

A Comparative Analysis of Education Policy and Practice: The Case of Institutions in Mumbai and Delhi¹

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ABSTRACT

There exist many actors within the realm of education policy planning and implementation, namely: the policy makers; the national, local and regional institutions engaged in the dissemination and interpretation of these policies; and the educational institutions that implement these policies at the ground level (schools). While schools are largely perceived to be at the receiving end of these policies, they are also held most accountable for any failures in effective implementation. The systemic factors, including: differences in local and regional institutions; the organizations that make decisions around functions, accountability and resource allocation; and the immediate environments surrounding the schools, are often ignored. This paper highlights institutional differences that affect policy implementation in two mega cities of India, namely, Mumbai and Delhi. The paper suggests that policy reshaping rarely considers the feedback from the bottom up; rather, policies are revised largely based on global and national agenda shifts rather than in response to on-the-ground impact of their implementation. The paper argues for a more reciprocal relationship between policy and practice, identifying the need for practice to influence policy in a mutually reinforcing process. Further, the paper argues that innovation at the local level of policy implementation is a critical mechanism by which such a reciprocal relationship can be established.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Research Question

Achieving the goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE) came into world view after the conference in Jomtien, Thailand which produced the World Declaration on Education for All ([WDEFA] UNICEF, 1990). WDEFA reinstated the goal of “universal access to...primary education or whatever higher level of education is considered basic” (UNICEF, 1990). To consolidate achievements and update these goals, the World Education Forum was convened in Dakar in 2000. The Dakar Framework for Action reaffirmed the Jomtien’s UPE goal, extended it to 2015, and added new elements, such as reaching out to children with difficult circumstances, increasing the focus on the quality of primary education, and refocusing on access to education (UNESCO, 2000). This international campaign towards UPE was reflected in the Indian education policies from the early 1990’s. National Policy on Education (NEP) in 1992 by the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, was a clear indicator in this direction. An-

other big push towards UPE came from the National Plan of Action: Education for All in India-2000² (MHRD, 2000).

During that time, while the Indian system of governance was simultaneously decentralizing, achieving UPE has increasingly evolved from a national priority, to a regional, local, and municipal priority. Thus, there is a critical need to examine how exactly UPE has been and continues to be implemented across the many levels of government across the country. The paper examines the question of whether national policy differs in the context of local implementation and what factors lead to the differences in implementation of national policy. By doing so, the paper attempts to isolate those factors that may need to be considered in both designing interventions as well as in reshaping and customizing policy for improved delivery.

Within a decentralized education system such as exists in India, institutional differences account for a significant amount of the variation in education policy implementation. Whereas comparative educationalists propagating the World Culture Theory (Baker & LeTendre, 2005) would look at similar-

ities in the ways policies are enacted by these institutions and draw generalized conclusions on policy implementation, this paper asserts that the institutional differences, and differences in local culture and context, can account for a great deal of variation in policy implementation. This paper focuses on local differences and policy appropriation in two “mega” cities in India: Mumbai and Delhi, comparable in terms of the delivery of public education on account of their relative similarity in size, scale, and overall policy context. However, despite many surface similarities, the two cities differ dramatically in the mechanisms by which the goals of UPE are achieved—we attribute these differences largely to the practice of education within the institutions of Mumbai and Delhi, namely the municipal corporations of the cities respectively.

This paper highlights the fact that the national policy goal of UPE is reshaped by the cultural rules, institutional structures, and resources of these state agencies. In the process, the differences in implementation within the institutions of the two cities are discussed. This paper acts as a lens through which to observe institu-

tional characteristics that reflect educational practices in the two cities. The intention is not to make the practices of these two institutions converge, as there will always be cultural and contextual differences in the two cities. Rather, it is to expose us to the different ways of achieving the goal of Universal Primary Education. It describes the constant struggle that the municipal corporations face on the ground with underlying systemic forces.

LITERATURE BACKGROUND

Comparative analysis of institutions at multiple levels is not new to the field of international education. Earlier works like that of Bray and Thomas (1995) emphasize the importance of multilevel analyses and mention that such an exercise adds balance and completeness to the research. They argue that much of the previous work has remained confined to the individual, classroom, school, and perhaps district levels. The authors suggest that adding multiple levels (state and national) would bring different insights and a better understanding to the issue under consideration. They argue that both macro and micro understanding of educational processes may help policy, planning, and implementation. This paper uses multi level analysis by taking a closer look at the relationship between these institutions and the state government, particularly in terms of the use of resources.

