign-mode intervention. Our experience from other states suggests that advance preparation in a timely manner ensures the most critical initial months are not lost in providing the basics or conducting trials and errors.

Driving in-school follow-ups

Through regular visits, the MT cadre played an essential role by handholding schools and thus ensured a smoother implementation of the programme. Teachers believe that MTs provided pedagogical support and helped in cross-communication of best practices across schools enabling teachers to understand better and modify their approaches. MTs even supported teachers with parent counselling when teachers faced difficulties in convincing parents.

Members from Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) conducted monitoring visits to schools and oversaw implementation. These visits ensured rigorous and effective implementation of the program.

SCERT and DIET faculty members too visited schools to observe the implementation of the program. Learnings from these visits were often discussed in meetings between district officials and faculty members and were useful in deciding the next course of action.

²⁸ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, DoE (2018). GO No. De.23(632)/ Sch.Br./2017/443 Retrieved from http://www.edudel.nic.in/upload/upload_2017_18/443_dt_05042018.pdf

²⁹ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, DoE (2018). GO No. De.23(632)/ Sch.Br./2018/444 Retrieved from http://www.edudel.nic.in/upload/upload_2017_18/444_dt_05042018.pdf

Regular mid-line and end-line assessments

Assessments monitored by DIETs and MTs, reflected the seriousness of Delhi in achieving the stated goal of universal FLN. Teachers believe that these assessments provided an accurate measure of each student's actual learning levels and gaps across subjects and competencies, which is difficult to do during regular classroom hours. These regular assessments thus enabled teachers to identify learning gaps and cater to each child's learning needs.

Community engagement

Teachers conducted regular workshops with parents³⁰ which covered the following aspects:

- Explaining the purpose: students at low learning levels, gaps need to be bridged
- Support sought from parents: ensure regular attendance, supervision at home
- Counselling parents on creating a supportive environment at home
- SMCs played a critical role in reaching out to the target students ensuring attendance during summer months. SMC members would regularly contact parents of irregular students, help resolve queries and encourage all parents to attend workshops.



For children who are not able to read, I request all parents to cancel their vacation plans during summer holidays and send their children to school for remedial classes.

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government³¹



Such mobilization and sensitization of parents helped improve student attendance during the program. It also led to extension of learning from school to home, resulting in higher learning level improvements. Further, SMCs identified teacher and student champions every month.

Flexibility at the school-level to both HoS and teachers (Classes 6 - 9)



Not only were schools given flexibility to adapt Buniyaad's implementation model to their own school's context (for example, choosing their preferred mode of parent mobilisation), significant resources were also mobilised (for example, they could hire guest teachers on their own).

However, successfully conducting a 'mission-mode' remediation programme between April and July had several additional risks beyond regular challenges faced by the education department. These risk factors along with the mitigation approach used by Delhi are highlighted in Table 3.1.

³⁰ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, DoE (2018). GO No. De.23(632)/ Sch.Br./2018/444 Retrieved from http://www.edudel.nic.in/upload/upload_2017_18/444_dt_05042018.pdf

³¹ Delhi govt's mission Buniyaad to improve learning skill of children. (2018, February 20). The Statesman. <https://www.thestatesman.com/cities/delhi-govts-mission-buniyaad-improve-learning-skill-children-1502588513.html>

Table 3.1
Risk mitigation strategy

 RISK	 MITIGATION APPROACH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low student attendance during summer vacations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensive parent engagement through parental workshops in early April Circular from deputy CM given to each child to give to their parents Deployment of SMC members to drive attendance Bulk SMS to parents Radio campaigns Fun activities also organised during the summer camp
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low teacher attendance during summer vacations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One to two teachers and the Training Development Coordinator of each school were directly trained in FLN pedagogy through a two day training Teachers also received audio / video clips on specific activities regularly during the campaign as part of concurrent pedagogical support Additionally, a specific teacher's handbook was also provided which included an instructions manual and activities material for children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedagogical challenges for higher class teachers attempting to bridge lower class FLN gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher selection included volunteering mechanism to selectively involve interested teachers Self-selection led to involvement of self-motivated teachers. Regular teachers were also granted earned leave in lieu of duty during the summer vacations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food refreshments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food refreshments in form of snacks (juices, biscuits, namkeen) acted as a pull factor for students and a driver for sustained attendance over time Parents related this to Mid-Day-Meal and were more inclined to send kids to classes

3.5 Impact

Delhi has made considerable progress in terms of FLN in classes 3 to 8 over the last two years. As per our teacher survey, 40 percent of the teachers consider FLN interventions as the most impactful learning initiative across classes.

The class and subject wise average learning gains over 2018-19 and 2019-20 are shown in Exhibit 3.4.³² The data shows clear gains between 10 and 25 percent for class competency combinations (for example, advanced story level in Hindi for class 6), reflecting the importance of learning interventions which are focused on bridging FLN gaps. It is observed that there are maximum gains in class 6 because of a large influx of behind-grade students from MCD schools. Further, gains tend to reduce in higher classes because of two reasons – as students get older, their capacity to improve basic skills decreases and teachers start paying less attention as

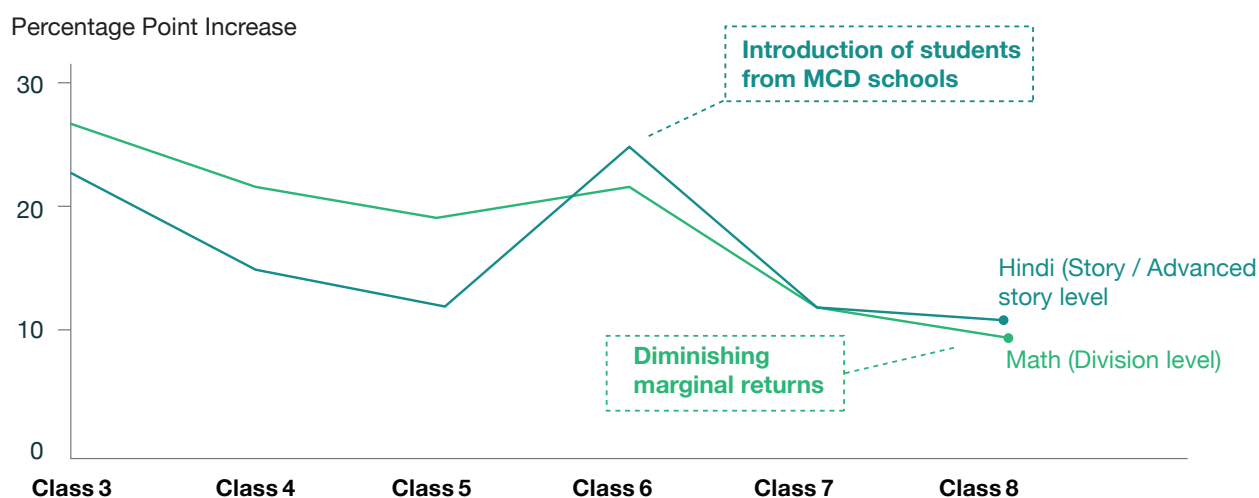
³² Percentage Point changes have been calculated as averages over two years: 2018-19 and 2019-20

more and more students start gaining learning levels.

It is important to note that learning gains are not restricted to a particular class or domain/competency, although major gains are accrued over classes 3 and 6. It is also evident that despite diminishing marginal returns in higher classes, there is still a 10 percent improvement in class 8 Math (division level).

Exhibit 3.4

Class and subject-wise average FLN improvement between 2018-19 and 2019-20



Further, focused conversations with teachers revealed that Mission Buniyaad has had an impact on multiple areas:



Reinforcement of positive mind-shift among teachers: As per our survey, 18 percent teachers feel that focus on FLN during Mission Buniyaad has been the most impactful academic change. Mission Buniyaad, with the objective of “No Neo-Nishtha group in 2018-19” further reinforced the “every child can learn” belief leading to change in teacher attitudes towards low-performing students.

“The focus has shifted to basics where we ensure students have a strong foundation which enables them to learn effectively in higher classes”

-Teacher, Delhi government school

“Until recently, only the textbook was taught in class and education was exam oriented. Now we identify if students are weak in particular subjects and work with them.”

-Teacher, Delhi government school

“I see a significant change in the discipline of the classroom, students pay more attention to their studies and I think this is because of the teacher’s attitude. The teachers are able to control and guide the students better”

- Parent, Delhi government school



Better realisation of FLN needs in the system: Burst intervention like Buniyaad creates an urgency of achieving the stated goal and the ‘mission-mode’ aspect ensures that all stakeholders are working towards the same goal. This has resulted in widespread acknowledgement and acceptance of the need for universal FLN.



Sustainable impact: Teachers agree that majority of students tend to retain understanding of previously taught concepts after moving on to the next class. This can also be seen from data (Table 3.2) and can be corroborated by the fact that Delhi has seen increased learning levels over the years (for example, in English, students who can read and write words are then able to understand simple sentences.)

Table 3.2

Competency-wise break up of class 6 2018-19 cohort

Subject	Competency	Class 6 (Dec 2018)	Class 7 (Apr 2019)
Hindi	Beginner	1%	1%
	Character	3%	3%
	Words	7%	7%
	Paragraph	11%	11%
	Story	20%	20%
	Advance Story	57%	58%
Math	Beginner	0%	0%
	Number Recognition (0-9)	2%	2%
	Number Recognition (10-99)	8%	8%
	Subtraction	23%	22%
	Division	68%	68%

3.6 Challenges

Burst campaigns insufficient to bridge gaps

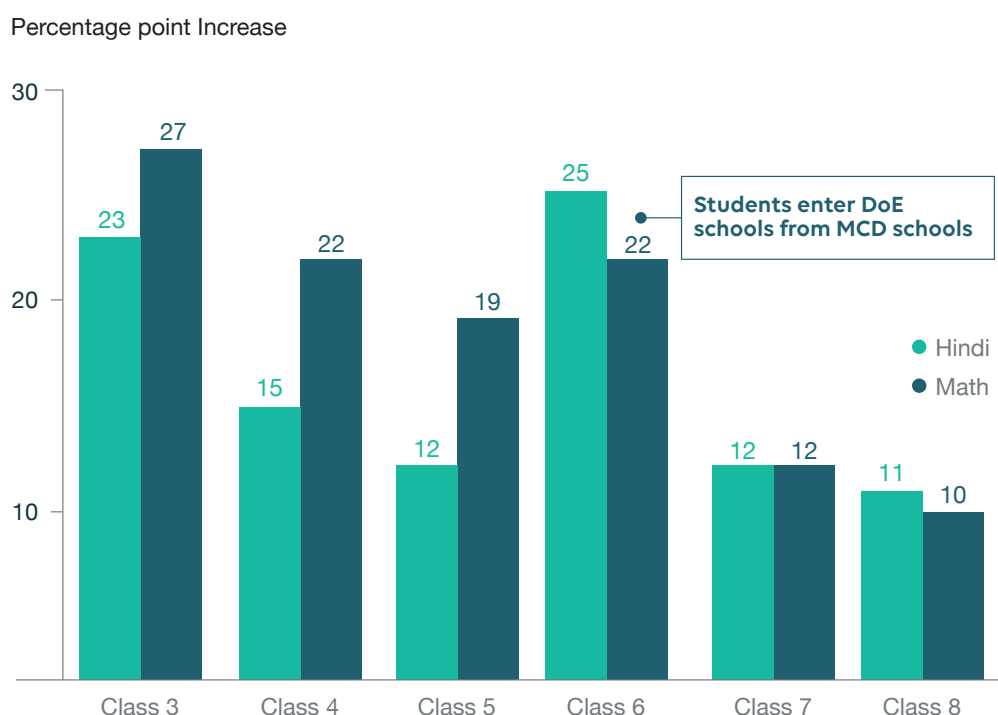
The biggest challenge is that in higher classes, the **gaps are too big to be bridged by such burst campaigns**. It is evident from Exhibit 3.5 that there are diminishing returns to such learning interventions. This means that Delhi achieved the maximum gains in class 3 and class 6 (majority of students in class 6 in DoE schools are from MCD schools) which declined slightly over class 3 to 5 and heavily over class 6 to 8. Two factors could be attributed for driving these diminishing returns:

Lowest classes have the maximum scope for improvement: Since the lower classes (class 3 and 6 in this case) have the maximum number of 'behind-class' students, and these students are newly introduced to the intervention, we see the largest learning gains.

Change in class composition: As students move into higher classes, more and more students move past the FLN competencies, changing the original composition of the class. This leads to teachers focusing more on the majority of the class (which has moved ahead on FLN competencies) than on students who may need specialised attention for improvement.

Exhibit 3.5

Consistant decline in returns post class 6



Looking ahead, robust and timely intervention, starting as early as class 2, will ensure that gaps are bridged before students reach higher classes. In Delhi's specific context, this will also imply robust implementation of Mission Buniyaad across all schools including the schools administered by local bodies.

Additional challenges also exist in the implementation of the programme. For example, a sample study by Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) on the implementation of Mission Buniyaad across 30 schools highlighted two additional challenges:

Varied adoption of the key pedagogical elements of Mission

Given that schools have the flexibility to decide on many aspects of implementation of the programme, including grouping and sections, a significant degree of disparity can be observed among schools. For example, as of 2019, the letter and word-level students or the paragraph and story-level students for classes 6 to 9 were not sitting together in nearly half the schools.³³

³³ Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights and District Institute of Education and Training, Dilshad Garden. (2019). Impact Evaluation of Mission Buniyaad. Retrieved from http://dcpcr.delhi.gov.in/wps/wcm/connect/doiit_dcpcr/DCPCR/Home/Publications

Gaps in awareness and alignment

Our parent survey³⁴ indicated that only 30 percent of parents were aware of and able to articulate the goal of Mission Buniyaad. The Mission Buniyaad study³⁵ also indicates similar awareness related issues. As of 2019, 70 percent of HoS did not have complete understanding of their role in supporting Mission Buniyaad. These data points suggest that much work needs to be done to strengthen awareness and involvement of primary stakeholders, including HoS and parents, in the programme.

Exhibit 3.6

Gaps in awareness as per Mission Buniyaad Case Study, 2019



3.7 Implications for other states

Campaigns such as Mission Buniyaad and Reading Campaign are directly applicable in most states' contexts. In our experience, the biggest question in most states is 'whether additional mission-mode FLN campaigns are required at all?' The answer usually skews towards investing more, rather than less, into bridging FLN gaps.

Q. Is a short-term burst intervention required even if all systemic changes under Chunauti are being implemented?

Chunauti represents a fundamental systemic change, where students are taught according to their learning levels. This is a long-term and likely lasting change. Such long-term changes tend to get internalised by the stakeholders leading to a 'loss in urgency' in achieving the objective. Further, while the need of a systemic intervention like Chunauti is non-negotiable, the burst interventions help to bring back the focus to the goal, time and again. For example, under Mission Buniyaad, even subject teachers (such as science teachers in class 9) focus on building FLN competencies, because these gaps severely limit at-class learning.

The systemic learning programmes should thus, be accompanied by burst interventions such as Buniyaad and Reading Campaign. The latter allows the entire system to focus on just one goal for a set period of time leading to better results. The summer camps provide

³⁴ BCG parent survey analysis

³⁵ Mission Buniyaad case study 2019 by DCPCR and DIET, Dilshad Garden

an opportunity for teachers to help students at lower learning levels bridge FLN gaps, without the pressures of day-to-day schooling. For example: there was a 23.5 percent improvement in class 6 Math from April to June 2018 compared to 6.3 percent from June to December 2018.

Learning improvements of Chunauti and Buniyaad's launch years are presented in Exhibit 3.7 as comparison:

Exhibit 3.7

Improvement in learning levels in language (advanced story; in percentage points)

Intervention / Class	Class 6	Class 7	Class 8
Chunauti (2016-17)	11	16	19
Buniyaad (2018-19)	28	18	18

While the above data shows slightly greater improvement in classes 6 and 7 through Chunauti, that does not negate the value of Chunauti, as both programmes are being run together, hence, accruing gains from each other.

Ideally, once primary education starts delivering FLN in the long-run, burst interventions such as Mission Buniyaad will not be required. But till the time FLN assessments indicate gaps, additional 'mission-mode' focus on FLN is critical.

Q. What are the key learnings for states that wish to implement 'mission mode' campaigns like Buniyaad?

Implementing burst campaigns like Buniyaad are critical for states with large FLN gaps. Following are key learnings for states that wish to implement similar campaigns:



Leverage summer and winter holidays to avoid disrupting the school year: Both HoS and teachers usually have a lot of things on their plate during the working months of the academic year. This does not allow ample time for targeted focus on FLN competencies during these months. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that students behind class levels need specialised attention to improve on the learning levels trajectory. Therefore, it is better to implement such burst campaigns during summer and winter vacations, which can ensure single-minded efforts from all stakeholders.



Incentivise students to participate by providing food, financial support: It is natural to expect that students will be reluctant to attend school during summer vacations. Given most of the students in government schools are from underprivileged backgrounds, providing food (through MDM) and minimal financial support will ensure greater attendance and engagement.



Intense parent engagement: Parents will also be quite reluctant to send their kids to schools during the summer vacations, unless they are sensitised towards the importance of FLN learnings. States should actively involve parents in the learning programme through all means – for example, political leadership reaching out to the parents, activation of School Management Committees (SMCs), and regular communication.



Use specialised teaching-learning material: Since such a programme will cater to ‘behind-class’ students, textbooks will have to be replaced by specially created teaching-learning material. States could follow the guiding principles of Delhi’s Pragati series in designing such material:

- **Simplified language** – Should be extremely easy for a student to read
- **‘Doing and learning’ approach** – An amalgamation of relatable activities
- **Conceptual questions**– Concept level understanding to be developed



Leverage guest teachers: States could take support of guest and contractual teachers to increase PTR, enabling better personalised attention on each child. Since most of the states usually have less than required number of teachers including regular and contract ones, states could explore onboarding guest teachers for the period of the burst intervention.

4. Happiness Curriculum: Developing Mindfulness and Emotional Self-awareness

4.1 Need

Education systems are being underutilised. They have been designed with the limited goal of providing textbook knowledge and jobs, which reflects in their overt focus on academic success. Education currently overlooks complex and often interlinked challenges, ranging from high rates of depression and suicide to broader challenges such as corruption, gender-violence, and pollution. To address these gaps, the education community is now focusing on social and emotional learning. The NEP, includes in its defining principles a focus on “social and emotional skills – also referred to as soft skills – including cultural awareness and empathy, perseverance, and grit, teamwork, leadership, communication among others”.

Delhi has taken tangible steps in this direction with an ambitiously designed ‘Happiness Curriculum’. The underlying philosophy has been described in Exhibit 4.1

Exhibit 4.1

Underlying philosophy of Happiness Curriculum



Today, education skews towards cognitive development

Teachers, curriculum, assessments all focus on **giving students academic competencies** from arithmetic, scientific concepts, etc.



The happiness curriculum introduces new concepts

- **Mindfulness:** The ability to be fully present in the moment
- **Self expression:** Expression of one’s feelings, thoughts, ideas
- **Noting:** A mental technique used to observe your own thoughts without judgement



Which lead to self awareness and emotional intelligence

Students and teachers learn to observe themselves and other people, to make deliberate and **mindful changes to their behaviours and relationships**



... which lead to happiness, positivity and balance

Happiness from learning and awareness is more sustainable than other forms of sensory pleasure; students can also build **deeper relationships** and **stay calm** when faced with adversity

“We have scientifically designed a course which helps children to focus their attention to the present moment. It enables them to live harmoniously with family and society and is likely to support them in developing a holistic outlook and perspective of life.”

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government³⁶

³⁶ State Council of Education Research and Training, Delhi. (2019). Happiness Curriculum. Retrieved from: http://edudel.nic.in/welcome_folder/happiness/HappinessCurriculumFramework_2019.pdf

4.2 Objective

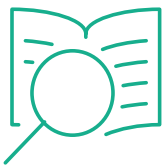


I hope that with this effort we will be able to make the education system an enabler for the all-round development of humankind

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government³⁷



At its core, the Happiness Curriculum seeks to guide the students towards exploring, experiencing, and expressing happiness in not just momentary, but deeper and sustainable forms.



Schools have been empowered to provide students a space to develop skills such as empathy, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration to become better human beings. Students, in turn, are expected to develop mindfulness and emotional awareness and incorporate that into decision-making to make meaningful contributions to their community and society.

The long-term goal of this curriculum is:

- To develop social awareness and human values in learners to engage in meaningful contribution to society
- To develop a holistic approach to education in a universal context

³⁷ State Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi. (2019). Happiness Curriculum. Retrieved from: http://edudel.nic.in/welcome_folder/happiness/HappinessCurriculumFramework_2019.pdf.

4.3 Design

The Happiness Curriculum has been introduced as a new subject for all students from pre-primary to class 8.



Four classroom components of Happiness Curriculum

Happiness Curriculum is taught for one period every day from Monday to Saturday and consists of **four classroom components**.

- First, teachers facilitate two to three minutes of mindfulness meditation.³⁸
- Second, they read out inspiring stories.
- Third, they facilitate group activities.
- Lastly, they conduct questions and answers, encouraging children to express themselves. There are no textbooks for this course and the only material provided is a teacher's handbook which helps teachers facilitate the class.

“...the classroom is an open and non-judgemental space for students to deeply engage with oneself and others... these classes are a platform for teachers and students to gain a better understanding of each other through the process of mindful listening and acknowledgement which will ultimately help build health and harmonious relationships.”

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government

³⁸ Meditation is for mindfulness and is not linked to any prayer or chanting (Vipasana).

HAPPINESS CURRICULUM:

Each class begins with 2-3 minutes of mindfulness activities through

One full day is allocated to mindfulness meditation and covers different aspects of mindfulness. Example – **Temperature of Breath**

MONDAY

Mindfulness Meditation



समय वितरण

1. (a) माइंडफुल चेक-इन (Mindful Check-in): 3 - 5 मिनट
(b) ध्यान देने की प्रक्रिया पर चर्चा: 10 मिनट
2. (a) Temperature of Breath: 5 मिनट
(b) Temperature of Breath पर चर्चा: 15 मिनट
3. साइलेंट चेक आउट (Silent Check out): 2 मिनट

The teacher narrates a story which covers various themes. Example: **तीन मजदूर तीन नज़रिये**

TUESDAY &
WEDNESDAY

Story

कहानी का उद्देश्य - यह स्पष्टता बनाना की किसी काम को करके हम सुखी या दुखी नहीं होते हैं बल्कि उस काम को करते समय हमारा भाव क्या है, यह हमारे सुखी या दुखी होने का आधार बनता है।

कहीं पर एक स्कूल बन रहा था। तीन मजदूर बैठे पत्थर तोड़ने का काम कर रहे थे। वहां से एक राहगीर गुजरा, उसने पहले मजदूर से पूछा, "क्या कर रहे हो?" वह दुखी मन से बोला, "पत्थर तोड़ रहा हूँ।" सच में वह मन में भी पत्थर ही तोड़ रहा था इसीलिए वह दुखी भी था। राहगीर दूसरे मजदूर के पास गया, वह दुखी नहीं था, संतुलित था – न दुखी न सुखी। राहगीर ने उससे पूछा, "क्या कर रहे हो?" उसने कहा, "रोजी रोटी कमा रहा हूँ।" सच में वह मजदूर रोजी-रोटी कमाने के लिए ही काम कर रहा था। इसीलिए उसके चेहरे पर ना दुख था न सुख।

राहगीर तीसरे मजदूर के पास पहुँचा। वह मजदूर आनंदित था। वह पत्थर तोड़ते हुए गुनगुना रहा था। उसने अपना गीत बीच में रोककर कहा, "मैं शिक्षा का मंदिर बना रहा हूँ। यहाँ बच्चे पढ़ेंगे।" यह कहते हुए उसकी आँखों में चमक थी।

जीवन में काम करने के यही तीन तरीके हैं – पहला - मजबूरी में काम करना और दुखी रहना, दूसरा है – रोजी-रोटी के लिए मशीन की तरह मेहनत करना, या तीसरा है- अपने काम से दूसरे लोगों को होने वाले सुख से आनंदित रहना।

जीवन का आनंद जीने वाले की दृष्टि में होता है। वह अंदर से आता है बाहर से नहीं।



The teacher then engages students through reflective questions based on the story and asks them to discuss these questions at home as well:

चर्चा: तीनों मजदूरों में से कौन सबसे ज्यादा समझदार या खुशहाल मन:स्थिति में था? चर्चा करें।

चिंतन: क्या आपके साथ ऐसी स्थिति आयी है कि अलग-अलग समय पर, एक ही काम करते हुए, आपकी मन:स्थिति अलग रही हो? उदाहरण देकर बताएं।

Visualizing a Happiness class over a week: Class 6

breathing exercises to help the learners relax

Along with stories, activities are conducted to explore various themes during a Happiness Class. Example – आओ खुशी को समझें

उद्देश्य: खुशी क्या है इसको समझना

Activity

THURSDAY
& FRIDAY

गतिविधि के चरण :

- यह गतिविधि inner circle & outer circle activity के माध्यम से करवाई जाएगी |
- सभी विद्यार्थियों से कहें कि दो गोले बनाकर खड़े हो जाएं |
- **Round 1:** अध्यापक कक्षा में अपने जीवन की उस घटना को साझा करेंगे जिसको याद करने पर बहुत खुशी होती है |
- अब विद्यार्थियों को भी अपने जीवन की किसी घटना के बारे में सोचने के लिए कहा जाए जिसको याद करने पर उन्हें बहुत खुशी होती है | आमने-सामने खड़े विद्यार्थी एक दूसरे के साथ इस बात को साझा करेंगे |
- **Round 2:** अध्यापक ऐसी घटना शेयर करें जिसमें उस वक्त तो कष्ट हुआ परंतु उसके अच्छे परिणाम आपको अब खुशी देते हैं |
- ऐसी ही शेयरिंग अब सर्किल में आमने-सामने खड़े विद्यार्थियों से करवा लें |
- **Round 3:** अब सर्किल में आमने-सामने खड़े विद्यार्थियों से शेयरिंग करवायें कि ऐसा कार्य या घटना बताइए जिनसे उस समय तो खुशी मिली थी जब घटना घटी थी पर अब या बाद में अफसोस होता है | (जैसे कक्षा मिस करना, स्कूल ना आना आदि)



Students ponder over story/ activity related questions, discuss at home and share life experiences. Example – Respecting others

Reflection and Expression

SATURDAY

उद्देश्य: विद्यार्थियों को दूसरों के प्रति सम्मान के भाव को व्यक्त करने के लिए प्रेरित करना |

विद्यार्थियों द्वारा अभिव्यक्ति: निम्नलिखित प्रस्तावित प्रश्नों के माध्यम से विद्यार्थियों को अभिव्यक्ति के अवसर उपलब्ध कराए जाएं |

1. आप किस-किस के प्रति सम्मान का भाव महसूस करते हैं ? आप उनके प्रति सम्मान का भाव किस-किस तरीके से व्यक्त करते हैं ?
2. किसी एक व्यक्ति को याद कीजिए जिनके जैसा आप होना चाहते हैं | उन्हें एक पत्र लिखिए और बताइये कि आप उनके जैसा क्यों होना चाहते हैं?



Teachers qualitatively assess students' progress based on class participation, self-expression, involvement in activities and behavioral changes

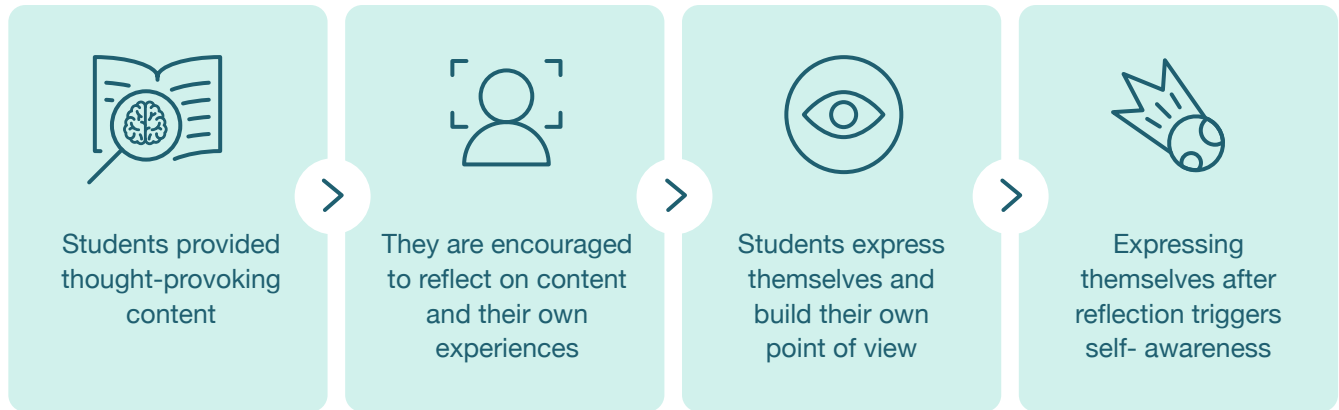


The core pedagogical principle is that emotional intelligence and self-awareness can be triggered through self-expression and reflection.

The specific pedagogical mechanics have been detailed out in Exhibit 4.3.

Exhibit 4.3

Specific pedagogical mechanics of Happiness Curriculum: Four-step pedagogical model



Both the objective and the pedagogy of the Happiness Curriculum are unique and distinct from that of typical academic subjects. The four key differences have been highlighted below.

Role-reversal: Teachers are encouraged to stay quiet

Teachers are explicitly instructed to speak only to facilitate and not to teach as in other subjects. This gives students a platform to express themselves in a free and non-judgmental environment, unlike in other academic subjects. Such self-expression is crucial to trigger reflection in students, helping them process their own life's experiences and challenges.

Novel learning material: Textbooks replaced by a teachers' handbook with relatable stories and activities for children

Textbooks for children have been replaced by class-wise handbooks for teachers. These handbooks consist of stories and activities along with detailed instructions on how to facilitate the class. The stories and activities are relatable to children (for example, stories on animals and religious figures have given way to stories on relatable human characters). The relatability of the stories and activities from everyday life prompts reflection.

A report³⁹ by the Brookings Institution and Dream a Dream analysed and mapped the class wise content to intended objectives and skills. Based on the analysis, the Report states that self-awareness, communication, and mindfulness are the most strongly represented factors across the curriculum.

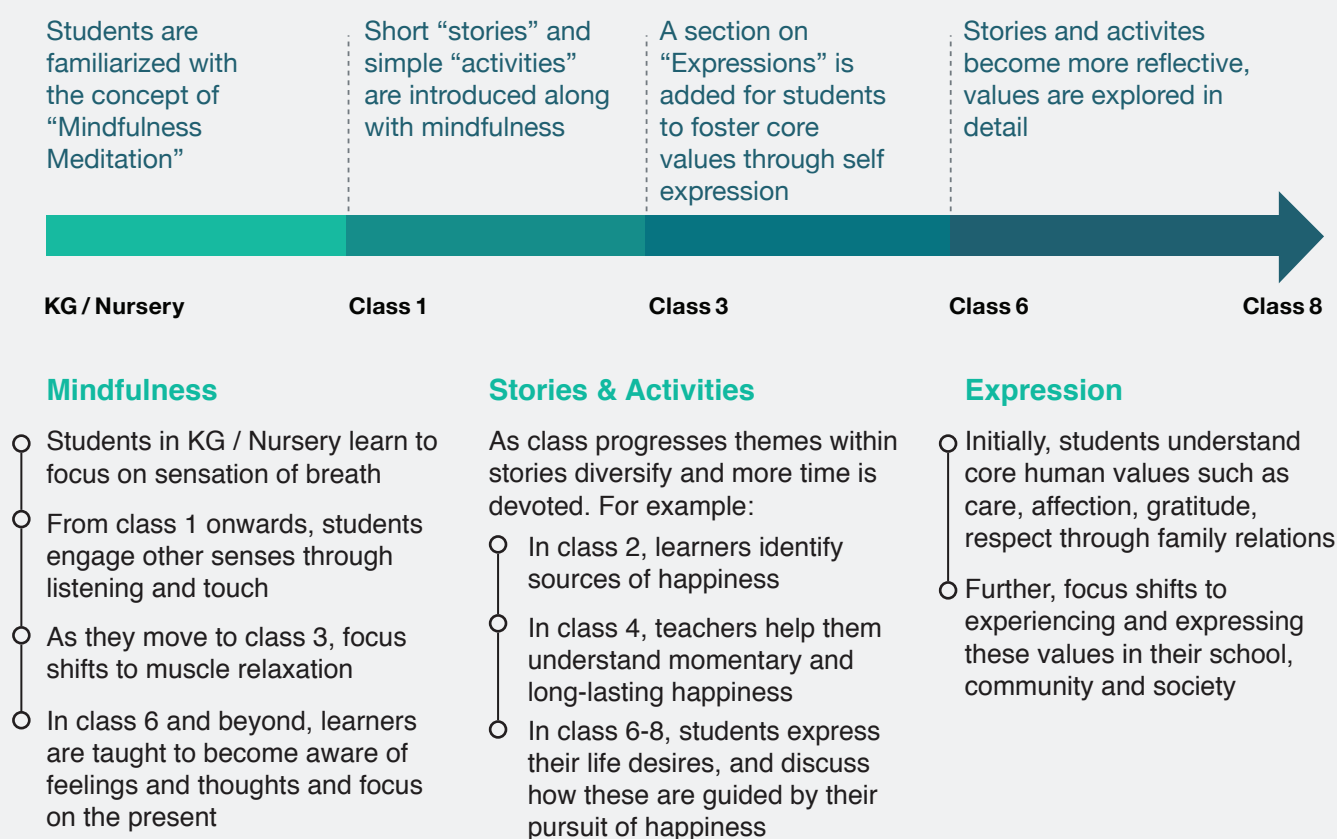
Progressive curriculum: Shifts from stories and activities towards reflection and self-expression in higher classes

The curriculum has been designed to make it age appropriate. Younger children are engaged through stories and activities. Once students grow up and can articulate more, components of expression, reflection are introduced in higher classes, as portrayed in Exhibit 4.4.

³⁹ Development of student and teacher measure of Happiness Curriculum factors (August 2020). Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Development-of-student-and-teacher-measures-of-HC-factors-FINAL.pdf>

Exhibit 4.4

Progression of content from Nursery / KG to class 8



Assessments: No formal examinations

In keeping with the spirit of the curriculum’s shift away from academic achievement, there are no formal assessments or pass/fail verdicts. Teachers note down their daily classroom processes and qualitative changes in children’s behaviours in their own diaries, but no records or results are compiled.

4.4 Implementation

The implementation model for Happiness Curriculum has four key elements.

Building a strong core team

The core team for the Happiness Curriculum consists of 16 MTs and more than 20 DIET/SCERT officials. The team was carefully built over a period of more than two years. Over this time period, each member attended regular week-long Jeevan Vidya Shivar sessions. This helped them understand the novel philosophy underlying the design elements of the Curriculum. The expertise of this core team was critical in framing the contours and implementing the Curriculum in its right spirit. The core team also included education consultants, teachers, EVGCs,⁴⁰ experts from Delhi SCERT⁴¹ and CHVTL,⁴² and organisations such as Dream a Dream, Blue Orb Foundation, Labhya foundation, and Circle of Life, all of which brought different areas of expertise.

⁴⁰ Educational and Vocational Guidance Counsellors

⁴¹ State Council for Educational Research and Training

⁴² Cell for Human Values and transformative Learning



Within the first 50 days after taking charge of the department, the Minister, with his own initiative took a full day workshop with SCERT on this topic. Active involvement directly from the Deputy Chief Minister was critical in generating energy, excitement and alignment within the department to take up a new initiative like the Happiness Curriculum.

- Chairperson, Happiness Curriculum Committee



Unique training plan

Delhi designed a unique training plan that addressed the challenges of principles such as ‘self-awareness’ and ‘well-being’ getting lost in translation, which can occur in typical short-form or cascade-style trainings. All HoS were given seven-day residential trainings on the co-existence model of education through the Jeevan Vidya Workshop. Teachers were given at-scale trainings directly by experts: 18,000 teachers (in batches of 3,000 each) were directly trained at the Thyagaraj stadium. While the batches were large, the core message for teachers was: ‘do not teach, only facilitate’.

Creating the time for Happiness Classes

The students’ timetable was revamped to introduce a ‘Happiness period’ during school hours. For pre-primary classes, 20-minute periods were introduced twice a week. For elementary classes (1 to 8), 45-minutes were allocated every day. Introducing these periods was facilitated by an earlier decision to reduce curriculum by 25 percent, which freed up one out of six periods in a week for all core subjects.

Adopting an enabling approach to implementation


Sixteen MTs were deployed as ‘Observers’ across 11 districts. They visited schools to observe Happiness Classes, conducted in-school demonstrations, and shared feedback with the authorities. This demonstration and feedback-based approach departs from a ‘monitoring-heavy’ approach. This enabling approach has avoided direct, reactionary opposition to the initiative and has led to observable organic adoption by teachers.

