Private education and disadvantaged children in India

Day Ashley, Laura; Skinner, Robert; Meyer, Alejandra; Perry, Tom

Save the Children

PRIVATE EDUCATION AND DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN IN INDIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF THREE MODELS OF PRIVATE SCHOOL PROVISION

LAURA DAY ASHLEY, ROBERT SKINNER, ALEJANDRA MEYER and THOMAS PERRY

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For more information please contact:

Dr Laura Day Ashley

Department of Education and Social Justice

School of Education

University of Birmingham

Edgbaston

Birmingham

B15 2TT

l.dayashley@bham.ac.uk

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List of acronyms

APSCP: Andhra Pradesh School Choice Programme

ASER: Annual Status of Education Report

BE2: Building Evidence in Education

DFID: Department for International Development

DISE: District Information System for Education

EOS: Equal Opportunity School

GC: General Category

ICT: Information and communications technology

IOT: Impact of Treatment

IHDS: India Human Development Report Survey

HFPS: Higher-fee private school

LFPS: Lower-fee private school

PPP: Public-private partnership

NGO: Non-government organization

NSS: National Sample Survey

OBC: Other Backward Classes

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

QLF: Quality Learning Framework (Save the Children's)

RCT: Randomized Control Trial

RTE Act: Right to Education Act: shortened term for the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009

SC: Scheduled Caste

ST: Scheduled Tribe

SD: Standard Deviation

SDG4: Sustainable Development Goal 4

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents an extensive literature review of recent quality research on three models of private school education provision in India: (i) private schools, with special reference to lower-fee private schools (LFPS); (ii) voucher schemes; and (iii) the national policy for the reservation of 25% free places in private schools under Section 12(1)(c) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (referred to here as the RTE 25% reservation). It assesses these models of private school provision in accordance with key criteria from Save the Children's (2016) *Global Policy Position on User Fees and Private Schools*, and especially in relation to: access and completion; quality and learning; and the impact of the model on the wider education system. The *Global Policy Position* focuses on basic education for the most disadvantaged and marginalized children which is reflected in this review. Basic education in the Indian context is referred to as compulsory education for children aged 6-14 years. In the assessment of the evidence on quality and learning, Save the Children's (2017) *Quality Learning Framework* is additionally used. The literature review was undertaken by a team of researchers from the University of Birmingham and forms part of a wider collaborative project with Save the Children investigating how the *Global Policy Position* can be effectively implemented in a national context. It is also likely to be of interest to others in the international development community, such as multilateral donors, aid agencies, non-government organizations and academics working in this field.

Methodology

The review used systematic techniques for searching relevant bibliographic databases and research and policy websites using key search terms and transparent inclusion criteria. This resulted in 44 studies reviewed through rigorous processes of data extraction, analysis and synthesis with considerable cross-checking across the team. Drafts of the report were reviewed at various stages by Save the Children and independent external peer reviewers.

Key Findings

Headline findings from the review are summarized below for each model of private school provision in relation to equity, quality and systems impact criteria; they are based on a context sensitive analysis and synthesis of the literature as set out in the main report.

Model 1: Private schools with special reference to LFPS

Access and completion: There are a number of intersecting factors hindering access to and completion of private school education, including economic, gender, caste and geographic disadvantages. The financial burden of LFPS attendance can lead to discriminatory practices within households with limited resources in terms of which children attend which school type and for how long which can increase equity gaps within families. LFPS practices of increasing fees as grade levels increase can lead to children moving schools frequently, thereby jeopardizing the consistency of their schooling experience, or dropping out of school altogether and not completing their education.

Quality and learning: LFPS are more likely than government schools to have lower pupil-teacher ratios, provide more disciplined learning environments and hygienic facilities, but they are less likely to provide midday meals. LFPS teachers are less likely to be absent and more likely to be actively teaching; they also tend to communicate more effectively with parents and are perceived to be more committed and caring towards their students than government schoolteachers. However, LFPS teachers are often low paid women with little training and experience working under conditions of high accountability and job insecurity. Limited evidence on pedagogy indicates teacher-centric exam-oriented teaching and low levels of student participation. In their learning, LFPS children perform at least as well or better than government schoolchildren and, despite the limited English language proficiency of teachers in English-medium LFPS, increased exposure to even imperfect English may open up further/higher education, career and economic opportunities for students.

Impact on education systems: Migration of more advantaged children to LFPS can lead to a 'ghettoization' of government schools serving the most disadvantaged and marginalized children exacerbating segregation in schooling and, where enrolment rates are low, may lead to closures of government schools. LFPS are significantly impacted by recent RTE Act regulations requiring schools to obtain recognition and comply with minimum infrastructure and quality input standards. Penalties for non-compliance are leading to threats of closure of LFPS which, combined with government school closures, may jeopardize children's access to basic education. LFPS popularity appears to be exacerbating social inequalities, most notably through economic and employment advantages associated with English-medium provision. In response to this, a number of states have enhanced English language teaching and introduced English-medium sections in government schools.

Model 2: Voucher schemes

Access and completion: Experimental research on two 5-year voucher programmes in rural and urban India show that they can remove or reduce the financial barriers to private school attendance which results in more socio-economically disadvantaged and marginalized children attending private schools. There is some evidence to suggest that children enrolled in private schools through some types of voucher programme may not remain in private schools and may move to the public sector. In other country contexts where voucher systems have been implemented at scale and over time (e.g. Chile), they have been found to increase social inequity and stratification through socially selective school practices.

Quality and learning: Research reporting on findings from voucher scheme experiments suggest that providing tuition-free access to private schools via vouchers to disadvantaged children results in no overall advantage in learning outcomes, albeit with variation by subject and medium of instruction.

Impact on education systems: Since private school voucher programmes produce similar learning outcomes to government schools but at significantly lower cost, some authors argue that they can increase productivity in the education system. However, this model of low-cost private provision depends on low teacher pay and working conditions which raises concerns about teacher rights and wellbeing. Additionally, where voucher systems are implemented at scale, they are likely to require potentially costly and complex additional regulation and oversight by governments.

Model 3: RTE Act 25% reservation of free places

Access and completion: Implementation of the national policy of the RTE 25% reservation of free places in private schools has been hindered by delays, a lack of clarity, low-level uptake by state governments and misinterpretation and evasion by private schools. A range of barriers hinder access for eligible disadvantaged and marginalized children including limited awareness of and information about the provision; application costs; a lack of online access and literacy; and the social and cultural capital required to apply. Concerns are raised about the continuity and completion of basic education by students with free places especially in higher-fee private schools (HFPS) given stark socio-economic background differences, fears of discrimination, parental support expectations and higher hidden school costs.

Quality and learning: Research in a small number of cases of HFPS indicates how they can offer free places to disadvantaged and marginalized children under the RTE 25% reservation in quality learning environments that provide active and child-centred teaching and learning through bilingual (English plus local language) provision. There is a lack of data on learning outcomes for disadvantaged children in these contexts but some indications that greater exposure to English, technical skills and a global outlook can offer career benefits. Ethnographic research offers insights into two modes of implementation of the RTE 25% reservation by schools: (i) separate provision whereby children with free places are educated in a school building separate to the private school and (ii) same provision, whereby children with free places are included into the private school and learn in classrooms alongside fee-paying children. With regard to the latter model, one quasi-experimental study finds that including free-place children in private school classrooms can lead to positive and less discriminatory social behaviours among fee-paying children and mixed and modest impacts on their academic outcomes.