The characteristics of institutions have a multiplier effect on many dimensions of other institutions, extending to even actors in these institutions. Sewell (1992) highlights the fact that structure is in fact “dual”—comprising both material resources (such as funding, language) and cultural rules (including practices that are elaborated within a given environment). The social “structure” of any system (including an education system) is thus simultaneously composed of cultural rules and resources. This theory also highlights the fact that there exist potentially conflicting structures within the system, which serve to reinforce or undermine each other.

In a similar vein, Cummings’ “In-

stitutionS Theory” suggests that institutions are comprised of complex procedures oriented towards realizing a particular goal and that institutions and their core values shape the behavior of actors within the institutions (Cummings, 1999). This perspective may emphasize that core values and objectives are solely responsible for the behavior of actors within the institutions, and may deny a role for the external environment and the context within which institutions operate. Berger and Luckmann (1966) outline a more interactive approach to the shaping of institutions, culture, and structure, suggesting that actions, norms, and behaviors are institutionalized because of meaningful reciprocity. This perspective adds a dimension of recursivity to the process of institutionalization—institutional behavior, norms, and values are not only shaped by the combination of rules and resources but also shape the rules and resources themselves. Using some key factors, this paper attempts to understand how institutions in the two cities have shaped the behavior and perceptions of other actors and institutions within and around them. The paper will contribute to the existing literature by analyzing patterns of institutional impact in the international education context.

METHODOLOGY

The paper follows a “problem-approach” methodology as described by Holmes, which focuses on educational problems in the context of two cities (Cummings, 1999, p.416). The paper uses the framework of comparative institutional analysis as a form of inquiry, where it analyzes and compares two institutions in two mega cities in India. A multi-level framework has been borrowed from Bray and Thomas (1995) to understand policy planning and implementation through the relationship of the state governments and the municipalities. The paper first discusses in detail those aspects that constitute the social structure and practice of policy within the educational systems in both cities, namely: cultural rules and resources. The cultural rules include the enacting of roles within the current or-

ganizational structures of the municipal corporations. The resources encompass funding and financing within the educational system of each city. The interaction of these two sets of variables results in the practice of education delivered and experienced on the ground.

The two institutions analyzed in this paper are the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). Specifically, the paper looks at four aspects of these institutions, including: environment, resources, administration, and rules. Our paper suggests that these four aspects taken together shape the institutions of primary education within Mumbai and Delhi, and in turn, the delivery and experience of education on the ground.

By no means does this paper attempt to outline a comprehensive set of reasons for the performance of primary schools in Mumbai and Delhi. Conversely, the paper is an attempt to set out a compendium of institutional factors that must be considered in understanding the delivery of primary education within each city, and in turn the factors that need to be considered in designing interventions to improve the system’s performance as well as in reshaping educational policy. The paper is the first of its kind to analyze the municipal corporations of the two cities in the context of education.

OVERALL CONTEXT: NATIONAL POLICY

The History of Indian Municipalities

Sharma (2007) traces the municipal administration of India to the Indus Valley civilization (around 2300 BC) and cites Golden Childe who notes, “well planned streets and a magnificent system of drains, regularly cleared out; reflect the vigilance of some regular municipal government”(p.1). He explains the first modern civic administration in urban India was the municipal corporation of the former Presidency town of Madras in 1688, followed by Calcutta in 1876 and Bombay in 1888. The Viceroy of India (1880-84), Lord Ripon is referred to as the father of local self-government in India for his efforts to strengthen the municipalities (Sharma, 2007). Statewide Municipal Corpora-

tion Acts came about in 1949 with Bombay, 1957 with Delhi and 1964 with the state of Gujarat. In order to provide a common framework for the urban local municipalities and to help strengthen their functioning as effective democratic units of self-governments, the Indian Parliament amended the constitutions (called the 74th Amendment Act of 1992) and provided the constitutional status to “municipalities” (Sharma, 2007). This Amendment laid down the specific formal guidelines on the composition of the municipalities; composition and constitution of Ward Committees, District Planning Committees; Seats reserved for minority groups; power authority, duration, dissolution and elections of the municipalities; and the constitution of the State Finance Commission. Sharma (2007) mentions that the 74th Constitution Amendment gave the municipalities constitutional status by which their authority was recognized by the state government.