4.5 Impact

The Happiness Curriculum has no formal assessments – the Curriculum is also structurally not suited to typical evaluations. However, our FGDs reveal that there are many positive indicators of impact including behavioural changes in children and improved relationships between teachers and students. The four broad themes emerging from the parent and teacher interviews are illustrated in Exhibit 4.5.

Exhibit 4.5


Field feedback on Happiness Curriculum shows many positive patterns



Children are becoming calmer at home and in school

My daughter used to be very irritable and got upset over little things. She would refuse to help with any work at home. But now I see a big transformation in her. Since the Happiness Class, she has become very caring. She helps her mother with housework after returning from school. It gives a lot of joy to see her participate in the family and even give happiness lessons to her younger sister.


- Naseem Ahmed, Parent



Children are showing increased interest in class

My mind was a mess. I could barely concentrate in what was being taught in the class. After the Happiness Class where I learn meditation, I am not only able to focus without feeling restless but also understand the concepts being taught. I am no more scared of studies, not even Maths.

- Yuvraj, Class VIII



Student-teacher relationships are becoming deeper

After happiness programme, I feel a noticeable change in my personal life and professional life too. The mindfulness, which is a well balanced combination of yoga and breathing makes me calm, I feel relaxed and more ready for the day. The stories and various activities have strengthened my bonding and understanding with the students. It's such a new but a very awesome experience for me.

-Pankaj Kumar, Teacher PRVV Shalimar Bagh

At the same time, we tried to capture different opinions from students, teachers and parents. It is observed that while few teachers have adapted to the new 'Happiness Class' way of teaching, others are still accustomed to the old 'one-way' kind of teaching methodology. Similarly, students have differing views on the various sections of the Happiness Curriculum – while one set of students enjoy mindfulness, others feel more enthusiastic about the activity part of the session. The Happiness Curriculum has thus been successful in engaging students and in offering a valued aspect of life through education.

Further, 87 percent⁴³ teachers surveyed confirmed that the Happiness Curriculum has had a tangible impact on students across different aspects, as shown in Exhibit 4.6.

Among the different impact themes heard during interviews, 'students becoming well behaved, polite and empathetic' was cited as the biggest benefit by 60 percent teachers. 'Better relations with others' and 'more interested in class and studies' are other major impacts seen in students by the teachers.

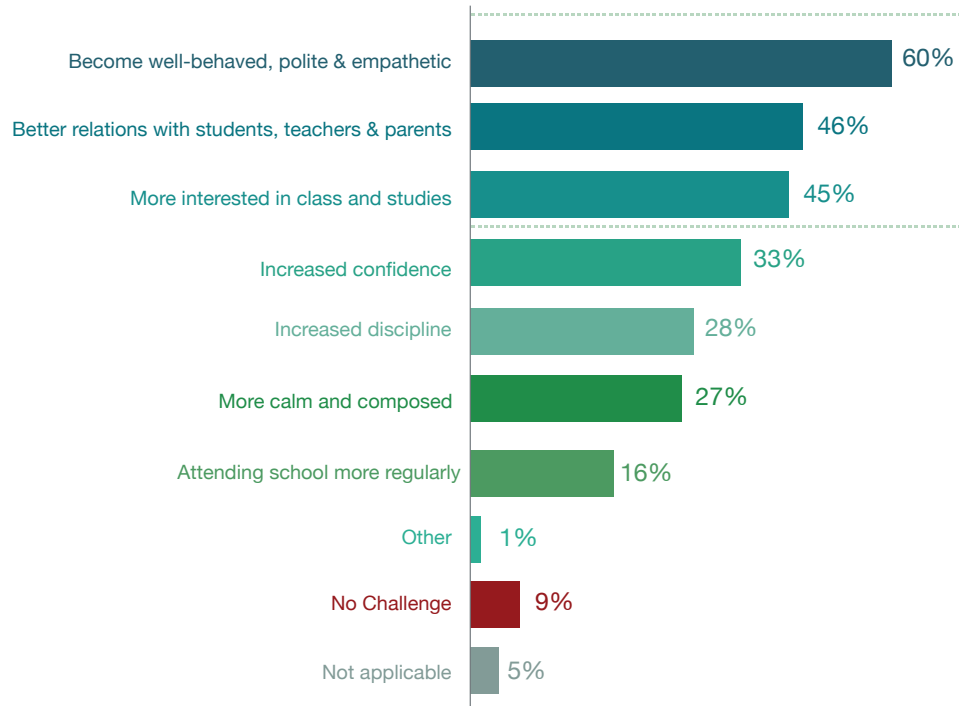
Impact assessment of the Happiness Curriculum, however, remains limited to observations and anecdotal evidence as highlighted above. The government is considering developing a tool to measure the curriculum's effectiveness. The Brookings Institution and Dream a Dream, in this regard, have published a study that suggests that it is viable to generate a measure of Happiness through a self-rating scale (survey) involving situational responses in the context of Happiness Curriculum. The independent report also ponders upon Happiness Curriculum's impact and mentions similar observations as above.

⁴³ Given the multiple-choice nature of question, the figure 87% is not shown in Exhibit 4.6

Exhibit 4.6

Impact of Happiness Curriculum as reported by teachers

Happiness Curriculum made students more empathetic, increased their interest in studies and helped develop better relations



1. N = 4,779 teachers teaching in class 1-8

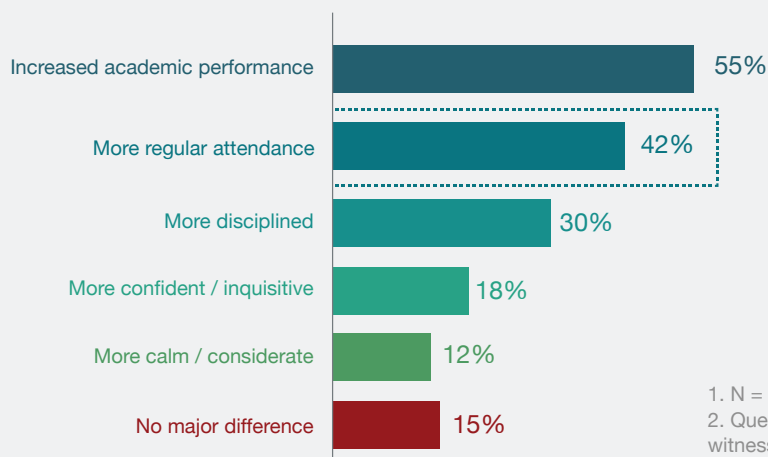
2. Question: "Please choose all that applies: Because of Happiness Curriculum, students are _____"

3. Multiple choice question

Our parent survey revealed that 55 percent credited the Happiness Curriculum with improved academic performance and 42 percent parents believe that their children are now showing more interest in going to school, as shown in Exhibit 4.7. While it is not possible to establish causal linkages, most teachers and department officials we interviewed believed there was a strong link.

Exhibit 4.7

42% parents believe that their child shows more interest in going to school



1. N = 5,551 parents saw positive change

2. Question: "What change have you witnessed in your child over the past 5 years"

4.6 Challenges

The Happiness Curriculum will require many years before it can be tested against its objective to improve human values. The path forward in Delhi was described by DIET officials as “*requiring eight more years for the first batch of students to ‘graduate’, after completing all modules from pre-primary to class 8*”. The officials also mentioned that the long-term vision is to train all teachers through the residential *Jeevan Vidya Workshop* as well, in order to generate more buy-in for the co-existence model of education.

A few challenges have emerged in the initial year of implementation such as

- Varying understanding of the objective of the curriculum by teachers (Exhibit 4.8). Further, quality of implementation differed across schools, including instances of complete misinterpretation (for example, teachers preaching spiritual/religious messages instead of focusing on self-awareness)
- Informal assessments leading to implementation gaps (for example, teachers unclear whether they are facilitating correctly or whether students are learning)
- Parents are most aware of the Happiness Curriculum compared to other learning initiatives, as shown in Exhibit 4.9. So far, however, the curriculum’s ‘understanding’ in the community is nascent – only 15 percent out of the parents, who were aware of Happiness Curriculum, demonstrated familiarity with the curriculum objective. In coming years, there is significant room for the curriculum’s awareness to grow as parents prioritizing the course at home may magnify its impact further.
- Lower parental emphasis leading to curriculum getting lesser focus than academics

Exhibit 4.8

Teachers have varied understanding of Happiness Curriculum's objective

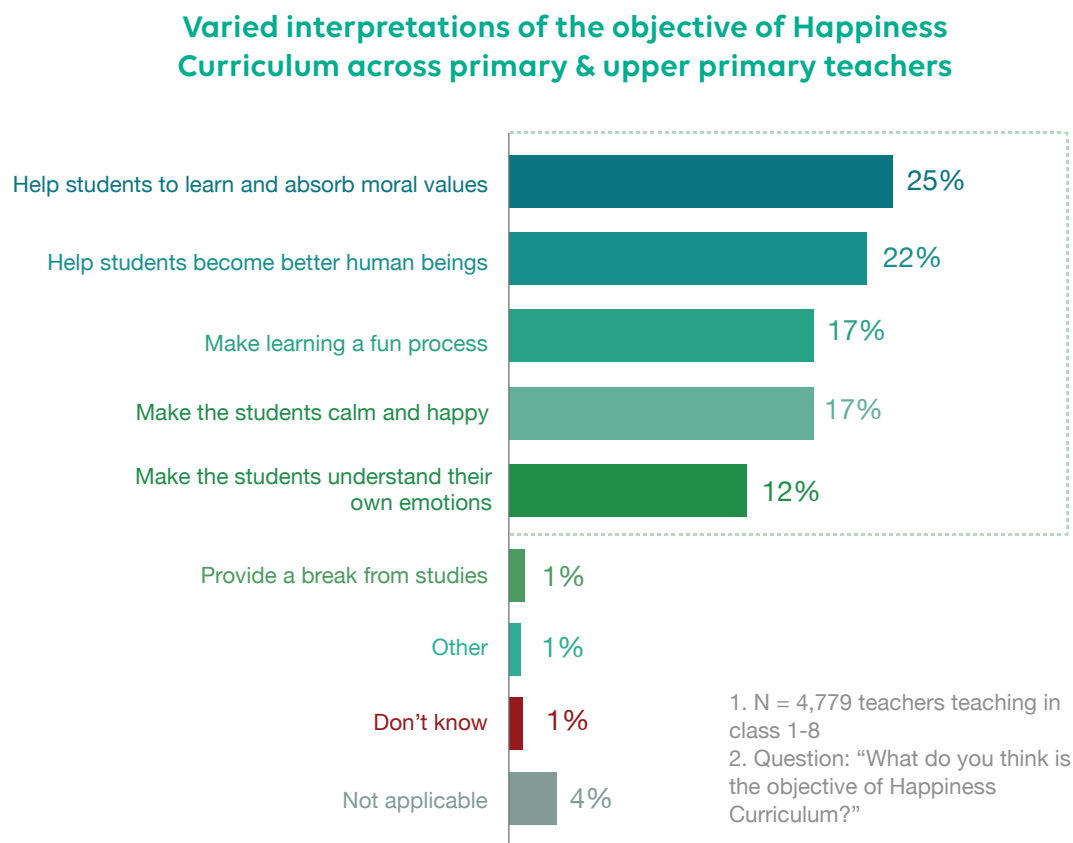
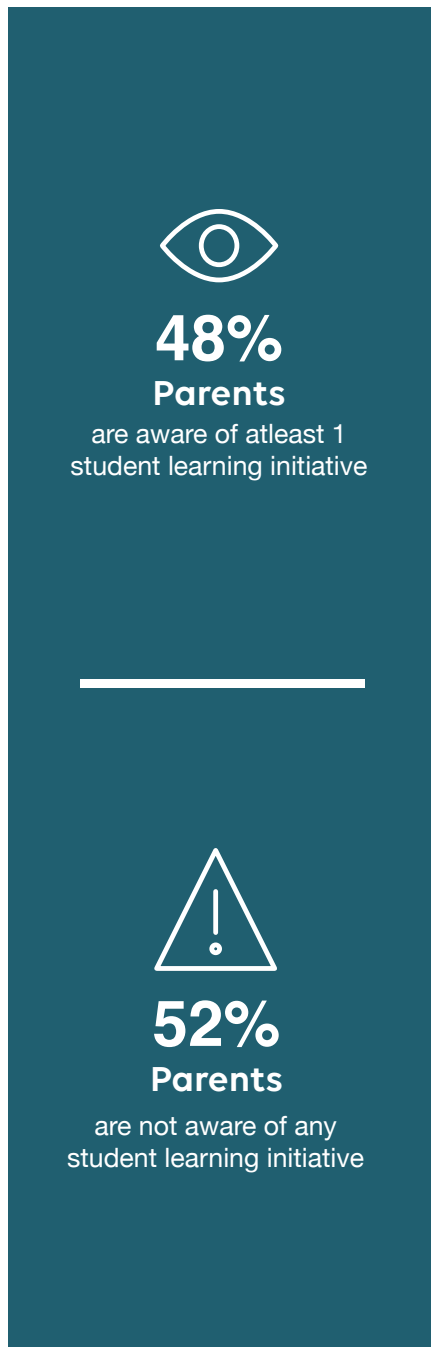
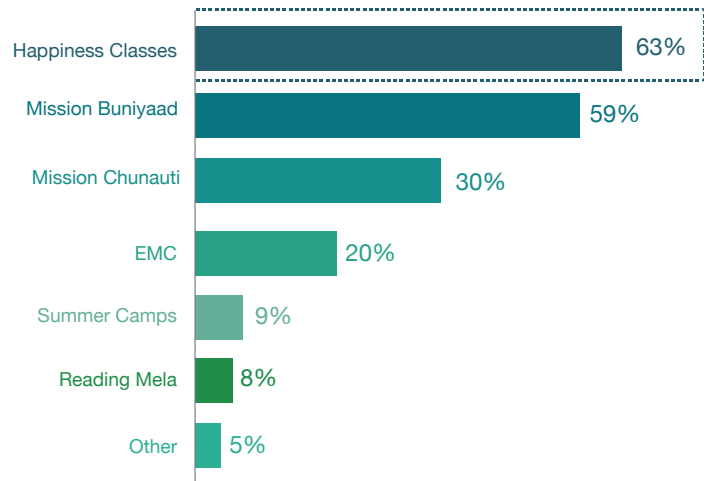


Exhibit 4.9

Among aware parents only 63% had awareness of the Happiness Curriculum fewer of its objective

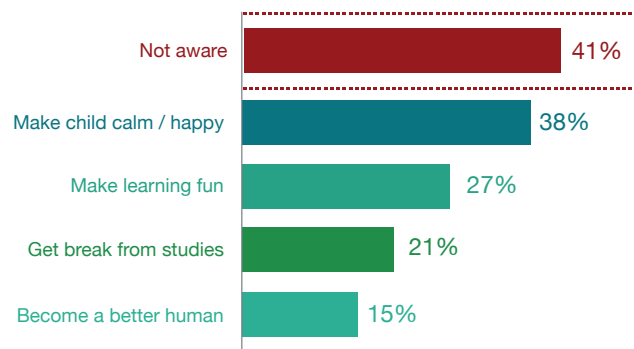


Out of parents who are aware of learning initiatives, 63% know about Happiness Curriculum



1. N = 577 parents (LHS); 279 parents who are aware of any initiatives (RHS)
2. Question: "Which Delhi govt's student learning initiative are you aware of?"

...but most parents are unclear of its objective



1. N = 175/577 parents aware of Happiness Curriculum
2. Question: "What is the objective of the Happiness Curriculum?"

4.7 Implications for other States

The Happiness Curriculum has generated a lot of national and international acclaim since its launch in 2018. It continues to be a talking point amongst governments and the education community. Critical details for other states or governments looking to implement a similar programme have been presented in a Q&A format below.

Q. Are there any pre-requisites before such an initiative can be considered in my state?

High investment and priority from senior leadership (for example, ministers/secretaries) is required to generate initial buy-in and alignment in the department and then drive the curriculum with teachers. This is because it is not related to the typical academic focus areas (for example, examinations, syllabus completion) and hence faces resistance in initial stages.

Q. Should I follow the same design in my state? Mindfulness, stories, and activities?

The short answer is 'No'. Most components of the Happiness Curriculum, including stories and activities can and should either be adapted, customised, or even replaced when being implemented in another state. In stories – characters, settings, and contexts should be customised for that state and should be presented in students' native tongue for maximum relatability.

However, some strong recommendations for 'non-negotiable design choices' emerged from our conversations with stakeholders in Delhi. These include:

- Ensuring that there is a prescribed structure for teachers, so that they don't appropriate it for their interests (including either academic or spiritual/religious messages).
- Using both mindfulness and self-expression in any designed format given their proven track records in emotional development.
- Ensuring that the message to students and teachers is about 'negotiating lifelong emotional journeys' rather than just focusing on 'what drives happiness today'.

Q. How should the implementation model be different for other states given Delhi's unique city-state context?

States should customise the size of their core team members (for example, Delhi has a core team of 16 MTs, which covers approximately 1,000 schools). This is crucial for schools to implement the initiative correctly because adoption is heavily dependent on regular in-school demonstrations. Further, regular trainings of the Core Team to inculcate understanding of the underlying design principles and objectives of the Curriculum is the most critical aspect of Happiness Curriculum implementation.

Q. How should a state decide between an intervention like Delhi's Happiness Curriculum and regular Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)/ Health and Wellness programs being run in other states?

Over the last few years, there has been a major focus on SEL across the country, with both international education fraternity and the recently launched NEP emphasizing this as a critical aspect of any student's holistic development. Only a few states have implemented/ are planning to implement SEL/ Health and Wellness programs, with varied aspects.

- Uttarakhand has been running an SEL program 'Anandam Pathyacharya'⁴⁴ modelled on Delhi's Happiness Curriculum, in over 18,000+ government schools. It has been co-created by the Labhya Foundation, which also played a crucial role in Delhi's Happiness Curriculum.
- Kerala – Under the Our Responsibility to Children (ORC) initiative,⁴⁵ Kerala aims to identify and address vulnerabilities of children facing various behavioural, emotional, learning, social and other mental health issues and integrate them to the social mainstream through enhancing life skills, nurturing strengths, addressing risks, and promoting mentoring and good parenting.
- Tamil Nadu plans to start a structured health and wellness program for all students across all government and government-aided schools which will cover several aspects ranging from emotional well-being to gender sensitivity.⁴⁶
- Gujarat – Concerned about psychological problems faced by students, the state government decided to introduce a chapter⁴⁷ on life skills for students above the age of seven in 2015.

Further, Ministry of Education, Government of India launched a School Health Program⁴⁸ under Ayushman Bharat in February 2020. Under this program, Health and Wellness centers will be setup that will teach skills ranging from emotional wellbeing, mental health, interpersonal relationships to values and maintaining healthy lifestyle.

⁴⁴ Our programmes. (n.d.). Labhya Foundation. <https://www.labhya.org/programme.php#Anandam-Pathyacharya>.

⁴⁵ Our responsibility to children (ORC). (n.d.). WCD Kerala. <https://wcd.kerala.gov.in/article.php?itid=Mzg5>

⁴⁶ UNESCO. (2019, October 30). Advancing health and well-being of adolescents in upper primary, secondary and senior secondary schools in Tamil Nadu. UNESCO. <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/newdelhi/schoolstamilnadu>.

⁴⁷ Ahmedabad Mirror. (2015, December 2). Schools to teach life skills to kids aged 8-10. <https://ahmedabadmirror.indiatimes.com/ahmedabad/education/schools-to-teach-life-skills-to-kids-aged-8-10/articleshow/50002136.cms>

⁴⁸ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource and Development. (2018). Retrieved from: https://nhm.gov.in/New_Updates_2018/NHM_Components/RMNCHA/AH/guidelines/Operational_guidelines_on_School_Health_Programme_under_Ayushman_Bharat.pdf



Delhi's Happiness Curriculum is different from other programs

Delhi's Happiness Curriculum is different from other programs in two important aspects. Firstly, mindfulness meditation and reflection-based learning are key differentiating factors in the underlying pedagogy of Happiness Curriculum. Secondly, the objective of the Happiness Curriculum is not just development of basic life skills (such as confidence, critical thinking, communication skills, etc.), which is similar to that of other states, but the Happiness Curriculum tries to re-envision education as a tool to build conscious and public-spirited citizens who can contribute meaningfully to the society and the country in the long run.

The right answer for a state will depend on the context of each state. While other states venture into designing and implementing such programs of their own, key design choices about the objective and the implementation process will remain the most pertinent questions.

5. Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum: From Job Seekers to Job Creators

5.1 Need

India's current curriculum for classes 9 to 12 is heavily weighted towards academics. Board exams, in core subjects such as Math, Science, and Language form a disproportionate focus of the four years of secondary education.

On the other hand, there is little to no recognition of the fact that the students of classes 9 to 12 are adolescents – soon to become young adults who will venture out onto many paths. Current statistics⁴⁹ indicate that around 25 to 30 percent will enrol into higher education and a large number of the remaining 70 to 75 percent will look for income generating activities (few may take up short vocational courses simultaneously).

However, in spite of NCERT's significant narrative around life skills and social emotional skills – there is barely any effort in classes 9 to 12 to ready the students for the real world that they will step into. Delhi's Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (EMC) is an attempt to equip young adults with the skills to strive and thrive in the world outside schools. **Delhi considers this intervention as the first step towards addressing rising joblessness in the country.**

“We want that while being in school, our students should start thinking in a direction where they do not have to find a job after leaving school, rather they should start thinking about their business propositions.”

- Shri. Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister, Delhi Government

5.2 Objectives

Many states have launched vocational programmes in a subset of their secondary/senior secondary schools. These programmes aim to train students on a particular trade/job category – for example, Hospitality, Information Technology or Beauty & Wellness. It is important to note that EMC is not an equivalent to these programmes. It is also important to note that the objective of EMC is not to teach every child 'how to start a business' and hence to necessarily become entrepreneurs.

“ Starting and managing your business is called entrepreneurship while entrepreneurial mindset is all about learning skills, growing and taking on a solution-centric approach while working for someone or managing one's own business.

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi Government

⁴⁹ Our programmes. (n.d.). Labhya Foundation. <https://www.labhya.org/programme.php#Anandam-Pathyacharya>.

The objective of the EMC, in reality, is to **bring a fundamental shift in the mindset of school children and inculcate entrepreneurial abilities for their all-round development**. These entrepreneurial abilities include communication, critical thinking, decision-making, etc. The hope and expectation are that through EMC, as young adults finish their secondary education and move into the outside world, they will be able to take bold decisions independently, chart their own course, and deal with the challenges that come their way with grit and equanimity. **It is also hoped that these qualities will eventually lead these young adults to become not just job-seekers but also job creators and job givers over a period of time.**

It is also important to note that the EMC (in classes 9th to 12th) acts as an analogous intervention to the Happiness Curriculum (pre-primary to class 8). As one of the EMC Committee members puts it, *“The thought was that now that a child has achieved that ‘happy’ stage, he or she would be able to look at things in a more holistic manner and develop an entrepreneurial mindset. Hence, we chose classes 9th and upwards for this”.*

5.3 Design

Overall Competency framework

The EMC curriculum is designed around a competency framework covering three broad categories, as shown in Exhibit 5.1. These categories - elucidated below – are designed with the aim to develop an entrepreneurial individual who is willing to dream and zealously pursue it with the help of right skills and attributes.



Six key executional components of the programme

These competencies (highlighted above) are executed through EMC’s course structure which has six major components. These components also reflect the experimental and experiential nature of the Curriculum.

1. Mindfulness and Thematic Units

Every student goes through a 30 to 40 minutes class every day. This class starts with five minutes of mindfulness, followed by an activity or story (based on a set of themes) from the manual, and then a discussion that involves students sharing their reflections around the story or activity. The EMC period was carved out by either reducing other periods by five minutes or reducing non-essential content from other subjects.

2. Student Specials

In addition, teachers are supposed to conduct different activities⁵⁰ such as Just A Minute (JAM), *Jaldi* Debate, Candidate Interview, Group Discussions, etc. every Saturday whereby students take up roles as participants and observers. This allows students to develop communication skills and confidence.

3. Live Entrepreneur Interactions (LEI)

Once a month, entrepreneurs are invited to tell their stories; idea is to make students learn from entrepreneurs' real-life experiences. Students find these inspirational and thought provoking.

Exhibit 5.2

Some snapshots of EMC in Delhi Government schools



4. Field project

Students of classes 11 and 12 are required to undertake field projects. Each of them will be provided with INR 1,000 as seed money – which they can use to earn profits or solve social problems (or both). These projects, done in groups or individually, will provide a real-world opportunity to practice and apply classroom learnings. Delhi has budgeted around INR 30 crore for implementing this 'Learning beyond Classrooms' component. Though a pilot was conducted in a few schools, Delhi is yet to fully implement this component in all schools.

5. Career exploration

Students understand a wide variety of career paths by interviewing both entrepreneurs and professionals about their experiences and journeys. Students maintain a copy to record these interviews and discuss their conversations in the classroom.

6. Accompanying objective-oriented TLM

Similar to the TLM of Happiness Curriculum, only teachers' manuals have been designed for EMC as well. These manuals (one each for classes 9 to 10 and 11 to 12) comprise of more than 30 units of case studies and

⁵⁰ SCERT Delhi. (2020, May 6). 6.3 JAM and Jaldi Debate - Student Special Activities [Video]. YouTube. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pECp7arpDoo&list=PLObo2PUf-VYMW8eq06xKzGF-t2QVLdFvQandindex=17&dt=0&andab_channel=SCERTDelhi

activities spread across more than 17 different themes of entrepreneurial mindset, some of which have been shown in Exhibit 5.3. ‘Dream Big’, ‘Recognise Opportunity’, ‘Planning, Listening, Collaboration’, ‘Bounce Back from Failures’, etc. are few of the chapters. Delhi is preparing for EMC 2.0 which would see introduction of one manual for each class (9 to 12).

Exhibit 5.3 Snippet of the EMC Teacher’s Manual

**4.5 गतिविधि:
फिर बॉक्स
(भाग-2)**

सामूहिक कार्य
5-6 विद्यार्थी

सामग्री
कामज़ एवं पेन

उद्देश्य :
विद्यार्थी अपने डर से जुड़े मूल कारणों पर चर्चा करेंगे।

कैसे करें

- कक्षा को 5-6 के छोटे समूहों में विभाजित करें।
- बॉक्स में दिए गए पृष्ठों को आपस में मिलाकर, प्रत्येक समूह को 5 या 6 पृष्ठ दिए जाएंगे जो कक्षा में किसी के भी द्वारा लिखे हो सकते हैं।
- अब प्रत्येक समूह पृष्ठों में लिखे गए डर के मूल कारण पर चर्चा करेगा और विशेष रूप से यह पहचानने की कोशिश करेगा कि लोगों में यह डर कैसे पैदा होता है।
 - यह एक बेहद संवेदनशील विषय है, जिस पर बात करते समय उसकी गंभीरता को भी बनाए रखा जाए।
- चर्चा को निश्चित दिशा देने के लिए शिक्षक चर्चा का प्रारूप बना सकते हैं। उदाहरण के लिए, अगर एक पृष्ठों में लिखा है कि, “मैं से डरता हूँ”, तो समूह की चर्चा इस दिशा में हो सकती है:
 - “लोग से डरते हैं क्योंकि।”
 - इस प्रारूप को विद्यार्थियों की सहूलियत के लिए बोर्ड पर लिखा जा सकता है।
- सभी समूहों की चर्चा होने के बाद कक्षा फिर से इकट्ठा होगी। प्रत्येक समूह का कोई एक विद्यार्थी संक्षिप्त में बताएगा कि किस प्रकार के डर सामने आए और डर के किन मूल कारणों को समूह पहचान सका।
- हमें याद रहे कि किसी भी हल की ओर जाना इस गतिविधि का मकसद नहीं है। यह समझना जरूरी है कि डर एक स्वाभाविक प्रक्रिया है।

**11.3
गतिविधि:
दुविधा और निर्णय**

उद्देश्य :

- विद्यार्थी निर्णय लेने के तीन चरणों के बारे में सोचना सीखेंगे – उपलब्ध विकल्प, निर्णय लेने के कारण तथा निर्णय का प्रभाव (स्वयं और दूसरों पर)।
- विद्यार्थी समझेंगे कि हर स्थिति के कई पहलू होते हैं तथा प्रत्येक पहलू का अपना महत्व होता है और उन्हीं पहलूओं को देखते हुए हम अपनी स्थिति के अनुसार उचित निर्णय लेते हैं।

सामूहिक कार्य
10-12 विद्यार्थी

सामग्री
—

शिक्षक नोट :

- गतिविधि करते हुए विद्यार्थियों को ध्यान दिलाएँ कि कोई भी निर्णय सही या गलत नहीं है। उन्हें केवल निर्णय के विकल्पों, कारणों और प्रभावों के बारे में सोचना है।
- यदि ऐसा लगे कि विद्यार्थी कोई विकल्प केवल इसलिए चुन रहे हैं कि वह सामाजिक तौर पर अच्छा या सही माना जाता है, तो उन्हें दूसरे विकल्पों का विरलेषण करने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करें। विद्यार्थियों को याद दिलाएँ कि वास्तविक जीवन में सामाजिक स्वीकृति के अलावा दूसरी कई बातें हमारे निर्णयों पर असर करती हैं।

Pedagogy and the role of the teacher

Learning by experience, inspiration, and reflection are the three cornerstones of the underlying pedagogy. The different course components outlined above are designed in line with this pedagogy whereby students learn by doing projects (*experience*), interact with entrepreneurs (*inspiration*), and share observations and experiences (*reflection*).

Exhibit 5.4

Various activities undertaken as part of the EMC



Hence the transformed role of the teacher in an EMC course requires them to be a guide and a facilitator inside and outside the classroom. Teachers are only supposed to act as a ‘nudge-factor’ to keep the students involved and motivated in the course. Typically, in an EMC classroom, the teacher would introduce a new theme or topic for the day and then use the accompanying material (story or activity) to initiate a discussion among students. Teachers are supposed to guide and mentor students for other course components such as career exploration and field projects (for example, ensuring that list of persons to be interviewed [prepared by students] is diverse).

5.4 Implementation

Given that the programme has been active only for a year, we will speak extensively about the design and the launch process for EMC - both of which were extremely involved processes. The design and launch of EMC took Delhi nearly five months during which they tried various aspects of the curriculum and piloted briefly inside schools. There are four key pillars to the design and implementation of EMC:



Core Expert Team: Delhi had already built a team for Happiness Curriculum and, in a similar vein, a 40-member committee comprising SCERT and NCERT teachers working on entrepreneurship, MTs, and several volunteer organisations/individuals having requisite expertise, was set up. Udhyan Learning Foundation, The Global Education and Leadership Foundation (TGELF), Dhriti: The Courage Within, Alohomora Education Foundation, Wadhwani Foundation and Kshamtalaya Foundation formed an integral part of the core team. These organisations were instrumental in designing the curriculum, developing programme SOPs and guidelines, and training of trainers. MTs primarily helped to develop the content, ensure content-class mapping, and conduct content trials and trainings. The team devised its own set of processes to work efficiently and played an important role in both design and implementation – visiting schools as observers during the pilot phase.



Initial Pilots and Independent Impact Study: Delhi undertook more than 50 trials and two pilots – to test the efficacy of initial ideas and content and the entire curriculum across 24 schools and engaged an agency for conducting a phase wise process assessment study soon after launch. The study emphasised on the need for improved understanding of EMC’s objective among teachers and their capacity building. There was an initial pushback from students – a section of students and teachers perceived the course to be about skills related to ‘starting a business’ – who did not find the course aligned with their career aspirations. Such specific learnings from these pilots helped the team in modifying their approach to suit the needs of the students. For example, the course content was reduced, and messaging was modified to explicitly stress that EMC is to ‘build entrepreneurship ability rather than skills’ and thus has relevance to all career aspirations.



Personalised Teacher Trainings: Delhi conducted EMC trainings in a cascaded manner starting with the training of 300 teachers for the initial pilot. Once the programme was ready to be launched, a one-hour module on EMC training was included as part of regular teacher trainings. These trainings, conducted by MTs, captured two important aspects – ‘understanding of the content’ and ‘understanding of the transaction methodology’ – given that the teachers were completely unfamiliar

with the nuances of entrepreneurship. Further, EMC being a child-centred curriculum, the teachers were required to take a backseat and only act as facilitators to keep the students involved and motivated. Delhi also organised large scale orientations for all EMC teachers (around 18,000) to distribute the teachers' manual and convey the most essential aspects of EMC. Delhi has planned a more vigorous short duration training for the EMC teachers in the coming months.



Strong Leadership Commitment: Under the overall leadership of the CM, the Deputy Chief Minister (DCM) was deeply involved from the initial stages of building the curriculum, steering early decisions, and spearheading final reviews to ensuring alignment among key stakeholders and building a belief in the field played an instrumental role in making EMC a reality.

5.5 Impact

There are a few challenges to articulating the impact of EMC. Firstly, the programme, with its unique pedagogical nature - experiential learning and no written evaluations - does not intend to measure impact in terms of learning outcomes. Secondly, the programme has only been in the field for half a year and its real impact can only be measured through the long-term career trajectories of students. However, we strongly believe that the programme is already beginning to take root and show some initial impact that could potentially lead to positive results going forward.

"These classes also help in increasing our concentration and help us study better to achieve our goal."

- Student, Delhi government school

"Attending EMC classes has made me believe that 'I can do it'."

- Student, Delhi government school

"EMC is a very useful curriculum where we are encouraged to think big and start our own initiative"

- Student, Delhi government school

Conversations with students revealed that EMC has helped them with their academics and that they have become more confident and aware of the various choices after school.

“ Through EMC, students have developed a sense of self-belief and have begun to foster aspirations regarding their future

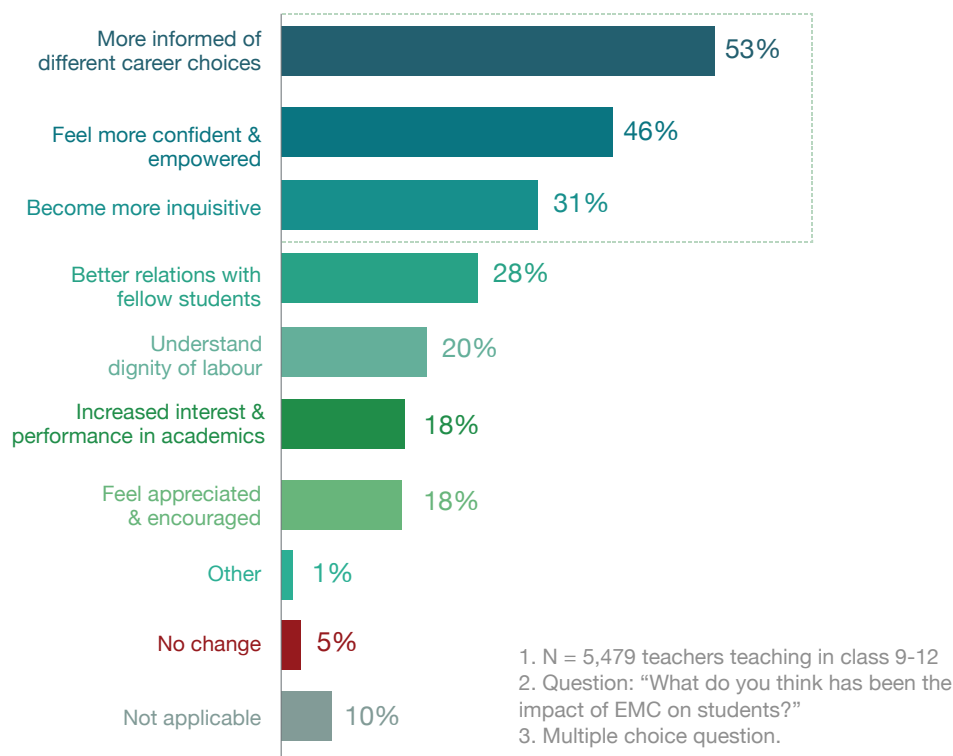
- Mentor Teacher, Delhi government school

In our survey of teachers, 30 percent teachers cited ‘Introduction of new curriculum like Happiness Curriculum and EMC’ as the most impactful learning initiative across classes.

Exhibit 5.5

Impact of EMC as reported by teachers

EMC made students aware of career choices, more confident and inquisitive.



85 percent⁵¹ of teachers feel that EMC has had a tangible impact on students, as shown in Exhibit 5.5.

Further, 53 percent teachers stated that students are now more informed of different career choices and 46 percent feel that students are now more confident and empowered. 31 percent teachers also reported that students have become more inquisitive i.e. they have started asking more questions in the class.