Impact on education systems: There are many challenges of implementation with the RTE 25% reservation policy, not least ensuring accessibility, continuity and completion for eligible disadvantaged and marginalized children. There is also a lack of support and guidance for schools on how to educate and include children with free places effectively. Despite this, most authors in the studies reviewed are broadly positive about its potential to contribute to bridging educational and social divides in a highly stratified system, if implemented effectively and with effective guidance and support structures in place.

Conclusion

This review has captured the research evidence on pro-poor private school provision in India at a particular moment in time when there is much shifting ground in the sector. This includes the RTE Act 2009 which sets a framework for the first time for the right of every child without discrimination to free and compulsory education. This includes the legal obligation for schools to be regulated/registered and not-for-profit, and the responsibilizing of private schools to contribute to the universalization of education through the 25% reservation of places. Most studies reviewed did not tend to refer to commercial providers or chains of schools, although concerns are raised in the literature about a 'second wave' of corporate-backed private school provision, evidence on which is nascent. Studies were also found to generally lack data on the financial returns of organizations involved in private provision, whether income, revenue, profit or otherwise. This is important, particularly given Save the Children's commitment to not supporting commercial for-profit direct provision of education. It

is suggested then that this literature review is read alongside up-to-date case-by-case assessments of providers on the ground in specific geographic contexts.

The literature reviewed included analyses of all-India data sets, but many of the primary and empirical studies were geographically weighted to certain cities and states (most notably, Delhi and Andhra Pradesh and to a lesser extent Bengalaru (Bangalore) and Rajasthan, with some individual studies in a handful of other cities/states); the geographic scope of research therefore needs to be expanded beyond these contexts to gain a clearer impact of private education provision across the country.

An important consideration of for future policy implementation is that the majority of the most disadvantaged and marginalized children in India are likely to attend government schools since only a limited proportion of these children gain access to private schools via the national policy of the RTE 25% provision or voucher experiments and since user fees create a financial barrier to their attendance at LFPS. The findings from the review have a number of implications for policy at different levels of operation. For example, they can help inform:

(i) stakeholders about the impact of different models of private school provision to aid effective participation in national education sector dialogue and policy debates;

(ii) advocacy in relation to state regulation for education that is fully inclusive of disadvantaged and marginalized children across both private and government schools;

(iii) work alongside school leaders and teachers in the co-creation of inclusive education practices;

(iv) the empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalized parents and communities to understand their rights under the RTE Act and support their children's application, access and completion of free places in schools to which they are entitled.

As well as informing policy implementation in the Indian context, this literature review and wider policy project may also offer lessons for Save the Children's other country offices.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims of the literature review

This report undertakes an extensive literature review of research on private school education provision in India. Its key purpose is to review and assess the most up-to-date evidence on models of pro-poor private school provision[1] in accordance with key criteria from Save the Children's (2016) *Global Policy Position on User Fees in Education and Private Schools*. It is part of a wider policy implementation project collaboration between the University of Birmingham and Save the Children. It aims to inform Save the Children staff and partners on issues of private education and privatization to aid their policy, programme and advocacy work. The report is also likely to be of interest to others in the international development community, such as multilateral donors, aid agencies, non-government organizations (NGOs) and academics working in this field, at a time of reflection on how the evidence has evolved since Day Ashley et al.'s (2014) Department for International Development (DFID) funded review on the role and impact of private schools in low and middle income countries (Akmal et al. 2019; Srivastava 2019; see also Day Ashley et al 2015).

1.2 Background

Save the Children set out its *Global Policy Position on User Fees in Education and Private Schools* in 2016. They did so at a time when the rapid growth of private schools alongside existing government schools in the Global South had led to a 'dual system' (Srivastava and Walford 2016, 491). At this time, the private sector was also afforded a more visible role in the collective achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2015), and the policy debate on the role of non-state actors in the provision of basic education was at its peak. Informed by reviews of the evidence on private and non-state schools in low and middle income countries (Day Ashley et al 2014; Day Ashley and Wales 2015), the *Global Policy Position* sets out criteria by which different models of education can be assessed in relation to central issues of equity, quality and learning, and impact on the education system to help inform decisions about which education models to support.

Clearly acknowledging that the right of children to 'free, inclusive, quality basic education' is the responsibility of governments, *the Global Policy Position* states that in the delivery of education 'a range of different actors can help', but draws a clear line that Save the Children 'will not partner with companies directly on projects which seek to derive a commercial return or profit from direct education provision' (Save the Children 2016, 1). The policy position also asserts a clear focus on basic education for the most disadvantaged and marginalized children 'from the poorest households and communities' and/or who face discrimination 'because of who they are or where they live, resulting in them being excluded from education' (Save the Children 2016, 4), as well as adherence to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Incheon Declaration and the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

[1] The focus of this review was private school provision, other services supplied through PPPs were not included in the review. See, for example, Subramanian (2018) on teacher training and (Byker 2015b) on information and communications technology (ICT).

1.3 Wider policy implementation project

This literature review forms part of a larger collaborative project between the University of Birmingham and Save the Children. This project investigates how Save the Children's broad and flexible *Global Policy Position* can be tailored to and implemented in specific national contexts and addresses the following questions:

1. How can Save the Children's *Global Policy Position on User Fees in Education and Private Schools* be shaped appropriately by local actors in a single national context as they plan their interventions, programmes and advocacy?
2. What lessons can be learnt from this project that may be helpfully shared with other Save the Children country offices?

The project uses a 'context-evidence-links' approach (Start and Hovland 2004) which is rooted in the premise that for effective policy three key things matter. First, an understanding of the specific contexts in which the policy is being implemented is required through, for example, grassroots listening and engagement with local actors (Samoff 2007). Second, effective policy needs to be informed by recent and good quality research evidence (Crossley and Jarvis 2001). Third, policymakers should engage with local networks and partners recognizing the importance of local agency in policy implementation (McGrath 2018). This literature review contributes to the second of these points, by identifying and reviewing the recent quality research evidence base.

1.4 India case study

India was selected as the case study country for the project for a number of reasons. First, the sheer prevalence of private schools in India means that they cannot and should not be ignored. From analysis of National Sample Survey (NSS) household data 2014-15, Kingdon (2020) estimates that almost a third of children aged 6-10 years attend private unaided schools (i.e. fee-charging, privately managed schools that recruit and determine the salaries of their teachers); with this figure rising to almost a half of 6-10 year olds in urban areas[2] (Kingdon 2020). Second, there is a relatively large body of literature focused on the Indian context (as indicated in Day Ashley et al. 2014). Third, it has been argued that Indian state collaboration with the private sector is leading to *de facto* privatization of education (Verger and VanderKaaij 2012).