Although the 74th Amendment does not mandate the city municipalities to take the delivery of education as their responsibilities (the 12th schedule inserted in the Indian constitution through 74th amendment does not mention education as one of the 18 subjects on which Municipalities

have exclusive jurisdiction), the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and Greater Mumbai include UPE as one of their departments by virtue of their pre-existing legislations (Sharma, 2007). Thus, the institutional frameworks of the two cities are comparable in their idiosyncrasy and complexity.

Education within the Municipalities of Mumbai and Delhi

India’s education policies since 1986 have been redistributive in nature, with a mission to universalize elementary education by giving special attention to the marginalized. Further, the policy also outlines the need to understand the mechanisms of delivering primary education to its population. In so doing, the policy statement articulates the need to understand the institutional context within which delivery of education operates:

[I]t is recognized that the objective of democracy, social justice, and equality can be achieved only through the provision of elementary education of equitable quality to all. We cannot improve the economic situation of the under privileged families, so that we have fewer number of families to cater to. But

what we can do is to understand our institutions and their response to crises. If we understand the underlying systemic factors, they could be potential solutions to many practice issues. And whereas it is also imperative to improve the present delivery system of elementary education, by, inter alia, greater decentralization of its management, and making it sensitive to the needs of children, especially of those belonging to disadvantaged groups. (MHRD, 2005)

It is within this overall policy context that the institutions within the cities of Mumbai and Delhi operate. Within each of the perspectives considered (environment, resources, administration, and rules) we will outline each city’s approach to meeting the goals of UPE within the particular perspective examined.

INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT: THE URBAN CONTEXT

Table 1 provides an overview of the institutional comparison in the context of the two cities in question.

The table shows the difference in the governance structure regarding the provision of basic education. In both

TABLE 1: Pattern of Education and Growth of Enrollment in Government Primary Schools in Mumbai and Delhi

City	Provision of Schools in the City		Is the child from government primary schools required to cross over to private aided schools for access to the cheapest available secondary education?	Rate of growth of enrollment in Municipal/State primary schools
	Who directly runs primary schools?	Who directly runs secondary schools?		
Mumbai	Municipal Corporation	Through “aided” Private secondary schools	Yes	Negative (-4.32)
Delhi	Municipal Corporation	Delhi Government	No	Positive (2.43)

Source: Juneja (2005).

the cities, the primary schools are not managed by the same administrative body as the secondary schools. This would involve multiple organizations and government structures working towards the UPE goal. The change in the organizational structure from primary to secondary schools in each city is accompanied by different organizational structures in both the cities. This results in adding more complexity to the already existing multi-institutional structure in the provision of basic education. To add to this are the inherent differences in the contextual factors of the two cities, as explained below.

The Urban Context: Mumbai

Public education within Mumbai is faced with a number of unique challenges. The city's schools are faced with problems including child labor, multilingualism, significant gender disparities, and marginalized tribal communities. These factors, among others, potentially complicate the successful implementation of education policy in the city. The Mumbai Department of Education states, "providing primary education to children from the age group of 6 to 14 [is] an obligatory duty of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). The goal of the Education Department is to encourage the poor and the needy through various programs and projects towards literacy" (MCGM, 2009).

Different institutions at various levels cater to the educational needs in Mumbai. The secondary schools and higher education are mainly supported by the State Government, Central Government as well as some private institutions regulated by the Governments, whereas primary education is mainly the responsibility of the MCGM. MCGM currently serves 485,531 students in 1181 schools with a total teaching staff of 13911 (MCGM, 2009). Further, the MCGM is the only Municipal Corporation in India that provides public education in eight different languages—Marathi, Urdu, Hindi, Gujarati, English, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. The Education Department of the MCGM has also recognized 975 private schools to impart education; out of these, 401

schools are given aid by the MCGM. At present there are about 207,480 students in these 401 private primary aided schools and 248,821 students in unaided schools with a total teaching staff of 9129 teachers, staff and special education teachers. 49 secondary schools with 55,576 students also come under the purview of MCGM (MCGM, 2009). Apart from these main responsibilities, the MCGM also runs six teacher libraries, four reading halls to promote libraries as a part of the curriculum; in-service teacher training component; an art and music academy; a language development project funded by the Ford Foundation for all the eight core languages and the school feeding program that provides mid day meals to all students in the school premises (MCGM, 2009). In order to address some of the problems of child labor, the state government established primary schools in the vicinity of sugarcane factories in order to provide education to children of sugarcane workers. Further, the *Mahatma Phule Shikshan Yojana* established centers catering to urban child labor and shelterless children who are deprived of primary education. These centers cater to at least 10-20 children and are run by voluntary organizations. To incentivize the education of girls and to address the priorities of redistribution to the marginalized, an attendance allowance scheme was introduced specifically for females. Under this scheme, the parents of girls would receive Rs.1.00 per day for 220 working days in a given academic year (Government of Maharashtra, 2002).