⁵¹ Enterprise syllabus livens up classrooms in Delhi. (2019). Civil Society Magazine. <https://www.civilsocietyonline.com/education/delhi-govts-enterprise-syllabus-livens-up-classrooms/>

5.6 Challenges

Delhi launched the EMC as an innovative experiment with a novel design thesis, incorporating learnings from the field in a regular manner. However, few challenges remain.

So far, enthusiasm around EMC has not converted into required attention from principals and teachers alike. There are two major reasons which have led to relative de-prioritization of EMC in schools. Firstly, teachers feel ill-equipped and not fully capable of teaching a course on entrepreneurial ability, which captures skills such as risk taking, critical thinking, recognizing opportunities, bouncing back from failure, etc., that are not relatable for them. It has been observed that teachers often resort to the ‘academic way of teaching’ in an EMC class as well. Further, in an independent survey by ID Insight⁵², only 38 percent teachers said that “they know of avenues to receive coaching and training”. Secondly, FGDs revealed that in higher classes, teachers are held responsible for class results, especially in classes 10 and 12, and are thus more occupied and concerned about academics, leaving less room for a non-evaluated course like EMC.

Another challenge has been that schools are unable to figure out the implementation of ‘beyond the classroom’ EMC components – career exploration and field projects – leaving students in disarray. This has resulted in many schools even resisting the implementation of these components. However, Delhi is devising EMC 2.0 to cater to these specific challenges by providing different ways to schools and students for implementing these components.

Finally, larger classrooms with more than 40 students limit a teacher’s ability to individually focus on every child in the classroom – a key requirement of the EMC. Only 10 percent of the students ask questions (an independent study⁵²) – which is far lower than the objective of two-way classroom interaction.



Teachers are less bothered about EMC and more concerned about the academic syllabus.

- Principal, Delhi government school

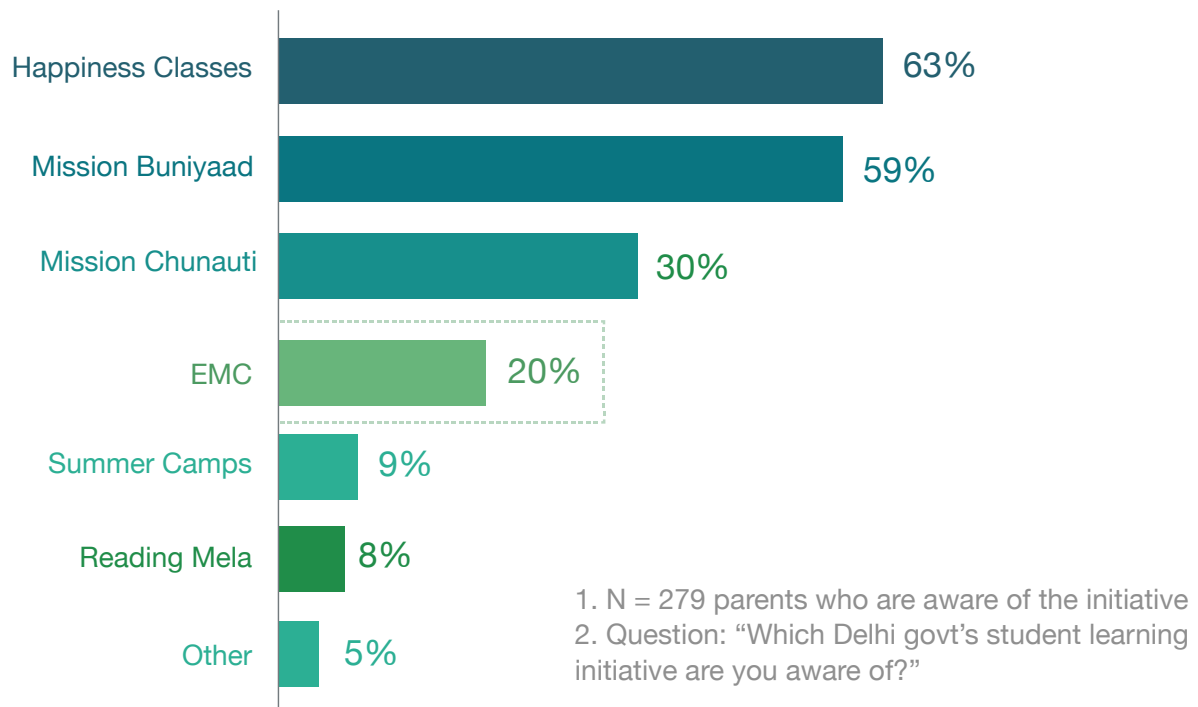


⁵² Strengthening implementation of the Entrepreneurship Mindset Curriculum (2020). ID Insight. Retrieved from <https://echidnagiving.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2020-02-07 EMC PE Results revised-FINAL.pdf>

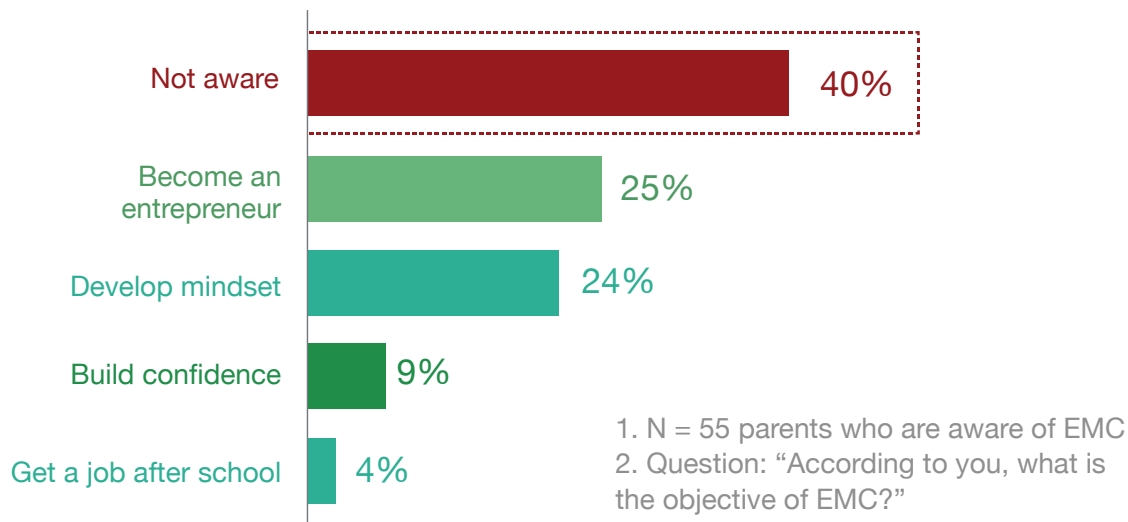
Exhibit 5.6

Among aware parents, only 20% knew of EMC, most of whom were unaware of its objective

Out of 'aware' parents, only 20% were aware of EMC...



... and most are unclear of its objective



Our parent survey revealed that majority of parents are not aware of the EMC. Further, only 24 percent of the parents who were 'aware' demonstrated familiarity with the curriculum objective, as shown in Exhibit 5.6. In the coming years, there is significant room for the curriculum's awareness to grow as parents prioritizing the course at home may magnify its impact further.

5.7 Implications for other states

Building on learnings from Delhi, other states too could design and implement a curriculum along the lines of the EMC. Given that lack of employability and joblessness are important issues across the country, an initiative to build entrepreneurial ability in school students could be a step in the right direction. States could begin by understanding the critical implementation elements (the four bullets in Section 5.4) and building the foundation for key success factors.

Q. What were the key success factors in Delhi?

Pilot and feedback loop: Delhi, understanding the challenges in launching a novel curriculum, conducted multiple trials, and undertook two pilots at both ideation and implementation stages. Learnings from these trials helped the team devise its course and counter issues at an early stage.

Clear and concise communication: The distinctive nature of the curriculum compared to other entrepreneurship courses made it imperative for the government to clearly convey the underlying distinctiveness to all the stakeholders. Communication and trainings were revised to reflect correct understanding of the EMC's objective.

Dedicated curriculum space: EMC was introduced as part of the main curriculum rather than being included as an extra-curricular activity. This ensured that schools would accord required priority to the course.

Transaction methodology: 'Facilitation' is at the core of classroom interaction in an EMC class. Recognising that teachers were accustomed to the age-old ways of one-way teaching, specially designed training on 'Facilitation' was given to all EMC teachers.

Student specials: Different activities are conducted for students every Saturday – is an integral component of Delhi's EMC as it is the primary tool for making students feel comfortable and getting them to speak in the class.

Q. How should a state decide between an intervention like Delhi's EMC and the Entrepreneurship/Skill-based programs being run in other states?

Courses on entrepreneurship already form a key part of the curriculum in several higher education programs in India. Over time, there is a growing consensus on the need for instilling entrepreneurial skills from the school level itself. Design of Delhi's EMC has been detailed in this chapter however, it is worthwhile to explore similar programs in other states as well. There are only a handful of states who have taken some steps towards developing/ implementing such a program.

- Kerala⁵³ – The Kerala government has a 'Student Entrepreneurship Policy' for schools and plans to include entrepreneurship in the school curriculum with the help of state-run Kerala Academy for Skills Excellence (KASE).
- Odisha⁵⁴ – Odisha is planning to introduce a chapter on entrepreneurship and innovation in schools and university syllabi to help promote a culture of entrepreneurship and build ecosystem for startups.
- Haryana⁵⁵ plans to introduce entrepreneurship as part of the State School Syllabus under Entrepreneur and Start up Policy 2017 to give students a general introduction to entrepreneurship and skills needed.
- Maharashtra and Assam⁵⁶ plan to initiate curriculums based on Delhi's EMC.
- Uttar Pradesh⁵⁷ – The State has chalked out a plan to introduce 'start-ups' as a subject in colleges and universities and offer one year's 'internship leave' during school. The aim is to create more young entrepreneurs in the state.

The key question for states to answer is whether they want to develop a broader entrepreneurship *mindset* that applies to all students pursuing any career in life or prioritise the development of entrepreneurship-specific hard skills in a more targeted group of students. Delhi's EMC is a unique attempt to define the former approach. For states adopting the latter approach, there is merit in looking at financial skills, market research as well as structural levers like funding, linkage to incubators, etc., which will provide the means to students to start a venture.

Given that it has been only about six to eight months of in-school EMC implementation in Delhi, the next few years will provide valuable lessons for other states.

⁵³ The Hindu. (2018, April 30). Entrepreneurship to be made part of school curriculum. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Kochi/entrepreneurship-to-be-made-part-of-school-curriculum/article23722761.ece>.

⁵⁴ Hindustan Times. (2019, July 2). Odisha to include startup and entrepreneurship in school, college syllabi. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/odisha-to-include-startup-and-entrepreneurship-in-school-college-syllabi/story-qxHMA6Gmhrw0OM54QFQJpN.html>.

⁵⁵ Government of Haryana. (2017). Entrepreneur and Startup Policy 2017. Retrieved from: https://startupharyana.gov.in/files/startup-policy_final_28th-sep.pdf.

⁵⁶ Daijiworld. (2020). Assam too will have entrepreneurship mindset like Delhi: Sisodia. Retrieved from: <https://www.daijiworld.com/news/newsDisplay.aspx?newsID=681962>.

⁵⁷ Screen Print India. (2020). UP Govt. to start 'Startups' as a curriculum in universities and colleges. Retrieved from: <https://www.screenprintindia.com/up-govt-to-start-startups-as-a-curriculum-in-universities-and-colleges/>.

6. Infrastructure: Strengthening the Building Blocks

6.1 Need

Due to a lack of land and space in Delhi, overcrowding in Delhi government schools was a common phenomenon prior to 2015. Delhi government schools' Student-Classroom-Ratio (SCR) in 2014-15 was reported to be 51 – one of the highest in the country. In comparable cities such as Bombay and Chandigarh, the SCR was only 41 and 46 respectively.⁵⁸ Some schools in Delhi were even reported to have an SCR of 125 to 150. In addition to this, the existing infrastructure in these schools also needed upgradation – many schools reported having dilapidated buildings, a lack of benches and blackboards for students and teachers to use, and an overall lack of maintenance, security, and sanitation. Private schools in contrast, especially in the context of Delhi being the national capital, often boasted of elite and high-quality infrastructure such as high-tech ICT laboratories, state-of-the-art sports arenas, and digital learning tools in classrooms. Delhi was cognizant of the fact that bridging this clear gap in the quality of environment that schools provided to students would go a long way in instilling a sense of dignity among students, parents, and teachers alike.

There was no easy fix to this situation. The expenditure on infrastructure in 2014-15 was only INR 80 crore – a mere one percent of the total education budget. Lack of autonomy of school funds and a shortage of labor at the school level for day-to-day infrastructure maintenance also left Heads of Schools over-burdened with both administrative and academic duties.

6.2 Objective

Delhi understood that the success of their education interventions would be dependent on the motivation of all stakeholders involved. Therefore, there was a need to provide every stakeholder with a respectable environment to work in and instil in them a sense of pride, dignity, and commitment. Government schools would no longer be inferior to private schools but offer equivalent or even better facilities than those private schools offered. Thus, several initiatives were launched that aimed at improving school infrastructure with the following multi-fold objective:

○ **Improve SCR in government schools**

Classrooms must be designed to be optimally occupied and offer comfortable conditions that does not impede but supports students' learning. Teachers must be able to teach without hassle and focus on every student individually without having constraints of space or resources.

○ **Create a safe, comfortable, and inviting learning environment**

Overall school environment must be improved by offering state-of-the-art infrastructure and reliable security, sanitation, and maintenance services.

○ **Instil a sense of pride and dignity among government school teachers, students, and parents**

The stigma that government schools are inferior to private schools must be removed. Every student, parent, and teacher, irrespective of background or economic status, must feel proud to be associated with a government school and be motivated towards education irrespective of their role.

⁵⁸ Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India. (n.d.). U-DISE Dashboard. Retrieved from <https://dashboard.udiseplus.gov.in/>.

“

We decided that there will be green boards instead of black boards in every school. The class rooms and bench-desks will be sleek and modern. The water coolers will be state of the art. We invested double the money to ensure that every piece of infrastructure was not of usual quality but the best possible quality. Do you understand why? So many government schools have an elite private school right next to it. What does this do to the self-esteem of children? We were very clear that we need to ensure dignity and equality - Government students have to feel that they are equal to any private school student even if they come from a very poor and underprivileged background.

- Education task force official, Delhi government

”

6.3 Design

In order to realise its vision of high-quality infrastructure in every single school, Delhi increased its annual infrastructural spending from INR 80 crore in 2014-15 to greater than INR 600 crore in both 2015-16 and 2016-17. Delhi's vision of infrastructure overhaul prioritised a few key elements, as summarized in Exhibit 6.1.

Exhibit 6.1

Key elements in Delhi's vision for infrastructure overhaul



Overhaul of school infrastructure: Interventions across academic and non-academic areas.

- New classrooms and buildings
- Re-modelling of existing buildings
- State-of-the-art extra-curricular facilities



Decentralized decision-making: Autonomy over infrastructure design and expenditure.



Dedicated personnel: Estate managers and specialist agencies for sanitation and security hired.

Overhaul of school infrastructure: Interventions across academic and non-academic areas

1. New classrooms and buildings

The building of new classrooms and buildings in Delhi's government schools was done in a phased manner, as summarized in Table 6.1. The construction of 8,000 rooms was carried out in 148 schools in 2017. These schools, identified by their adverse SCR and ease of construction (given land and resource availability), were termed 'Priority One' Schools. In 2018, the construction of 12,000 more rooms was commissioned by Delhi across 242 schools. Public Works Department (PWD) was handed over the responsibility of construction of these additional rooms. These rooms included not just classrooms but other rooms such as toilets and multi-purpose halls as well. A total budget of INR 2,900 crore was allocated to Priority Two projects.

Table 6.1
Phased construction of classrooms in Delhi government school

	Prior to 2015	Priority 1	Priority 2	End State
Total number of rooms	24157	+8213	+12748	45118
Total number of classrooms	17387	+4780	+9981	32148
Total number of school buildings	706	+25	+30 (under construction)	731+30 (under construction)

2. Re-modelling of existing schools

The re-modelling of schools began with the complete makeover of 54 'model' schools in Delhi. These model schools were designed to be best-in-class in line with international standards. Not only was basic infrastructure such as buildings, toilets, and classrooms renovated, but these schools were also provided with high-tech infrastructure such as projectors, digital boards, air-conditioned auditoriums, and conference rooms to name a few. Some schools were even provided with advanced sports infrastructure such as indoor badminton courts.

Met with the success of these model schools, Delhi understood that true change will occur only if infrastructure was revamped at a larger scale across all the government schools in Delhi. A major infrastructure overhaul exercise was launched across majority of the remaining government schools in the city. The most important initiatives are detailed below:

Renovation of existing buildings and classrooms

Earlier dilapidated and worn out, these schools' buildings were whitewashed and given a fresh coat of paint. Gates and school boundaries were also strengthened to improve security. Vitrified/graphic tiles were installed in the corridors, staircases, and classrooms.

Ensuring supply of basic services such as electricity and water

Basic sanitation and electricity were ensured in every part of the school. Existing toilets were renovated, plumbing fixed, drinking water provided, and rooms furnished with adequate electrical fittings such as lights, fans, and plug points.

Upgradation of academic infrastructure

Delhi spent special efforts on providing top-quality academic infrastructure in their government schools. Wooden desks were replaced with spacious and comfortable metal desks and chairs, as shown in Exhibit 6.2. Despite challenges in sourcing these high-quality desks, they remained a priority for the department as they were found to be a key factor in stimulating student motivation. Windows were upgraded and grilled to ensure safety. Blackboards that had lost their sheen were replaced with higher quality green-boards.

3. State-of-the-art extra-curricular facilities

Libraries

Libraries were introduced in the Primary wings of 450 Sarvodaya schools in Delhi. Two kinds of libraries were established:

- a. Separate room libraries:** Libraries were provisioned in separate rooms in 200 schools.
- b. Classroom libraries:** Books were stored in a storeroom in the school and were brought into the classrooms during the library session.

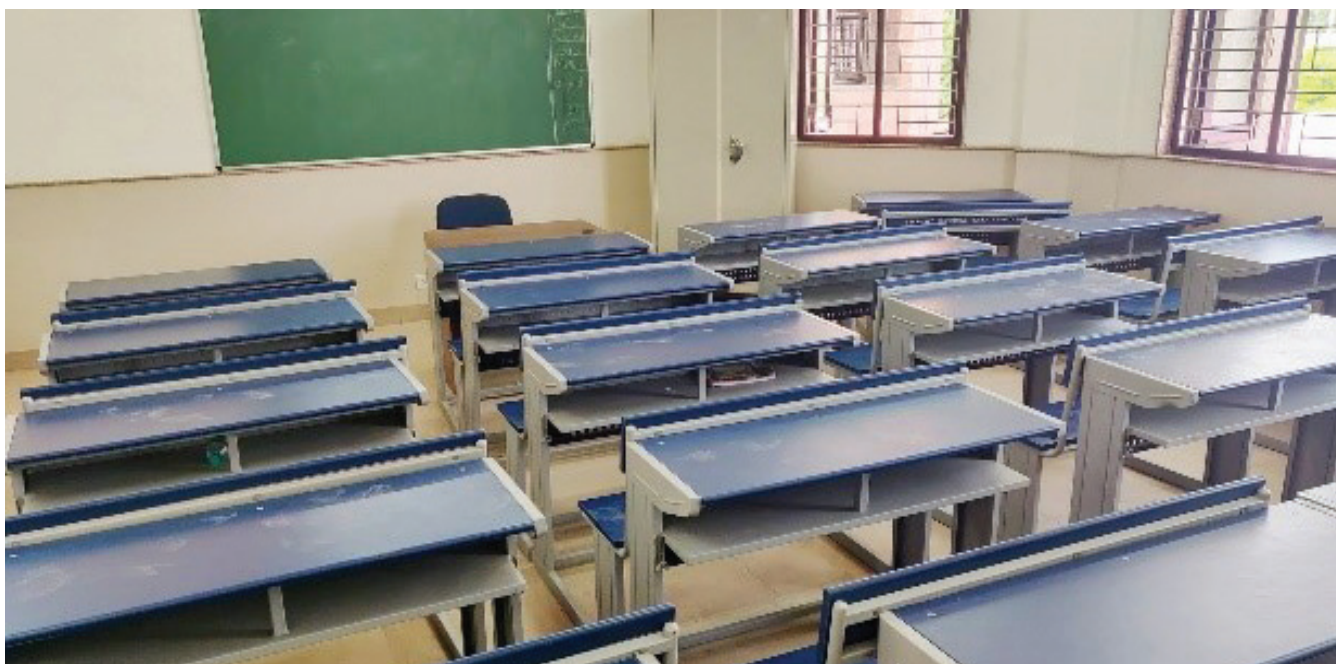
Each of these libraries had carefully selected books considering the learning levels of students. Books were grouped into six levels depending on the learning level. Every student was encouraged to take a book back home without worrying about the condition of the book. Teachers were also trained to utilise library period as a potent teaching tool.

Sports

In addition to academics, encouraging sports was also one of Delhi's primary focus areas. In order to enable the same, Delhi had introduced several state-of-the-art sports initiatives in schools across the state. Initiatives included full-fledged sports complexes and stadiums with swimming pool and athletic track, football fields, cricket fields, hockey turfs, and even less popular sports such as shooting ranges.

Exhibit 6.2

Wooden desks and chairs replaced with modern metal ones



Decentralised decision-making: Autonomy over infrastructure expenditure and design

Government infrastructure interventions are often challenging to plan and execute due to the high expenditure and red tape involved. Approval of such funds have traditionally been driven top-down resulting in severe delays in implementation. Decentralisation of decision-making simplifies red tape, resulting in quicker approvals and speed of execution.

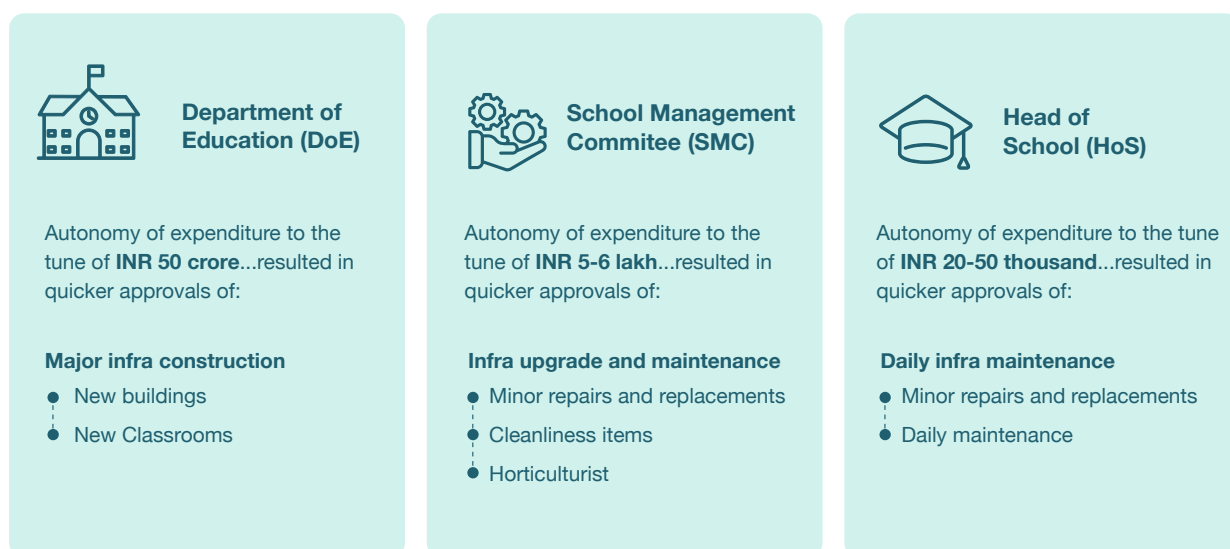
Delhi employed decentralised decision-making by providing a greater degree of autonomy over infrastructure expenditure at all levels. This decentralised model resulted in two crucial advantages detailed below:

1. Quicker execution of construction and repair work as a result of quicker approvals

A greater degree of autonomy was provided at each level of the education system: Department of Education (Secretary and Directors) at the highest level, SMCs at the mid-level and HoS at the ground-level. This is detailed in Exhibit 6.3.

Exhibit 6.3

Increased financial powers provided across each level of education system



For expenditure greater than INR 50,000, all that HoS had to do was to identify areas of improvement and raise a request for an extraordinary repair on a Management Information System (MIS) portal which was approved by the DDE, tracked and implemented by the PWD. Earlier, for every expense greater than INR 5,000, the HoS had to obtain clearance from the DDE.

2. Collaborative process of infrastructure design between HoS and PWD Engineers

The autonomy of expenditure provided the school HoS, Estate Manager, and PWD engineers at the ground-level, the freedom to modify and customise the design of infrastructure for every school based on its requirements. Even the PWD engineers were given a greater degree of freedom and were encouraged to think out of the box and come up with innovative ideas to enhance the infrastructure of these schools. They started taking interest and pitched novel ideas to the HoS. This resulted in a collaborative environment between the engineers, HoS, and Estate Managers thereby motivating them to work towards the betterment of school infrastructure. For example, engineers created specially designed classrooms for nursery sections with cheerful designs on doors and colourful tiles.



Our engineers did not do different things, rather they did things differently.

- Former Engineer-in-Chief, PWD



3. Dedicated personnel for infrastructure maintenance, sanitation, and security

HoS earlier oversaw the end to end administration and running of a school. Given this broad span of responsibilities, HoS often deprioritised improvement or maintenance of infrastructure as they had other pressing activities to tend to. This division of focus and effort also compromised their work on core academic activities such as teacher evaluation and student tracking.

Dedicated Estate Managers for maintenance

Each school was sanctioned a dedicated Estate Manager aimed at reducing the burden of administrative work on HoS. The main responsibilities of the Estate Manager include:

- a. Maintenance of school infrastructure and reports on the same
- b. Payment of electricity and other bills related to the school
- c. Security of students, staff, and school assets
- d. Project management and monitoring of new construction activity in school

While the profile and background of the Estate Managers were vetted by the Caretaking Branch (CTB), the hiring and firing of the Estate Manager was completely left to respective HoS. Estate Managers were often retired servicemen.

Specialised agencies for sanitation and security

Dedicated third-party agencies were hired to provide sanitation and security in the school. Full-time safai karamcharis were centrally recruited by the CTB and stationed at schools depending on the size and requirement of the school. Their daily activities were monitored by Estate Managers. Moreover, the safai karamcharis were treated with dignity – salaries were hiked to a respectable INR 15,000 per month and new uniforms were issued to them.

Delhi schools also had a separate security agency which staffed guards in the schools. Now that there was a guard present 24x7 at the school premises, parents were not worried about sending their children to schools anymore. Girls' schools even had a lady security guard deputed in the school to ensure the safety of girl children. In addition to this, Delhi started installing CCTV cameras in every classroom across 728 government schools in 2019, as shown in Exhibit 6.4.

Exhibit 6.4

CCTV installed in various government schools



“

I am pleasantly surprised with the improvements in security measures. Guards mandatorily ask for Aadhar card before allowing any outsider to enter the school premises and CCTV cameras have been installed. I have no tension regarding sending my girl child to school.

- Parent, Delhi government school

”



6.4 Implementation

Major works outsourced to specialist organisations like PWD and Delhi Tourism and Transportation Development Corporation (DTTDC)

Construction work was outsourced to third-party ‘construction experts’ such as the PWD and DTTDC. As DTTDC had expertise in the beautification and renovation of existing buildings using high-quality fittings, they were made in charge of re-modelling assignment while PWD did most of the construction of new buildings.

There are clear advantages of scale in having a specialist engineering team like PWD in-charge of construction. PWD possesses expertise in carrying out huge construction projects and have the technical know-how to standardise processes across schools. This made large-scale implementation extremely efficient. For example, construction of new classrooms often needed to be done on top of the existing school building which required a multi-step process of research, survey, planning, procurement, and then construction. These processes were all easily standardised and rolled out across all schools.

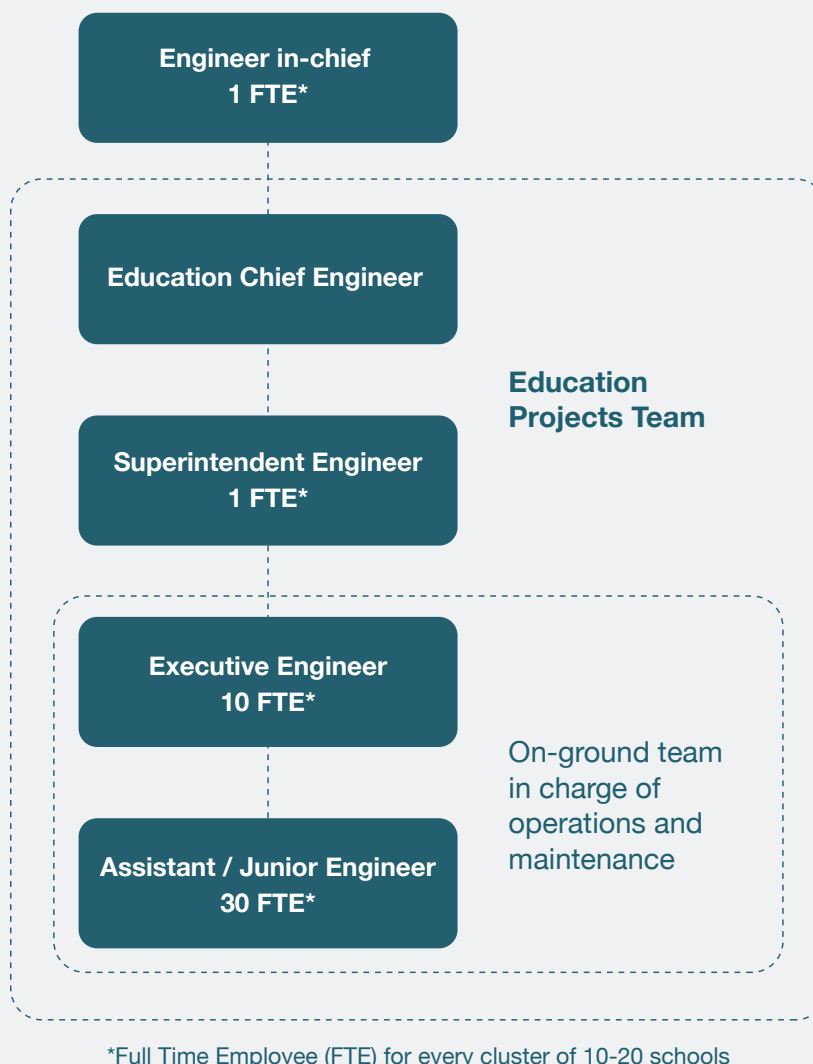
Dedicated PWD team for school infrastructure

PWD set up a dedicated ‘Education Projects team’ that was made in-charge of all of Delhi’s education infrastructure initiatives, the composition of which has been shown in Exhibit 6.5. This team was stationed in their respective schools and would work exclusively on Department of Education projects.

Every cluster of 10 to 20 schools was mapped to a team of 30 Assistant/Junior Engineers and 10 Executive Engineers with one Superintendent Engineer overseeing the entire cluster as indicated in Exhibit 6.5. Their roles and responsibilities included end-to-end maintenance of all existing school infrastructure. As they were stationed full-time in these schools, a sense of ownership started developing among these engineers. The same team worked dedicatedly on a single project across construction, operation, and maintenance inspired ownership and accountability of project. This contributed greatly to the strength, stability, and longevity of these interventions.

In order to operationalise this dedicated education projects team, the PWD underwent a major restructuring exercise, where promotions at higher levels were expedited and Junior Engineers were hired on contract to fill vacancies.

Exhibit 6.5
Structure of 'Education projects team'



Experts hired contractually and laterally



Architect team: There was an emphasis on developing aesthetically pleasing schools. Professional architects were hired to design the building architecture of Delhi's government schools. These architect teams had specialised expertise in educational infrastructure, and they provided detailed architectural plans of new school buildings after surveying the site. This included the layout for spacious school buildings, introduction of greenery and lawns, and construction of open spaces within the school. Based on the inputs from the architect team, the PWD would plan for the optimal sourcing of raw material.



Creative team: A creative team consisting of young design and architecture graduates was recruited by PWD for a contract of two years. They were hired to provide inputs on how to further enhance school infrastructure in an innovative manner and inject a creative element during the construction of these schools. Examples of creative inputs included beautification of walls using murals and paintings, using inviting colour schemes on walls, cheerful design on doors, etc.

Exhibit 6.6

A modern Delhi government school



In addition to the architect and creative teams, there were expert personnel hired for maintenance (Estate Managers), sanitation (Safai Karamcharis), and security (Guards), and a dedicated quality assurance team which will be detailed in the following section.

Multi-channel monitoring implemented

Monitoring is often the most important success factor in the implementation of any initiative. Close day-to-day monitoring ensures both quality and adherence to timelines, which are always a challenge in large projects. Delhi opted for a multi-channel monitoring mechanism:

Direct monitoring by Education Minister

A WhatsApp group was created with all DDEs, DoE officials, Estate Managers, and the DCM. Concerns could therefore be raised by any stakeholder to the highest level directly which were often acted upon the very next day. The DCM also chaired weekly reviews with PWD officials and visited schools where there were significant delays.

Dedicated CM fellow to look after day to day monitoring

A dedicated CM Fellow was appointed to visit schools to physically inspect status of construction. The PWD were also required to submit weekly school-wise reports detailing the status of every piece of construction and timeline expected.

Monitoring by Estate Manager

The Estate Manager was the monitoring front of the school and would liaise with all the PWD officials to ensure that everything was being done according to expected timelines. The Estate Manager was also provided a mobile application which could be used to flag infrastructure or maintenance related issues.

Monitoring by SMCs

SMCs would conduct frequent inspection of schools and report the construction status. SMCs were also present in WhatsApp groups along with the HoS and Estate Managers, thereby providing a timely redressal avenue for challenges faced in terms of cooperation among various stakeholders, construction snags, etc.

Monitoring by PWD

The PWD had a regular engineering team that also monitored the progress and mobilisation of workforce while controlling the pace of work and quality.

- **Quality assurance – dedicated third party quality assurance agency**
A third-party quality assurance agency was also engaged for quality assurance and holding PWD or the selected vendors accountable. The responsibilities of the third-party quality assurance team included:
- **Visits and monitoring during important steps of construction:** For example, concreting was necessarily conducted in the presence of the quality agency
- **Sampling and testing of raw material:** At least 50 percent of raw material used was tested in the presence of the quality agency

Examples of quality assurance agencies include NCCPM, Engineering India limited etc.

Standardised tender executed efficiently

A large number of tenders were needed to be executed during such a major infrastructure overhaul. The scale of such an operation coupled with novel architecture designs from specialists and experts like architects meant Bill of Quantities (BoQs) had to be carefully calculated and judiciously defined. However, once these BoQs were finalised, the tendering process was standardised and was executed efficiently. The tendering differed depending on the nature of material and scale of implementation:



Centralised ‘department-run’ tender: Tenders for standard materials and processes were planned across many schools and thus centrally issued – for example, green-boards, white-washing of existing buildings, etc. The requirement for these materials was centrally calculated, tenders run and then assigned to individual schools depending on need.



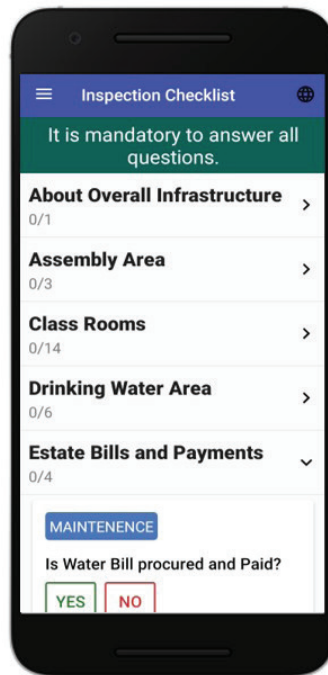
Decentralised ‘school-specific’ tender: Tenders for materials or processes that may be school/region-specific were run at a cluster-level. For example, construction of new school buildings was done at a cluster-level as different schools presented different space constraints, design specifications, and other challenges.

Maintenance processes streamlined

Maintenance of schools was completely taken care of by the Estate Managers. A mobile application was provisioned for Estate Managers – who were required to enter data every day across 80 indicators – toilet, electricity, water, among many others, a screenshot of which has been shown in Exhibit 6.7. Estate Managers are required to report 30 minutes before the school session begins every day to fill in all the indicators in the application. The mobile application is religiously filled by the Estate Manager in the spirit of transparency and the data was often reviewed during SMC meetings. This mobile application was used by HoS to track required repair work on a real-time basis. While minor repair work was instantly approved and executed on a day-to-day basis, larger repair work was brought to the attention of the SMCs who would review and provide necessary approvals. The sanitation workers, security workers, and waste disposal is also directly managed by the Estate Manager.