Recent Indian education legislation has major implications for the private school sector. In 2009, the *Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act* (RTE Act) was passed. This followed the centrally sponsored flagship education programme, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which started in 2001 and led to 'near universal enrolment at the lower-primary level through massive infrastructural development, teacher training and community mobilization' (Kelly et al. 2016, 175). The RTE Act set out for the first time a national legal framework to enact the right of all children to free and compulsory education, requiring children aged 6-14 years to be enrolled in age appropriate schools recognized by the state, whether government or private schools. Whilst this legislation confers educational rights, it renders parents 'responsibilized' to secure these rights through school choice (Maithreyi and Sriprakash 2018) and 'reponsibilizes' private schools to play a role through provision of 25% free places to disadvantaged children (Day Ashley 2013). Section 12(1)(c) of the Act (hereafter referred to as the RTE 25% reservation)

[2] Just over a fifth of 6-10 year olds are in private schools in rural areas. The percentages of 11-14 year olds in private schools are approximately 27% across India (41% in urban areas and 18% in rural areas) (Kingdon 2020).

requires all private schools to reserve 25% of their places for local children from 'economically weaker sections' and 'disadvantaged groups' between 6 and 14 years (Classes 1-8) in return for per-child subsidy (Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India 2009).

2. Methodology

The literature review used systematic and rigorous techniques at each stage of the process. This began with the development of a multi-pronged search strategy and setting of transparent criteria for the inclusion of studies in the literature review through to recording, analyzing and synthesizing the evidence and assessing it against the key criteria in Save the Children's *Global Policy Position*.

2.1 Search strategy

A wide range of relevant bibliographic databases and research and policy websites were identified by the research team to undertake a comprehensive search of the literature (these are listed in Appendix A). Other key literature was identified through hand searching and 'pearl growing' identification of relevant references in other key policy-oriented texts (see Day Ashley et al. 2014). Key search terms (listed in Appendix B) were formulated to identify key areas of known private school, public-private partnership (PPP) and privatization activity in education provision in India through consultation with Save the Children India/International colleagues. Key search terms also captured Save the Children's (2016) three central criteria for the assessment of models of education from their *Global Policy Position on User Fees and Private Schools in Education*:

(i) *Access and completion:* Does the model help or hinder the most disadvantaged and marginalized children to access and complete quality basic education and reduce equity gaps?

(ii) *Quality and learning:* Does the model enable the most disadvantaged and marginalized children to learn in quality, safe and protective learning environments and improve the quality of education available to them? And does it support those children to achieve relevant and effective learning outcomes, and reduce equity gaps in learning outcomes?

(iii) *Impact on education systems:* Does the model have any unintended effects (short-term or long-term) on systems-strengthening and the ability of the government to set and enforce quality and equity standards? If so, how will those impacts affect the most disadvantaged and marginalized children?

(Adapted from Save the Children 2016, 7)

While these three criteria are identified as particularly important, the *Global Policy Position* sets out two further criteria 'cost-effectiveness and efficiency' and 'transparency, accountability and regulation' (Ibid.). Although these terms were not included as key search terms, they helped inform the development of synonyms and related terms to enable the capture of these issues in the review where relevant (see Appendix B).

2.2 Inclusion criteria

Criteria for the inclusion of literature in the review is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Criteria for the inclusion of studies

	Criteria
Publication date	Material published between 2014 and 2019.
Relevance	Includes research findings on pro-poor private provision of basic education in relation to the *Global Policy Position* criteria: access and completion *or* quality and learning *or* impact on the education system.
Geography	India
Language	English
Quality	Literature was assessed for quality as noted below, with low quality studies sifted out. All studies included were medium/high quality.
Repetition	Where similar findings were repeated in publications, the more relevant, higher quality or more empirically focused study was included in the review.

Basic education is defined in the Indian context in line with Save the Children's *Global Policy Position* and Incheon Declaration Education 2030 to include at least nine years of compulsory education for children aged 6-14 years. Quality was assessed using a checklist from the Building Evidence in Education Note (BE2 Note, 2015) *Assessing the Strength of Evidence in the Education Sector* which recognized the diversity of methodological approaches. Low quality studies were sifted out leading to a final list of 44 studies included in the literature review (see Appendix C).

2.3 Recording, analyzing and synthesizing evidence

Relevant data from individual studies were extracted and recorded on templates to enable analysis and synthesis of evidence (see Appendix D), with contextual, substantive data and methodological information recorded. Substantive data was mostly recorded in relation to the three key criteria from the *Global Policy Position*: equity (access and completion), quality and learning, and systems; allowing space to record other relevant data e.g. cost-effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, accountability and regulation. Studies were described according to research design as follows (from categorizations used in the BE2 Note, 2015): (i) primary and empirical research (observational, experimental or quasi-experimental); (ii) secondary review; (iii) theoretical and conceptual. Given India's vast size and diversity with multiple spoken languages, religions and cultural traditions, the review paid careful attention to the contexts in which research studies were conducted (e.g. using all-India data, or conducted within certain states, cities, districts, villages or neighbourhoods). In the process of reviewing the literature, three key models of school education provision, by the private sector alone or partnering with the public sector, emerged: (i) private schools with special reference to lower-fee private schools (LFPS); (ii) voucher schemes; and (iii) RTE 25% reservation (these are discussed in more detail in the *Findings* section below). Extracted evidence relating to each of these three models was analyzed, synthesized and assessed according to the three criteria in the *Global Policy Position*. In Appendix C, studies are listed according

to the private provision model they (mostly) report on, albeit with a few overlaps as some studies refer to more than one model.

2.4 Limitations

The protocol employed in searching for and including relevant literature has been transparently set out. As with any review, all relevant published research may not be captured due, for example, to alternative terms being used in studies that were not picked up by the search terms employed. The review is limited by publication date (2014-19) and only research studies published in the English language are included and so there may be omissions of relevant publications in other languages. Finally, checks were put in place to reduce the possibility of researcher bias. These included the cross-checking of data extraction, analysis and synthesis within the University of Birmingham research team, reviewing of drafts of the report being undertaken by Save the Children at different stages of the project and a process of independent external peer review.

A note on profit and private school provision

In their Global Policy Position, Save the Children (2016, 1) differentiate between (i) 'community-based models of direct, private provision of education' delivering social returns alongside moderate income (such as owner/headteacher salary), which may be appropriate if key equity and learning criteria are met; and (ii) profit generated from commercial investment to generate maximum return, which they do not support. The first category may include the types of individual and locally-run LFPS that have been described as mushrooming , by 'default rather than design' (Rose 2005), over the past few decades in urban and rural areas, referred to by Srivastava (2019) as 'one-off mom and pop' schools. However, the second category may refer to a more recent 'second wave' of corporate-backed lower-fee private provision and commercial chains of schools that operate 'across geographic boundaries beyond the local', with India designated as a favoured location for such business ventures (Srivastava 2016a, 249). The majority of studies reviewed (with the exceptions of the theoretical and conceptual studies by Srivastava 2016a and Nambissan 2014) do not describe or refer to commercial providers or chains of schools and so it can be assumed that the types of private provision they research are likely to fall into the first category. However, it is also important to note that there is a lack of detail on the moderate or otherwise financial returns of the private schools across the studies reviewed e.g. in terms of income, revenue etc. There are laws in India that prohibit for-profit schooling (Nambissan 2014; Srivastava 2016a). However, Srivastava (2016a) warns that the scaling up of for-profit corporate-backed lower-fee private schooling may occur under the guise of PPPs and Nambissan (2014, 9) equally warns of 'advocacy of for-profit private schools for the poor in India through state-supported vouchers to enable children to access schools (private) of their choice.' Although the vast majority of studies reviewed do not focus on 'second wave' private provision[3], it is important to be alert to this especially in the light of Save the Children's clear stance on not supporting profit making commercial providers of education. It would therefore be advisable to combine the general understanding of models of private provision generated from this literature-based review with up-to-date case-by-case assessments of private providers operating on the ground in specific geographic contexts.