The Urban Context: Delhi

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has under its purview 1819 MCD primary schools and 46 aided and 323 recognized primary schools reaching out to around 900,000 children (MCD, 2009). The schools are located in 12 geographical units called zones and are further divided into 268 wards. Public education in the city of Delhi focuses more strongly on the problem of dropouts from school on account of frequent migration and economic issues. These issues are played out in a relatively more homogeneous population base

than Mumbai. The Delhi Government, with the help of NGOs, started "learning centers" for out-of-school children, under *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* ([SSA] Education for All in the Indian context) that focused on parent contact and motivation. The geographic spread of the city of Delhi complicates the delivery of primary education. Further, to incentivize the education of girls, the Delhi government provides free transport to female students in rural areas as well as stipends to girls in addition to the free supply of textbooks, stationery and uniforms. The Delhi Government is also working on a streamlined teacher recruitment drive by accurately assessing teacher requirements well in advance.³

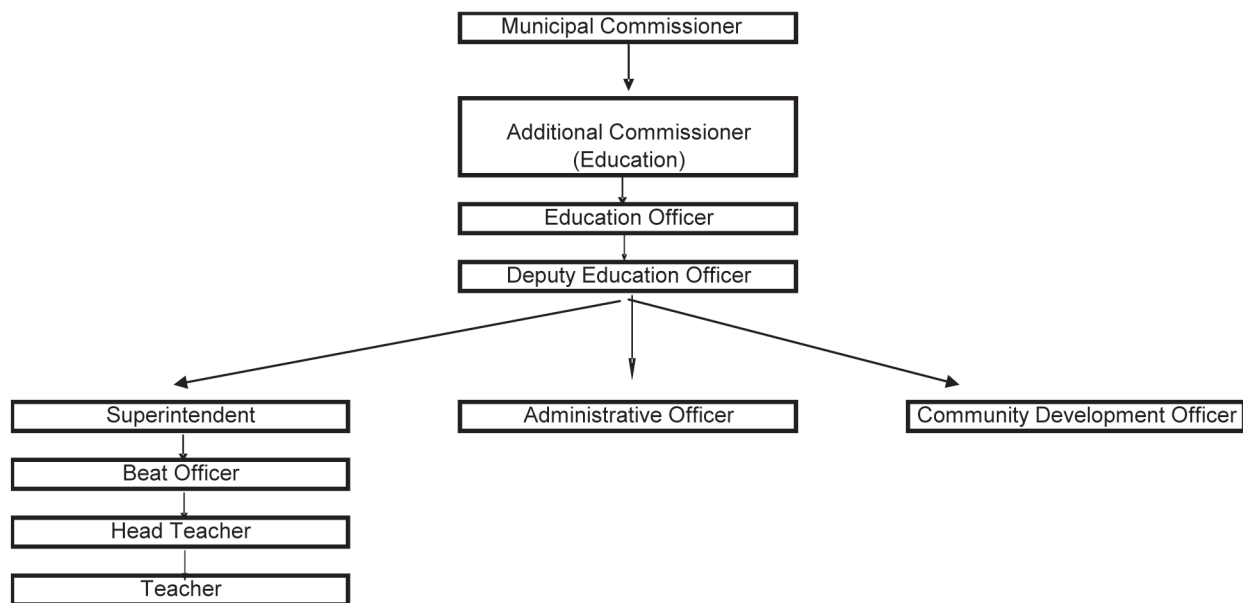
The Urban Context: Comparative Analysis

The urban environments of the two cities constrain the delivery of education by limiting the extent to which education can be delivered and how (e.g., distance in Delhi, language in Mumbai). While there exist common patterns of prioritization (e.g., education for girls), the specific priorities within each urban context dictate what should be prioritized within each context (out-of-school children in Mumbai, migrant children in Delhi). At a very high level, Delhi appears to be faced with challenges largely related to scale of provision of education (distance, coverage), whereas Mumbai is faced with problems largely due to the scope of provision (language, dropouts). These challenges necessitate a different set of responses and priorities. However, while these could be seen as institutional constraints, they could simultaneously encourage innovative responses to the unique and real contexts—such as the establishment of schools in close proximity to areas of work in the case of sugarcane factories in Mumbai (as mentioned before). The delivery of education within each city is thus shaped by and shapes their institutional environment.