Exhibit 6.7

Screenshot on the EM mobile app



6.5 Impact

The infrastructural reforms throughout Delhi's government schools have been the most tangible transformation in the educational revolution. This sentiment is unequivocally echoed by both parents and teachers, as shown in Exhibits 6.8 and 6.9 respectively. The stereotype of low-quality government schools has always been entrenched in the mindset of the citizen of our country who had lost their trust in the public systems. The transformation brought in Delhi's schools has been a path breaking in the sense of creating that mindset shift in people too. Some of the biggest impact factors arising out of infrastructure initiatives are outlined below.

Exhibit 6.8

Infrastructure the most cited improvements amongst parents

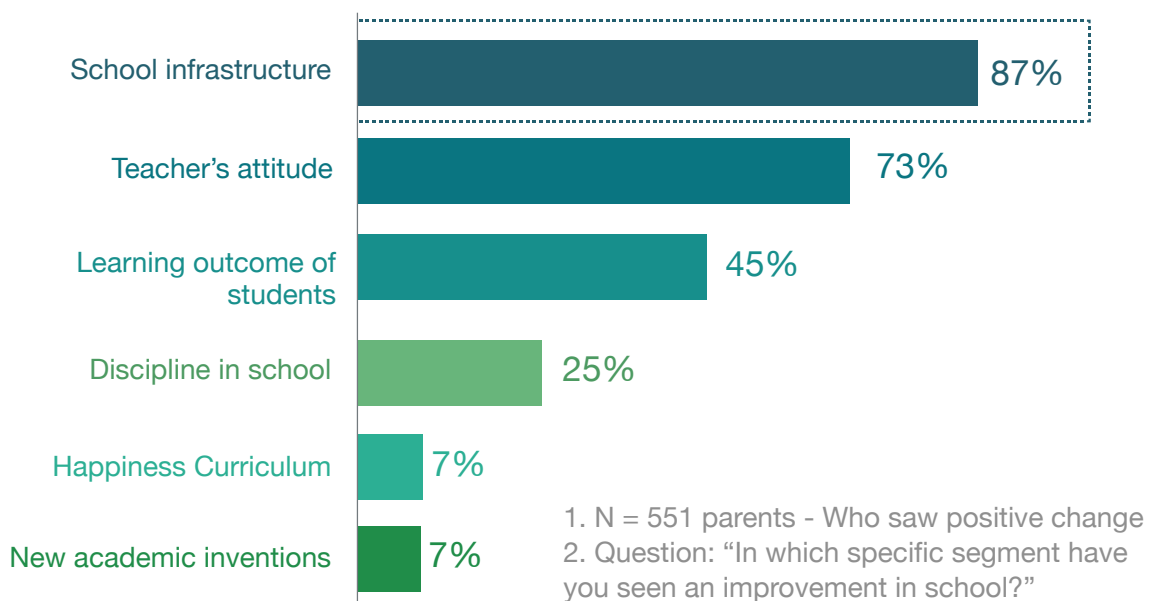
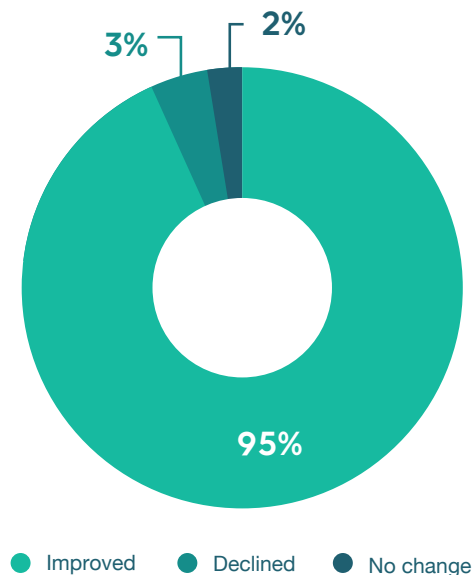


Exhibit 6.9

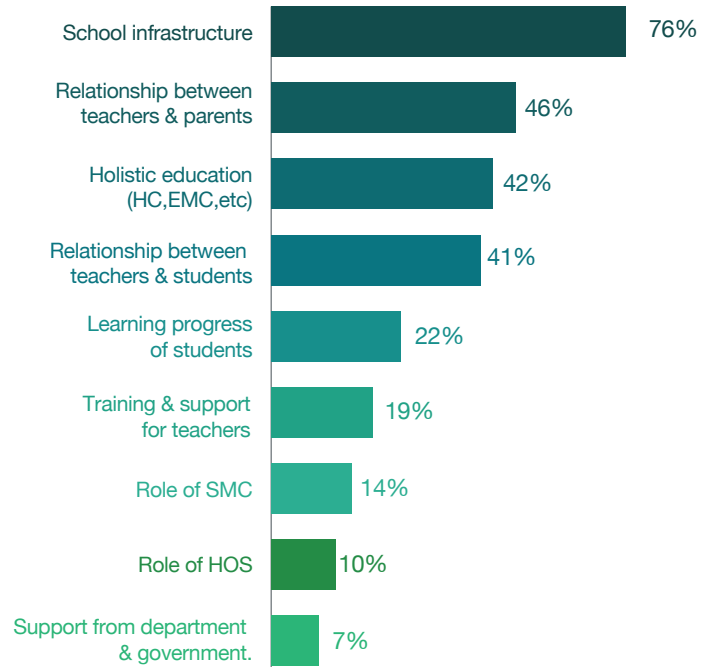
Infrastructure the most cited improvements amongst teachers

95% of surveyed teachers believed that the quality of education has improved



1. N = 7,096 teachers - who completed the survey
2. Question: "How has the quality of education in your school changed in the last 5 years?"

Of these, 76% teachers cited infrastructure as the most prevalent improvement



1. N= 6,769 teachers - who have seen improvements
2. Question: "What aspects of education have improved the most?"

Sense of self-worth and pride instilled in students, parents, and staff

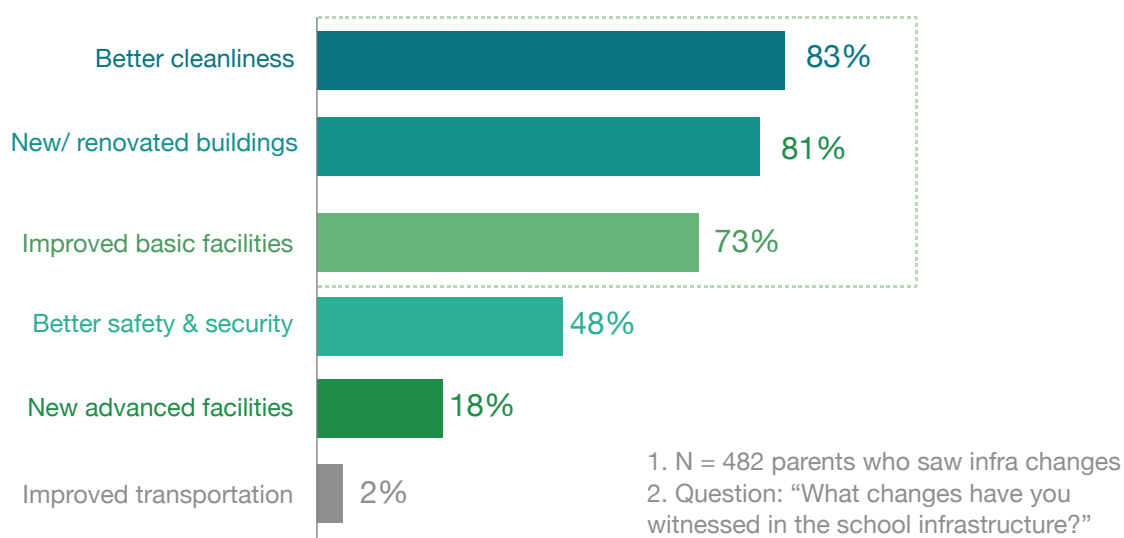
The biggest change that these initiatives have brought about is the sense of pride and motivation in students, parents, and school staff. With these changes, the public schools now feel and look like private schools which has improved the morale and the self-worth of not just the students and staff but also the extended community around the school. This positive mindset affects the regular behaviour of the students as well and brings about real benefit of improved attitude in students.

Basic improvements have been biggest positive change according to parents

According to a parent survey conducted by Boston Consulting Group (BCG), more than 70 percent of parents felt that basic improvements like cleanliness, new buildings, and other basic facilities like electricity and water have been the most prominent change in Delhi's government schools, as shown in Exhibit 6.10. These basic facilities ensure that schools offer a comfortable and conducive learning environment for students.

Exhibit 6.10

Basic improvements were the most prominently witnessed change



Access, security, and safety

Availability of water and toilets are critical aspects of improving access to education and the experience of engaging in schools especially for girl students. The improvement in security and sanitation facilities in Delhi's schools with increased number of toilets for girls along with the improved security facilities has created a sense of safety in parents and students themselves. Additionally, the sense of monitoring through the security equipment (CCTVs) also creates an environment of higher accountability in actions resulting in improved discipline in students and teachers alike.

Student-Classroom-Ratio

The construction of new classrooms has reduced the SCR in Delhi's government schools. The SCR in 2016-17 was reported to have dropped to 46⁵⁹ from 51 in 2015-16. Teachers therefore have fewer students to teach in a single classroom thereby increasing the focus that the teacher can afford each student. The bottom 20 percent of students who are usually neglected, are now better connected to their teacher. This has improved the quality of instruction in classrooms leading to better learning outcomes. Similarly, despite the increase in total number of teachers from 49,300 to 58,900 between 2014-15 to 2019-20, the Teacher-Classroom-Ratio improved too, from 2.38 to 1.38.

Exhibit 6.11

Infrastructure interventions have driven impact across students, parents and teachers



"There are small things like the improvement in school cleanliness, especially the toilet. Earlier, I used to feel tensed going to my school and honestly tried avoiding attending whatever I could. But now I feel much better and look forward to attending school with my friends."

- Muskan, A Student

⁵⁹ Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India. (n.d.). U-DISE Dashboard. Retrieved from <https://dashboard.udiseplus.gov.in/>.



"Students faced so many difficulties due to poor infrastructure. The fans used to be non-functional during summer and doors and windows would not close during the harshest of winters. This made the classroom environment for our child too uncomfortable. This has all changed now. Now when bored at home, he wants to go to school! This is a positive change."

-Parent of a 9th grade student



"Earlier, I used to teach a class of 70-80, grade 6 students. That number has significantly come down to 40-45 in the past 2 batches. This has allowed me to monitor and take care of all students, something that was not possible before"

- An upper primary teacher

6.6 Challenges

Clear alignment of infrastructure plans needed across all stakeholders

There were often points of disagreement among SMC, PWD officials, and even HoS and Estate Managers across various shifts regarding construction plans. As a result of these disagreements, construction would get stalled until a consensus was reached. This often arose as there was a lack of clear alignment of infrastructure plans across the various stakeholders. Requirements of safety precautions and corresponding space and time constraints further delayed construction. A formalised process of alignment, if established, would address this challenge.

Delays in paperwork and approvals

Infrastructure construction involves bureaucratic approvals and paperwork across multiple departments. Complications such as tree-cutting permissions or land allocations require special approval from the Land and Environment Department that further delayed timelines.

Establishing a standard process around involvement of creative team

While the creative team was an asset in providing innovative inputs to the PWD department and school stakeholders in making the campus more inviting, this team was not leveraged in the most effective manner by all on-ground PWD teams. Disseminating best practices around involvement of the creative team could have further improved infrastructure across all schools.

Bridging infrastructure gap in more under-developed areas (for example, North-East Delhi)

While the infrastructure initiatives have been successful across most government schools across the city, the extent of success has been reported to vary across regions. Several schools in North-East Delhi, for example, continue to report sub-standard classroom conditions with Heads of schools feeling that their schools have not been focused upon enough. As next steps, addressing these gaps would go a long way in ensuring parity in facilities and services offered to school children in every area in the city.

6.7 Implications for other states

Critical details for other states or governments looking to implement a similar programme have been presented in a Q&A format below.

Q. Delhi was able to invest in a host of infrastructural upgrades ranging from building of new classrooms and toilets to installation of state-of-the-art sports facilities. How must larger resource-crunched states prioritize infrastructure upgrades?

States must first prioritize improving basic school infrastructure. Every government school must provide a comfortable learning environment to both student and teachers. With adequate classrooms and furniture, crowding is managed and the teaching-learning process becomes more effective. Having electricity, drinking water and clean toilet facilities ensure students feel comfortable in the school premises thereby reducing dropouts.

States which have achieved this and are keen to provide schools with some of the more advanced infrastructure facilities – such as playgrounds, smart classes and sports arenas – must prioritize high enrollment schools. They may consider adopting a phase-wise template in doing so:

Phase 1: Prioritize high enrollment integrated schools (offering classes 1 to 12) that are centrally located in district headquarters. These schools are likely to have basic infrastructure in place and upgrades can be focused on digitization of classrooms, expanding extra-curricular/sports facilities and auditoriums.

Phase 2: Depending on resource availability, states may then prioritize other medium-to-high enrollment schools that located in more interior areas such as block/panchayat headquarters. Infrastructure upgrades such as sports facilities and playgrounds may be focused on for such schools.

Q. A key element in Delhi's school infrastructure strategy the devolution of decision-making power and execution at various levels. Is this essential for other states to replicate to witness the success that Delhi did?

School infrastructure upgrade and maintenance is a cumbersome and time consuming process in most states. The financial approvals needed from higher authorities and the lack of structured communication channels and tracking of these requests often result in infrastructure-related issues never being addressed in government schools.

Therefore, Delhi provided ground-level stakeholders such as Heads of Schools and School Management Committees with the financial and operational autonomy to address school infrastructural needs. Moreover, outsourcing of construction and maintenance to specialist agencies ensured timely execution thereby ensuring that school infrastructure consistently met quality standards.

The following learnings from Delhi's school infrastructure model resulted an outcome-driven way of working:

Ownership of infrastructure upgrades among grassroot-level stakeholders

Heads of Schools and School Management Committees must be empowered to monitor and manage construction activities in schools at the ground-level directly. They must also be provided with a degree of financial and operational autonomy to address minor issues that are important but easy to fix.

Outsourcing of basic maintenance, security, and sanitation

The appointment of a dedicated estate manager will streamline day-to-day maintenance of school infrastructure. Specialized agencies for security and sanitation services will also ensure that school safety and cleanliness is taken care of in an orderly manner. These specialist staff significantly reduce the non-academic burden off the Heads of Schools' shoulder allowing them to focus on improving academic outcomes in the school.

Outsourcing of construction work

Outsourcing of construction work to 'construction experts', such as PWD and DTTDC in Delhi's context, allows the Education Department to focus on its core work – improving quality of public education and student learning outcomes. Due to their expertise and technical know-how in carrying out huge construction projects, implementation of large-scale infrastructure projects is made extremely efficient.

Q. Do infrastructure upgrades lead to immediate improvement in student learning outcomes?

While we were not able to find any immediate quantitative correlation between improvement in infrastructure and academic outcomes of students, qualitative analysis suggests that provision of quality infrastructure was key to creating fundamental attitudinal change across parents, teachers, and students.

Infrastructure upgrades are the most tangible change observed by the community. With public schools looking like private schools, a sense of pride and dignity was instilled among beneficiaries. This positive momentum and goodwill generated were instrumental to the success of the other interventions that Delhi introduced, not least community engagement initiatives such as PTMs.



7. SMC Strengthening: Leveraging Community Ownership of Schools

7.1 Need

Section 21 of the Right to Education (RTE) Act mandates the composition of SMCs (with elected parent members) in all government schools in India in order to widen the role of parents and local communities in the management of a school. However, in most states in India, this has remained largely on paper – with SMCs yet to be constituted in many schools, while in others they function as perfunctory institutions with almost no regular meetings or genuine involvement of parents.⁶⁰



The biggest reform in Delhi model has been SMCs. They have ensured that schools are accountable. Today, SMCs have become the true owners of schools.

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government



Delhi prioritised the strengthening and empowerment of SMCs for three reasons:

- The core philosophy and theory of change underpinning the government's vision not just in education but across all aspects of governance was one of Swaraj or putting power back in the hands of people. Ensuring the increased participation of local communities in school governance therefore lay at the heart of this vision.
- Governance systems in India are currently hampered by a status-quoist inclination. There is a desire to paint a picture-perfect scenario to senior officials. In such a situation, it was felt that the only way to get real-time feedback of on-the-ground status at scale from a very large number of schools is directly through parents who have limited conflict of interest.

On asking 'Diwar ban gayi school mein? Drinking water aaya?', the answer from the field would always be, 'Ji sir, diwar ban gayi school mey aur paani bhi hai!'. But, if you go to the school, you will see a half-built wall and 200 students lined behind one water tap and the response will be 'I was told to build a tap. I didn't know how many'. It is a checkbox-ticked mentality rather than one of implementing change in letter and spirit.

- Member, Education task force

⁶⁰ Rout, S., and Sharma, N. (2018). School Management Committees and the Right to Education Act 2009. Retrieved from <http://oaji.net/articles/2017/488-1530278154.pdf>.

- The problems at a school level are too varied and massive for everything to be solved through centralised governance. Every school will always have multiple issues with fans, lights, water pipes, cleanliness, playgrounds, and so on. If the state system has its hands full with such day-to-day problems, there will be no space left to bring larger reforms in public education. It is, therefore, essential to activate and strengthen SMCs to resolve majority of such issues at the school level itself.

7.2 Objective

The objective of Delhi's SMC strengthening efforts (as with other initiatives) was to achieve its central vision of building the school as an **independent and autonomous unit** – transforming its system from a *Directorate-governed* school to *community-governed and supported school*. Fully constituted, empowered, and trained SMCs would not only exert a lever of accountability on the school but also act as important support system to the HoS, and most importantly, build a bridge between the school and the parent community – increasing their awareness, involving them in the education of their child, and acting as their voice in the school.

7.3 Design

Almost every state in India has tried to strengthen SMCs at some point or the other. However, few have been successful. The key to understanding the difference in Delhi's reforms lies in certain critical design elements.

A sense of dignity and respect

Delhi understood that parent SMC members have a significant power disadvantage to start with. Many of them come from poor and illiterate backgrounds, tend to be looked down upon, and do not have the same status and education as HoS or teachers. It is therefore essential for them to have a strong sense of recognition in order to function effectively as equal co-owners of the school.

To start with, every SMC member was given an 'identity card' and due recognition with their photos being put up on notice boards in the school. Secondly, there were considerable efforts to ensure SMC members felt a sense of pride. They were recognised by the whole school - greeted with respect by teachers/guards, etc. and their contribution celebrated during school assemblies. SMC members were empowered to visit the school anytime (something they couldn't do before) and walk into the HoS's office at any point to engage in conversation or discussion – in other words, to feel like an equal stakeholder in the ownership of the school. During events attended by both HoS and SMC members, the members used to sit next to the HoS. Old SMC members were also rewarded and thanked in the school upon demitting office.

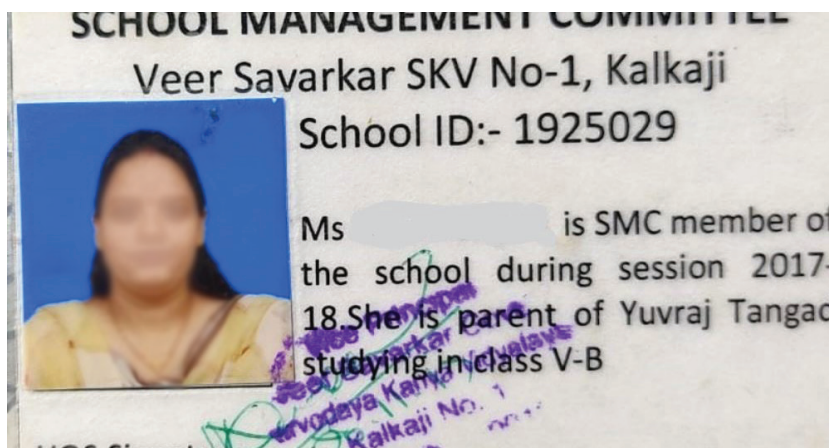
“Principal sir ne hume apne saath baithne ka mauka diya. Humse chai bhi puchi. Ye bahut badi baat thi hamare liye.

- School Management Committee Member, Delhi government school

Beyond ensuring dignity inside school, the administration also went out of its way to give due recognition to SMC members within larger community. During the SMC 'Samman Samaroh', Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) handed out shields and letters of appreciation to all SMC members to make them feel valued. Similarly, SMCs were often invited for visits of their respective schools with the Education Minister who frequently praised them for their work and reminded them of the important role they were playing.

Exhibit 7.1

Concrete steps taken to instill a sense of identity and pride in SMC members



Name	Role	Contact Number
Ram Niwas Meena	HOS / Chair Person	9990888273
Mamta Dhir	MLA Nominee	9810481112
Niranjan Lal Sharma	Convener	9806000022
Lalita	Vice Chair Person	9176003944
Vijay Lakshmi	Member	9992714862
Neetu	Member	9990888273
Jabbar Saifi	Member	9811020038
Farzana Begum	Member	9992714862
Kranti	Member	7999202042
Rita	Member	9811027401
Sonam Devi	Member	7999202042
Kiran	Member	9811027405
Rajpal	Member	9992714862
Munni Devi	Member	9990888273
Subhra	Member	9176003944
Harjinder Singh	Social Worker	9811027401

“

When the Minister spoke to foreign dignitaries in Moscow, he spent one minute out of eight minutes talking about SMC members. That is the importance he gave us.

- School Management Committee State Coordinator, Delhi government school

”

Devolution of Power

The sense of identity, dignity, and recognition given to SMC members in an abstract sense was amplified through a material devolution of financial and administrative powers, as summarized in Exhibit 7.2. While other states typically tend to circumscribe the power of SMCs through a web of rules and norms to prevent ‘misuse’, Delhi administration took a different route. This was in consonance with the core vision of making the school an independent unit of change.

These ‘enhanced powers’, along with the slew of many other reforms that were introduced to empower SMCs, finally enabled the SMCs to hold the school accountable and become equal stakeholders in the development and management of the school. To start with, in August 2016, SMCs were enabled with administrative powers⁶¹ to ensure governance of school. However, more concrete and substantive devolution of powers came in October 2018 that gave SMC financial powers⁶² to use the SMC fund for improved functioning of schools. In addition, the government also enhanced these powers in a dynamic manner based on needs. For example, when Estate Managers were not responsive to SMCs, SMCs were given the power to decide the extension or termination of Estate Manager contracts. Frequent circulars were used to reiterate the powers of SMCs in these situations.

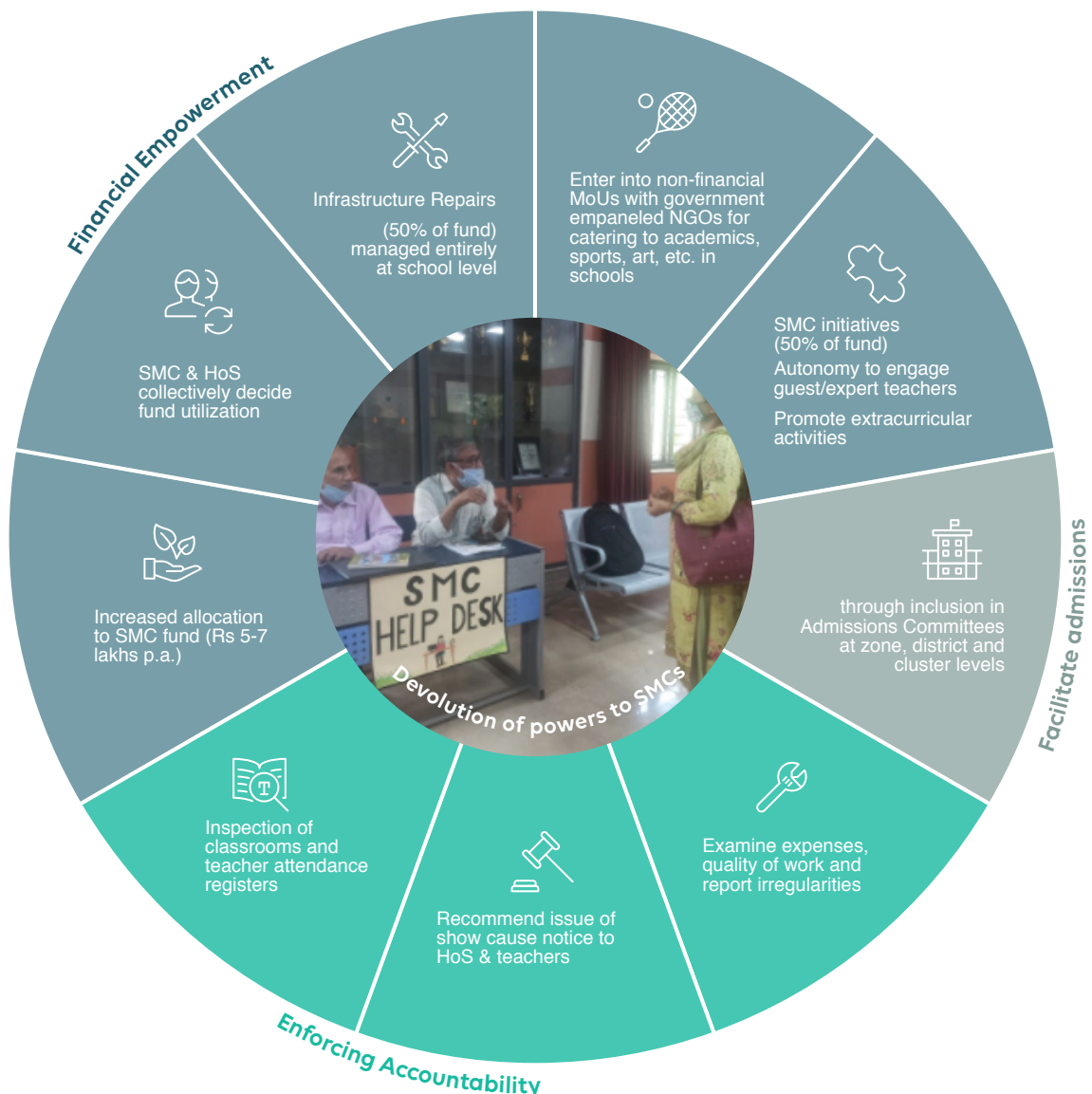
⁶¹ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Directorate of Education (2016). F.No.De-23(6)/RTE/2012-13/847-854.

⁶² Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Directorate of Education (2018). F.No.F.De-23(70)/RTE/2017/PF-II/3626-32.

Exhibit 7.2

Key steps towards 'devolution of powers' to SMCs

With greater administrative powers and financial autonomy conferred on them, SMCs play a pivotal role in governance of Delhi government schools



Field Support and Feedback mechanism

Strengthening and activating SMCs is a monumental task that requires constant field engagement, handholding, solving day to day issues, and touch points with a very large number of members and parent stakeholders. Delhi recognised that this would be extremely difficult to do through the existing constrained system. Here again, the current multi-layered feedback mechanism was ill-equipped for the task – bogged with bureaucracy and lacking the responsiveness required. Hence, Delhi activated an almost parallel support structure for SMC strengthening which consisted of:

SMC Volunteers: Delhi constituted a cadre of volunteers who were unpaid staff that supported various interventions alongside their regular jobs. They were meticulously organised with a State Manager and four 'Hub Managers' responsible for a team of 14 District Coordinators (DCs) and 70 Vidhan Sabha Coordinators (VSCs) responsible for SMC management within their jurisdictions. In addition, MLAs were given responsibility to ensure that there were two highly committed volunteers who were members of each SMC in the form of the MLA representative and social worker. This massive and committed cadre of volunteers provided the deep ground connect by being individually connected to each SMC member and performed two major roles:

- They provided instant feedback to senior leadership through direct communication on any challenges being faced by SMCs - Each volunteer had direct communication access to senior leadership such as Smt. Atishi Marlena through WhatsApp groups. Hence, the current multi-layered feedback mechanism between SMC and Delhi government was transformed and allowed issues to be addressed in real time.
- They helped mobilise SMCs, provided day-to-day handholding, and support, built the confidence of first-time members through sustained mentorship, and resolved grievances and problems on the ground through coordination with HoS and district officials.

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) partnership with Saajha: Saajha provided a team of one Programme Manager and four hub managers who supported the state administration with their expertise and field work. Saajha worked very closely with SCERT on designing various interventions for SMCs, their training content, training CRCs and SMC members, attending SMC meetings, policy-making support, and tracking grievances of SMCs.

Both these structures worked very closely together and reported directly to the Education Task Force (ETF) of senior leadership members.

Regular Activation Through Frequent Events/Tasks

SMCs had a few key roles which members understood over time. This covered fortnightly meetings, School Development Plan and SMC Fund expenditure, and monitoring of infrastructure maintenance, student attendance etc. However, Delhi administration was keen to ensure that SMCs understood their role to be much more than a narrow list of meetings and tasks, but more broadly to act as a bridge between parents and schools and ensure overall development and quality improvement of the school. Therefore, there was a very conscious strategy to keep SMCs energised and activated through a series of tasks/events/campaigns for them to get involved with every three to four months. This has been shown in Exhibit 7.3.

Exhibit 7.3

SMCs were continuously engaged in events every 3-4 months



The purpose of these regular events/tasks was also to increase the visibility of SMC members within the parent community and imbue SMC members with a sense of meaning and purpose towards their role by contributing positively to school development and education reform. Another key feature to note is the extensive focus on activating SMCs through a focus on academic progress and quality improvement. Initiatives such as Summer Camp, Reading Mela, and Reading Campaign, were explicit initiatives aimed at increasing parent and SMC participation in learning and academics.

7.4 Implementation

Elections

The first step was to constitute SMCs through free and fair elections. Delhi issued a detailed procedure for nomination of candidates, process of voting, and tabulation of results. This was followed by direct, no-cascade orientation of all HoS by the EM on how to conduct elections. In a one-day long orientation/ workshop, all HoS were walked through the rules, guidelines and best practices of SMC constitution. At the end of the workshop, quizzes were conducted to nudge HoS to have a full understanding of the election process. To ensure adequate participation from parents, a large-scale awareness campaign was also run that included EM sending letters through students to their guardians to boost their interest and nominate themselves for elections. Further, select parents who seemed more active and were not afraid to ask questions (during PTMs for example) were also identified by volunteers and encouraged to submit their nominations. In later years, as the status of SMCs grew, volunteers even identified SMC Mitras - parents who were interested in being SMC members the next year, and who would attend SMC meetings in an observer capacity to build their own skills and understanding.

In order to ensure fair conduct, there was an all-out focus on monitoring, especially in 2017. Delhi ordered suspension of all classes during election day and created a host of Observers (including civil defense volunteers) to oversee the election process. All accountant staff from multiple Departments were deputed to schools as Observers. In addition, four Civil Defense Volunteers from the Revenue Department were deputed to each school with payment of honorarium as well. Lastly, every senior officer from the DoE including the Minister personally monitored the election in several schools.


Training

Training of SMC members was the next critical step, especially for first time SMC members. The training programmes were designed to make SMC members aware of their roles and responsibilities under RTE and understand how to execute their functions. There were several important steps taken to improve the quality of these trainings:

- The training content was designed by Saajha with the support of SCERT after a highly inclusive process of feedback and brainstorming with SMC members and Cluster Resource Centre Coordinators (CRCCs). The content used for the training involved a lot of printed material shared directly with facilitators and SMC members. Most of this content was in highly graphical/comic book fashion for engagement and understanding. It covered SMC interactive calendars, worksheets for practice, pictorial flash cards, and booklets for meeting records, as has been shown in Exhibit 7.4. The training was also designed in an interactive format with priority given to experiential activity-based learning for parents.
- Three days of annual training was executed in a two + one day format to allow for reflection and implementation before a follow-up training session. This was complemented by quarterly physical Hub Trainings for social workers and one SMC member. The group size of annual trainings was significantly reduced (from a typical size of around 400 to around 40) to have higher engagement of SMC members during training.

Exhibit 7.4


Various components of Saajha's SMC training material



विद्यालय प्रबंधन समिति (SMC)

विद्यालय में प्रयोग होने वाले अनुदानों और मिड-डे मील (Mid-day meal) आदि के सही प्रयोग में सहयोग देना।

4



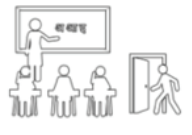
बच्चों को अच्छा मिड-डे-माल उपलब्ध हो, यह सुनिश्चित करने हेतु 'विद्यालय प्रबंधन समिति' मिड-डे-मील की जाँच भी कर सकती है।

मार्च 2017

रवि	सोम	मंगल	बुध	गुरु	शुक्र	शनि
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

नोट्स

शिक्षक के पढ़ाते समय नहीं करेंगे हम व्यवस्था को बाधित। अगर किसी कक्षा में जाएँगे, तो विद्यालय प्रबंधन समिति (SMC) के 3 सदस्यों की सहमति होने पर।



आईये जाने... हम सब 'विद्यालय प्रबंधन समिति' (SMC)

व्यक्तिओं के नाम -

1. बच्चे बेहतर सीखें, इसके लिए आप क्या करेंगे (बिन्दु चुने व अन्य विकल्प भी लिखें) -

(हाँ / नहीं)

- प्रत्येक माह बच्चों से हो रही पढ़ाई का फीडबैक लेंगे () ()
- शिक्षक के सहयोग से समय-समय पर बच्चों का स्तर जाँचेंगे। () ()
- शिक्षक व अन्य SMC सदस्यों के सहयोग से पढ़ाई के प्रति अभिभावकों को जागरूक करेंगे। () ()

• अन्य _____

• अन्य _____

भारत सीट

विद्यालय का नाम _____ विद्यालय कोड (I.D.) _____

सिख (लैंग) _____

कार्य के क्षेत्र			
गतिविधियाँ			
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
जिम्मेदार व्यक्ति			

मुद्रांक निर्देश - अपने संसु के साथ फिल, अपने विद्यालय के लिए (जिसके बच्चे बेहतर सीखें) एक संकेत (check) करें।

- In order to reduce the cascade dilution by involving high quality facilitators, CRCCs were supplemented in several cases with DIET and SCERT faculty themselves directly conducting trainings for SMC members.
- Over time, digital training was also introduced for SMC members. This was made possible because of the presence of internet connectivity and a projector in every school. It has had a very positive impact on SMC members for three reasons:
 - a. It allowed all SMC members to be directly trained unlike the physical format where only four members per SMC received training from facilitators.
 - b. It allowed for more frequent trainings especially on new programmes and updates.
 - c. Questions posed at the end of trainings allowed for collection of responses and analysis of gaps in training.
- Finally, beyond the regular training, SMCs were also provided regular on the job training support by SMC volunteers. Occasionally, Saajha hub managers and members of ETF also attended select SMC meetings and provided feedback/training.

SMC Engagement Activities

As explained in the Design section, SMCs were regularly involved in several events and programmes, some of which are important to highlight.

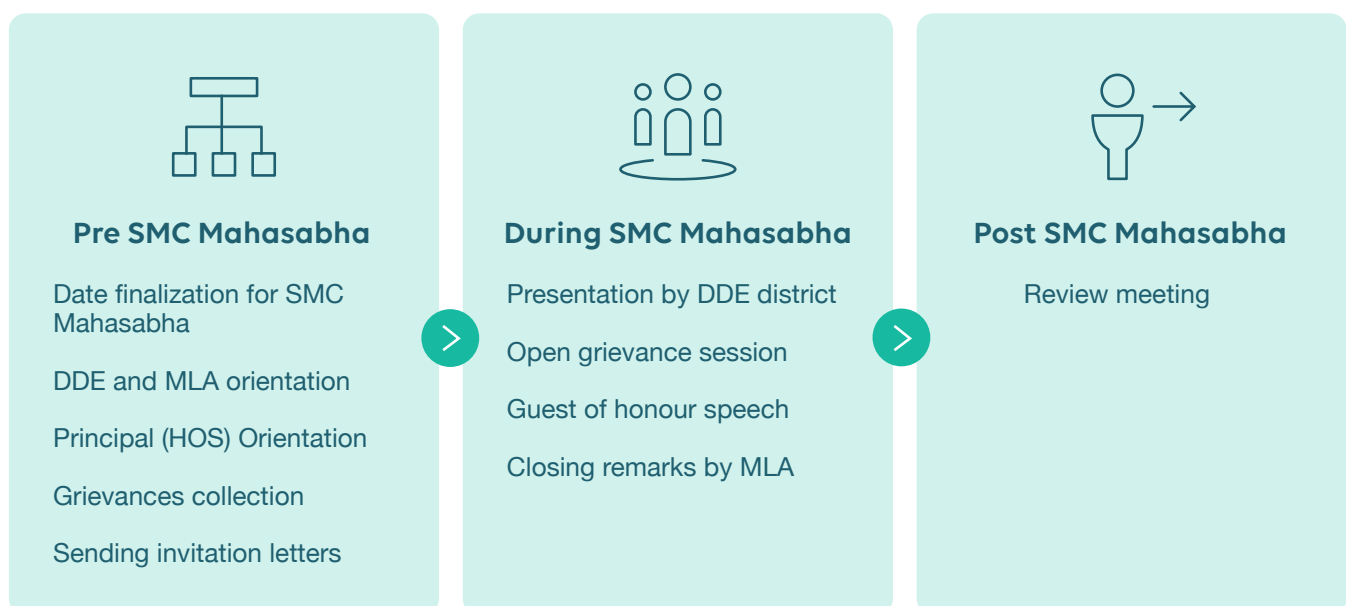
Parental Workshops: These workshops were conducted during the summer vacation break to ensure more in-depth involvement of parents in their child's learning at school as well as to involve them more consciously at the school level in such a manner that they feel no inhibition while raising their issues and questions wherever required. Beyond the workshop, parents were also provided with tools/worksheets that they could take back and complete the activity at home with their children, eventually ensuring parents spend more quality time with their children on a regular basis.