[3] Some studies, beyond the scope of this review, discuss and attempt to map the activity of philanthropic actors in education and privatization (see for example, Junneman and Olmedo 2019; Srivastava 2016b).

3. Findings: Review of the evidence

The literature reviewed is geographically weighted to particular cities and states of India, especially Delhi, Bengaluru (Bangalore), Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, with some individual studies in other states (e.g. Gujarat (Ahmedabad), Kerala, Bihar (Patna), Telegana and Uttar Pradesh) and a number of all-India studies analyzing nation-wide data sets. Through the process of reviewing literature three key models of private education provision were identified:

(1) *Private schools with special reference to 'lower-fee private schools':* Over half of the reviewed literature addresses the relatively recent rapid growth in private schools, especially those targeting socio-economically disadvantaged children referred to in the literature variously as 'low fee', 'low cost' and 'budget' private schools. There is a lack of agreed definition of these terms in the literature (Srivastava 2015) and fee levels tend to vary according to location and services provided (Singh and Sarkar 2015). But what is known is that the group of private schools particularly proliferating are not those higher-fee paying schools (HFPS) which have traditionally catered for the elite and middle classes. Therefore, the broader and more relative term for this group of non-elite private schools, 'lower-fee private schools' (LFPS) is preferred and used in this review. Given that national data sets analyzed in a number of studies included in the review do not make the distinction between LFPS and other private schools, this section is broadly labelled as 'private schools with special reference to LFPS'. We refer to private schools as schools which usually 'depend on user fees and therefore follow the market to attract and retain students' (Day Ashley and Wales 2015, 8). In our review process we did not actively search for schools often described as NGO/charitable/philanthropic or religious/faith-based schools (for a rigorous review of such schools in low and middle income countries see Wales et al. 2015); however, we acknowledge that boundaries between non-state school types can often be blurred. In this India-focused review, private schools mostly refer to private unaided schools[4], that do not receive government funding, are privately managed, privately owned/founded and recruit and determine the salaries of their teachers[5]. They may be recognized (i.e. regulated and meeting quality conditions set by the government) or unrecognized. Although the latter are not officially allowed under the RTE Act, a number of reports indicate that they continue to operate (Srivastava 2016b). In fact, the size of this unrecognized sector is potentially significant (see for example Tooley and Rangaraju 2015). LFPS have experienced the greatest proliferation among private schools in recent decades with explanations for this growth ranging from the failures of government schooling to increased parental aspirations, wealth and access to information (Jones 2018). Insights are gained on this model of private school provision from a review of studies with a range of methodological approaches including analyses of existing data sets, surveys, and detailed ethnographic case studies and interview-based research.

(2) Voucher schemes: There is a small body of research on voucher scheme experiments taking place in India. Based on the findings of these studies which are mostly Randomized Control Trials (RCTs), this section considers what happens in relation

[4] Private unaided schools are distinct from private aided schools. Private aided schools are partly government-funded and although they are nominally run independently by private management boards, in reality they are heavily state governed. They are fee-free up to grade 8 and teachers are recruited and paid in a similar way and at the same rate as government schoolteachers (Kingdon 2020).
[5] However, some data sets e.g. ASER bring aided and unaided private schools together in the same category (Kingdon 2020).

to education equity, quality and systems when vouchers are randomly allocated to parents of disadvantaged children to attend private schools/LFPS.

(3) *The RTE 25% reservation:* There is some emergent literature, using various research designs and methods, reporting early findings of the impact of this legislation on access and quality of education for disadvantaged and marginalized children and on the education system more broadly. In theory, the mandate for private schools to reserve 25% of their seats from Class 1-8 for disadvantaged and marginalized children applies to private schools across the fee spectrum, from LFPS to HFPS. Schools are 'subsidized by the states at per pupil state expenditure or the tuition fee charged by the school, whichever is less' (Srivastava and Noronha 2016, 561). If the RTE 25% reservation were to be implemented as planned, it would result in India having probably the largest number of children attending private schools through public funding as well as the largest attempts at school integration anywhere in the world (Aslam et al. 2017).

Here, each of these three models of private school education provision is examined in turn. For each model, evidence is analyzed, synthesized and assessed against key criteria from Save the Children's (2016) *Global Policy Position*: 'access and completion'; 'quality and learning'; and 'impact on the education system'. While these three are the main criteria, evidence relating to two further criteria is considered and discussed in the review where relevant, 'cost-effectiveness and efficiency' and 'transparency, accountability and regulation' (Ibid.).

3.1: Private schools with special reference to LFPS

Model 1: Private schools with special reference to LFPS **Access and completion**
Headline Finding
There are a number of intersecting factors hindering access to and completion of private school education, including economic, gender, caste and geographic disadvantages. The financial burden of LFPS attendance can lead to discriminatory practices within households with limited resources in terms of which children attend which school type and for how long which can increase equity gaps within families. LFPS practices of increasing fees as grade levels increase can lead to children moving schools frequently, thereby jeopardizing the consistency of their schooling experience, or dropping out of school altogether and not completing their education.

The review of the literature revealed financial, social, cultural and geographic factors that hinder access to and completion of LFPS education; these are identified as *economic, class and tribal status, gender, and geographic disadvantages* and are discussed in turn below. These disadvantaging factors often intersect, and in combination may lead to 'multiple disadvantage' (Woodhead et al. 2013). However, there are some notable gaps in the literature in need of further research. First, the social differences of religion are rarely discussed which is particularly important in understanding dis/advantages and marginalization of different religious groups in relation to access and completion of (private school) education. Second, there is a lack of reference to children with disabilities which may be explained by these children not being a target group for market-driven LFPS. Third, in

a limited number of studies, level of parental education, especially mothers' education, is identified as significant in explaining equity gaps in private school attendance (Alcott and Rose 2015; Azam 2017; Chaturvedi 2014) which would benefit from further understanding.

Economic disadvantage

Various studies analyzing national level data show that in India private school pupils tend to come from wealthier households (Alcott and Rose 2015, Chaturvedi 2014, Chudgar and Creed 2016, Dahal and Nguyen 2014 and Singhal and Das 2019). In their analysis of rural Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) data, Alcott and Rose (2015) find that while India has achieved near-universal primary school enrolment, only 15% of private school children aged 10-12 were from the lowest wealth-index quartile, while more than twice as many were in the wealthiest quartile (37%); the reverse was true for government schoolchildren (15% were from the wealthiest quartile and 33% were from the poorest). Chudgar and Creed (2016) compare India Human Development Report Survey (IHDS) and District Information System for Education (DISE) data over time and find that the private school enrolment wealth gap is not only large, but growing. Per capita income is found to be the most important predictor of private or public schooling in Chaturvedi's (2014) analysis of IHDS data with a doubling of per capita household income increasing the chances of enrolment in private schools by about 10%.