INSTITUTIONAL ADMINISTRATION: PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION

The focus of this section will be

Figure 1. Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM)- Education Department



Source: Juneja (2001); Govt. of Maharashtra (2002).

on the differences in the administrative and organizational structures of the MCGM and MCD. (For additional detail see Figure 1-2).

Municipal Planning and Education: Mumbai and Delhi

For the purposes of municipal planning and organizing, the city of Delhi is divided into sub-units called *kshetras*⁴, Mumbai into units called *prabhags*. The concept of the *kshetra* originates from the catchment area of the schools, whereas *prabhags* are based on the divisions of electoral wards. There are a total of 1823 contiguous Kshetras in Delhi and 227 contiguous Prabhags in Mumbai (Banerji, Surianarain, Shetty, & Kabare, 2005). However, neither city applies the *prabhag* or the *kshetra* for the purposes of municipal school planning. In fact, both municipalities define the administrative structures of education in terms of “wards” (Banerji, et al., 2005). Along those lines, Mumbai and Delhi have been divided into 23 and 12 wards respectively (Banerji, et al., 2005). Since the planning units of the city and the municipal corporation differ, incorporating schools as institutions in city planning becomes difficult. For example, the SSA (Education for

All) survey data of out-of-school children administered by the Delhi Government adopted the *kshetra* approach.

The Delhi Government aggregates *kshetra* information into 9 districts, whereas the MCD divides the city into 12 zones (aggregate units of the municipal wards). As part of an effort to enroll all children in a given school’s catchment area, municipal corporation schools were required to survey all houses in their neighborhood. The survey varies from the SSA survey as the *kshetras* do not completely overlap the schools’ catchment areas and may cross two more wards. Therefore, the Delhi Government’s survey data often does not match the municipal school survey data for local planning. The interplay between the different municipal administrative units additionally constrains and complicates the delivery of education.

Municipal Organizational Design: Mumbai

From the perspective of organizational structure, Municipal Commissioner is the administrative head of the corporation in Mumbai, and is the head of all municipal functions. The Commissioner is assisted by an Addi-

tional Municipal Commissioner and a Deputy Municipal Commissioner who is in charge of the Education Department along with other portfolios (Juneja, 2001; MCGM, 2009). As mentioned above, the city is divided into six administrative zones with a total of 23 wards (Juneja, 2001). All education related decisions are made by the Education Committee, headed by the Education Officer who is in charge of the Primary and Secondary Education Department. Higher levels of education administration in Mumbai are restricted to largely administrative functions, whereas the State Government retains control over academic decisions regarding the subjects, the curriculum, text books etc. The Education Department has two main wings: academic and administrative (Juneja, 2001). Juneja (2001) mentions that the academic wing comprises of the Superintendent of Schools assigned for each of the languages. They are assisted by Beat Officers (assigned by language) across one or two wards (Juneja, 2001). Other departments exist as well, including: a Research and Statistics Department, a Language Development Project Unit, an Aided Schools Unit, an Art and Music Academy and an In-service Training Wing (Juneja, 2001).

Further, Juneja (2001) states that the administrative wing is headed by the Deputy Education Officers for each of the three zones (city, suburbs and extended suburbs). They are responsible for the overall performance of the education department. Superintendent supervise the work and get regular reports from Beat Officers (BO's), who are primarily responsible for academic achievement in the schools. Each BO is in charge of on average of 16 to 17 schools (Juneja, 2001). The city's 23 wards each have an Administrative Officer also concerned with the academic side. Ideally, the best teachers are promoted to the rank of Administrative Officer in order to extend best practice to a larger network of schools.