Reading Event and Reading Mela: These two events had a similar conceptualisation and aimed to increase SMC and parent participation in the learning of children as well as to familiarise them with the schools so that they lose their inhibitions and feel free to raise their issues. The Reading Melas were organised by SMCs in schools, parks, and other community spaces where students from the neighbourhood participated along with their parents, in fun and reading activities. Similarly, the Reading Event was conducted within school premises during summer camp every Saturday from 19th May till 23rd May 2018. These events were kept simple with clear and precise instructions so that they could be conducted by parents and SMC members. IVR calls were also used for SMC members to dial in and listen to specific instructions or stories for effectively conducting the events.

SMC Mahasabha: SMC Mahasabhas were a constituency level platform to ensure direct participation and voice of SMCs in governance. It was chaired by the MLA and the DC but also had representatives from various Departments (Water, Police, PWD, Forest, etc.) in addition to HoS and SMC members. The objective was to raise grievances, discuss long-pending issues of DoE schools, and resolve them through comprehensive cross-departmental coordination. Grievances were tracked and addressed through a robust process as detailed below. The SMC Mahasabhas were a huge success not just because it resolved greater than 30 percent of grievances within three months through inter-departmental coordination but because it also raised the confidence of SMC members by having their concerns and suggestions addressed by all senior officials together in their presence.

Exhibit 7.5

Different phases of SMC Mahasabhas



Monitoring and Communication channels

As mentioned during the chapter, Delhi had identified a clear need to connect with SMCs at the ground level to truly empower them. Hence, Delhi had put in place robust mechanisms that could provide real-time feedback to senior leadership and concerned stakeholders to identify ground issues and provide requisite support such as:

Constant communication with SMC members: WhatsApp group for each SMC was activated. Each group consisted of SMC members (parent members, MLA representative, social worker) along with VSC, and sometimes even the DC. Any ground level issues could be escalated and discussed on these groups.

Feedback mechanism for senior leadership: The DCs in turn had a WhatsApp group with Central team (which has four hub managers) and also members from the senior leadership. The DCs could directly escalate ground issues to apprise senior leadership almost instantly. This two-level communication structure effectively enabled even the Education Minister to interact directly with SMCs on their grievances.

Meeting Cadence: Beyond the WhatsApp groups, monthly meetings were conducted by DCs and VSCs with SMCs to provide them with requisite support. DCs and VSCs also held weekly update calls between themselves to discuss SMC related developments.

Centralised platform to report grievances: SMC App was launched for all SMC members to report their grievances which were monitored by DDEs. The App however was not a success as only five percent SMC members reported using it. This was mostly due to their low digital literacy level and existence of an established and working structure (WhatsApp groups with DCs/VSCs) that performed similar function.

7.5 Impact

It is not a coincidence that almost all senior officials of Delhi government will highlight the strengthening of SMCs as not just the most important intervention but also the most impactful intervention. SMCs have truly had a transformational impact due to their consistent efforts both inside and outside schools. Their constant rigor towards school governance has helped drive accountability of the school – **50 percent parents who were**

"Mere bete ke school ke gate ke aage kudaa ka dher ikatha rehta tha..baarisho mein itni badboo aati thi ki beta school jaane ko mana kar deta tha..Principal sir ko kitni baar bola par unhone kaha ki yeh aakhir unke haath mein kahan hai..SMC ke aane ke bad unhone local MLA se kehkar usko hatwaya aur phir aas paas ke logo tak se jaake mile aur unko samjhaaya ki waha kudaa na daale."

- Parent, Delhi Govt School

"Once an SMC member sent a video of teacher absenteeism in school on WhatsApp group..Atishi got it and sent it to the EM. Within two hours ETF team reached the school and shot a video of teacher absenteeism across multiple classrooms one after the other (6A -absent; 6B- absent; 6c-absent). HoS was totally shocked. This is how SMC and ETFs have become eyes and ears of Education Minister- people who can go to any school anytime."

- Member, Education Task Force

"Once 20 ceiling fans were stolen from school. I didn't know what to do..So, I called up one of the SMC members..within 20 mins four of them reached the school.. they stood next to me till late night in the police station to file an FIR..SMC has supported me even in such extreme situations."

- Head of School, Delhi Govt School

aware of SMCs and 38 percent teachers cited increased maintenance of school infrastructure, upkeep, and cleanliness because of SMCs and another **48 percent parents who were aware of SMCs and 38 percent teachers reported that increased governance** has reduced teacher absenteeism and vacancy. Further, SMCs have fast tracked grievance addressal by acting as a direct voice to reach state leadership. They have also given a voice to parent grievances as 39 percent parents who are aware of SMCs, reported that SMCs helped resolve their school related concerns. Similarly, 17 percent teachers mentioned that SMCs helped raise their issues to higher authorities.

They have also helped increase parental participation by actively reaching out to parents – a staggering 57 percent teachers reported that SMCs helped them find contacts of parents and connect with them, while 39 percent parents reported to have benefited from important school/child related information communicated by SMC. SMCs have also engaged with parents during various learning events and built a relationship of trust with them as they helped smoothen the admissions process. This outreach to involve parents has also resulted in improved child attendance at school.

Additionally, SMCs have helped mainstream interventions and created space for them, for example, by facilitating sessions for students during Reading Melas (as part of Mission Buniyaad), by conducting door-to-door outreach to parent for Mega-PTMs, etc.

Lastly, and most importantly, **SMCs have had a powerful electoral impact**. SMC members who fulfil their role out of a sense of responsibility and without payment or compensation usually tend to be public-spirited citizens who exert a strong influence over the community by virtue of their role. The AAP government therefore succeeded in not just improving schools through SMCs but clearly identifying this cadre of people who have become strong votaries of the government.



SMCs have surely made the schools more accountable for infrastructure and learning outcomes, but their true achievement lies in the fact that they have also evolved parents as partners and decision makers in schools



- Ranjana Prasad, Member, DCPCR

7.6 Challenges

In the process of strengthening and empowering SMCs, Delhi faced a few challenges which are important to highlight and learn from:

Resistance from schools and lack of cooperation from HoS

It was inevitable that HoS were concerned with the shift in power that SMC empowerment brought. Several HoS refused to cooperate in the early days and many didn't even allow SMC members to enter their schools. Few SMC parents also worsened this dynamic by interacting with HoS with a sense of entitlement.

This was gradually addressed over time through extensive training and regular on-ground communication with both SMCs and HoS during their cluster development sessions. Fifty nine percent of SMC members surveyed said that increased cooperation of HoS/teachers was critical to strengthening of SMCs.

Limited connect between SMCs and parent members

Although SMCs are elected representatives and should engage directly with parents in order to be a 'voice' of the parent body; our survey revealed that as many as 79 percent parents are not aware of SMCs.⁶³ Even those who are aware have had limited meaningful interaction. Therefore, while SMCs have clearly had a transformational governance impact, their ability to increase involvement of parents still has great potential that needs to be realised. As other states look to learn from Delhi, they may want to consider reaching out to parents directly and prioritising that in early years.

Lack of outcome data

The mobile app for SMCs was not a success, partly because of low digital literacy. At the same time, there was limited measurement of outcomes around the SMC programme to which senior system stakeholders (DDE/ Directors, etc.) were held accountable – whether it is in terms of parent awareness, increased accountability, or community participation.

⁶³ Please note: The data on impact of SMCs cited in the rest of the chapter is based on the 21% of parents who were aware of SMCs

7.7 Implications for other states

Q. What are the key success factors from Delhi that other states must keep in mind?

There are three key success factors that will be essential for states to replicate in some form:

- SMC strengthening requires high-touch, intensive, and on-ground handholding. The massive volunteer base and support of Saajha was critical in Delhi. Other states will also need to think through options to build a field force capable of this task at scale.
- Devolution of power gave SMCs clear roles and responsibilities and placed ownership of schools in the hands of parents. Because of strong institutionalisation and close engagement with the leadership, the powers of SMCs were rarely misused.
- Direct communication with SMC members was essential to make them realise that their voice mattered and was heard. Any grievance posted on WhatsApp would reach state leadership in an hour. This was further reinforced very strongly by political messaging as well.

Q. What powers should be devolved to SMCs?

There is no standard template on the specific powers that should be devolved. The specifics will have to be worked out by each state. A few things may be kept in mind however:

- It is important to win the trust of SMCs and parents first and activate them. We would recommend devolving limited administrative and financial powers (for example, power to enter into non-financial MoUs with government empaneled NGOs for catering to academics, sports, art, etc. in schools), reducing permissions and expenditure caps, and strengthening the structure and functioning first as autonomy without the capacity to exercise that autonomy is not helpful.
- Increased financial devolution and strong administrative powers (example: recommend administrative action against teachers) may be considered in later years when SMCs have started functioning.

Q. How can a state with tens of thousands of schools set up very active SMCs in each school?

Delhi has large schools where SMCs had to play a bigger role in more complex school management. However, the role of SMCs may need to be different in states with a large number of small or sub-scale schools and very low literacy. It might not be practical to set up 16 member SMCs for schools with enrolments of 20 to 30 students. States may consider panchayat level SMCs in such cases or focus on SMCs in larger Model Schools or schools with greater than 150 or even 200 enrolment.

Similarly, sustained handholding across 50,000 or one lakh schools in a large state is also a herculean task that may be outside the capacity of a state. We would recommend starting with a more manageable sub-set of schools and carefully identifying two to three NGOs for field level support in different divisions of the state. The NGO partners should have a very clear, common agenda and work in strict consonance with the roadmap of the state.

Q. Delhi is a small city-state. How can this sort of direct engagement and interaction be replicated in other states? Is SMC strengthening impossible if the Minister does not interact directly with SMCs?

The principle is one of direct and constant interaction. However, this does not need to be driven in exactly the same manner as in Delhi. Even in a state with no support from an NGO or volunteer cadre, the state may develop a communication model where one block official may be in charge of compiling SMC grievances in his/her block. If all block officials are directly connected to the Director or Secretary as well as through WhatsApp and these grievances are looked at through the app on a daily or weekly basis, it will have a huge impact. The key is to ensure that all SMC members feel empowered because their voice is reaching state authorities and their concerns are getting addressed. That can be done with many different types of models depending on the resources available to the state. The only pre-condition is a willingness to break down hierarchy and interact directly.

8. Parental Engagement: Bringing the Parents Back into Schools

8.1 Need

Other than teachers, parents play the most important role in the education of children. However, despite universal recognition of the role of parents, parental engagement with schools and vice-versa is extremely low in government schools today. This is because of two reasons:

- **Dismissive attitude of school towards parents:** “*Yeh anpad log bache ko kya padhayenge; kya padana hai woh toh school hi jaanta hai*” is not a rare sentiment. HoS and teachers typically do not believe that most poor or illiterate parents are interested in their child’s education. Given the power dynamic between educated/richer teachers and poor parents, very few parents feel that they are treated with enough dignity. Therefore, the unfortunate reality is that schools for the most part have kept their gates closed for parents.
- **Lack of understanding of parental role in child’s education and learning:** “*Humne toh apni zimmedari nibha di bache ko school bhej ke*” – It is undeniable that some parents themselves do not give their role in their child’s education enough importance either. This is a consequence of being occupied with work to eke out a meagre living, limited confidence due to their lack of education, as well as general cynicism towards the school and system.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to bridge this gap and bring balance to the role played by both parents and school.

8.2 Objective

“

When parents and teachers get to interact, they get to discuss the child’s progress, how he/she can take a step forward in learning, what environment is needed at home to support the child and finally what changes need to be done at school - all these things are openly discussed.

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government

”

Delhi’s parent engagement efforts tried to ensure that both parents and schools are collaboratively involved in the learning journey of the child. The objectives of this effort were five-fold:

- To give parents the opportunity and platform to get apprised of their child’s progress at school so they could support child’s learning at home meaningfully.
- To give parents a platform to speak with the school and the teacher – in order to voice their concerns and apprise the teacher of the home environment/behaviour of the child.

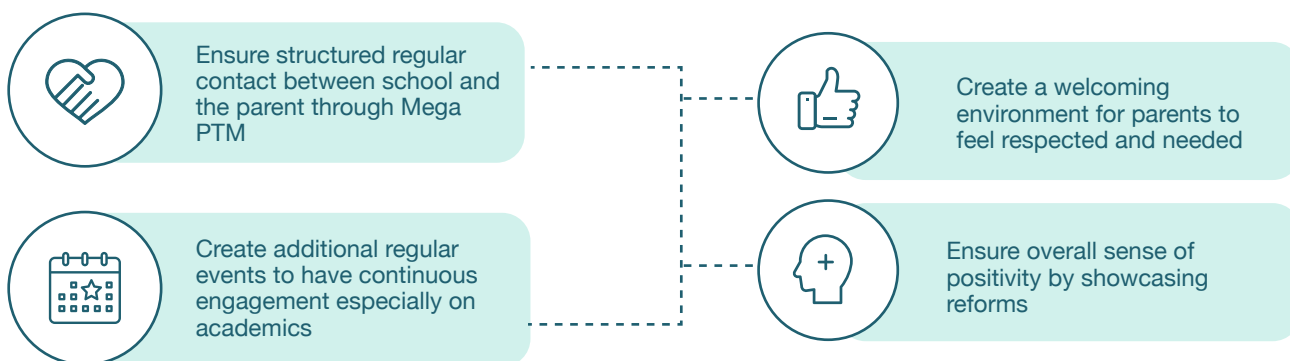
- To make the school leaders and teachers feel more connected with every child and his/her parent – and hence feel more responsible to their role of educating the child.
- Parental engagement was also meant to make parents aware of the various developments/interventions that were being introduced by the government.
- Finally, Delhi realised the need to make education not just the state's job but also a people's movement or 'Jan Andolan' – where each parent also plays a part in the development/education of child, holds the school to account, and fosters a long-term public demand for high quality education as a right.

8.3 Design

In order to increase parent engagement, Delhi adopted two types of initiatives (Mega-PTMs and a regular series of parent events), all of which had two common principles embedded in its design – to give parents a sense of dignity and respect and to create a culture of positivity and hope. This has been shown in Exhibit 8.1.

Exhibit 8.1

Two key principles for increasing parental engagement



Ensure structured contact between school and the parent through Mega-PTMs

While the concept of PTMs had existed in the past, as they do in most states, Delhi adopted a new concept of Mega-PTMs in July 2016.

- Mega-PTMs were a special PTM on a common day for all schools. It was given 'special' attention by its very name and communicated through massive awareness drives across multiple channels to break through the typical indifference that parents had towards regular PTMs.
- The positioning and preparations for the Mega-PTMs were quite different from what is typically seen otherwise. The entire event was planned as a celebration – something that parents looked forward to. Special provisions for tea and coffee were made for all parents, unseen in a typical PTM, even in private schools. The distinct positioning of the event helped ensure that parents and teachers acknowledged its importance and attended them regularly.
- The structure of the Mega-PTM itself was very different as well. No classes were held as Mega-PTM ran through the whole day. They were designed to give each parent ample time and opportunity to connect with the teachers (both class and subject teacher) on their child's progress, as well as more broadly with the school on any overarching issues and voice any concerns they had. Teachers were asked to ensure their availability in their respective rooms and spend 10 minutes with each parent.

“

I like to go the Mega-PTM so that I get to know my faults first-hand. My Maths is weak and I got low marks in 9th. Due to adequate time in Mega-PTM, my parents opened the exam paper and saw all the answers to see where I'm making mistakes.

- Student, Delhi government school

”

Given the scale and depth desired, these Mega-PTMs were organised only twice a year but done with a quality and rigor typically unseen across the country.

Create additional regular events to strengthen parent participation in the learning process

Delhi administration recognised that just the half-yearly Mega-PTMs would not be enough to generate and sustain parent involvement. This needed to be supplemented with regular events which would provide more frequent touch points for parents to stay engaged in child's learning. Two such examples were parental workshops and Reading Melas.

- In **parental workshops**, interactive sessions were conducted inside schools by teachers exclusively for parents during the summer vacation break. They were meant to encourage parental involvement in the child's learning at school as well as involve parents more consciously at the school level in such a manner that they feel no inhibition while raising issues and questions wherever required. Sessions covered a range of topics – assess learning level of the child, how to motivate the child, identification of strengths and likes of the child, and child safety. Beyond the workshop, parents were also provided with tools and worksheets that they could take back and complete at home while sitting with their children, eventually ensuring parents spend more quality time with their children on a regular basis.
- **Reading Event and Reading Melas** had a similar conceptualisation and aimed to increase SMC and parent participation in the learning of their children as well. The Reading Melas were organised by SMCs in schools, parks, and other community spaces where students from the neighbourhood participated along with their parents, in fun and reading activities. Similarly, the Reading Event was conducted within school premises during summer camps every Saturday from 19th May to 23rd May 2018. These events were kept simple with clear and precise instructions so that they could be conducted by parents and SMC members. Several innovations were undertaken with clear sessions organised and additional material with stories, activities, drawing and painting events, etc. provided to improve student's reading abilities.

All of the above, with the philosophy of welcoming the parents and ensuring they feel respected

One of the core things that was deeply understood by Delhi administration from the beginning was that parents have never had any agency inside the school or felt valued. More often than not, parents have felt inferior to the school staff and have thus felt intimidated and voiceless. For Delhi, it was important to ensure that parents feel a sense of dignity first.

Hence, the Delhi administration went out of its way to give due respect to parents through these events. A few examples of this include:

- As a build-up to Mega-PTM, customised invitation cards (made by children in school) were sent to parents to make them feel welcomed. The parents who attended the PTM were also given a signed letter from the Education Minister, thanking them for attending the Mega-PTM, and encouraging their participation in the future.
- During the Mega-PTMs, welcome signs and boards were decorated for parents at the school gates to honour and celebrate their presence. In some cases, bands were also organised and tilaks were applied to their heads as they entered the school. Additionally, arrangements for tea-coffee-water were also done for all parents that brought them a sense of comfort and made them feel that the conversation with teachers is a 'charcha' between equals.
- HoS also conducted group sessions for all parents to encourage them and openly ask for their suggestions – thereby helping reduce any hesitance of parents and making them feel that their opinions were valuable and will be considered.

“

Parents have stayed away from school events because they don't feel their presence is valuable. First and foremost, it was essential to restore the dignity for the parents – and then encourage them to be actively involved.

- Initiative Lead, Saajha

”

The success of some of these initiatives goes a long way to debunking one of the common myths often heard in education systems. Delhi makes it quite clear that lack of parent participation in school education is rarely a consequence of parental apathy or ignorance but mostly because of not feeling welcomed or guided by schools and the government.

Exhibit 8.2

Different initiatives which helped create a 'welcoming' environment for parents



Ensure overall sense of positivity by showcasing reforms

Finally, for Delhi to truly ensure participation of parents, it also had to address the typical cynicism that parents had towards government schools with respect to lack of progress at the school level. For this Delhi looked at creating nuanced experiences for parents across different events, that left the parents with a belief in the possibility of change and feeling an overall sense of positivity. A few examples of how this was done include:

- During Mega-PTMs, parent-teacher conversations were consciously designed to be a very positive interaction. Teachers were issued specific guidelines to mention three positive things about every individual child. This ensured that every teacher actually made the effort of knowing every child and that every parent went away feeling happy and proud of their child. Most importantly, the student went away motivated to do even better.
- HoS also took parents for a tour of the school to showcase the developments in the school – the improved infrastructure, paintings and projects by children, etc. that had been put across school walls. Parents were thus able to witness the massive strides that a school had made and went away feeling proud of the school.

"Tuition lagwana kisko pasand hai par majboori mein lagwani padti hai .. par PTM mein ma'am ne meri beti ke paper dikhaye aur suggest kiya ki usko tuition lagane ki zaroorat nahi hai .. usko toh woh class mein he itna padha denge .. unki rai ekdum parivaar ke sadasye jaisi mehsoos hui."

- Parent, Delhi government school

"I feel good when I'm appreciated by the teacher. It makes me want to improve my result and get 90 percent instead of 85 percent. PTMs help me get more clarity on what the teachers expect from me."

- Student, Delhi government school

8.4 Implementation

Successful implementation of Mega-PTMs can be attributed to:

Strong core team for end-to-end design of initiative

Mega-PTM was meant to be a significant departure from regular PTM both in terms of scale and meaningful outcomes. It was a very large event and therefore had a large team working on several details. This included senior advisors, department leaders, as well as NGO partners (Pratham and Saajha). Everyone had pre-defined roles.

Pratham was responsible for defining the content that teachers could discuss with parents and for designing some of the learning material. Saajha, on the other hand, was responsible for designing the ground plan, training of teachers and SMCs before events, and ensuring communication/ messaging for effective parent-school interactions during the event. Finally, the outreach to parents through various media channels was handled by Media and Communications team of the Education Minister.

Effective leveraging of media to reach parents

To ensure that parents don't treat this as just another PTM, creating mass awareness of the nature and importance of the event became key.

Single day scheduling of event across all government schools eased communication for mass media.

Massive radio campaigns were launched one week before the Mega-PTMs which proved most effective because of a high level of political involvement. Two interesting features of the radio campaign were:

- Many of the radio advertisements were targeted not at parents but at the upper and middle classes. It urged employers to give their employees (maids, factory workers, drivers etc.) the day off so that they could attend PTMs. This actually pushed a lot of people to encourage low-income parents who had never attended PTMs before to do so.
- The radio advertisements also featured children who spoke about their touching personal experiences of how their parent's attendance at Mega-PTMs had created an impact on the school, the family, and the children themselves.

Beyond radio, newspaper advertisements also drove large scale awareness of the event. Apart from mass communication through media, other outreach activities included personalised invitation cards made by students, HoS note in student's diaries, HoS SMS to parents, teachers directly calling each parent, SMCs door-to-door outreach to parents, etc. All these small initiatives proved useful as parents turned up for the event in large numbers even during extreme weather conditions.

Special arrangements and budgetary provisions

While some preparations such as invitation cards, welcome boards, snacks, and beverages for parents have already been mentioned, a few more special arrangements to reinforce the importance of Mega-PTMs to parents and students are highlighted below:

- Schools were extensively decorated including displaying artwork by children that celebrated the contribution of child, leaving the parents proud of their child's progress at school. Teachers and students actively contributed to these preparations leaving them proud of their school for conducting such an event which was earlier only experienced by their private counterparts.
- Civil Defence volunteers were posted for crowd management during the PTM to avoid any inconvenience to teachers, parents, and children.
- At times, health camps were organised for both parents and students during the PTMs that expressed care and thought for their well-being.

“

**PTMs toh ab hone lagi hai
... pehle kahan he pataa
lagta tha ki kab hai PTM.**

- Parent, Delhi government school

”

- To execute such arrangements, a special budgetary provision was made (up to INR 7,000 per school) and provided to school to expense as Mega-PTM related expenses.⁶⁴ This ensured wider participation and meaningful implementation by schools.
- Finally, SMC members were activated to support the on-ground preparations for the event. SMC members conducted meetings with teachers before the event to discuss the preparations required that helped ensure adequate arrangements were made according to guidelines⁶⁵

Exhibit 8.3

Different steps which culminated towards a feeling of 'pride' amongst parents



Robust monitoring and reporting of Mega-PTMs

At department level, members of SCERT, DDEs, and DIETs were mobilised to conduct inspections of the event across all schools. There was a clear 10-point checklist⁶⁶ basis which they assessed schools on whether guidelines were followed, and adequate preparations made to make the event successful. Further, members of the senior leadership team including the Education Minister conducted surprise visits to schools to check preparedness for the event.

At school level, each teacher was asked to maintain record of parent attendance which was then consolidated at the school level and sent by HoS to DDEs. Teachers were also tasked to follow-up with parents who did not attend the PTM.

Sessions of Parental Workshops

Parental workshop served as a useful platform to enable parents to play an increased role in their child's learning. Each session began with an introduction of a chosen theme for the session and narration of a related story by the teacher. **The role played by use of stories to conduct the session was particularly important as it described a parent-child conversation that the parents could relate to and that gave them a clear understanding of what they could do to help their children.** For example, as part of Mission Buniyaad, theme for one of the sessions was '*Dekho kya seekha*' with a related story (see Exhibit 8.4) for parents to assess the learning level of their child.


⁶⁴ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, DoE (2018). GO No. De.23(21)/ Sch. Br./2017/1415

⁶⁵ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Directorate of Education, School Branch (2018). No. DE.23 (632)/Sch.Br./2018/571


⁶⁶ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, Directorate of Education, Inspection Branch (2018). No. F.PA/DDE/IC/Inspection Schedule/Mega PTM/2018-19/25

Exhibit 8.4

Introduction of theme by teacher



शाहिदा जी की कहानी सुनना



शाहिदा जी की कहानी से हम जानेंगे कि बच्चों के पढ़ने के स्तर को जांचना क्यों ज़रूरी है और माता-पिता बच्चे के स्तर को कैसे जांच सकते हैं। कहानी कुछ इस तरह से है

Exhibit 8.5

Story narrated by the teacher, related to the theme

SESSION 1 | STORY 1

देखो क्या सीखा

शाहिदा जी अपनी बेटी आबिदा के विद्यालय में विद्यालय प्रबंधन समिति की सदस्य हैं। शाहिदा जी अक्सर विद्यालय आया जाता करती हैं। एक रोज़ शाहिदा जी की तबीयत खराब होने की वज़ह से उनके पति सादिक जी को आबिदा की PTM में अकेले ही जाना पड़ा। जब सादिक जी विद्यालय पहुँचे तो अध्यापिका ने उनको नमस्ते कहा और पानी के लिए पूछा। वह अध्यापिका को धन्यवाद कहते हुए कुर्सी पर बैठ गए। आबिदा की अध्यापिका ने सादिक जी को बताया कि उनकी बेटी 'शिक्षा की सीढ़ी' के तीसरे पड़ाव पर है। सादिक जी ने कहा - 'जी, मैं कुछ समझा नहीं।' अध्यापिका ने मुस्कुराते हुए एक कागज़ निकाला जिसपर अक्षर, शब्द, अनुच्छेद, कहानी और अंशिक कहानी लिखे हुए थे। फिर वह आबिदा की तरफ इशारा करते हुए बोली - 'बेटा ज़रा यह अनुच्छेद पढ़कर सुनाओ।' आबिदा अनुच्छेद नहीं पढ़ पा रही थी। फिर अध्यापिका ने आबिदा को शब्द पढ़ने को कहा, जो आबिदा ने पढ़ दिए।

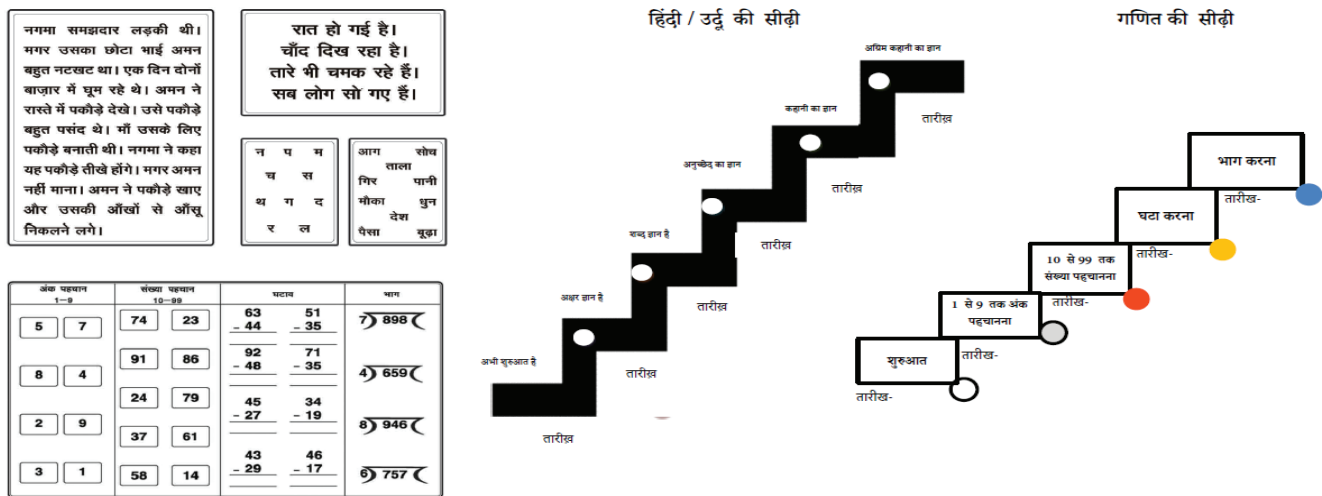
फिर अध्यापिका ने सादिक जी को समझाया कि 'शिक्षा की सीढ़ी' में 6 पड़ाव होते हैं। पहला पड़ाव - जब बच्चा अक्षर न पढ़ पाए, दूसरा पड़ाव - जब बच्चे को अक्षर ज्ञान हो जाए, तीसरा पड़ाव - जब बच्चा शब्द पहचानने लगे, चौथा पड़ाव - जब बच्चे को अनुच्छेद पढ़ना आ जाए, पांचवा पड़ाव - जब बच्चा कहानी पढ़ सके और छठा पड़ाव - जब बच्चा अंशिक कहानी पढ़ने लगे। सादिक जी ने कहा - 'बहुत अच्छे, मतलब आबिदा की शब्द ज्ञान है।' अध्यापिका बोली - 'हाँ, आबिदा अभी 'शिक्षा की सीढ़ी' के तीसरे पड़ाव पर है।' अध्यापिका ने बताया - 'माता-पिता इस तरह पढ़ावाकर हर महीने जान सकते हैं कि बच्चा कितना पढ़ना सीख रहा है और जब भी स्तर जाँचे तो तारीख लिख दें।' जिससे पता चल सके कि बच्चा कितने समय में सीख रहा है। माता-पिता के लिए यह जानना इसलिए ज़रूरी है, ताकि वह बच्चे की सीखने में मदद कर पाए। आप बच्चे के अध्यापक से बात भी कर सकते हैं कि बच्चे को 'शिक्षा की सीढ़ी' पर आगे ले जाने के लिए, वह क्या मदद कर सकते हैं।

सादिक जी ने घर आते ही कहा - 'शाहिदा तुम्हें पता है हमारी आबिदा 'शिक्षा की सीढ़ी' के तीसरे पड़ाव पर है।' शाहिदा जी बोली - 'हाँ आबिदा शब्द पढ़ना जानती है।' सादिक जी ने हैरानी से पूछा - 'तुम्हें कैसे पता?' शाहिदा जी मुस्कुराते हुए बोली - 'जब भी विद्यालय में बच्चों के पढ़ने का स्तर जाँचा जाता है, मैं अन्य माता-पिता को 'शिक्षा की सीढ़ी' समझाने में मदद करती हूँ।' सादिक जी को यह सुनकर ख़ुशी हुई और बोले अगली बार से मैं भी तुम्हारी मदद करूँगा।

The story, as shown in Exhibit 8.5, was followed by questions which the parents then discussed in small and large groups. Finally, and most importantly, parents were given specialised resources to perform activities based on the session theme with their child at home. These home-based activity sheets were designed keeping in mind ease of use and comprehension for both the child and the parent. For example, at the end of above session, parents were handed a tool/template called 'Siksha ki Seedhi' (refer Exhibit 8.6) which they could use to assess the learning level of their child at home.

Exhibit 8.6

Pictographic representation of 'Shiksha ki Seedhi'



Field Support structure

Organising parental engagement events is a monumental task right from creating awareness of the event amongst parents to designing the content of the event that addresses varied needs of parents and finally engaging the parents during the event. Hence, Delhi had brought on-board partners from NGO Saajha and a group of SMC Volunteers to help support all such field activities. Details of support provided by both these partners have been elaborated in SMC chapter for reference.

8.5 Impact

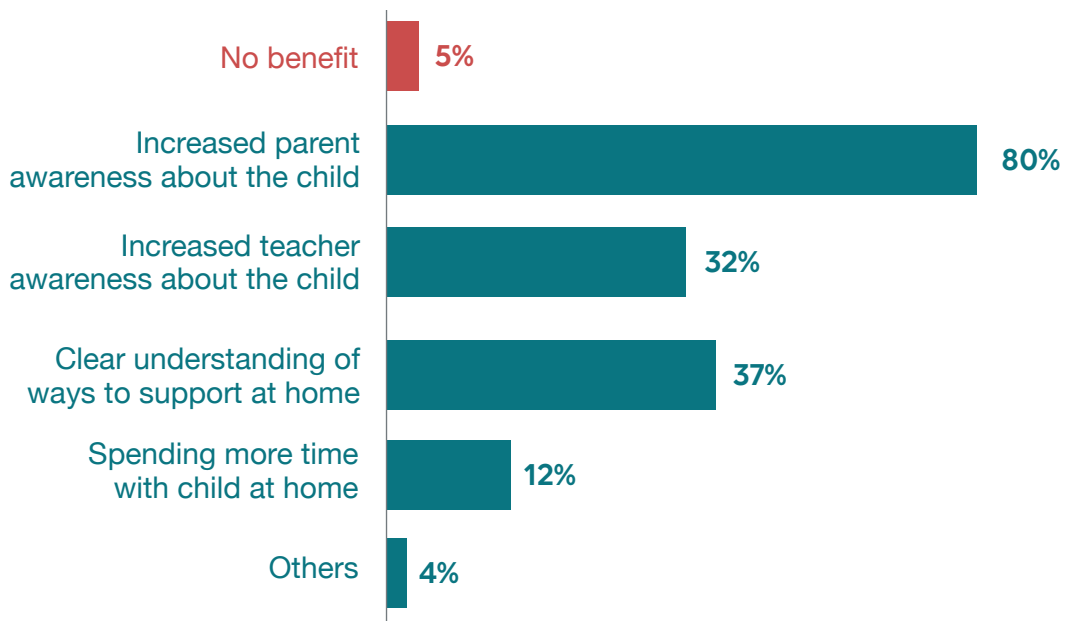
The impact of PTMs has repeatedly stood out across all our FGDs and surveys.

Firstly, it has succeeded in getting many parents involved in the schooling and education of their child for the first time, as mentioned by 72 percent teachers. **Our survey revealed that greater than 95 percent of parents have attended at least one PTM in Delhi with at least 65 percent having attended more than four PTMs.** Moreover, the seriousness with which PTMs were conducted is evident by the fact that only a mere five percent considered it to be a formality, while 43 percent of parents felt that teachers took the time to have a detailed discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of their children.

As a result, 80 percent of parents said their understanding of their children has increased amongst other benefits they cited – as shown in Exhibit 8.7.

Exhibit 8.7

Various benefits witnessed by parents due to PTMs



Students have also expressed multi-fold benefits of PTMs. The richness of the conversation with teachers has led the parents to feel more confident in the ability of their children and to provide them with more support. This has in turn left the students more motivated to do even better, as mentioned by 47 percent teachers.

"I was transferred to a new school, and my parents did not know any teacher. But Mega-PTM helped to get introduced to each other and build relationship. They spoke very candidly to each other. My mother also took teacher's number for emergencies."

- Student, Delhi government school

"I wanted a blackboard after my SA2 exams to study at home. My parents bought it for me after hearing good feedback about me from my teacher. I also communicated to them that I want to study more and become a teacher. They have become more acceptive of my future plans as well."

- Student, Delhi government school

The impact of PTMs however is not just limited to parents and students. As a consequence of regular and comprehensive interactions with parents, teachers had to ensure adequate attention and time was spent with each student to understand specific strengths and weaknesses. 36 percent teachers credit Mega-PTMs for increased student awareness as a result of PTM preparations and interactions with parents. In many cases, the

quality interactions with parents have helped teachers understand context of each child better and the important role they need to play given the challenges (lack of ability, daily work) parents are faced with. As many as 52 percent teachers credit PTMs for providing the platform to have open discussion with parents about the child and provide them with tips to support learning at home. This has also become a large part of the reason for improved learning outcomes in their school.