Financial constraints were a key reason hindering LFPS access for more disadvantaged families in mixed method in-depth studies in urban Bihar, urban and rural Andhra Pradesh, rural Rajasthan and rural Kerala. The costs to users of attending LFPS was considerably more than government school attendance with cited figures ranging between contexts[6]. LFPS costs related to both fees and more hidden expenses such as uniforms, textbooks, transport, and annual functions as well as the loss of benefits offered through government schemes such as school supplies and midday meals (James and Woodhead, 2014; Kelly et al. 2016, Morrow and Wilson, 2014; Singh and Bangay, 2014). From interviews with parents of government schoolchildren (194 children from 361 households) in the city of Patna, Bihar, Tooley and Rangaraju (2015, 167) found that for 70% of parents, affordability was a key factor in their choice of school and 'had they been able to afford the fees, they would have put their children in a private school'.

Some studies explain the desire for LFPS in contexts of limited financial resources in terms of (a) parental aspiration for their children's social mobility and capital accumulation which may be experienced as a social or peer pressure, particularly by mothers, and linked to perceptions of being a 'good mother' (Endow 2018; Jayadeva 2019; Mathew 2019); and (b) social exclusivity or social status (Crawfurd et al. 2019; Jones 2018), i.e. seeking schools appropriate for their 'class of people' (James and Woodhead 2014). Some insight into the economic backgrounds of parents seeking and admitting their children to LFPS is provided by recent ethnographic studies. In a study in a Kerala village, Mathew (2018) describes such parents as those who, benefiting from economic liberalization policies from the 1990s, had experienced considerable income increase compared to the previous generation but, due to relatively high expenditures, continued to live in economic precarity. In Jayadeva's (2019) Bangalore (Bengaluru) study, such parents were in service occupations such as maids, drivers and watchmen.

[6] Compared to government schools, LFPS cost users two and half times more than government schools in Singh and Bangay's (2014) study in Andhra Pradesh; they cost users ten times more at lower secondary level in Kelly et al.'s (2016) study in rural Rajasthan.

However, while socio-economically disadvantaged families may aspire to send their children to LFPS, the significant economic sacrifices required to meet costs may lead to borrowing (Mathew 2018; Kelly et al. 2016), which for many families may be an untenable or unsustainable option in the long run (James and Woodhead 2014; Mathew 2018; Morrow and Wilson 2014). The recent tendency to increase LFPS fees as pupils progress through the grades can lead to pupils frequently switching between schools according to what their families can afford, or not completing their school education at all (James and Woodhead 2014, Mousumi and Kusakabe, 2019).

Caste and tribal disadvantage

A number of studies focus on or include a focus on traditionally marginalized groups in Indian society related to caste and tribal status. Caste is defined as 'ascriptive and usually endogamous groups, defined by traditional occupations forming a complementary hierarchical order reflecting ritual and often economic status' (Jones 2018, citing Fuller 1992). Researchers tend to use four official categories (i) General Category (GC): traditionally more advantaged sections of society; (ii) Other Backward Classes (OBC): diverse group of castes including artisans, agricultural and service workers; (iii) Scheduled Caste (SC): lowest castes in the hierarchy and historically regarded as 'untouchable' related to their occupations; (iv) Scheduled Tribes (ST): tribal populations marginalized mainly due to geographic isolation. The latter three are traditionally disadvantaged groups which 'qualify, to varying degrees, for reserved status in government sector education and employment' (Jones 2018, 354). Jones (2018) challenges the suitability of official caste categories by which pupils are registered in Indian schools suggesting that they do not capture the complexity and heterogeneity existing within them. Although they may provide 'a broad indication of social hierarchy and differential school enrolment, it is the specific social and economic features of their constituent communities, and particular household circumstances, which facilitate or preclude parental school choice' (Ibid. 367).

Analyses of IHDS and DISE data show that children belonging to a disadvantaged or marginalized caste or tribal group are less likely to attend private school than children who do not belong to such groups indicating that barriers to LFPS may be social as well as financial (Azam 2017; Chaturvedi 2014, Chudgar and Creed 2016, Singhal and Das 2019). Azam's (2017) analysis of 'Participation and Expenditure in Education' 2014 NSS Organization data finds that, when geographic location, household and individual factors are controlled for, these private school attendance gaps shrink but still remain large; and a significant proportion of the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged castes is explained by variation in parental education and income. This lower caste and tribal status disadvantage to LFPS enrolment is also found in primary and empirical studies in rural Rajasthan. In their questionnaire survey of 413 second year female undergraduates whose parents had completed upper primary education or less, Kelly et al (2016) find that compared with their GC peers, traditionally marginalized castes were more likely to attend government schools: twice as likely for SC participants at primary level and three times more likely at secondary level, and almost ten times more likely for ST participants at both levels. In his village level study in a predominantly tribal district, Jones (2018) finds that the social composition of government schools was becoming increasingly narrowed to predominantly ST and lower-caste pupils. He relates this to the private school migration of pupils from higher castes (GC and OBC) as well as those from the Jain religion who were retreating from government schools and the perceived 'unsuitable pupils' within them (Ibid. 367).

Gender disadvantage

Recent evidence from both national and state-level studies reveal significant gender disparities in private school enrolment and attendance in India. Analyses of IHDS and DISE national data sets show that private school attendance is more prevalent among males than females (Chaturvedi 2014; Chudgar and Creed 2016; Singhal and Das 2019). Using NSS data on 5-19 year olds in rural areas across 16 states, Datta and Kingdon (2019, 8) find that between 1995 and 2014 enrolment of girls and boys dramatically increased in most of the major states of India. They explain this in terms of a shifting of gender-biased dynamics of education spending in households, from not enrolling girls in educational institutions generally to not enrolling girls in private schools.

Gender bias at the household level is found in a number of studies. Comparing school enrolment of boys and girls in the same household from IHDS data, Maitra et al. (2016) find a significant gender bias against girls with the difference in enrolment persisting over time and location; the only exceptions were found in western states of Gujarat and Maharashtra, which the authors relate to their high industrialization and increased job opportunities for all, including women. Using longitudinal household survey data from the World Bank's Living Standards Measurement Study in rural Uttar Pradesh, Sahoo (2017) estimates a fixed effects model to demonstrate a significant gender bias of 6 percentage points in the probability of private school enrolment for children aged 6-16 years from the same household. This increases over time and is more pronounced when there is a greater cost-differential between government and private schools, i.e. 'female disadvantage is higher when private schools are more expensive' (Ibid. 1728). Alcott and Rose's (2015) analysis of national rural ASER data finds that gender discrimination is more likely in poorer households which the authors explain in terms of economic restrictions leading families to choose which of their children to educate in a private school. A qualitative study conducted in Andhra Pradesh finds that families under financial constraints choose to send boys and older children to private schools since they perceive them to be able to 'benefit more' (Morrow and Wilson, 2014). While the chances of attending private school are reduced if a child has siblings of school-going age (Azam 2017), Mathew (2019) finds that discriminating between children and deciding who will attend which type of school (e.g. LFPS or government) can be emotionally painful for parents.