Municipal Organizational Design: Delhi

In Delhi, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) bears the institutional responsibility for primary school education; it is perhaps the largest local body for education in India. It shares its educational responsibilities with other local agencies like the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and the Delhi cantonment, along with the Delhi Government Department of Education. The higher levels within the MCD organogram (Figure 2) are similar in authority and functions to the Greater Mumbai Department of Education (BMED). Similar to Mumbai, these levels assume largely administrative responsibilities and enjoy little or no role at all in shaping policy. However, where roles are distinguished in Mumbai by academic and administrative responsibility even at the lowest unit of disaggregation (schools), in Delhi the distinction is blurred closer to the ground. In Delhi, higher levels of the organization are associated with role-specific responsibilities, lower levels with area-specific responsibilities.

The Director Primary Education is responsible for the overall planning and implementation of the MCD and reports to the MCD Commissioner or the Additional Municipal Commissioner (Figure 2). He is assisted by an Additional Director and zonal Deputy Education Officers and Assistant Edu-

cation Officers. Construction activities are undertaken by the Corporation's Engineering Wing (MCD, 2009). The Director Primary Education and the Engineer-in-Chief work in close coordination under the overall control of the Commissioner, the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation. Each zone has a relatively linear structure with a Deputy Education officer and an Assistant Education Officer, who both share the ultimate responsibility for all their wards' schools. Eight to ten school inspectors help the schools with their both administrative and academic issues, unlike Mumbai.

Planning and Organization: Comparative Analysis

It is clear that the contextual factors of Mumbai and Delhi require a different set of capacities – namely planning, organizational design, and institutional levers with which to administer education – within each the institutional structures of each city. For example, Delhi is much more geographically spread out but relatively more homogeneous than Mumbai. Thus, institutional structures in Delhi require a range of administrative functions (including school construction and transport) but relatively simple academic functions (schools in fewer languages, etc.) In contrast, Mumbai's social and linguistic context demands a complex set of academic functions in addition to the administrative function—perhaps necessitating the distinction between the two roles even at the lowest unit of disaggregation.

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES: FUNDING

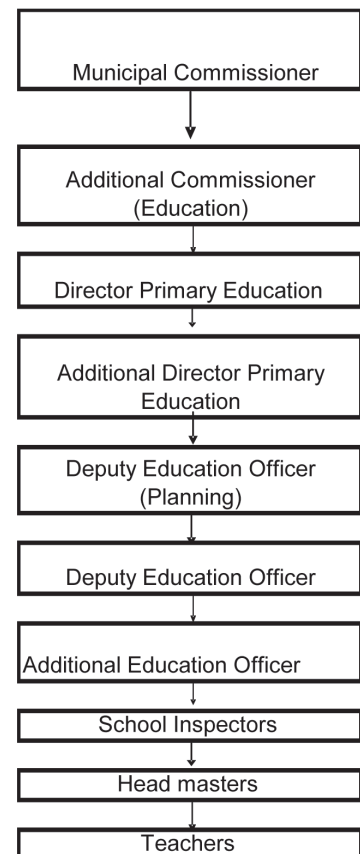
A very material resource that shapes institutional action is that of financial resources. In the case of funding, we examine the differential funding sources and expenditures on education within each city to understand fully the extent to which education is prioritized and delivered.

Municipal Funding: Delhi

MCD has three sources of funds to meet its entire budgetary requirement: Government of India (federal

government), Government of Delhi, and its own revenues generated by way of property and other taxes and user charges. As far as the education budget of MCD is concerned, it is almost entirely dependent on Delhi Government funds. The revised plan outlays for 2008-09 for the Department of Education Delhi Government indicates that from the total recurrent amount allocated for general education, MCD is allotted 32.7 percent (Rs.1.37 billion out of Rs.4.19 billion), NDMC accounts for less than one percent (Rs.20 million out of Rs.4.19 billion) and the remaining is allocated to the Delhi Government's Department of Education schools (Government of Delhi, 2009). Combining local authorities (MCD and NDMC) and the Delhi Government Department of Education, recurrent expenditure on general education accounted for around 10.17% (Rs.4.19 billion out of the Rs.41.23 billion) from

Figure 2.



Source: Interview data collected for the study by the authors

the total Delhi Government Budget.