Lastly, PTMs have been a powerful tool to increase parent awareness about the reforms being made in school education. Because of the mass outreach of PTMs, parents were able to witness the changes being made in schools and became powerful voices in the narrative of reforms in Delhi, some of which ultimately led to its electoral impact as well. Some of these voices have been captured in Exhibit 8.8.

Exhibit 8.8

Voices on the ground suggest significant shift in parent participation



Parents have felt increased connect with school

“Parent workshop attend karke badaa surprise hua..mujhe hamesha lagta tha ki school bulaya hai toh bache ki complaint sunni padegi..Kabhi socha nahi tha ki school mein madat liye aisa kuch karayega.” - *Parent*

“PTM mein mujhe bataya ki meri beti iss vishye mein weak hai...Phir mujhe jagruk kiya ki yeh sirf beta ki he nahi meri bhi zimmidari hai... khud ko aisa laga ki agar aage se kehne waala hai toh ab peeche se karne waala bhi toh hona chahiye.” - *Parent*



Parents have become more involved and responsible



Parents have felt their grievances are heard / addressed

“PTM mein maine kahan ki mujhe pata nahi lagta ki mera beta school pahucha hai ya ghoomne bhaag gaya... usko dekhni ya naukri dekhni.. Teacher ne tabhi class monitor ko khada kiya aur bola ki ek register mein likha jaaye kaun bacha kab aaya.. Jisko parents kabhi bhi dekh sakte hai” - *Parent*

“Agar main papa se ab koi doubt puchti hu toh woh apna kaam side rakhke pehle mere sawaal ka jawaab dete hai. Meri padhai unki priority #1 bann gayi hai” - *Student*



Students have also felt increase in parent involvement



Teachers have also felt change in themselves

“Maine bohat bar uss bache ko late aate dekha.. PTM mein jab uski Maa ne bataya ki uske yahan bus aati aur usko common van mein aana hota hai isiliye late ho jaa hai.. Sunke laga ki yeh toh maine socha he nahi tha” - *Teacher*

8.6 Challenges

In the process of organising these various events, Delhi faced a few challenges which are important to highlight and learn from:

Low parent participation in the beginning

Initially, despite newspaper advertisements, cynicism towards events organised by schools led to muted parent participation. Consequently, massive radio advertisements featuring the EM and mass media coverage helped position it as a distinctive event that eventually increased parent attendance.

Lack of structured follow-up mechanism/systems with parents

Parents were provided with useful tools and techniques across multiple events such as PTMs, parental workshops, etc. However, there was no tracking mechanism integrated into the school system to check with parents on the utilisation of these tools. Till date, there is limited understanding on the usefulness and impact created by the tools in terms of either increasing parental involvement or student learning at home.

Teacher preparedness

Teachers are central to the process of engaging parents during Mega-PTMs and parental workshops. However, teachers struggled to articulate three positive and unique things about each child. Even to this day, some teachers are not able to know all students deeply - thus their conversations with parents of these children is generic and lack specific inputs. Teachers also faced challenges facilitating workshop sessions for parents. Thus, there are marked differences in the way sessions were conducted by different teachers. However, this has gradually improved over time.

Pushback from schools

The organisation of PTMs required significant amount of bandwidth of HoS as well as teachers. It was felt that this would negatively impact teaching time. However, despite initial reluctance to engage in the preparatory activities, SMC meetings, etc. before PTMs, schools have participated with increased enthusiasm as the benefits began to show overtime.

8.7 Implications for other states

In the process of organising these various events, Delhi faced a few challenges which are important to highlight and learn from:

Q. What are the key success factors of Mega-PTMs in Delhi that other states must keep in mind?

- Mass outreach and awareness activities, especially radio campaigns with participation of the EM and students.

- Preparatory activities that focused on providing a sense of dignity and respect to parents – the smallest of gestures such as invitation cards, providing tea for parents etc. probably made the maximum difference. A special budget was provided to all schools to support some of this.
- Every teacher was given strict instructions to say three positive and unique things about each child. While a seemingly simple action, this one step was instrumental in transforming the relationships between students, teachers, and parents. On the one hand, it helped increase student's confidence, while on the other, it forced teachers to reflect on each child's individual strengths and weaknesses, and made the entire PTA exercise a more meaningful and personalised experience for parents.

Q. Delhi is a small city-state with low average school distance. How does a state with significantly higher geographical spread make such preparations for PTMs given the logistics and coordination required?

Delhi followed a decentralised model for preparations of Mega-PTMs. For some preparations such as decoration of school, school members including both teachers and students supported majority of the preparations that left them vested in the success of the event. For other preparations such as tea-coffee, welcome bands, etc. requisite budget was provided to HoS to make the necessary arrangements and charge as Mega-PTM related expenses.

Other states should also consider such a decentralised approach since the capability to make such arrangements already exists at school as seen in various other events that the school organises during the year (annual day, sports day etc.) While few capabilities, for example, printing of letters might not exist at the school level, it is important to understand that such special preparations were only a part of the many things that made Mega-PTMs a success.

9. Head of School Enablement: Developing School Leaders

9.1 Need

School leadership is second only to teacher quality in terms of its importance to the functioning of a school. It is hard to imagine any system, in education or otherwise, transforming without high quality leadership. However, historically, **HoS in the Indian public education system have faced three challenges:**

- Most HoS **do not see themselves as the true leader of a school** – someone who is responsible for setting and executing a vision for the school. Majority see themselves as a conduit between the state and the student – someone who merely follows the rules and executes the orders as best as he/she can.
- Quite often, **HoS are burdened with so many varied tasks** that even if they want to, they are not able to spend adequate energy and effort on issues central to long-term improvement of the school. Their time is spent on ‘the urgent’ and not ‘the important’.
- They **do not possess the requisite leadership skills to run a school**. Most HoS are teachers that are promoted into this position. Teaching a class is a different skill set from running an institution – which requires managing and motivating the teachers and staff, along with the parent and the student body – and most often these are not taught to HoS. Even where trainings are done, they are mechanical and not effective.

“

Lagta tha ki aakhir class karwaye ya safai karwaye .. yeh toh sabko pataa hai ki expert teacher acha rakhna chahiye par usko bulaye kaise..karein toh karein kya.

- Head of School, Delhi government school

”

[“There was always so much to do that we couldn’t understand if we should conduct classes or get the school cleaned... there was no one to tell us how to do certain things...”]

Given these challenges, it was critical for Delhi to undertake holistic enablement of HoS to truly make them independent leaders and to enable schools to become autonomous learning institutions.

9.2 Objective

Delhi’s efforts to build school leaders cannot be defined or restricted to ‘training’ but should be viewed as enabling of its HoS to take up their mantle.

The specific objectives of this initiative, as articulated in the 'SCERT Annual Training Goals 2017'⁶⁷ document, are:

- Build self-awareness amongst the overall cohort of HoS
- Enable visible shifts in their beliefs, values, vision, and observable behaviours
- Ensure that HoS understand, develop, and live the competencies of their role as leaders
- Bring the cluster alive as a trust based non-hierarchical peer group for the HoS
- Through all of the above, enable the HoS to develop the school as a learning organisation



To establish HoS as the true leaders of their schools; leaders who have dreams for their institution and the ability and empowerment to fulfil those dreams.

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government







9.3 Design

At a summary level, there were four key elements to the inputs and support provided to HoS in Delhi, as shown in Exhibit 9.1

Exhibit 9.1

Four key design elements in HoS enablement initiatives

Measures Taken	 Exposure Visits (domestic/ international)	 Cluster based engagement model	 Empower HoS	 Give HoS a "Voice"
Objective	Broaden horizons and expand thinking of HoS	Invest in continuous process of peer-led leadership development	Devolve financial and admin power; provide additional resources to transform schools	Make HoS feel valued and involved in decision making

⁶⁷ State Council of Educational Research and Training (2017). SCERT Annual Training Plan: Academic Year 2017.

Broadening the horizons of the HoS's thinking through domestic/international exposure visits

Delhi invested a significant amount of effort and money into breaking down the typical cynicism/jadedness that one sees in most tenured education department employees – including HoS.

Almost all (more than 95 percent) HoS had an opportunity to visit foreign universities (for example, in Cambridge and Finland) to observe what global best-in-class education institutions look like, how they conduct teaching-learning processes, and innovations such as creating an inclusive learning environment (for example, Finland visit showcased how non-English speaking immigrant students were integrated into classrooms).

“

Jab sab HoS ko foreign visits pe bhi leke gaye...humein bhi lagaa ki aakhir sarkaar itna kuch kar rahi hai hamaare liye.. toh kuch toh hamaara bhi farz banta hai..usko reciprocate karne ka..unko support karne ka.

- Head of School, Delhi government school

["When we saw that the government was doing so much for us, we felt that it is our duty as well to reciprocate, to undertake our responsibilities"]

”

In addition, all HoS also underwent residential training at IIM Ahmedabad, India's premier management institution. The residential format of the training allowed the HoS to step out of their responsibilities at school and truly immerse themselves to understand what it takes to run an institution where people dream to go and study. Sessions were conducted as discussions in smaller groups (10 to 12 people) where HoS analysed case studies prepared by IIM, discussed school specific challenges, and professors shared practical approaches that could be used to solve these challenges.

This kind of high-quality exposure at scale is something that few states have invested in and it has paid rich dividends in Delhi. These visits served three purposes: make HoS feel valued/invested in and increased their motivation; help them set a much grander vision for their school (inspired by the schools they visited); and develop a few hard and soft skills through the sessions in these visits.

Finally, all HoS underwent the **eight-day Jeevan Vidya Shivir (JVS) workshop** in Chhattisgarh. This was the same process that the leadership team of Delhi as well as all the MTs/TDCs also went through. These workshops helped ensure that the HoS were steeped in the same philosophy and guiding norms as the broader leadership of the DoE.

Investing in the HoS's continuous development through a cluster-based training/engagement model

When it comes to HoS leadership training, most states tend to follow a few standardised models – for example, a one-shot 10 to 20-day training, or three to four sessions of three to four days each spread over one year. Delhi also tried the **NCSL – NUEPA trainings** at the beginning. These trainings were conducted for 200 HoS. It consisted of 16 days of training which included workshops for an initial stretch of 10 days and then two-day follow-up sessions done thrice over the year in gaps of six to eight weeks.

However, eventually Delhi institutionalised **continuous cluster level leadership development programme (CLDP)**. In this programme, HoS were grouped into clusters (10 to 12 HoS per cluster and hence around 100 clusters across DoE Schools) for the training. Within each of these clusters, facilitator led peer-learning sessions were organised which included a five-day intensive training to begin with and followed by 11 monthly sessions. While the programme was conceived to be a one-year programme, it was found to be useful enough for it to continue across the last five years.





There were three key principles of this cluster-based programme:

- A reflective and participative approach to learning
- A focus on soft skills and nuanced understanding of the meaning of leadership rather than just hard skills
- Linked to core government initiatives – for example, Mission Buniyaad, HC, EMC

It is important to note here that this cluster-based facilitation mechanism is core to Delhi's philosophy of school leadership development. It is a significant departure from typical HoS trainings on many dimensions. It reflects a certain set of beliefs: that leadership development never ends, that collective conversations lead to system improvement, and that motivated people when put into small collaborative groups for open conversations – learn and grow significantly through peer learning.

We believe that this cluster-based development approach has had a significant impact on Delhi's school leaders and hence Delhi's school transformation. This has been shown in Exhibit 9.2.

Exhibit 9.2
Different benefits of the CLDP programme

	KEY DIFFERENCES	TYPICAL HoS TRAINING	CLUSTER PROGRAM (CLDP)	BENEFITS OF CLDP
	Group Size	Large groups (50+ people)	Small groups (10-12 people)	Ensures engagement of all participants
	Continuity	Ends after 6-12 months	Continues for years	Continued self reflection / L&D
	Frequency	Burst mode (once every quarter)	Regular (once every month)	Continuous exchange of best practices
	Content	Pre-decided topics	Flexible / Discussion based (topics decided every month)	Contextualized to state agenda / reforms

Empowering HoS to transform their schools by granting them additional powers/resources

Delhi recognised that HoS don't need just skills, but also resources to transform their schools into strong institutions of learning. The main powers and resources given to HoS included:

- **Autonomy to take decisions for the school:** Firstly, HoS financial powers were increased from INR 5,000 to INR 50,000. Secondly, HoS were also given a few additional powers, the main ones being the power to recommend the transfer of up to two teachers and the power to appoint part-time resource teachers as needed with the concurrence of the SMC.
- In addition, **each HoS was provided with an Estate Manager and clerical staff** who supported him/her in non-academic responsibilities. Estate Managers took the responsibility of maintenance of school infrastructure; clerical staff helped with administrative work. The appointment of these staff was done by the HoS using the support of SMC members.

Making the HoS feel continuously valued by giving them a ‘voice’

Finally, many small initiatives were undertaken to ensure that HoS felt continuously heard and had multiple avenues to express their concerns directly to the leadership. This included: **annual day long brainstorming and discussion sessions with the EM at Vigyan Bhawan, all HoS being on WhatsApp groups with the EM** and his office and additional easy access to the leadership. The Director (Education) personally interacted with all the Delhi government HoS zone-wise over many days during an effort to outline a strategy for improving Board results. The input of HoS was frequently taken on decision making and programmes too. Several academic programmes allowed the HoS to decide implementation details and in case of new initiatives like summer camps, whether they want to participate. More recently, the decision to reopen school during the COVID-19 pandemic was also first discussed with the HoS.

“

.. if I ever had an issue, I would go the EM’s house or office. If a HoS visits; EM would always give time within the hour...

- Head of School, Delhi government school

”

9.4 Implementation

The entire HoS enablement programme was designed and led by SCERT with the support of several organisations especially Creatnet and the Cell for Human Values & Transformative Learning at DIET Daryaganj. This included:

- Developing partnerships and programmes with IIM-A and international institutions
- Scheduling and logistics management of the national and international visits including Jeevan Vidya Shivir
- Initial development of the cluster-based training/engagement concept (detailed below)
- On-going implementation and course correction of the cluster-based trainings
- Development of the core cadre of facilitators for leadership development (detailed below)

Programme at IIM-A

It was a rigorous five-day residential programme that included four sessions per day. A variety of methodologies were used such as case methods, short presentations, large group activities that allowed the sessions to be engaging and immersive. Topics of the sessions were chosen with an intent to broaden the focus of HoS beyond just operational tasks to make them understand the richness of their role and to motivate them to better perform their role after they go back to their schools.

In all their leadership programs, the key message was the importance of creating a nurturing environment at school for all stakeholders and working as a team with fellow teachers to bring cooperation and change in school.

“

One of my teachers wanted to come late by half an hour due to a genuine reason. My general reaction to such requests is to decline .. but I accommodated her request and she in turn volunteered to take a full extra class. I have tried to bring a personal touch to my leadership .. something that was taught during the programme.

- Head of School, Delhi government school

”

Exhibit 9.3

Day-wise summary of sessions and key takeaways

DAY 1	Role of school principal HoS is a nurturer of potential of teachers and students and doesn't have to feel overburdened to do all different tasks	Strategic decision-making & leadership competencies Creating a vision & settling direction for the school. Important role played by positive attitude to bring change in school
DAY 2	School climate, academic excellence and psychological well being Shared responsibility & accountability between parents, students, and teachers to build healthy school environment	Integrating community & school search for innovations Innovative ways in which education can be made inclusive by identifying the right incentives

DAY 3	Leadership styles Difference between a leader and a manager - need to delegate, trust others' capabilities	Data driven approach for teaching learning practices Basic data analysis and how to use it for decision making. Novel techniques to understand student grievances	Developing people and nurturing talent Ways to delegate but provide the support and freedom to execute
DAY 4	Emotional well-being of students Power of introspection and having positive outlook that disseminates to teachers and students	Working in groups Understanding of group dynamics and ways to build cooperation amongst teachers, students, and parents	Schools in changing context Recognizing increasing pressures on students and responding to their psychological needs
DAY 5	Leadership Behavior: Encourage innovative thinking Live case study of how teacher persistence significantly enhanced student learning	Bringing change in schools Change agents need to understand point of views of others to correctly define the problem in order to get to the right solution	

Cluster leadership programme designed for HoS

This programme aimed to enable HoS to become better leaders by development of specific competencies in them that are central to their role:

- **Self-awareness:** Responsibility, Trust, Influence, Intrinsic motivation
- **Group and system awareness:** Working with all stakeholders
- **Facilitation skills:** Listening, Synthesizing, Giving feedback, Building cooperation

As already mentioned in this chapter, HoS were grouped into clusters (10 to 12 HoS per cluster and hence around 100 clusters across DoE Schools) for the training. The purpose of a cluster was to create a peer group that could develop together over the course of the programme by sharing resources, learning, and supporting each other.

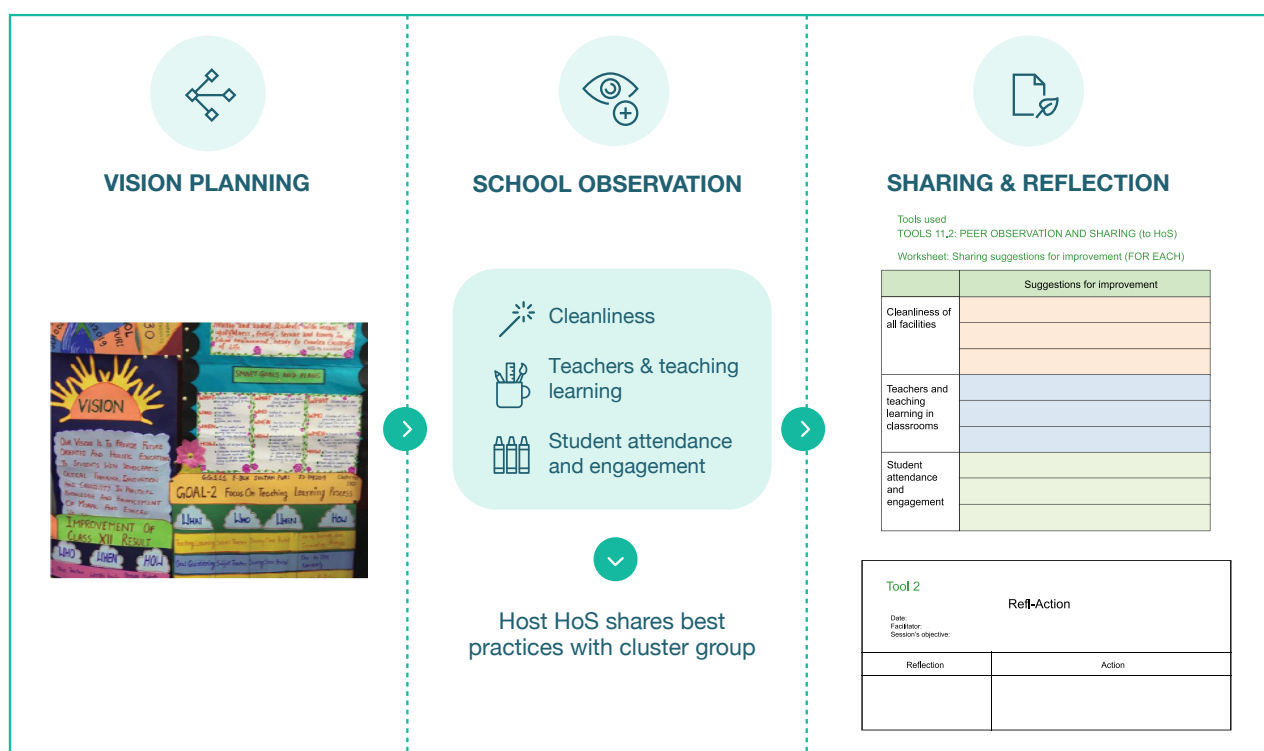
At the core of the programme were the facilitator led sessions organised by a host HoS every month. Each session was meant to promote peer learning amongst HoS and act as a source for them to continuously reflect on their role as a leader and develop skills in the process. The facilitator engaged the group on various topics mostly focused on above mentioned competencies. The session sometimes also included specific topics to build HoS understanding of upcoming education reforms in school (for example, Mission Buniyaad).

While each session (refer Exhibit 9.3) was designed to enable diverse learning of above topics, there were three specific activities that were common across all sessions:

- **Vision planning:** This session included helping each HoS set a vision for the school and create a plan for it. It also helped them reflect on their current progress.
- **School observation:** This activity essentially included observation of school by cluster members along with a facilitator. It was a silent observation that focused on three aspects – cleanliness, teachers and teaching learning, and student attendance and engagement. During the observation, host HoS shared his/her best practices, which fostered trust and collaboration among cluster members. Finally, the facilitator did a debrief on how one should share feedback with teachers after observing their classroom.
- **Sharing and reflection:** Post the school observation, facilitator asked cluster members to share few positive things they noticed along with further areas of improvement with host HoS. Finally, they were asked to reflect on the takeaways for themselves from school observation and fill them in 'Refl-Action' sheet.

Exhibit 9.4

Three specific activities, which were common across all sessions



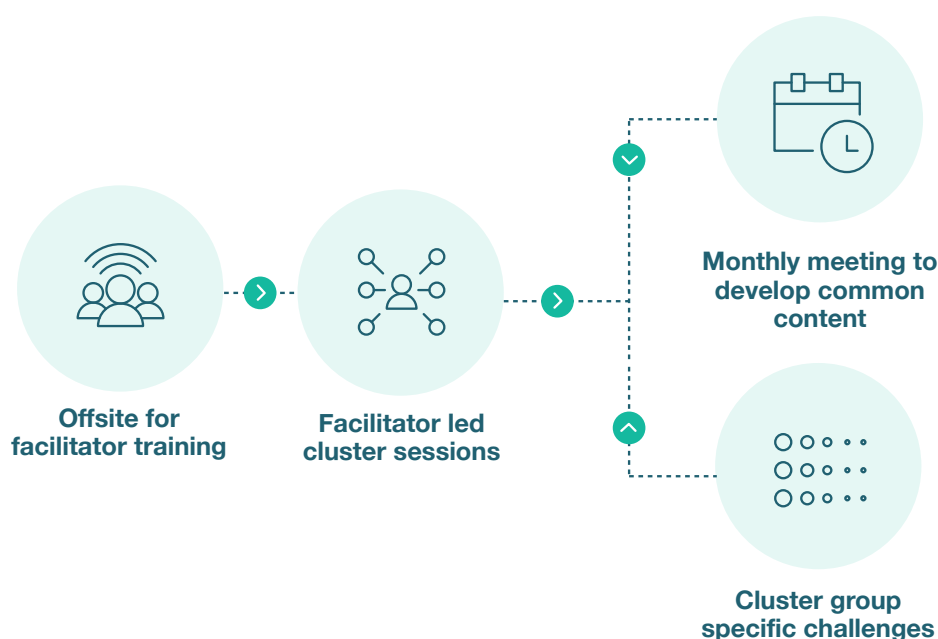
Cluster sessions were facilitated by a team of around 100 facilitators

The construct of the monthly cluster-based peer-learning sessions necessitated having a cadre of skilled facilitators. To address the capacity need, facilitators were selected from within the existing system – typically one HoS per cluster also played the role of a facilitator. These facilitators were then supported by CreatNet to conduct facilitator-led cluster sessions (refer Exhibit 9.5).

To begin with, these facilitators themselves required significant structured support in developing the skills of facilitation. A structure was put in place that helped them in two ways – creating content for the sessions and training on how to facilitate the sessions. For training of facilitators, intensive offsites were organised (three days every quarter) which focused on developing their skills to better organise and facilitate, understanding competencies to be delivered to the HoS, and also familiarise them with initiatives such as HC, EMC, and Chunauti, etc.

Over a period of time, facilitators also began to support in content creation for cluster workshops. Monthly meetups among facilitators where they collaborated to develop common material that they could use to facilitate their monthly peer-learning sessions were held. Each facilitator also tailored content to address specific challenges HoS in their cluster had highlighted during the previous sessions.

Exhibit 9.5
Support structure for 'facilitator led cluster sessions'



9.5 Impact

The impact of leadership development initiatives for HoS was repeatedly reinforced during our conversations and FGDs.

Firstly, and most importantly, the entire program has raised the profile of the HoS and allowed them to develop into holistic school leaders who can realise the vision of autonomous learning institutions. By trusting the HoS to take decisions and greater responsibility and facilitating international exposure visits to elite institutions, Delhi has managed to increase motivation and propelled HoS to become votaries of change at school level. The consequent increase in ownership to transform their schools into learning institutions has allowed them to drive higher acceptance and successful implementation of initiatives such as mentorship programme, Chunauti, etc. despite the initial pushback.

The increased autonomy to HoS has helped them take decisions that have improved the functioning of schools. HoS were given powers to address teacher vacancy by autonomous hiring of guest teachers, which has played a crucial role in improvement of Board results. Moreover, the flexibility to hire Estate Managers has reduced HoS administrative burden, freed up their time, and allowed them to focus more on core academic tasks of school.

“ I didn’t have a science teacher in my school and the guest teacher left in the middle of the year; the revised power allowed me to get another teacher through the SMC fund which led to 33 percent improvement in results. ”

- Head of School, Delhi government school

Thirdly, the focus on self-realisation and consistent messaging on an empathetic and collaborative mindset during these sessions has also seeded cultural change in several schools over the years. Several HoS noted that one of the biggest learnings that they had internalised was the need to be more responsive than reactive, a key message of the CLDP programme. In practice, this means being flexible to accommodate alternatives, being ready to trust people with responsibilities, giving them the freedom to execute, and working with a mindset that is less mechanical and more positive and hopeful. These shifts ensured that HoS were able to grow from a position of self-awareness to group-awareness towards teachers and other school staff, allowing them to invest in the development of their people.

“

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Collaboration with SMC has deepened

“HoS have truly started supporting us. They give us respect to sit next to them. It is a big thing for us which motivates us to perform our role. They include us in discussions and genuinely ask our opinion on school issues. Once we discussed an issue of teacher misconduct. HoS proactively acted on it and organized to speak with the teacher and address the issue”

- SMC Parent Member

“I used to speak to the teacher many times but felt nothing was done. Now I can easily approach the HoS. They are always taking rounds during PTMs. Once I spoke to HoS and he followed up with the teacher on what has been done to address my issue”

- Parent



Parents feel their voices will be heard

9.6 Challenges

The HoS leadership programme of the Government of Delhi has been truly impactful and unique in its own right. However, some challenges that surfaced were:

Significant dependence on quality of facilitators

The format of the peer-learning session was essentially a workshop that stimulates discussion amongst HoS to share their learnings. While this format helped enrich the discussions, it also created a high dependence on the quality of facilitation to stimulate such a discussion. Given the more than 100 clusters, there were at times significant differences in quality of discussions across sessions. To address this, constant feedback was sought on facilitators and repeat specialised trainings were conducted to equip them with the right skills and mindset.

Limited contextual relevance of exposure visits

While the international exposure visits were appreciated, it was also recognised that at times the socio-economic realities (literacy, resources, etc.) of the host institutions were different from India and hence had lesser scope to be applied in short/medium term to bring reform in existing system. Going forward, there are talks of similar foreign trips to countries like Vietnam, which are closer to India's educational context.

Alignment of multiple programmes

While the cluster programme had its own agenda, it also had to be integrated with the NUEPA programmes to some extent - thus leading to additional bandwidth requirement from HoS.

9.7 Implications for other states

Q. If a state is looking to initiate Leadership Development programmes, how should it think about it?

States should consider a three-pronged approach to leadership development programme:

- High investment on exposure visits of HoS to broaden the vision that they have for their school and motivate them to drive change in school from the front.
- Continuous peer-based cluster programme with focus on practice of collective enquiry, mutual support and problem solving.
- Regular engagement with HoS to align them on the vision of the state. The JVS workshop was leveraged effectively in Delhi for this purpose.

Q. What are the key success factors of CLDP in Delhi?

- **Learning in small groups:** The peer learning sessions were conducted in smaller groups of 10 to 12 people. This limit on the participant count ensured that facilitator was able to involve all participants, enabling active participation across the group, and increasing the quality of learning from the sessions.
- **Continuous learning process:** CLDP envisioned leadership development as a long-term process that entailed sustained reflection by HoS on their role. The design of programme to continuously engage them during the year through sessions and peer-learning groups helped create requisite space for HoS to set themselves up on their leadership journey.
- **Integration with state programmes:** Cluster sessions included specific discussions on various state programmes that had been rolled out. Through this, HoS openly discussed the challenges that were encountered and ideated on ways to address them. This process empowered HoS with workable strategies to take back to school and a deeper understanding of the role they needed to play to drive larger adoption of programmes in their school.
- **Support of CreatNet and role of facilitator:** The richness in the peer-learning session was brought by facilitators who stimulated discussions amongst HoS to share their learnings. To perform this role, the facilitators were supported by CreatNet team that provided them with the requisite training to run the sessions effectively.

Q. What is the role of soft skills vs hard skills in Leadership Development

Leadership development for HoS is more than just functional training. It involves re-skilling them into becoming leaders who are able to drive the schools' goals, vision, and, performance all while creating a collaborative and positive atmosphere, both for teachers and students. While hard skills and knowledge are also important for HoS, the softer aspects such as, decision making, collaboration, ethical and inclusive leadership, action orientation, etc. form the real backbone to help perform their role of people management that can in turn drive excellence at school.

Q. What powers should be devolved to HoS?

There is no standard template on the specific powers that should be devolved. The specifics will have to be worked out by each state. A few things might be kept in mind however:

- It is important to win the trust of HoS first and motivate them. We would recommend devolving limited administrative and financial powers (reduce permissions and expenditure caps) in the beginning. To begin with, more critical administrative powers such as hiring of Estate Managers should be devolved, which will allow the HoS to focus on core academic tasks of school.
- Increased financial devolution and stronger administrative powers (example: action against underperforming teachers) may be considered in later years when there is a governance mechanism such as SMCs which are functional and are able to provide necessary check on HoS powers.

10. Mentor Teachers/Teacher Development Coordinators: A Mentorship Model

10.1 Need

Research around the world has demonstrated that the primary determinant of student learning outcomes is the quality and skills of teachers. However, the current **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)** model of professional development in India provides just a few days of standardised training for all teachers every year. This leads to two major challenges:

- The training does not cater to the specific context of the teacher based on the unique learning trajectory and backgrounds of their children as well the past trainings and skill set of the teacher herself/himself.
- Most teachers receive lecture style trainings in pre-determined formats. Training is confined to a physical centre and rarely has any element of classroom-level support and handholding – which is critical to put things in practice.

Therefore, there was an urgent need to build a model of continuous professional development that responds to the context of the teachers, builds shared learning communities at all levels of the system, and provides sustained mentorship and handholding inside the school and classroom.

10.2 Objective

The vision, as stated by the Government of Delhi, of these initiatives is to build an “*education system where everyone learns together*”. This is achieved by creating a collaborative network of teachers – MTs and TDCs. This network enables continuous professional development of teachers through peer-learning, in-classroom support and mentorship, and dissemination of best practices on subject topics and pedagogy.

The specific objectives as articulated in the ‘SCERT Annual Training Goals 2017’⁶⁸ were:

- Developing the school as a learning organisation for all stakeholders.
- Developing the academic expertise of teachers for students to achieve appropriate learning outcomes; especially FLN
- Strengthening facilitation skills and interactive classroom practices of teachers to be more engaging and support learning with understanding.

10.3 Design

The MT programme was conceptualised in 2016-17 and extended to introduce the TDC programme in 2017-18 in schools. It envisions a system-wide network of academic support for the teachers.





⁶⁸ State Council of Educational Research and Training (2017). SCERT Annual Training Plan: Academic Year 2017.

Separate roles for two cadres

- District level MTs:** MTs are a separate cadre of resources/teachers who do not take on formal teaching responsibilities during their tenure as an MT. Each MT is tasked with mentoring four to five schools and supporting capacity building of teachers on a daily basis. MTs also work alongside a District Resource Group (DRG) – an academic unit that builds tools for academic guidance to schools in their district.
- School level TDCs:** Across Delhi, each school has a TDC who works under the guidance of the HoS and MT to enhance the learning environment at school. TDC does this by encouraging academic discussions amongst teachers, supporting them with constructive feedback to improve their teaching practices, and sharing innovative pedagogies with them to better engage with children in classrooms and ensure learning. Often, this is done by the TDC through demonstration and role-modelling – ‘preaching’ to their peers is specifically discouraged.

Exhibit 10.1

Different roles and responsibilities of MTs and TDCs

Role & Responsibilities	Mentor Teacher (MT)	Teacher Development Coordinator (TDC)
 Teacher Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct zonal subject specific training Provide mentorship to TDC - how to observe classes and provide feedback Coordinate with TDCs to observe classes (once a week) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe classes (daily) and identify learning needs of teachers Provide feedback to teachers to address academic challenges
 Content & Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create supplementary material and pedagogies that teachers can use to teach students Share teaching pedagogies with TDCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collate academic resources to support learning needs of teachers Share teaching pedagogies with teachers
 School Learning Plan (SLP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support TDC to develop Academic Resource Team (ART) Observe monthly ART meetings Support / provide inputs to TDC and ART to prepare SLP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Academic Resource Team (ART) Facilitate monthly ART meetings Support ART to prepare SLP
 Learning Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-facilitate peer learning sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setup peer learning community of teachers Facilitate 30 minutes peer learning sessions

The differentiating elements of this programme vis-à-vis similar ones in other states are:

Philosophy of Mentorship

- Firstly, the MT/TDC model inherently discourages monitoring as a function, in favour of mentorship. While several states have built high quality monitoring apps and accountability focused systems using field level persons – such as block and cluster resource persons - MTs/TDCs are not expected to monitor or report gaps and challenges in schools. Instead, they are expected to work with the HoS and teachers collaboratively to address key challenges (primarily academic but sometimes non-academic challenges such as attendance or community engagement) at the school level.

“

One teacher used to not teach during class ... instead of complaining about it to someone, I used to stand outside his classroom persistently and not leave till he started teaching.

- Mentor Teacher, Delhi government school

”

- Secondly, it is a high-touch mentorship model where MTs visit a school for the entire duration of the school day once every week. During a typical visit, an MT first spends time speaking to the HoS, then engages with TDC on the developments since last visit, and then finally, jointly undertakes in-depth individual discussions with teachers, often while observing their classrooms. This is a far higher touch model than those seen in other states where a mentor/monitor may spend only one to two hours in a school and visit once every few weeks.
- Thirdly, mentorship is not seen as a top-down process with prescriptive advice. Instead, it relies on learning through reflection and discussion. It also tries to build a culture of peer-learning where teachers learn through sharing and discussing teaching practices with each other. MT/TDCs are supposed to be facilitators of this process – aided by being vulnerable themselves in these discussions and focusing on building relationships of trust with teachers.
- A corollary to the lack of top-down prescriptiveness is that it is a non-hierarchical system – MT/TDCs are not senior to other teachers in any way. The intent was to create a space for sharing and reflection between equals that was facilitated through MTs and TDCs. Learning was not just envisioned for teachers but MT/TDCs were also expected to continuously learn from teachers and share those learnings with others.

Separate cadre of Mentor Teachers

Although CRCCs (as seen in other systems) are also supposed to perform a mentorship role, in many states, this position has degraded into a data collection and monitoring role, including in Delhi. However, monitoring is a different role from mentorship (supporting and handholding teachers, especially academically). While the former, by its very nature, has a somewhat antagonistic relationship with teachers, the latter requires strong personal bonds, trust, as well as deep academic understanding.

Therefore, there was a need for a new cadre of MTs who possess the ‘appropriate mentorship skills’ and are dedicated to the role. MTs were expected to be exclusively involved in mentorship and day-long school visits rather than teaching in classrooms. In lieu of the MT, the DDE (District) assigned a Guest/Contract Teacher to the schools. TDCs on the other hand were not a separate cadre since their role was to work within the school itself.

Capacity Building and Exposure

The most critical element of this initiative was the capacity building of MTs and TDCs themselves. MTs, in particular, were given not just a few days of orientation but months of support and immersive exposure. They were extensively exposed to differing models of classroom practices from the best possible practitioners and alternative schools in India. Many were also sent on international trips to observe best practices. Almost all of them attended workshops and conferences conducted by subject and pedagogy experts.

This significant investment in capacity building was driven by the recognition that the role is critical and requires great patience, dedication, and motivation. The role also requires strong pedagogical grounding to be able to mentor and support teachers in their classrooms, especially cutting across classes and subjects.

10.4 Implementation

Selection Process

The quality of mentorship and facilitation provided by MT/TDCs depended to some extent on their selection. However, selection was approached differently for MTs and TDCs.

MT selection was a rigorous process. Initial shortlisting of candidates was based on expression of interest by candidates. The role of MT was of a change agent and required dedication, perseverance, and long hours. Therefore, their intrinsic interest and motivation for the programme was a critical deciding factor. Final selection was done based on three types of assessments that evaluated how they interacted with people – psychometric assessment, group discussion, and formal presentation on a given topic. MTs were also replaced every two years so that the culture of academic discourse and peer learning could spread to more people and MTs could apply their broader learnings to their individual schools as well.