Geographic disadvantage

Private school attendance is more likely in urban areas, but there has been a significant growth of private schools in rural areas in India. In their comparison of 2005-6 and 2011-12 IHDS and DISE district-level data, Chudgar and Creed (2016) find significant growth of the private school sector in both urban and rural areas. While overall private enrolment levels remain higher in urban areas, the average number of private schools per district in rural areas were exceeding those in urban areas. However, this did not lead to more equitable enrolment as there was no evidence of more girls, economically disadvantaged or OBC, ST and SC pupils enrolling in rural private schools. This may indicate that private schools are growing unevenly in rural areas, with more growth in better-off villages with better infrastructure.

There is some, albeit limited, evidence to suggest that in urban areas private schools may exist in close proximity to low-income communities and in some cases they may be the only realistic schooling option available to parents (Endow 2018, Mousami and Kusakabe 2019). For example, Mousumi and Kusakabe (2019) find in their household and school-level survey

in two Muslim majority unauthorized settlements in Delhi that, despite a preference for tuition fee-free government schools, low-income parents were compelled to send their children to local LFPS since there were no government schools in reachable distance. Travel to distant government schools (e.g. 3km from home) was ruled out due to cultural restrictions of women travelling unaccompanied outside of the community to take children to school; parental concerns for the safety of young children, especially girls, travelling unaccompanied; and the unaffordability of public transport costs. Parents tended to use these LFPS as interim schools at primary and elementary levels until their children reached an age they could travel to government school alone safely (usually at school grades 5-8). However, parents often struggled to afford these LFPS and reported that if they failed to keep up tuition fee payments, their children would be punished (e.g. being made to stand outside the classroom or sent home).

Model 1: Private schools with special reference to LFPS **Quality and learning**
Headline Finding
LFPS are more likely than government schools to have lower pupil-teacher ratios, provide more disciplined learning environments and hygienic facilities, but they are less likely to provide midday meals. LFPS teachers are less likely to be absent and more likely to be actively teaching; they also tend to communicate more effectively with parents and are perceived to be more committed and caring towards their students than government schoolteachers. However, LFPS teachers are often low paid women with little training and experience working under conditions of high accountability and job insecurity. Limited evidence on pedagogy indicates teacher-centric exam-oriented teaching and low levels of student participation. In their learning, LFPS children perform at least as well or better than government schoolchildren and, despite the limited English language proficiency of teachers in English-medium LFPS, increased exposure to even imperfect English may open up further/higher education, career and economic opportunities for students.

This section is organized under the following subheadings: (i) *inputs and processes,* where inputs refer to infrastructure, physical resources and learning and teaching materials, and processes refer to pedagogy, curriculum and management; and (ii) *outputs,* which may include learning outcomes, skills, values and longer term educational outcomes.

Quality of education: inputs and processes

Here, we use Save the Children's Quality Learning Framework (QLF) (2017) to unpack the evidence on quality and learning. It is presented in terms of the QLF's five foundations supporting children's learning and wellbeing: (1) 'emotional and psychosocial protection'; (2) 'physical protection'; (3) 'teaching and learning'; (4) 'parents and community'; and (5) 'school leadership and management' (these QLF foundations are presented in full in Appendix E).

Emotional and psychosocial protection: A number of studies found that LFPS tend to have lower pupil-teacher ratios than government schools (Dahal and Nguyen 2014; Jayadeva 2019; Karopady 2014, Singh and Sarkar 2015; Tooley and Rangaraju 2015) which may have potential for improving the quality of the teacher-pupil relationship. Indeed, Singh and Sarkar (2015)

find that 86% of students believe that their class teacher treats them fairly compared with 77% in government schools from their survey in Andhra Pradesh. Government schools are often seen by parents as lacking in security and discipline with little learning taking place and with schoolteachers who are disinterested in children's progress (Endow 2018; Jayadeva 2019; Morrow and Wilson 2014; Mousumi and Kusakabe 2019). By contrast, parents perceive LFPS teachers as being more 'caring' about children's education and 'taking care' of them e.g. being dedicated and monitoring their attendance and performance, guiding them on manners, being affectionate and kind to them (Morrow and Wilson 2014; Mousumi and Kusakabe 2019). Parents also find LFPS to provide better discipline (Morrow and Wilson 2014; Tooley and Rangaraju 2015). One of the key findings in Morrow and Wilson's study (2014, 4) is that "'care" may equate with teachers disciplining children, sometimes using corporal punishment, which is expected and considered acceptable by some parents so long as it does not constitute serious physical assault (and despite being illegal)'. In Kelly et al.'s (2016) study in rural Rajasthan, experiences of teacher violence were low-level and similar across all school types.

Physical protection: While LFPS may be less likely to contribute to children's nourishment by providing midday meals, they are more likely to offer safe and protective learning environments by providing more hygienic facilities with drinking water, functioning toilets and fans (Dahal and Nguyen 2014; Karopady 2014; Kelly et al. 2016; Muralidharan and Sundararaman 2015; Tooley and Rangaraju 2015).

Teaching and learning: LFPS in India are more likely to be English medium or start teaching English earlier compared with government schools. The aspiration for their children to acquire proficiency in English tends to be a key reason for parents choosing private schools (Dahal and Nguyen 2014; Endow 2018; Jayadeva 2019; Karopady 2014; Morrow and Wilson 2014; Singh and Sarkar 2015; Tooley and Rangaraju 2015). But the evidence on teaching and learning pedagogies and resources used in LFPS classrooms remains a glaring gap in the literature. Often studies give fleeting regard to this, providing limited empirical evidence that is comparative with government schools; for example, in their studies in Andhra Pradesh, Karopady (2014) finds that LFPS were less likely to offer school libraries and Singh and Sarkar (2105) find that LFPS teachers were more likely to provide regular feedback on children's work (Singh and Sarkar 2015).

Using ethnographic methods two recent studies give more detailed insights into classroom practices in English-medium LFPS (Endow 2018; Jayadeva 2019). Jayadeva's (2019) ethnographic study in an English-medium LFPS in Bengaluru describes a 'textbook culture' (Kumar 1988 cited in Jayadeva 2019) whereby class time was typically spent on 'explanation and note giving' (162). 'Explanation' involved teachers explaining and paraphrasing lessons from textbooks (either in English, or English and Kannada combined, or translating in Kannada), followed by teachers posing questions to the class to recall information presented and asking students to read aloud, and ending the lesson with a list of questions (multiple choice or several lines to answer) on which students would be tested in exams. 'Note giving' involved either the teacher (or a student working from the teacher's notes) dictating or writing the answers to these questions on the blackboard which students then copied in their notebooks to study for exam preparation. There was an emphasis on memorization of material required for exams to ensure high exam scores which was a priority for students, parents and schools alike. This strongly resonates with Endow's (2018) description of teaching practices in English-medium LFPS in her study in authorized settlements in Delhi and a village

in NCR. She found classroom teaching to be didactic, concentrating on memorization rather than comprehension and textbook-based assessment, with limited participation of students and a focus on progressing through and completing the syllabus rather than monitoring individual student progress. These approaches are counter to those 'active and child-centred practices' advocated in QLF3: 'Teaching and Learning' (Save the Children 2017, 2). The studies also raise issues about learning through the medium of English which sit uncomfortably with QLF3 and learning in 'languages children understand' (Ibid.).