Municipal Funding: Mumbai

MCGM is known to have the reputation of being the richest Municipal Corporations of India (Juneja, 2001). The MCGM Budget is divided into categories with Budget E (Fund Code 30) being the Education Budget. Budget E accounted for 10% of the total MCGM expenditure. The largest category is Budget "A" incorporating fund codes 11 (General Budget), 12 (Health Budget), 60 (Provident Fund) and 70 (Pension Fund). Budget A accounted to 83.21% of the total MCGM revenue Expenditures. Although MCGM has a small Education Budget (Budget E), the main source of income is the contributions from Budget A. Other sources of income are Grant-in-aid from the Government of Maharashtra and rent and other receipts from properties, which do not have a large share of the total budget outlays (MCGM, 2009). Therefore, in the case of Mumbai, the bulk of resources are generated from its own sources with little dependence on the state or other external sources (Juneja 2001).

In 2008-09, the MCGM spent around 10.88% (Rs.11.32 billion from a total of Rs.103.99 billion) of its net revenue expenditure on education (MCGM, 2009). MCGM budgets' suggests that Rs.10 million was spent towards the provision of free textbooks to students from grades one to ten (except those covered under SSA-Education for All program). The supply of educational materials such as uniforms, notebooks, compass boxes, tiffin-boxes, water bottles, raincoats etc. amounted to Rs.660 million for primary schools in the Budget year 2008-9. Attendance allowance to girls (Rs.1/- per day) to promote girls' education accounted for Rs.60.3 million in the primary school.

Municipal Funding: Comparative Analysis

The main difference between the two cities is that unlike the MCD, the MCGM generates most of its resources from local taxes—including property tax, octroi, taxes on vehicles, user charges on water electricity etc. This revenue forms the bulk of the resources

that the MCGM needs for its activities, and comprises between 60-70% of its total expenditure (Juneja, 2001). The MCGM receives some funds from the Maharashtra State Government, which is usually a small amount (MCGM, 2009). There are often lags in the disbursement of funds from the Delhi Government to local agencies like the MCD, New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) and the Delhi Cantonment. The MCD is required to submit budget plans every year to the Delhi Government; this budget goes through multiple iterations and negotiations before it is approved. Thus in the process, the MCD loses its autonomous power which comes from financial independence. Interdepartmental tussle within the MCD to gain access to more funds has the potential of adding more complications. Another factor that needs to be taken into account is the political angle. If two different political parties are elected as the state government and the municipal council, this set up may lead to political rivalries which may influence budget allocations and dispersion of funds.

An analysis of both city budgets indicates that almost 90 to 95% of the budget goes towards salaries and administration, mostly teacher salaries. Juneja (2001) points out that barely 4% of the education budget in the Mumbai Municipal Corporation goes towards non-salary expenditures, a trend common throughout the country. The extent of resources available, and the ways in which resources are collected, allocated, and distributed pose a very real constraint to the delivery of education within each city. Mumbai's direct access and greater funding sources have not translated into a higher per capita spending on education. However, this may be due to the fact that the bureaucratic burden of revenue collection and generation is reduced for Delhi, which only has to spend the money allocated from the Government of Delhi. However, as this study has not fully examined the linkage between outlay and impact, it is not possible to successfully conclude that greater per capita expenditure results in greater outcomes. In addition, further research is necessary to understand the ramifications of cen-

tralizing or decentralizing the education budget, and the implications on school autonomy and accountability.

INSTITUTIONAL RULES: THE PRACTICE OF POLICY

Research conducted by Banerji et. al (2005) revealed certain telling differences in the ways in which the institutional "rules" were enacted and interpreted at the ground level in Mumbai and Delhi. Government-run primary school principals in the two cities were asked questions based on five policy elements: access and overcrowding, mainstreaming, achievement, transition, and funds for and teaching learning. Their responses revealed the differences in practice and behavior as a result of institutional constraints. For example, school headmasters in Mumbai often came up with more creative local solutions to problems of access and overcrowding, whereas in Delhi they largely relied on the institutional administration to bail them out. This may not only highlight the limited capacity of school principals to make decisions but also underscore the differences in institutional norms between the two cities. Banerji et. al (2005) cite an example of a Delhi headmistress who narrated that she had completed all the required paperwork with the school inspector to request new classroom construction. However, there had been a several month delay in the release of the funds. As a result, there was a substantial delay in the construction of new classrooms in the school. She also seems to justify the delayed action by stating the entire process, which according to her is time consuming. The same question about overcrowding and access to schools in Mumbai had a different reaction. A Mumbai school headmaster reported that space is always a constraint, but the school finds ways to solve the problem. He noted that children are adjusted in other classrooms or a temporary solution is to have classes in the corridors and verandas. In the meantime, the Ward Officer is informed about the situation. The example here shows how the institutional rules play out in the schools, where Mumbai's administrators show much more in-

novation as compared to Delhi's school officials' dependence on the "system" to resolve immediate problems.