TDC selection was a relatively less intensive process. TDCs operate at the school level. They were selected by HoS to ensure collaboration and support of HoS to transform the academic environment in school. It was also important to ensure that no alternate power center developed in a school.

High Quality Capacity Building

The success of the mentorship model rested upon the capability and skills of the MT/TDCs. Delhi invested time and resources to ensure the best model of capacity building, high quality exposure visits, and consequent integration into mentorship role, especially for MTs:

- Onboarding and induction training:** An MT's journey started with a rigorous 30 to 45-day training schedule. The focus of this training was to develop an understanding of their role and mentorship and facilitation skills. It involved extensive self-reflection sessions, exploration of alternate content and child-centric pedagogy, techniques of class observation, and learning assessments. The orientation session was also practical in nature - MTs would practice different techniques and pedagogical approaches in classrooms with a definite cohort of children, develop learnings from their experiences and document it.
- Jeevan Vidya Shivir workshop:** An eight-day workshop was also organised for all MTs in Hapur to align them with the overall vision of the education reforms in Delhi.
- External exposure visits:** In addition to the above, high quality exposure visits were organised in changemaker schools in different parts of India and abroad. Different MTs spent four to six days each in such schools to gain exposure to creative/alternative teaching learning practices and different belief systems in education. These visits were chosen to promote diversity of learnings and ensure practical immersion.

Before shifting to the regular model of school visits, MTs also used their learnings and experiences through this capacity building phase to conduct four workshops with teachers where they created new supplementary learning material and transaction processes for classrooms.

Exhibit 10.2

Various components of MT/TDC capacity building and its impact

 <p>Exposure Visits</p>	<div> <div>  Gujarat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anupam Moti Dau Gyaan Shala </div> <div>  Assam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm2Food Foundation </div> <div>  Bangalore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prakriya Green Wisdom School </div> <div>  Chennai <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HLC International </div> </div> <div> <div>  Maharashtra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Gateway School Of Mumbai Teach for India, Mumbai 3.2.1 Education Foundation, Mumbai A2Q Education, Mumbai </div> <div>  Pune <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avasara Academy Gyan Prakash </div> <div>  Delhi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India Education Collective </div> </div> <div> <div>  Rajasthan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gramin Shiksha Kendra Digantar Vidyalaya </div> <div>  Karnataka <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dream a Dream </div> <div>  Hosur <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TVS Academy </div> <div>  Tripura <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brilliant Stars School </div> </div>
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Teacher Development Coordinators: For TDCs, there was a three-tiered structure setup to support them in their new role:

- **Term workshops:** Three workshops (several off-site) were organised every year for capacity building of TDCs. They focused on facilitation skills and how to lead academic discourse within a school.
- **On field support:** Ongoing support was provided by MTs and STIR's Programme Managers with respect to classroom observation, giving feedback for improvement and solving school specific challenges in the TDC programme.
- **Monthly alignment meetings:** Discussions with MTs and DIET facilitators on the challenges/learnings for the last month and action plan for the next month.

DIET linkages

The involvement of DIETs was an important step in the programme given their quality and pedagogical experience. It also connected DIETs directly with the on-ground situation in schools.

DIETs were responsible for:

- **Facilitating capacity building workshops for MTs/TDCs:** DIET (along with SCERT) provided a 35-member team that facilitated workshops for MTs; they also worked along with MTs to co-facilitate workshops for TDCs (three workshops per year).
- **Monthly alignment meetings with TDCs:** DIETs also coordinated with TDCs to discuss school wise progress, understand the common challenges in their schools and suggest possible measures to overcome those challenges including providing pedagogical support.

In order to facilitate this, DIET Principals were also given some administrative powers such as maintaining MT timesheets.

TDCs as the lead of an Academic Resource Team

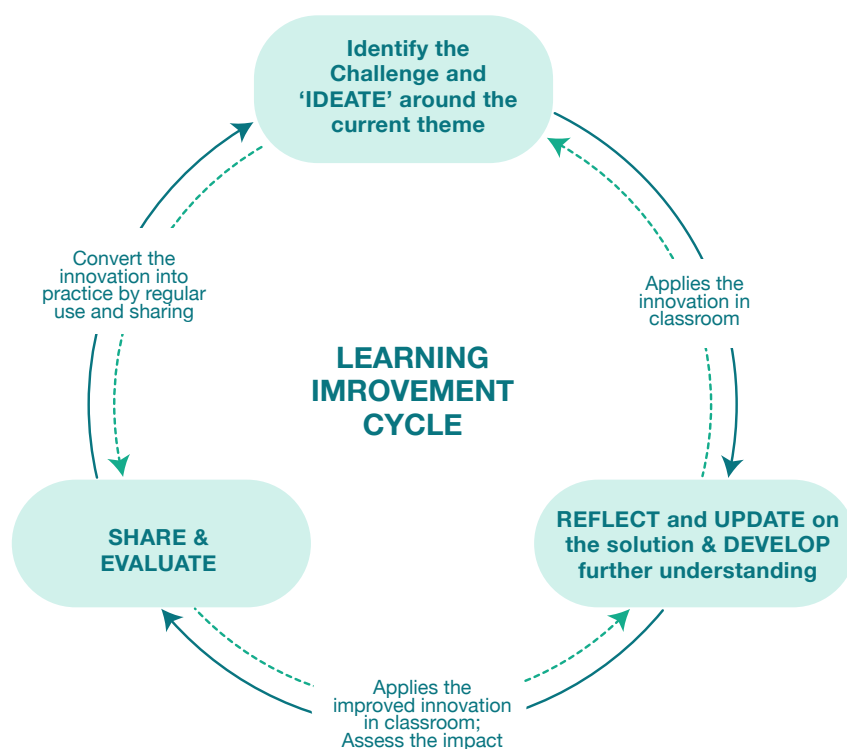
The primary role of TDC was to establish a positive learning environment in the school. To do this, their main support at school level was an ART - a five to six-member team including HoS, one SMC member, and select teachers. ART and TDC jointly worked together to identify and address the learning needs of the school.

As a regular process, the TDCs facilitated monthly meetings within the ART to discuss these learning needs and prepare a list of activities that should be done in school to address these learning needs - needs that are school specific as well as those that are identified at state level. These state-identified needs were often linked to the ongoing state interventions for a given period of time (for example, Mission Buniyaad). Progress of previous month's activities was also reviewed during the monthly ART meetings, to discuss what worked and what didn't, and to help further refine the activities for the next month.

This exercise of continuous review and refinement was called **Learning Improvement Cycle (LIC)**. LICs as a process thus helped ensure translation of learning needs into actual change in classroom practice as well as development of teacher professional mindsets and behaviours.

Finally, TDCs also promoted learning environment in school by institutionalising **daily 30-minute sessions** for all teachers. Teachers were divided into different groups based on their subjects. Each group discussed and shared innovative teaching methods for upcoming subject lessons to better engage children in the classroom.

Exhibit 10.3
Various components of the 'Learning Improvement Cycle'



Monitoring and tracking

MTs were given the flexibility to decide their schedule of school visits and allocation of effort across mentee schools. To ensure adequate MT time is spent across each mentee school, 'Circle In' mobile app was introduced. MTs were required to update their daily attendance and details of schools/centres visited, on the app. They were also required to enter the details of activities performed such as learnings from classroom observations.

In addition, a three-tier model for MT review was setup:⁶⁹

- **Zone level:** Weekly cadence was setup with DDE (Zone) to discuss support required by MTs.
- **District level:** Monthly cadence was setup with District Level Resource Group (comprising of DDEs, DIET HoS, Officer on Special Duty (OSD) [MT], Core Academic Unit (CAU), etc.) to discuss subject-specific academic problems faced by schools and interventions to solve these problems.
- **State level:** Cadence of once in two months was setup with Director SCERT and Additional Director (School) to discuss effectiveness of support provided by MTs (mentorship and academic material).

Role of stakeholders

The success of mentorship model rested on the quality of training and support provided to develop requisite capabilities of MTs/TDCs. The MT program was conceptualised through the joint efforts of SCERT and partner organisations like Pratham, Creatnet, and Sanjha. The TDC program was supported by STiR who deployed nine Programme Managers who supported design and field implementation. DIETs also played an important leadership role in the implementation of both programs.

⁶⁹ Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, DoE (2018). GO No. De.23(669)/ Sch. Br./2018/759 Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y7x69kex>

10.5 Impact

At a basic level, the MT/TDC programme has **institutionalised a culture of academic peer-learning**. The ART meetings and MT visits have created space for discussion on a regular basis. 20 percent of teachers feel that the day-to-day discussion-based learnings from MTs/TDCs have been as useful for them as formal workshops and training models.

This culture has led to a significant change in classrooms as well. Fifty one percent of teachers, who consider MTs/TDCs to be the most impactful development program, also believe that MTs/TDCs have helped them improve their pedagogical approach in classes. This is visible not just in improved and creative teaching practices but also in the mindset of teachers towards learning.

MTs have gone out of their way to identify and address specific challenges that they have observed in schools and set an example for other teachers to follow, especially in creating a student-centric atmosphere - as per our survey, 53 percent teachers, who consider MTs/TDCs to be the most impactful program, mentioned that MTs/TDCs helped them with techniques to engage weaker students.

Last, but most importantly, MTs/TDCs have become crucial cogs in the implementation of several other initiatives of the state. For example, teachers rely upon MTs to understand the vision of the state and answer clarifications on initiatives such as Buniyaad or SMC reforms. Sixty three percent teachers, considering MTs/TDCs to be the most impactful program, mentioned that they have become a platform for them to openly ask their queries. MTs have also begun to play other roles such as cross-checking data to ensure the validity of assessment data.

"Pehle sirf bol diya jaata tha ki meetings ho gayi hai aur points note kar liye jaaye..Kitne saalon se yehi dekha tha.. Par main kaafi surprised thi jab ART meetings attend ki..dekha ki meetings mein PPTs ke through samjha rahe hai.. badaa interesting lagaa jab teachers apni class problems discuss rahi thi aur unko solve karne ki strategies bataayi jaa rahi thi."

- Teacher, Delhi government school

"During lockdown, final assignment for class 9 compartment re-examination was to be shared on WhatsApp. We felt a lot pressure how to ensure children do it judiciously since its to decide whether they move to next class. We reached out to MT with our concern. She helped calm us down and suggested we could take a viva of the students later to check. MTs have always helped us in such situations"

- Teacher, Delhi government school

"When we start our class, children are typically distracted in some thing or the other. To tackle this, I learnt this technique in ART meeting called refresh activity. I asked all the students to raise their arms and shake them along with their legs. Immediately all of them started paying attention to what I was saying. I never knew such small techniques could be so useful."

- Teacher, Delhi government school

10.6 Challenges

Initial reluctance amongst the HoS

Early days of the programme were characterised by significant pushback from HoS who felt their authority over school was challenged when an MT visited the school to advise and support teachers. In some cases, MTs were stopped from entering schools. Multiple joint workshops between HoS and MTs and extensive discussions through cluster-level HoS sessions helped address these challenges. A culture of accountability towards Buniyaad outcomes also eventually encouraged HoS to proactively reach out to MTs for support.

Lack of prioritisation within the MT role

The role of MTs has continuously expanded over time. In addition to providing on-site mentorship to a school every day, MTs are also responsible for teacher training, teaching-learning material development, implementation of major government initiatives, TDC support, and more. This widened scope has created some amount of confusion and lack of predictability for MTs which has also taken away focus from their core role of in-school mentorship.

10.7 Implications for other states

Q. What were the key success factors of the Mentor Teacher cadre in Delhi?

As other states look to implement similar mentorship structures, it is important to understand why the MT cadre was successful in Delhi. We believe that there were three key elements. Firstly, MTs were developed as an exclusive cadre with a focus on classroom-level handholding and mentorship. They were given a small span of schools (five per MT) and afforded the time and space to fully invest in the development of each of their schools. Secondly, the state invested deeply in building the skills and capacity of MTs. Rather than a few days of training, MTs were sent on several exposure visits across the country and supported for many weeks through professional development opportunities before being deployed in the field. Lastly, MTs were selected through a rigorous multi-layered selection process. Delhi ensured that only the most interested candidates, who were willing to invest time and energy to their respective schools, formed part of the MT cadre.

Q. My state already has a CRCC cadre. Is a separate cadre needed for MTs?

States may want to differentiate between two different functions during school visits – monitoring (data collection, reporting, checking on attendance, and other parameters, etc.) versus mentorship (supporting and handholding teachers especially academically). Both these functions required differing approaches. While monitoring is often inherently antagonistic, mentorship relies on a far more supportive and friendly relationship of equals. States need to develop a clear vision of which of these functions they wish to prioritise.

Delhi took a very clear step of persisting with the existing CRCC cadre for day-to-day monitoring and reporting and built a separate high-quality MT cadre for the far more important function of mentorship. It also created a well-thought-out strategy for implementation of the program (five schools per MT).

Even if states cannot set up two separate cadres, states could identify high performing teachers from the CRCC cadre and delink their role completely from the monitoring function and allow them to exclusively focus on mentorship instead.

Q. My state has several small schools and high vacancies. How do I pull MT out of schools?

Several states will struggle to constitute a MT programme at scale with 40,000 or 50,000 schools that require 8,000 to 10,000 MTs. This is particularly difficult in states with high teacher vacancies.

In states with limited vacancies (less than 20 percent), a separate cadre of MTs may be provided, perhaps with a larger span of control (around 10 to 15 schools). However, states with very large vacancies and very tiny schools, may consider building the capacities of existing system staff even though that is far more difficult and time consuming.

Similarly, the TDC programme may also be considered as a common nominated position across two to three schools especially in the case of sub-scale schools.

11. Teacher Professional Development: Transitioning from 'Teachers' to 'Educators'

11.1 Need

In the past, teacher professional development in Delhi, as in other states, had been following a fairly standardised set of once a year three to five-day trainings for all subject teachers. There were multiple challenges with this model:

- **Teachers considered trainings as an avoidable formality** because of the quality of training and the fact that content was often repeated. Additionally, trainings were delivered in a one-sided 'lecture-like' fashion which failed to achieve the basic goal of teaching the teacher in an 'engaging manner'.
- **Training content was developed in a prescriptive non-inclusive fashion** which led to creation of content, which was not always valued by the teachers, not owned by the trainers, and left out many necessary topics which teachers genuinely wanted to learn.
- The entire training logistics encompassing elements such as **training venue, facilities, and communication about the trainings were not satisfactory**. During our conversations, teachers noted their frustrations: *"There was no place to sit as there were insufficient chairs", "There wasn't even clean drinking water available", and "We were notified about the trainings at the last moment and this affected our school work"* amongst many.

11.2 Objective

The objective of teacher professional development summarised through SCERT's Annual Training Plan booklet⁷⁰ states that training should help teachers inculcate five key learnings:

- **Developing** the mindset that every child can learn.
- **Understanding** different approaches of learning among children.
- **Sharpening** pedagogical skills in respective subjects.
- **Expanding** the conceptual base of different topics.
- **Developing** the art of engagement with children and parents of diverse profile.

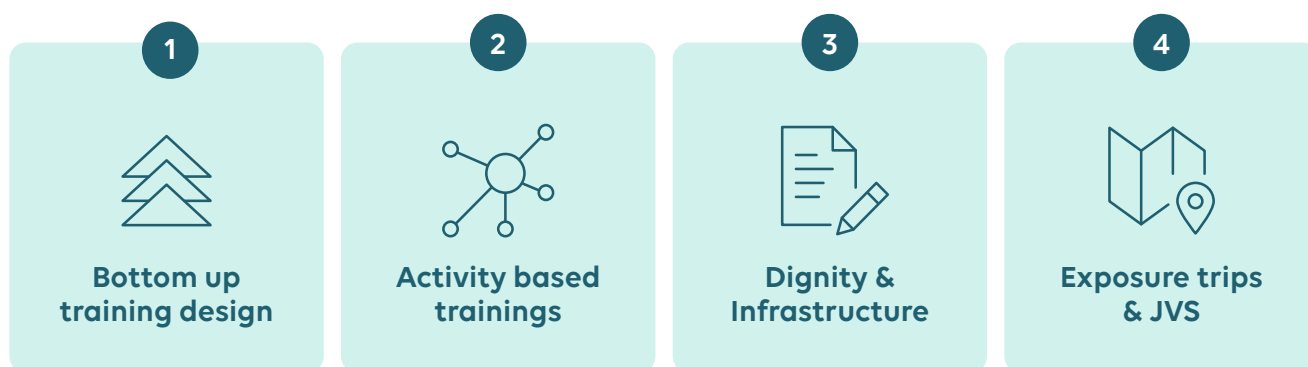
11.3 Design

The entire universe of Delhi's teacher professional development initiatives can be summarised into four key design elements, as shown in Exhibit 11.1.

⁷⁰ State Council of Educational Research and Training (2017). SCERT Annual Training Plan: Academic Year 2017.

Exhibit 11.1

Four key design elements for TPD initiatives



Bottom-up training design

It is a common practice for other states to develop trainings in a top-down prescriptive fashion, wherein the training structure, topics, content, etc. is decided at the top – generally at the DoE or SCERT level; and trainers are expected to take whatever they receive as ‘gospel’ and train teachers using them. This system provides no flexibility and no freedom for trainers, i.e. people who are directly interacting with teachers, to modify content in the way that they seem appropriate or that allow training to become relevant for the end beneficiaries, i.e. the teachers.

Delhi ensured a paradigm shift from the conventional ‘prescriptive’ method to a softer and more ‘suggestive’ approach. There were three key objectives of this bottom-up approach towards training design and content creation:

- To **incorporate ground level inputs** into the top-level decision-making process and design training content based on the needs and requirements of teachers.
- To **build flexible training modules** that enable stakeholders who are closer to the ground to take ownership of the process and create content according to their understanding.

This was another important initiative which was appreciated and, more importantly, was necessary for teachers, as was corroborated through many conversations we had with them.



My fellow science teachers consistently faced a problem of students having weak understanding on ‘Jalvayu’ (part of climate studies) in class 9. Through the feedback forms, they were able to flag this as a fundamental issue which needed to be tackled in lower classes, like 6th and 7th. Realising the importance of this at the top, just the next year onwards, this topic was included in the teacher trainings across all classes from 6 – 9.

- Teacher, Delhi government school



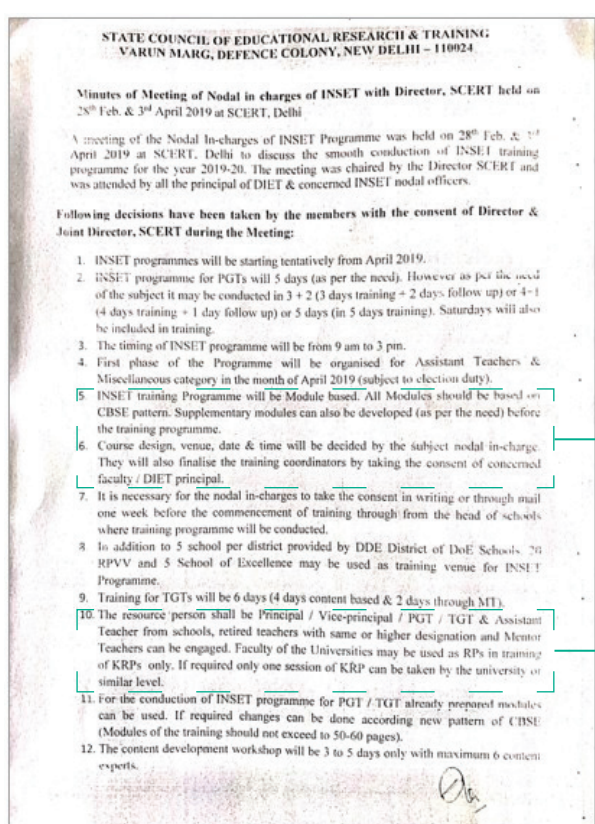
Every year, the annual training design and schedule creation starts in February at the SCERT where the core team at SCERT conducts various workshops and discussions with teachers (regular, MTs, TDCs) and DoE representatives. Four constituent factors are considered here to determine the training design:

- Previous year's **teacher feedback** on the topics they desire to learn
- Current year's **CBSE curriculum** and marks distribution
- Ground level inputs captured through representatives in **discussion workshops**
- Needs assessment from standard tests like **National and state achievement survey, NUEPA tests etc.**

Based on these factors, yearly training rules and guidelines are created.

Exhibit 11.2

Circular containing the finalized teacher training guidelines



Nodal officers have authority

Supplementary material for training module will be created as per the subject's need & the course design, schedule & training personnel selection powers lie with the subject's nodal officer at SCERT

RPs to be selected from schools

The resource personnel shall be a Principal/Vice-principal/PGT/TGT/ Assistant Teacher/Mentor Teacher currently employed in schools or retired

Activity-based collaborative on-ground trainings

One impactful change in teacher training has been the shift from 'lecture-like' mode to 'workshop-like' mode. Earlier, trainings were conducted in a one-sided fashion where the trainer would essentially read through the training material without adequate interaction or discussion amongst the teachers. Now, a significant emphasis is put on activity-based trainings where the teachers are often divided into groups of four to six people and perform some form of collaborative exercise. At the end of each period or session, a group presentation is held and then feedback is given by both the RPs as well as other teachers. The activities vary significantly basis the theme of the training. For example, it could be creation of sample questions and worksheets which capture the essential topics discussed during the training or it could be practical activities where the teachers would have to create some physical model from scratch and explain their experience at the end, while receiving feedback from fellow teachers.

“ During our training session, the RP had taught us about the concept of creating experiments from garbage. In my group, I had created a model of a human lung using bottles, balloons etc. I realised that this is a very engaging and useful method to teach, so I started doing the same in my classroom as well.

- Teacher, Delhi government school

This change has been appreciated by various teachers with whom we spoke. They displayed a heightened sense of enthusiasm being part of collaborative trainings and mentioned that this was one of the most essential changes. However, teachers also mentioned that such form of ‘workshop-like’ trainings still needs to be mainstreamed effectively.

Dignity and infrastructure

During our conversations with many government school teachers, one persistent issue that emerged was the poor state of teacher training infrastructure. Lack of seating space, no provision of drinking water, no provision of lunch, and no availability of ICT facilities were common complaints. This had a detrimental impact on teachers’ motivation, who would have to travel for hours to reach the training venue during summers and then spend the next seven to eight hours in an uncomfortable environment.

Taking cognizance of this, Delhi decided that the first step was to inculcate a feeling of respect, value, and dignity amongst teachers by making them feel welcomed and celebrated during trainings. The idea was to intrinsically motivate teachers to come for trainings with enthusiasm.

A well-thought-out process was followed to realise this objective. Delhi started by rectifying the fundamentals, i.e. by identifying decent and clean venues with sufficient number of chairs, working fans, provision of drinking water, etc. and later moved towards the end goal of creating a holistic ‘welcoming’ environment for teachers. For example, green carpets were laid out in training venues to create the feeling of ‘respect’ and ‘celebration’. Additionally, certain infrastructural changes were also introduced to fundamentally change the training methodology from a ‘lecture-like’ mode to a ‘workshop-like’ mode. A simple but highly effective change, that was referenced by a large number of teachers we spoke to, was the introduction of round tables where teachers would be facing each other instead of the trainer, as shown in Exhibit 11.3. This facilitated more interactive and collaborative training sessions.

To ensure these activities were conducted responsibly, a dedicated position of ‘administrative coordinator’ was created to handle all the logistical aspects associated with each training venue. The HoS of the selected venue served as the academic coordinator.

Exhibit 11.3

Various infrastructural improvements across teacher training venues

Green carpets, clean rooms and adequate seating ensured



Round tables, pens & papers provisioned for trainings



Exposure trips and Jeevan Vidya Shivir to broaden mindset

While standard on-site and digital trainings were essential, Delhi's mindset towards trainings was that subject-specific enablement was not enough. It was believed that teachers needed to understand the overall vision and purpose driving the broader education reforms in the state.

“

In today's scenario, our children are being prepared as a tool, resource, but value of education stands nowhere. We will prepare our teachers to impart value of education to students.

- Shri. Manish Sisodia, Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi government⁷¹

”

This was achieved by sending teachers for JVS workshops. These intend to educate participants about 'Madhyasth Darshan' or 'Co-existential Philosophy', which is defined as 'existence based human focused contemplation'⁷². For a school teacher, this helps them realise their role as a 'guru' in an inter-connected society and the value that they add. Even though these programmes were originally designed for a different target audience – HoS, MTs, and TDCs; eventually these programmes were made available for regular teachers as well – although at limited capacity. Over the past three years, around 3,000 to 4,000 teachers have already been to these JVS trainings - originally selected from the 54 pilot schools and later selected amongst the remaining teacher cadre based on their expressed willingness to attend these eight-day long residential programmes.

In addition, Delhi was clear that transformative change can only happen through an investment aimed at broadening teacher's horizons and mindsets through exposure visits to creative and elite institutions across the country. Almost 3,000 to 4,000 teachers have been sent for exposure visits to different states in India with each

⁷¹ FE Online. (2016, September 10). Manish Sisodia announces new teachers' training school (TTS) in Delhi. <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/manish-sisodia-announces-new-teachers-training-school-tts-in-delhi/373176/>.

⁷² Philosophy brief. (2017, May 3). coexistence workshop - jeevan vidya workshop-shivir - coexistential philosophy. <https://jeevanvidya.info/more/philosophy-brief/>

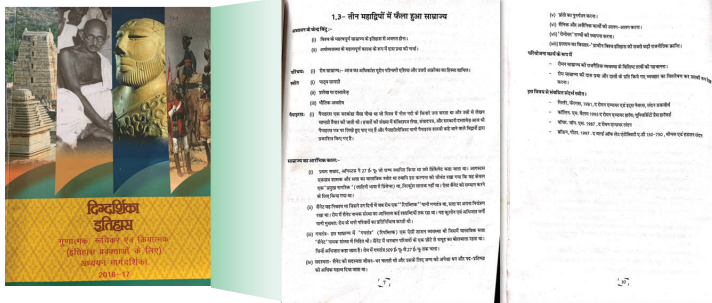
The coverage of these unique trainings is currently low since each visit is for small groups of teachers to allow for an immersive experience, but Delhi has an ambitious end goal of providing these opportunities to all the Delhi government teachers with enough time and resources.

Formulating a robust initiative design was only half the battle won. Delhi also had to ensure the establishment of a strong implementation mechanism. The most fundamental step in this regard was to increase the budget for teacher training over the years. The budget for teacher training in Delhi increased from around INR 27 crore in 2014-15 to around INR 78 crore in 2018-19. This translates to a budget of INR 5,400 per teacher in 2014-15 and INR 13,100 per teacher in 2018-19 – i.e. a 143 percent increase over the course of five years. But, increasing the budget was only half the story. Translating monetary benefits to tangible on-ground improvements was the next crucial step. This has been covered in detail in the forthcoming section.

Given that SCERT is the primary authority responsible for teacher training, it was quintessential to ensure that a strong team is at the helm. The core team at SCERT consisted of a group of the SCERT director, Joint Director and subject-wise Nodal Officers. This team would also work in close collaboration with the DoE and DIETs. The core team would organize brainstorming workshops, discussions, timely content creation, trainer selections and the various logistical aspects associated with smooth conduction of trainings. The subject-wise Nodal officers would each be supported by a dedicated team consisting of a Key Resource Personnel (KRP) and a group of Resource Personnel (RP). These KRPs and RPs were selected by the Nodal Officers, based on their subject matter knowledge and motivation towards the program.

The actual design of the training at SCERT is done in a flexible manner. Rather than designing a standardised training module, SCERT creates subject-wise handbooks in collaboration with Trained Graduate Teachers (TGTs) and Postgraduate Trained Teachers (PGTs), MTs, TDCs, DIET personnel, and external subject experts, basis subject-wise needs' assessment. These handbooks contain topic-wise briefs, sample worksheets, prescribed teaching guidelines etc; but importantly, serve only as suggestive guidelines or rather an orientation plan for RPs. One such handbook has been shown in Exhibit 11.4.

Exhibit 11.4



- Concise chapter-wise notes
- Suggested project work
- Additional reference sources
- Sample questions
- CBSE question paper
- Marking scheme

For RPs to use as base to create training content
Also, distributed to teachers for their reference

The RPs then create the training content using the handbooks as base guidelines, add or modify the training material individually, and iterate on it through group discussions and collaborative presentations to the KRPs. Often, group discussions on training topics and curriculum is also done over WhatsApp groups – as seen in Exhibit 11.5. The design of the training by the RPs themselves has greatly increased ownership of the training by RPs and helped create a sense of collective ownership.

Exhibit 11.5

Collaborative effort by RPs materializes to final training content

Collaborative discussion on individual material

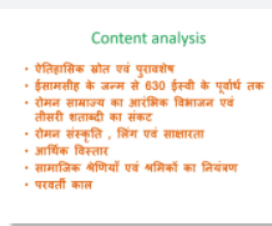


Group presentations & social media discussions



Creation of final training material

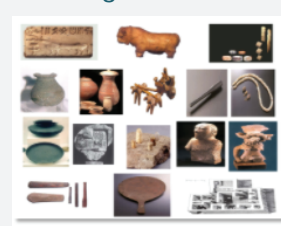
Handbook based PPT



Online videos created



Images sourced



Graphic created



Selecting RPs from the teacher cadre

Instead of inviting trainers from top-tier universities in Delhi, it was decided that trainers – i.e. KRPs and RPs – were to be selected from the school teacher cadre itself. These RPs/KRPs could either be MTs/TDCs or even regular teachers who were both qualified as well as motivated to teach the concerned subject. This was done in order to:

- Enrol trainers who were **aware of classroom-level challenges and closer to the context**.
- Have trainers who were **more motivated, had higher ownership** for teacher training, and could introduce relevant innovations in classroom pedagogy.
- **Remove the barriers between teachers and trainers** – as teachers were less comfortable to discuss queries and concerns with someone ‘senior’ or outside their cadre.

The newly appointed KRP/RPs ensured that the trainings were more engaging and kept in mind a school teacher’s typical challenges and problems. “*Ab jo trainers aate hai, vo samajhte hai humare problems and zyada acche se connect kar paate hai humse*” – as mentioned by a teacher in a government school in Delhi.

Leveraging digital and ensuring year-round trainings for teachers

Physical on-site trainings had various limitations, something that was voiced by the teacher community and was realised by the management:

- Due to time limitations during on-site trainings, **trainers could not cover a lot of topics** that teachers wanted to learn. Topics covered during trainings also lacked depth at times.
- Non-subject specific topics such as road safety, child sexual abuse, etc. also had to be covered which **took up a significant chunk of already limited training time.**
- On-site trainings were held once a year and many **teachers felt this was insufficient.**
- A plethora of content was compressed in a period of three to five days which made it **difficult for teachers to pay complete attention to all the topics.**

To overcome these challenges 'Online Capacity Building Programmes' (OCBPs) were conceptualised in 2016-17. The online platform and mobile app, 'Chalk-lit' was the key tool utilised for this. Digital trainings for all subjects were conducted on both the Chalk-lit app and website. Teachers were notified of new trainings through text messages, app notifications, and via the HoS. Teachers have to undergo a 'pre and post-training' assessment and are given a 10 to 15 day window to absorb all the content, after which they are provided a certificate of completion.

The creation of digital content begins with a three to five day 'content development workshop' with a team from SCERT and a content team from Million Sparks Foundation (MSF).⁷³ The SCERT team is made of teachers, HoS, legal experts and government officials. The outcome of this workshop is a finalised set of topics and lesson structure. The same team then creates 'bite-sized' training modules. These modules are either existing contents which are uploaded on Chalk-lit App with the help of MSF or created from scratch by the team, in case of new content. Modules also have audio-visual aids which are often sourced from open-source education sites, like NPTEL. The content is then vetted in a 'vetting workshop' to check for important parameters such as conceptual correctness, comprehensibility, etc. Finally, after receiving approval from the concerned authorities – Joint Director and Director (SCERT), Director (DoE) - the training is launched, and circulars are floated across schools. The training modules on the app is presented in a 'Facebook-like' manner where teachers have the option to ask doubts as well as give suggestions – which would be later addressed by the digital content creation team.

Through OCBP, Delhi could not only address the aforementioned issues, but also perform in-depth impact assessment of trainings in an easy and effective fashion – something which would have required huge investments and human resources to be done at scale for on-site trainings. This platform also became a channel to capture teacher feedback, which was then leveraged to decide and create future content.

It should be noted that digital trainings are still at an infant stage, with only 26 trainings held between December 2016 and June 2019. Moreover, very few general topics such as prevention of child sexual abuse, elimination of corporal punishment, etc. subject specific topics such as Mensuration, Acid, Base, and Salts, Understanding Nationalism, etc. have been rolled out so far. Nonetheless, digital trainings were appreciated by 35 percent of teachers, who cited that this was the most impactful teacher training initiative which had various benefits: **Trainings could now be done at their convenience** at their home and at the time of their liking.

⁷³ State Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi. (2019). Impact of Online Capacity Building Programme (OCBP) on Knowledge and Classroom Practices of Delhi Government School Teachers. <https://millionsparks.org/Delhi%20OCBP%20Research%20Report%20Final%20Published.pdf>

As the trainings could be paused and continued, teachers had the freedom to **divide the modules across multiple days to better absorb the content.**

Depth of each topic could now be explored, which was not possible during the on-site trainings.

Giving teachers the flexibility to choose the training of their liking

Delhi wanted to ensure that teachers' preferences of different trainings were considered. Instead of the conventional practice of centrally allocating trainings schedules, multiple sessions were organised such that teachers were given some flexibility to decide which trainings they wanted to attend, in terms of:

- Which slot do they want to attend their training?
- What topics do they want to learn?
- What venue do they want to attend the training in?

“

We gave teachers a choice to select training venues and modules of their liking, so that they can choose trainings as per their convenience, plan in advance, and not disrupt school activities.

- Principal, DIET, Dilshad Garden

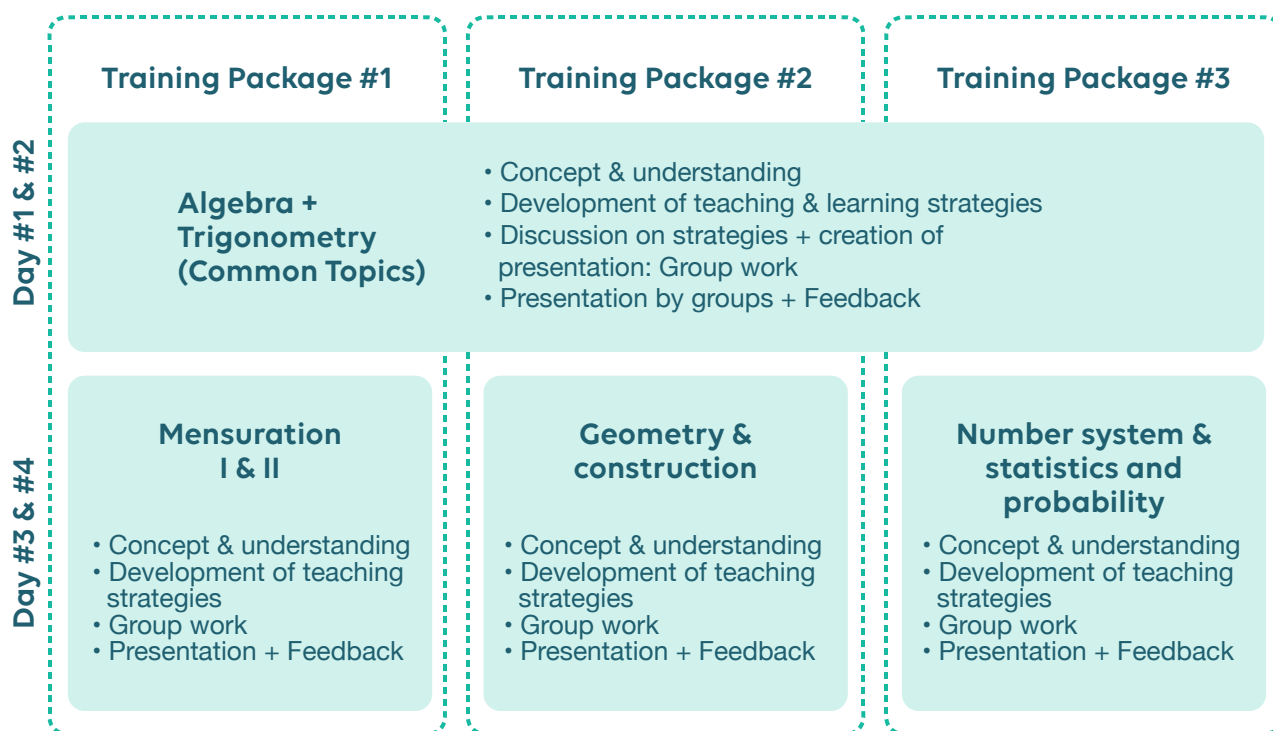
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In order to ensure that teachers are given advance notice and flexibility in attending trainings, the training calendar in Delhi is decided many months in advance. Google forms are then floated to capture teacher preferences on location, topic, and date of training. Teachers are given a window of five days, post which their responses are collected, and the trainings are allocated accordingly. As seen in Exhibit 11.6, a Math teacher of class 11 is given the choice to attend one of three trainings on the topic that he/she desires to learn based on his/her understanding of his/ her needs.