LFPS teachers in English-medium schools tended to have variable proficiency in English which correlated to some degree with fee-level: fluency tended to be worse in the cheaper LFPS where teachers struggled to speak English compared with the more expensive ones (Chattopadhay and Roy 2017; Endow 2018; Jayadeva 2019). Jayadeva (2019) finds that LFPS teachers' limited English language proficiency helps explain the narrow teaching and learning approaches used. Since discussion in English with students was 'daunting or impossible' to teachers, they 'by hearted' [learned by heart] English explanations which they then recited (Ibid. 164). These tightly scripted approaches are referred to by the author as coping strategies 'that posed minimum risk of loss of face to students and – most importantly – themselves' given that they 'were forced to provide instruction in English, a language that was imperfectly understood by both teachers and students' (Ibid., 164). Endow (2018) finds that students also felt more comfortable reading and writing recited English and lacked abilities in spoken English which remained undetected by parents and teachers and negatively affected their ability to progress in other subjects. In her study nearly half of the children interviewed reported that they did not understand English lessons.

Parents and community: A number of studies find that parents feel that communication is better in LFPS; they are able to speak to teachers about concerns or complaints and LFPS teachers are more accountable to them than government schoolteachers (Dahal and Nguyen, 2014; James and Woodhead, 2014; Jayadeva 2019, Morrow and Wilson, 2014). However, such enhanced accountability of teachers to parents is very different to the type of relationship between parents and schools advocated in QLF4 i.e. parents participating 'in decisions about their school' (Save the Children 2017, 2).

School leadership and management: LFPS teachers are not just more accountable to parents, but also to school leadership. This may help explain their lower rates of teacher absenteeism[7] and higher levels of teacher activity compared with government schools, as well as parent perceptions of LFPS teachers as both more committed and more likely to provide relevant, quality teaching than government schoolteachers despite their lower qualifications[8] (Dahal and Nguyen 2014; James and Woodhead 2014; Jayadeva 2019; Morrow and Wilson 2014; Muralidharan and Sundararaman 2015). However, the emphasis on performance-related accountability based on weak job security for LFPS teachers does not sit well with QLF 5: 'School Leadership and Management' and its explicit responsibilizing of school leaders to put in place policies that protect and promote the safety and wellbeing of teachers. Private schools recruit significantly lower paid teachers from the local area who are less likely to be trained or have teaching experience and more likely to be on fixed term contracts (Dahal and Nguyen 2014;

[7] With the exception of Kelly et al. (2016) where female second year undergraduates' remembered high level of teacher absenteeism across both private and public schools.
[8] For example, in their study in Andhra Pradesh, Singh and Sarkar (Ibid.) find 83% of teachers in public schools have a professional teaching qualification compared with only 56% in private schools.

Karopady 2014; Singh and Sarkar 2015). Given that these LFPS teachers are often women paid less than the minimum wage, Carr-Hill and Sauerhaft (2019, 39) argue that this denial of human rights and disempowerment of women teachers is 'not sustainable for gender equality in the long term'.

Quality of education outputs: learning outcomes and other educational outcomes

Studies comparing learning outcomes of private and government school students face the methodological challenges of adequately accounting for differences in socio-economic background and other observable and unobservable differences that might determine school choice. This is a challenge because if these confounding factors are not properly accounted for, differences in learning outcomes may be wrongly ascribed to differences in the school type rather than differences in their pupil intakes in terms of socio-economic background, parental education or pupil academic ability and prior learning (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2008). Approaches to addressing this issue fall into two broad groups: those which employ econometric 'value-added' techniques to statistically adjust outcomes, controlling for observable pupil characteristics; and those based on experimental or quasi-experimental design to achieve 'like-for-like' performance comparison on observable and unobservable characteristics. While value-added measures have serious limitations when used at school and teacher level (Perry, 2016; Corcoran and Goldhaber, 2013), they can yield more reliable estimates when used for larger units of analysis (Perry, 2017), albeit with the remaining potential for unobservable or omitted variable bias.

With these caveats in mind, this section reviews studies of the effectiveness of LFPS employing the correlational, econometric approach. In the section on *Voucher Schemes*, below, there are some examples of experimental studies which also pertain to the question of private school effectiveness; these two sections should, therefore, be read in conjunction.

Singhal and Das (2019) analyze nationally representative IHDS and DISE data in relation to rural 8-11 year old primary school student performance in simple tests of reading, writing and mathematics offered in 14 languages to ensure accessibility. They attempt to control for observable and unobservable characteristics using a two-stage instrumental variables regression approach. This involves identification of an instrumental variable associated with the probability of attending a private school, but not the unobserved characteristics which affect learning outcomes. As instruments, they use the ratio of private to public schools at district level and the availability of private schools in a particular village. After a second-stage regression, additionally controlling for a range of observable characteristics they find that in general private schoolchildren had statistically significantly better scores in reading, mathematics and, to some extent, writing, than their government school counterparts. But ST children in private schools were an exception: they did not perform better compared to socially better-off government schoolchildren, but they did perform better than ST government schoolchildren. There were also regional differences: the achievement gap was more pronounced in certain states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, but not significant in Himachal Pradesh, where higher state government expenditure on basic education has led to improvements in government schools.

Singh's (2015) and Rolleston and Moore's (2018) analyses of the Young Lives longitudinal data from Andhra Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh and Telegana, respectively, identify important distinctions between urban and rural schools, and between

subjects, as well as heterogeneity in school effectiveness within sectors. Both of these studies use value-added models of learning outcomes to measure progress and evaluate whether and to what extent there is a 'private school effect' after controlling for various background factors and prior achievement. Singh (2015) presents value-added models of learning outcomes based on panel data (2002-2011) from Andhra Pradesh, examining heterogeneity in the results across urban and rural areas, and by medium of instruction. In rural areas, the analysis finds for 8-10 year old students 'a substantial positive effect (>0.5 SD) in English, no effect on mathematics and heterogeneous effects on Telugu'; for 15 year old students, 'there are modest effects (<0.2SD) on mathematics and Telegu receptive vocabulary' (Ibid., 16). In urban areas however no positive effects are found. Unsurprisingly, the medium of instruction is related to performance in English and Telugu, with a relatively larger effect on English in English-medium schools (≈0.8 SD) compared to Telugu-medium schools (≈0.6 SD) and a negative effect on Telugu performance in English-medium schools (≈ -0.4 SD) compared to Telugu-medium schools (≈0.0 to -0.1, and statistically insignificant).

Rolleston and Moore's (2018) value added analysis uses Young Lives 2016-17 survey data from Andhra Pradesh and Telegana on a sample of schools teaching Class 9. Gaps in student learning outcomes between government and private unaided schools observed at the beginning of Class 9 were found to widen over the school year, with more learning progress shown by schools with higher initial performance levels. Although part of the greater progress made by private unaided schools compared with government schools is explained by differences in home advantage of their student cohort, 'contextual value-added' models still show sizeable gaps even after accounting for such background differences. They also find considerable heterogeneity among government schools: while most government schools are less effective than private schools, 'this pattern is far from universal and … there are a number of highly effective schools in the government sector' (Ibid. 20) and greater learning gains in English in both English-medium private schools and government schools with English-medium sections[9].