From the perspective of improving student achievement, structural differences in education delivery may compound the differences due to existing poor conditions such as high student teacher ratios and lack of facilities—for example, the persistence of poor teaching and all-pass policies in Delhi, or the improper assignment of teachers to schools and the emphasis on remedial education in Mumbai. Specifically, responses from Delhi suggest that the schools need academic support from the Cluster Resource Centers (CRC) which are set up to support around 10-12 schools in the same neighborhood (Banerji et. al, 2005). Dependence on organization structures and support systems is the way for Delhi to improve student achievement. In Mumbai, the solution was more school-based, as educators believed that remedial classes organized in the school for children lagging behind in certain subjects will improve academic performance. Mumbai again shows a more hands-on approach as compared to systemic dependence in Delhi. In terms of transferring children into new schools, responses from Mumbai schools were largely stymied by bureaucratic hurdles, whereas the Delhi schools were more flexible in admission policies. However it could be surmised that the combination of policy directive (easing of the requirement of affidavits for admission) as well as the less "complex" (relatively homogeneous, stable) academic environment may have enabled Delhi schools to adopt such an approach. It is clear that a lack of coordination delivery institutions (such as MCD and NDMC institutions in Delhi; MCGM and partial State Government institutions in Mumbai) is largely responsible for the poor performance with respect to transition to secondary education.

CONCLUSION

Institutional structures, culture, norms, and practices within different contexts can affect the implementation of educational policy to a great extent. This paper is an attempt to understand

the factors that influence the shaping of institutional culture, norms, and practice. We have endeavored to outline the basic set of institutional factors—environment, resources, administration, and rules—that may impact the practice of educational policy on the ground in two mega cities, Delhi and Mumbai, whose surface similarities are deconstructed at the level of contextual and institutional differences. A greater understanding of the ways in which education policy and practice are enacted on the ground would help reform institutional practices, and ultimately enhance institutional performance and accountability.

Educational policy goes through an intricate process by which it at once shapes and is shaped by the institutional actors within the system. Institutional contexts and challenges, planning and administration, organizational structures, the availability and utilization of resources, the norms followed for planning and implementation, and finally the perceptions, personal interests and preferences of the actors in these institutions can transform policy planning and implementation in unexpected ways. Thus, from the perspective of institutional environment, the urban contexts within each city not only dictate the priorities for education delivery within each city, but also reshape the delivery of education within these contexts in ways that need to be carefully considered. These appear to have posed specific challenges of scale in Delhi and scope in Mumbai. From the perspective of resources, it appears that despite being resource-rich and in control of revenue collection, the city of Mumbai is still limited by the mandated disbursement and allocation of funds. Arguably, while Mumbai may have access to financial resources, it may lack access to sufficiently decentralized spending to make the real difference. As stated above, further research is necessary to fully understand the differences in the budgeting and allocation mechanisms.

From the perspective of administration, both cities are victims of circumstance—whereby they lack alignment with municipal planning and organizing mechanisms. Further, the administra-

tive and bureaucratic institutions of each city are responsive to and perpetuate the necessities of their unique contexts.

Our paper does not suggest that all institutional characteristics should be challenged and substituted, as some of them maybe deeply ingrained in the institutional culture of the delivery of education. Indeed, some aspects of institutional characteristics are commendable and worth extending. However, this paper does make an appeal to policy makers and implementers not only think comparatively but also to be cognizant of the wider set of factors responsible for the delivery of education within different contexts.

ENDNOTES

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² Also this national framework is known as the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (MHRD, 2000).

³ Right to Education Act is in force now and the 6 month period given to the states to have stipulated PTR at school level is also over. So all states are required by law now to assess, recruit and appoint teachers in school. Besides, the School Management Committees are required to prepare school development plan which has to foresee the requirements of the next 3 years in advance.

⁴ This term was used by Delhi *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* as unit of micro planning for education delivery purposes. However, it does not have a legal basis and is not even mentioned in any of the official document of Department of Education in Delhi.

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