It should, however, be noted that this initiative, while theorised, has been implemented in a very limited manner, as understood through our conversations with many teachers who were unaware of the existence of such choices. However, it is gradually being scaled over the next few years.

Exhibit 11.6

Three 'training packages' made available for a Mathematics PGT



11.5 Impact

Based on our conversations with teachers as well as insights from the teacher survey, we have witnessed a very positive indication towards improvements concerning teacher training. 90 percent teachers believe that government training and mentorship initiatives have helped them become better teachers. Of these, 41 percent teachers mentioned that annual SCERT trainings had the most impact on them, followed by 35 percent who mentioned digital trainings and 22 percent who mentioned support from MT/TDCs. There were four key areas where teachers had seen improvements:

- **More relevant training content:** 41 percent teachers feel that lately, the topics covered have become more relevant and useful. Fifty four percent teachers said that their pedagogy knowledge has improved and 52 percent said the same about their specific subject knowledge.



Subject trainings toh acche hue hi hai, magar uske alawa jo humein 'general' topics sikhaye jaate hai vo kaafi useful hai. Jaise ki POSH ke training me na hi 'workplace behavior' but kaise baccho ke problems iss sandharb me sujhaa sakte hai seekhne ko mila tha. Pehle pata hi nahi hota tha.

- Teacher, Delhi government school



- **Improved trainer quality:** Forty one percent teachers felt that the new trainers had more expertise and were overall more effective, pointing towards the fact that selecting RPs from the teacher cadre created impact and was appreciated.
- **Improved training methods:** Fifty two percent teachers felt an overall improvement in the way trainings were conducted. The use of technology, presentations and props alongside having more interactive sessions were noticed and appreciated.

"Mai Sanskrit padhati hu, jisko 'boring' subject maana jata hai. But, RPs ne humein puzzles aur basic workbooks banana sikhaya tha. Hum teachers ne training ke samay khud se bhi kuch examples banaye the. Iske alawa fir humein thode examples bhi sikhaye gaye the jisme ki hum baccho se gaane aur group discussions karwa ke unki curiosity aur badha sake."

- Teacher, Delhi government school

"Pehele RPs PhD scholars hua karte the, jinko definitely subject ke baare mey bohot pata hota tha but humaare kaam ki kuch hi cheezey hoti thi., magar ab jo RPs aate hai vo humaare beech ke hi hote hai toh fir kisi bhi topic ko waise samjhate hai jaise hum samajh paye aur fir baccho ko asaani se samjha paye."

- Teacher, Delhi government school

- **Improved logistical aspects:** Twenty two percent teachers witnessed better logistical arrangements in the training venues, such as functioning fans, round-table discussions and better food and water provisions which ensured that teachers do not have to worry about refreshments. Forty nine percent teacher mentioned that they felt refreshed after attending these updated trainings.

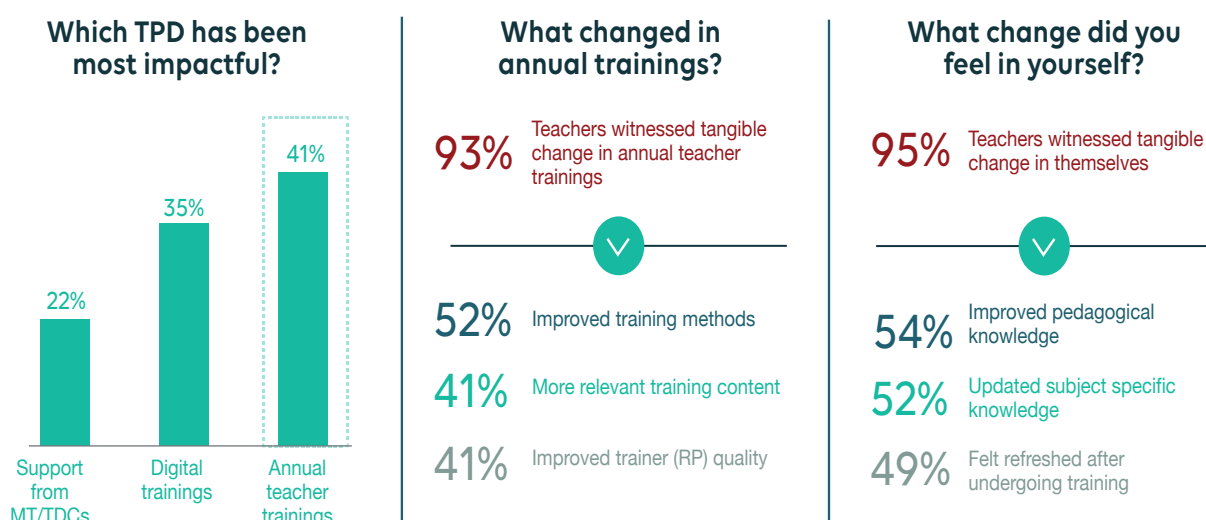
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"Kuch on-site trainings jo maine COVID ke pehele kiye the, un venues mey ACs dekhne ko mila tha. Pehele toh fan hi nazeeb ho jata toh badi baat hoti thi. Ab atleast inn cheezo ke karan jaane ki iccha toh hoti hai trainings mey."

- Teacher, Delhi government school

Exhibit 11.7

Impact of the improved Teacher trainings have been witnessed on-ground



Trainings are more effective due to better logistics

"I have seen a huge and overall positive change in the trainings. Especially in terms of infrastructure, we finally have enough space to sit and pay full attention to the trainings. Moreover, the new topics that were taught to us, especially about pedagogy, were also useful"

- Ms. Manisha Rani, TGT English

Trainings helped me decipher child psychology

"The SCERT trainings that I have attended recently have helped me connect with my students to such an extent that I never thought was possible. My students were now more forthcoming – They didn't only talk to me about their doubts in Hindi, but also shared personal stories with me"

- Mr. Pankaj Upadhyay, TGT Hindi

1. N (Left) = 6,355 Teachers who believe training & mentorship has helped

2. N (middle & right) = 2,889 teachers who believe annual trainings have been the most impactful

But, on the flip side, as per our survey, 10 percent teachers still feel that the government's training & mentorship programs have not helped them become a better teacher. This is an indication towards the fact that the training interventions are still a work in progress for Delhi. Some teachers, we spoke to, still feel that having a good training experience is a 'matter of luck' – the quality of the trainer, quality of infrastructure, interactive sessions, etc. are still missing in some trainings.

11.6 Challenges

Several challenges still exist in the system, a summary of which is mentioned below:

SCERT Autonomy

Because of the dual role of SCERT and DoE in organising trainings, there is an implementation gap. For example, SCERT is unable to organise training programmes on their own as most logistical and administrative orders need to be routed through the Directorate, leading to avoidable delays.

Digital trainings need further improvement

Even though digital trainings encompass almost all government teachers, the amount of content on the platform needs to be increased. Moreover, the utility of digital trainings for teachers is still in question, where some teachers find trainings very useful, whereas some have opposing views.

Lack of contextualisation

Although the trainings now cover innovative ways to teach at the classroom level, some teachers feel that these trainings are too utopian and often not applicable to their real-life context – due to varying classroom strengths, limited ICT infrastructure at schools, etc.

Limited scope to innovate

Delhi has introduced several new educational initiatives in the past few years – such as Buniyaad, Happiness Curriculum, etc. – to which teachers are still adapting. Teachers therefore feel that they have limited bandwidth to absorb new suggestions. Secondly, the current performance assessment mechanism for teachers still checks for ‘syllabus completion’. This leaves limited time and space for the teachers to experiment with new techniques and initiatives in classrooms.

Lack of support from HoS

During many one-to-one conversations and Focused Group Discussions, many teachers mentioned that successful ground level impact was dependent on HoS co-operation. Teachers working under the leadership of traditional HoS, who believe syllabus completion and improvement in Board results are the only goals, are demotivated because of a lack of appreciation for innovating in their classrooms.

11.7 Way Forward

The changes made to teacher training by Delhi are being further strengthened. Moving away from the typical model of three to five days of training every year, Delhi is on the verge of implementing a revolutionary new model of continuous professional development for all teachers. Starting from next academic year, training programmes will be conducted every single day of the year across all venues in Delhi across a wide range of subjects and topics for all levels of teachers. The agenda and calendar for the training will be communicated at the beginning of the year and teachers can sign up for any trainings they wish to attend. In order to facilitate this, Delhi is also undertaking three major steps:

Creation of 150 ‘model training centres’

SCERT and DIETs are currently in the process of creating dedicated training centres across Delhi, which would serve as model training centres. These centres, which would be created near schools and DIETs would have modern and desirable amenities such as air-conditioned rooms, dedicated water coolers, separate resting room for RPs and coordinators, etc.

Dedicated DoE staff to be assigned non-academic responsibilities

Currently, there are plans to assign dedicated 144 non-academic staff from DoE for managing field work. The primary objective behind this is to reduce additional logistical burden across schools, such as ensuring good quality lunch and sufficient drinking water and maintaining teacher and student attendance. This is subsequently expected to provide more time for faculty to focus on academic work.

SCERT mobile app

SCERT is in the process of finalising a centralised mobile app which would further streamline and ease the training process for teachers.⁷⁴ The SCERT app will act as a one-stop solution covering the following aspects:

⁷⁴ DELHI SCERT INSET TEAM. (n.d.). Delhi scert inset - Apps on Google Play. Google Play. <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=scert.delhiinset>

- Access to training schedules and itinerary
- Opt-in registration of training slots/venues/topics beforehand
- Central source of notifications for teachers (replacing the physical circular based notification system)
- Assessment and feedback collection
- Digital training content

11.8 Implications for other states

Q. What are the key design/change principles that I need to keep in mind while replicating this model in my state to ensure success?

This can be answered through the key success factors behind this change in teacher training landscape:

- **Improve training infrastructure:** In almost all states, teachers regard training programmes as an obligation with limited value. An important learning from Delhi is that small changes and improvements to the quality and cleanliness of training venues and ensuring that teachers feel welcomed can go a long way towards increasing teacher motivation and their involvement in training.
- **Build a model of continuous professional development:** Although this is still a work in progress, Delhi is already shifting towards a system where continuous professional development opportunities are available to all teachers such that they can choose to attend what they find most value in. This is a key shift that is appreciated by most teachers who have been exposed to it and that has greatly enhanced participation as well.
- **Bottom-up training design:** Another crucial learning from Delhi is to ensure that ground level feedback is incorporated at the top while designing annual trainings. Not only does this make the trainings more relevant for teachers, but also makes them feel valued and heard, in turn increasing their motivation and desire towards teacher training.
- **Supplement standardised trainings with digital training and exposure visits:** States may find value in complementing regular trainings with available-on-demand digital trainings and effective exposure visits for teachers. These interventions helped Delhi develop not only teachers' pedagogical and classroom instruction skills but also instil a sense of enthusiasm and excitement among them.
- **Source trainers who are closer to the context:** Finally, another important initiative that was undertaken in Delhi was to select trainers from the teacher community itself. This was appreciated by the teaching community as they felt they could now better connect with the trainers.

Q. How do I ensure that teachers are internally motivated to come for trainings?

It is of utmost importance to ensure that teachers are never 'forced' to go for trainings. Ensuring that teachers are themselves willing to come for trainings and are excited with its prospects would be what states should be aiming to accomplish. Some key factors which helped Delhi achieve the same were:

- **Make teachers feel dignified:** Through infrastructural and logistical improvements, Delhi was able to cultivate an environment which 'celebrates' and 'welcomes' teachers who come for trainings. Teachers stopped shying away from trainings, and rather started looking forward to attending them.
- **Ensure that they are being heard:** Through the bottom-up feedback and design mechanism, teachers felt that they had a platform where they could voice their opinions and suggestions - suggestions which would be genuinely considered and most likely worked upon in the future.
- **Give teachers freedom to choose:** Albeit at a nascent stage, teachers who were given a choice to select trainings expressed genuine happiness and voiced the question of "Why didn't this happen before and why doesn't this happen always?". Any form of flexibility in choice given to teachers has proved to create impact.

12. Private Schools: Creating an Inclusive Schooling System

12.1 Need

47 percent⁷⁵ of schools in Delhi are private unaided schools. In contrast, the nation-wide average is only 19%⁷⁶. As a result, an important element of Delhi's education reforms has been the recognition that the government is not just responsible for government schools but equally responsible for providing an enabling atmosphere that will ensure quality education for students going to private schools as well. This includes elite private schools as well as affordable private schools, which constitute 79%⁷⁷ of private schools in India and cater to a significant proportion of underprivileged population. In this regard, Delhi undertook a few key governance and regulatory reforms to improve the private school ecosystem. A summary of these is shown in Exhibit 12.1.



Delhi has a unique context vis-à-vis regulation of private schools. A large number of Delhi's private schools operate on government-owned land due to constraints of land and space in the city. Since the government provided 'aid' to private schools in the form of land, they had greater regulatory jurisdiction. For example, many private schools had a 'land clause' in their land allotment orders that required them to seek prior permission from the DoE before hiking fees. However, this regulation was not earlier fully enforced, as a result of which private schools had often been reported to charge hefty fees. Delhi addressed this in 2016 by enforcing the submission of 'fee hike proposals' from private schools seeking to increase their fees. A dedicated fee regulation committee was established for the examination, verification, and approval of the fee hikes.

In this document however, due to the high degree of applicability to other states, we will focus on the details of the two other initiatives: **Implementation of RTE 12(1)(c) and establishing grievance redressal processes.**

RTE 12(1)(c) aims to mitigate the disparity created by unequal access to private schools for underprivileged households. It mandates private schools to allocate at least 25 percent of a school's entry level admissions to children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the school neighbourhood. The cost is then reimbursed to the private schools by the government. Though the Act was enforced in 2009, its implementation has been challenging across the country due to a lack of awareness among parents and resistance from private schools. This has led to both poor school participation and low fill rates. In 2012, despite more than 35,000 private school seats being provisioned under RTE 12(1)(C)⁷⁸ in Delhi, the eventual number of admissions were only 8,658. School participation rate was also low at 45 percent. This was a concern that required urgent attention.

⁷⁵ DISE 2019-20 data

⁷⁶ <https://ccs.in/sites/default/files/attachments/faces-of-bps-in-india-report2018.pdf>

⁷⁷ <https://ccs.in/sites/default/files/attachments/faces-of-bps-in-india-report2018.pdf>

⁷⁸ Sarin, A., Kuhn, S., Singh, B. D., Khanghta, P., Dongre, A. A., Joshi, E., ... & Rahman, F. (2015). State of the Nation: RTE Section 12 (1) (c). Available at SSRN 2637817. Retrieved from [https://www.cprindia.org/sites/default/files/policy-briefs/State%20of%20the%20Nation-RTE%20Section12\(1\)\(c\)_2015%20\(Provisional\).pdf](https://www.cprindia.org/sites/default/files/policy-briefs/State%20of%20the%20Nation-RTE%20Section12(1)(c)_2015%20(Provisional).pdf)

In order to ensure the fair and transparent implementation of government initiatives, grievances and feedback had to be recorded and addressed in a timely manner. To enable the same, there was a need to set up an easy-to-access grievance lodging mechanism with strong governance processes around redressal.

12.2 Objective

In 2015, Delhi identified the implementation of RTE 12(1)(c) and establishment of strong grievance redressal processes as key priorities to **improve quality of education, remove access barriers, and create an integrated and inclusive schooling system.**

In this regard, the following objectives were charted out:

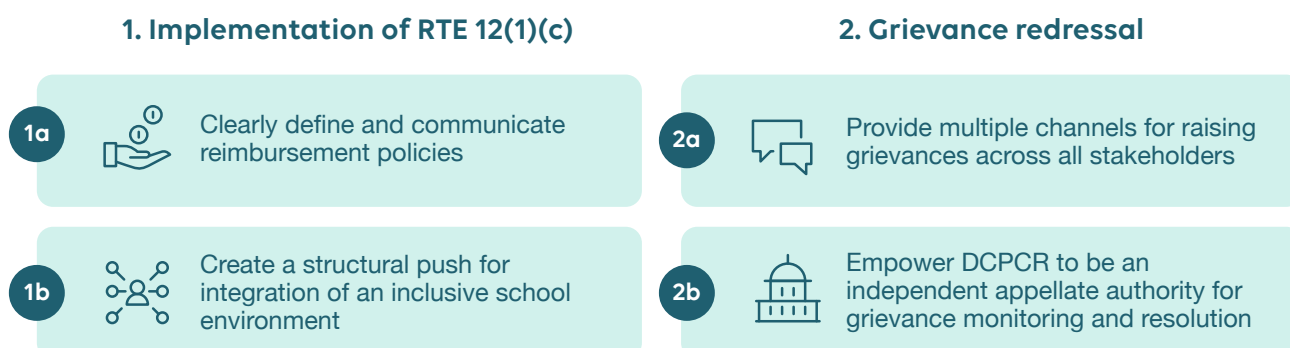
- **Increase the number of annual admissions under RTE 12(1)(c) by:**
 - a. Achieving 100 percent private school participation under RTE 12(1)(c)
 - b. Increasing number of applications to private schools by Economically Weaker Section (EWS) parents thereby enabling wider reach of the programme
 - c. Reducing drop-outs post-admission by systemically addressing challenges faced by beneficiaries
- **Ensure fair and transparent implementation of 12(1)(c) and other private school initiatives by:**
 - a. Providing easy-to-access and well-publicised avenues for beneficiaries to raise grievances
 - b. Ensuring timely redressal of grievances through establishment of strong governance processes
 - c. Enforcing strict punitive action in case of non-adherence by private schools

12.3 Design

There were several design elements that contributed to the success of RTE 12(1)(c) implementation and grievance redressal as detailed in Exhibit 12.2.

Exhibit 12.2

Key design elements of both private school initiatives



Clearly define and communicate reimbursement policies

Policies regarding EWS reimbursements were defined and communicated clearly by the Delhi Government leaving no room for misinterpretation by schools. Schools were eligible for reimbursements under the act only if EWS students were provided all - education, books, writing material and uniforms - completely free-of-cost. In case a school was found to breach this policy, it was declared ineligible for reimbursements under RTE 12(1)(c). Delhi's reimbursement committee also included a private school representative - private schools were regarded as thought partners and their feedback were incorporated in every step of policy design and implementation processes.

Create a structural push for integration of an inclusive school environment

Students from underprivileged backgrounds often struggle with settling in even after getting admitted into private schools. In Delhi, significant efforts towards inclusion were introduced. Schools that promoted an inclusive school environment were widely publicised and awarded. Workshops were conducted to disseminate best practices across schools and encourage others to adopt similar mechanisms. The Child Rights Commission is also in the process of publishing a playbook of these best practices.

Provide multiple channels for raising grievances across stakeholders

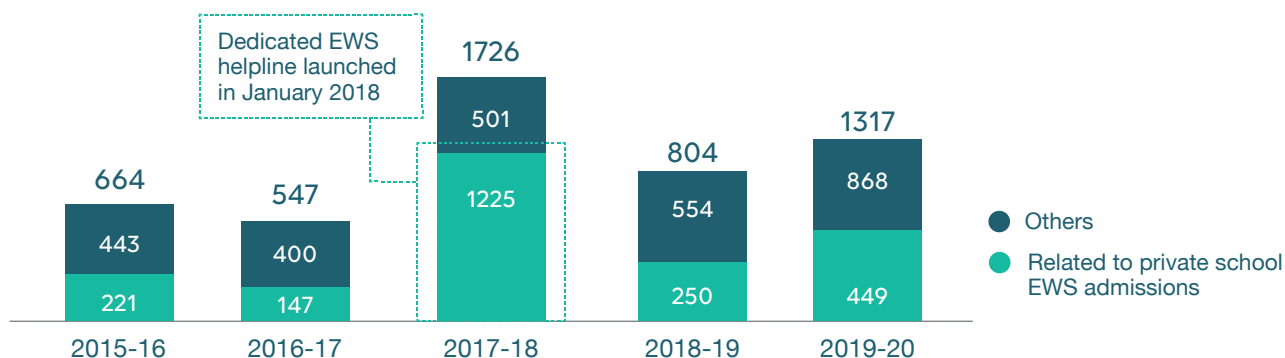
Delhi was one of the first states to set up grievance redressal mechanisms for not just the beneficiary but also the school. Parents and schools could lodge complaints either centrally, through helpline numbers provided by the DoE, or locally by registering a complaint with the District DDE office. A District-level committee (that included citizens of the community and personnel from volunteer organisations, NGOs, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), SMCs etc) was also set up by the DCPCR for parents to register RTE 12(1)(c)-specific grievances.

Empower DCPCR to be an independent appellate authority for grievance monitoring and resolution

Every state has a State Commission for Protection for Child Rights (SCPCR) that is the nodal authority for all child related grievances. However, unlike other states (where this statutory body typically plays a very limited role in education), Delhi empowered DCPCR to play a key role. Despite objections, DCPCR strongly exerted its jurisdiction over private schools as codified in several key laws such as RTE⁷⁹ and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)⁸⁰. DCPCR thereafter played a critical role in the tracking and resolution of all education related grievances, particularly from private schools. In fact, DCPCR launched a dedicated helpline for EWS admissions in private schools in January 2018. As a result, the total number of private school grievances related to EWS received by DCPCR peaked to 1225 in 2017-18.

Exhibit 12.3

Breakdown of grievances received by Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights



⁷⁹ Section 31, Right to Education Act, 2009

⁸⁰ Section 13(1), Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005

Over time, DCPCR was successful in becoming an effective check to the Department of Education and ensured the implementation of proper grievance redressal, especially regarding RTE 12(1)(c). There were 3 key reasons for this:

- **Visibility:** DCPCR made itself accessible to parents. They established SMS and IVRS avenues through which they could be easily reached and also frequently visited schools to survey the ground situation. Whenever mobilization of corrective measures was needed, they were swift in implementing the same. As a result, stakeholders in the education system – from bureaucrats to school principals and parents - started recognizing and acknowledging the role DCPCR played in school regulation.
- **Internal governance reforms:** DCPCR also revamped several governance processes to aid its efficient functioning. Additional staff members were recruited and adequately trained, complaints processes were simplified, excel tracking systems were implemented to monitor daily progress, and faster communication was enabled by shifting from basic post to speed post.
- **Political support:** The most crucial success factor however was the political support DCPCR received in carrying out its duties. As the responsibilities of an SCPCR as a watchdog is often against the interest of the ruling government, it is in the interest of the government to keep this institution dysfunctional. However, the activities of the DCPCR was not hampered by politics and it was given a free rein in carrying out its duties as a check to the government.

“ The law is very clear regarding the empowerment of DCPCR to inspect and regulate private schools. But no one had bothered to stir up this hornet’s nest before. We realized private schooling is an integral part of Delhi’s education system - so we got involved. While we had to establish credibility and visibility initially, slowly, everyone in the system started taking our work seriously.”

- Chairman, Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights

12.4 Implementation

While the four design principles in the previous section are similar to that adopted by many other states, Delhi was successful due to its quality and rigour of implementation. These are presented in this section. Many of the details highlighted below, particularly pertaining to RTE 12(1)(c), have been adapted from research work published in various national reports.⁸¹

Establishment of robust MIS systems to conduct RTE 12(1)(c) admissions

Prior to 2016, the RTE 12(1)(c) lottery and admission process was manual and decentralised, requiring parents to run from pillar to post to gather information, submit documents, and complete admission formalities. Today, this process in Delhi is run completely online using a robust end-to-end data and MIS system. The seven components of the RTE 12(1)(c) MIS are:

⁸¹ State of the Nation Reports – published by IIM Ahmedabad, Central Square Foundation, Center for Policy Research, and Vidhi Center for Legal Policy https://cprindia.org/system/tdf/policy-briefs/SOTN%20Report%202017_FINAL.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=6428
Bright Spots Reports by Indus Action, a not-for-profit organisation https://www.indusaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Indus-Action-Bright-Spots-Report-2018-1_compressed.pdf.



School registration: Schools register on the MIS with data on total number of seats, fees, and geo-location. This is verified by the administration.



Application: Parents can check vacancies under each private school and choose which schools to apply to via a single-point, user-friendly interface.



Lottery: The draw of lots is conducted centrally online through an automated lottery system using a pre-defined matching logic.



Admissions: Schools verify each RTE 12(1)(c) admission on the MIS. This provides the accurate status of admissions and vacancies and enables the department to conduct a subsequent round of admissions if needed.



Tracking: The implementation of RTE 12(1)(c) scheme is monitored at a micro-level on the MIS – data on student attendance, distribution of uniform and books to students are uploaded by schools and tracked by the department post-admission.



Reimbursement: Reimbursements are automatically calculated using admission and cost-per-student data uploaded by schools. Reimbursement tracking is also done through the MIS.



Grievance redressal: Grievances are logged online and tracked through the Public Grievances Management System (PGMS).

On-ground monitoring through DoE nominee

The implementation of private school initiatives was closely monitored on-ground by a Department of Education (DoE) nominee allotted to each private school. The nominee, typically an HoS of a government school in a nearby region, was responsible for the following:

- **Ensure RTE 12(1)(c) participation:** Verify number of seats offered and aid registration of school on RTE 12(1)(c) MIS.
- **Monitor implementation of 12(1)(c):** Ensure books, uniforms, writing material, education are all provided free of cost to students admitted under RTE 12(1)(c).
- **Ensure inclusive environment in school:** Ensure no discriminatory practices exist – for example, separate grouping of EWS kids.
- **Real-time monitoring and information gathering:** Physically visit schools when a complaint was filed, investigate the same, and report finding to District Authorities.

The strategic decision to appoint HoS as DoE nominees was a crucial one. HoS had first-hand knowledge of the management and working of a school and were able to identify malpractices regarding both academics and non-academics easily. If such an activity was reported by the nominee, this was immediately addressed by the department and one or more of the following actions were taken against school:

- A show-cause notice was issued to the school directing them to resolve the complaint
- In case of repeated offenses, the school were *unrecognised* by the DoE
- In extreme situations, the management of private school was taken over by the DoE

Micro-level tracking of grievances and reimbursements

Delhi institutionalised a strong grievance redressal and reimbursement system by establishing clear governance process, elements of which are presented below:

○ Micro-level tracking by dedicated nodal officers

Dedicated nodal officers for reimbursement disbursal and grievance resolution were appointed in each zone. These nodal officers were responsible for the end-to-end implementation starting from on-ground verification and tracking to eventual reimbursement disbursal or grievance resolution. The nodal officers also served as a single point of contact relating to all queries regarding reimbursements or grievances in the allocated region.

○ Frequent reviews of reimbursement claims and grievance resolution

The reimbursement and grievance resolution progress were reviewed on a weekly basis by District Deputy Directors and Section Officers. This frequent top-down monitoring resulted in timely reimbursement disbursal and grievance redressal. For example, majority of grievances were addressed within one to seven days. DCPCR also conducted bi-annual reviews of reimbursement statuses across schools served as the highest level of escalation for unaddressed grievances.

Identification and dissemination of best practices for inclusivity

One of the major concerns surrounding the mandated admission of underprivileged students has been the need to enable an inclusive school environment accepting of every student's background and culture. Engendering the same required a mindset shift among not only students' peers but also HoS, teachers, staff members, and other parents. This is often the hardest to affect.

Delhi government has made early in-roads into promoting an inclusive school environment. It recently instituted the *Social Inclusion Award*⁸² for schools that implemented successful practices of integration. This had a two-pronged goal:

- **Incentivise and inspire schools:** Schools that received this award received a lot of positive press improving their reputation. Success stories from schools also raised the consciousness of other schools towards inclusion and inspired them to implement similar processes.

“

Because my son studies in a private school, he has friends from various backgrounds. The school environment has also been very welcoming and inviting. Teachers interact often with us parents to keep us abreast of our child's development. The well-structured activities in school has had a positive influence on my son's learning and decision-making capabilities. I hope more children from EWS avail the RTE 12(1)(c) provision for their uplift.

- Parent, Delhi Private school

”

⁸² Firstpost. (2019, April). New Education Policy: Intent and policy of proposed document differs on ensuring 'diversity of children' in private schools. Retrieved from <https://www.firstpost.com/india/by-opposing-diversity-of-children-in-private-schools-new-education-policy-de-feats-purpose-of-rte-6836831.html#:~:text=The%20Delhi%20government%20has%20recently,wider%20dissemination%20and%20capacity%20building.>

- **Capture best practices⁸³:** Workshops were held for all private schools in which best practices were outlined and impact explained. The winners of the Social Inclusion Award were requested to present papers detailing their successes. This provides a clear action plan for schools to create an inclusive school environment. The Child Rights Commission is also recording best practices of inclusion in the form of a playbook for their circulation and capacity building.

12.5 Impact

The systemic push of the various initiatives has translated into successful implementation of the RTE 12(1)(c) and grievance redressal. **The 3-4-fold increase in RTE 12(1)(c) admissions between 2012-13 and 2018-19** has been possible due to:

- **Superior school participation rate** arising out of transparent reimbursement processes, public furnishing of data, and involvement of private school members as thought partners
- **Reduced drop-offs post admission** due to strong grievance redressal processes
- **Improved awareness of parents** due to on-ground admission and application assistance offered by government officials and NGOs



I had to leave my in-laws' house after my husband passed away as I was being ill-treated by them. I took to sewing to earn a living and support my three kids. However, due to the meagre income I earned, I could not afford to enroll them in a private school.

Fortunately, my children were able to secure admission in Vasundhara Public School, Nawada through the RTE 12(1)(c) lottery. Through this scheme, my children have received free admission, books, and even uniforms. Now I am not worried about their education. This has been extremely beneficial for parents who are not well-off like me.

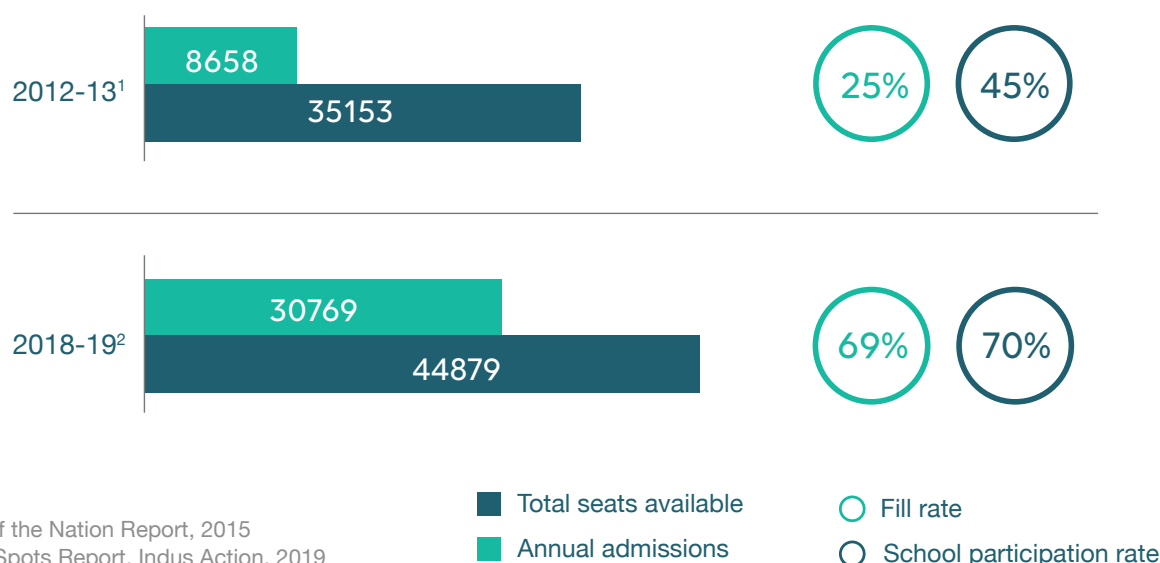
- Parent, Delhi private school

⁸³ Indus action. (2018). The Bright Spots: Status of social inclusion through RTE Section 12(1)(c) 2018. Retrieved from https://www.indusaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Indus-Action--Bright-Spots-Report-2018-1_compressed.pdf.

Exhibit 12.4

Annual admission and fill rate under RTE 12(1)(c) has improved b/w 2012-13 and 2018-19

In Delhi, annual admissions and fill rate under RTE 12(1)(c) have improved between 2012-12 and 2018-19



12.6 Challenges

While Delhi's implementation of RTE 12(1)(c) and fee regulation can be termed as successes, there is further opportunity to improve the following:

Scope to improve school-preparedness of EWS students

School readiness of children transcends mere academic ability and covers socio-emotional preparedness and creative development as well. In a recent survey⁸⁴, **only 17 percent of EWS students were assessed to be school-ready** and only 60 percent of parents were keen to improve school readiness of their kids.

Success stories not captured and amplified enough

Narratives of many families who have benefited from RTE 12(1)(c) have been missed out in the media. Such narratives have the power to not only raise awareness among parents who are eligible for the provision but also inspire school managements and society at large to back the implementation of the scheme.

Scope to improve EWS parent awareness⁸⁵

EWS parents are often unaware of their rights regarding RTE 12(1)(c) or unwarranted fee hikes. Some regard the seats as '*charity by the government*'. This creates a grave power imbalance between them and the authorities. Parents can be duly educated by engaging with NGOs/local volunteer organisations to conduct awareness drives.

⁸⁴ Indus Action and Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights. (2018). Inclusive classrooms: A study of the implementation of the Right to Education Section 12(1)(c) in Delhi, 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.indusaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Indus-Action-DCP-CR-report-copy.pdf>

⁸⁵ Indus action. (2018). The Bright Spots: Status of social inclusion through RTE Section 12(1)(c) 2018. Retrieved from https://www.indusaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Indus-Action-Bright-Spots-Report-2018-1_compressed.pdf.

“

I was informed about the provision for EWS candidates under RTE 12(1)(c) by the Mahila Panchayat. However, none of my neighbours in the Muhalla are aware of this provision. They did not believe that I was able to secure a private school seat for my child completely free of cost.

- Parent, New Delhi

”

12.7 Implications for other states

Q. What are the critical first steps for successful implementation of RTE 12(1)(c) in my state?

The **development and implementation of an MIS system** for online application and monitoring is most important for the success of RTE 12(1)(c). A robust and transparent MIS system not only streamlines the application and lottery process but also enables real-time monitoring of admissions, reimbursements and grievances at a school-level.

Second, an **easy-to-use avenue for raising grievances** must be enabled and communicated to parents. Addressing criticisms and incorporating suggestions from the ground is critical for the success of implementation of any scheme. For the same, a multi-mode (online + offline) grievance avenue can be established.

Third, with the MIS and grievance avenues in place, the state should look to establish **strong governance processes around reimbursements and grievance monitoring**. Dedicated nodal officers must be placed-in-charge of the end-to-end management of reimbursements and grievances with their roles and responsibilities clearly defined and communicated to internal (government officials) and external (parents, teachers, principals) stakeholders. The state must also establish a review structure with higher officials to monitor the progress on reimbursements and grievances on a frequent (daily/ weekly) basis.

Finally, the SCPCR must be empowered to perform its duties as the watchdog of all RTE-related initiatives. To enable the same, there must be investment and push from the leadership of State Department of Education. Parents and School HMs must be made aware of the legal powers that SCPCR possesses and the escalation channels that it provides to beneficiaries. Organization strengthening and upskilling of the SCPCR may also be considered both at leadership and field levels.

Q. My state has a predominantly rural population. What modifications to the Grievance Resolution mechanism must be applied?

For states with predominantly rural population having little familiarity with technology, a grievance redressal system more skewed towards the decentralised system must be implemented. On-ground fleets of volunteers and officers must be centrally mobilised and trained to identify, collect, and resolve grievances for families. For larger states, a multi-tier grievance redressal system can potentially be explored.

The Delhi model is suitable for states with greater percentage of urban and technology-literate population.

Q. My state is large. How do we ensure that information and awareness regarding RTE 12(1)(c) is adequately disseminated to all parents across the state?

Larger states must opt for a more decentralised strategy of disseminating information to parents regarding RTE 12(1)(c). Some ways of doing so include leveraging local NGOs in cities/towns/villages to conduct awareness campaigns, mandating all private schools to adequately advertise EWS seats, requesting SMCs of government schools to disseminate information regarding RTE 12(1)(c) to the community, and organising volunteer drives including college students, members of Resident Welfare Associations, etc. in every block/ward.

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