Again, these results suggest a non-negative private school effectiveness premium, albeit based on correlational techniques which, even with sophisticated analytical approach, fall short of the 'gold-standard' for causal attribution of experimental designs. The results also suggest subject and area-level variation as well as considerable heterogeneity in effectiveness within sectors. These issues are examined further below in relation to voucher experiments. The ostensibly higher effectiveness of private schools from these analyses also needs to be put in context: as Singh (2015, 30) explains, while 'raw differences in test scores between children in private and government schools are invariably substantial, statistically significant, and favor private school students … much of this variation seems to be a reflection of greater home investment and socio-economic background'; in the absence of a substantial and consistent private school effect (except in English) 'the spread of private schools is unlikely to raise average achievement levels' (Ibid.). Importantly, as numerous authors point out (e.g. Alcott and Rose, 2015; Singhal and Das, 2019) while private school results tend to be better than those in government schools, learning levels are low across all school types. Alcott and Rose (2015) also find from their analysis of rural ASER data on 10-12 year old students' literacy 'that disadvantaged children in private schools are learning less than more advantaged children in government schools' (345) and they identify poverty as 'the main driver of poor learning, regardless of school attended' (359).

[9] English-medium sections in selected government schools were introduced as a result of recent state policy.

It is also important to consider education outcomes beyond examination scores. Jayadeva (2019, 168) argues that outcomes of LFPS 'cannot be evaluated merely through assessing pedagogical practices or examining test scores. Rather, a meaningful evaluation of education outcomes requires understanding students' and their parents' experiences of an education system and its impact on their lives'. Despite the problematic teaching practices, Jayadeva (2019, 155) finds in her ethnographic study that attending English-medium private schools was seen as 'improving a student's prospects', and especially students' economic trajectories given that English was required for entry to certain HE courses and to an increasing number of jobs, not just with multinational companies but also in retail, hospitality and many state government jobs. Such career benefits were not available to vernacular-medium graduates (usually from government schools) for whom the 'lack of exposure to English had shaped their higher education and career choices negatively' (Ibid. 166).

Model 1: Private schools with special reference to LFPS **Impact on education systems**
Headline Finding
Migration of more advantaged children to LFPS can lead to a 'ghettoization' of government schools serving the most disadvantaged and marginalized children exacerbating segregation in schooling and, where enrolment rates are low, may lead to closures of government schools. LFPS are significantly impacted by recent RTE Act regulations requiring schools to obtain recognition and comply with minimum infrastructure and quality input standards. Penalties for non-compliance are leading to threats of closure of LFPS which, combined with government school closures, may jeopardize children's access to basic education. LFPS popularity appears to be exacerbating social inequalities, most notably through economic and employment advantages associated with English-medium provision. In response to this, a number of states have enhanced English language teaching and introduced English-medium sections in government schools.

LFPS are undoubtedly contributing to a changing educational landscape. The evidence indicates that they are particularly attractive to aspirational parents of lower socio-economic status but who are relatively more advantaged in various ways (e.g. income-level, caste/class/tribal status, gender, geographic location, parental education). In contrast, government schools are often regarded as 'the last resort' for 'the poorest of the poor, the most disadvantaged of the disadvantaged' (Jayadeva 2019, 155-6) leading to what has been referred to as a 'ghettoization' of government schools which exacerbates social stratification (Woodhead et al. 2013). Additionally, as the *Concept note for the 2021 Global Education Monitoring Report on non-state actors* notes, 'when richer households exit the public education system, support for it unravels, leaving it underfunded and at risk of not fulfilling its purpose of building citizenship values and attitudes' (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 2019b, 4). This exodus of more advantaged children from government to private schools may also have contributed to the reportedly low enrolment rates in some government schools and their subsequent closure and/or merger (Rao, 2016). Where this leads to an absence of government school provision in certain areas, this is likely to severely impact the most economically disadvantaged and marginalized who may be compelled to attend LFPS they can't really afford or, due to financial barriers, they may be prevented from accessing to basic education altogether.

However, when investment is made in government schools (such as in Delhi) with improved infrastructure, teacher accountability and all-round development of children, transference of children from private schools to government schools may occur (Singhal and Das 2019). An argument for investment in public rather than private provision is made by Smith and Joshi (2016) in their historical comparative study of progress towards achievement of universal basic education in China and India. The study finds that 'China's greater emphasis on public schooling has contributed to higher enrolment, attendance, graduation rates, gender parity and proportion of students entering higher education than India, the country with the world's largest private sector in primary and secondary education'[10] (Ibid., 153). They also argue that schooling systems with high private sector participation might prevent the state from investing in the public system.

A key theme recurring in the literature is that the popularity of LFPS, especially English-medium LFPS, is both strengthening existing historical divisions leading to the intergenerational persistence of socio-economic status as well as providing contexts for new forms of social disjuncture (Jayadeva 2019; Jones 2019; Mathew 2019; Singh 2015; Singhal and Das 2019). Rolleston and Moore (2018) find that with increasing school choice and heterogeneity between schools, student intakes within schools are relatively homogenous with students effectively 'sorted' into schools of differing effectiveness according to socio-economic advantage. In particular, English-medium education (usually provided by LFPS) can give students leverage in competitive employment markets. But while it may open the door to career opportunities, social mobility and a future 'large wage premium' (Singh 2015, 31) for students, vernacular-medium graduates (usually from government schools) tend to be shut out of such opportunities, creating what Mathew (2019, 81) refers to as an 'unbridgeable divide'.

Although the popularity of English-medium LFPS may not have stimulated market competition among individual government schools whose leaders may lack the incentive to compete given their secure funding[11], it has been described as leading to 'market driven' language-in-education reform by increasing English in government schools (Vaish 2005, cited in Jayadeva 2019). Thus, in response to government school closures and parental demand for English, some state governments (e.g. Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Kerala and Karnataka) have attempted to provide more and better English language instruction and earlier, including through English-medium government school sections (Crawfurd et al. 2019; Jayadeva 2019; Mathew 2019; Rolleston and Moore 2018).

Dahal and Nguyen (2014) raise the issue of the historically weak institutional capacity for effective government regulation of private schools among the South Asian countries in their study. In the Indian context, this may lead to inefficiencies such as double school enrolment whereby students attend unregistered private schools while maintaining their enrolment in government schools as well as benefits, such as free supplies and official records such as the transfer certificate which enables students to move schools (Ibid.; Tooley and Rangaraju 2015). Recently, a range of regulations to private schools have been

[10] However, this finding fails to acknowledge the sizeable 'shadow education system' of private tutoring in China and its potential contribution to some of these educational outcomes (Zhang and Bray 2017). Emerging evidence suggests that private tuition uptake is considerable in India too with ASER data indicating that 19% 10-12 year olds receive private tuition (Alcott and Rose 2019).
[11] This is especially the case in rural areas where the school market is particularly uncompetitive (Dahal and Nguyen 2014).

brought about by the RTE Act, including the requirement of private schools to obtain a certificate of recognition from the state government and to comply with minimum quality input standards such as, pupil-teacher ratios, teacher qualifications, curriculum and infrastructure norms (e.g. libraries, girls' toilets). Additionally, state governments have further conditions adding to the variation between states (Shah and Steinburg 2019). Data on the extent to which regulations are enforced are inadequate (Endow 2018) and some authors are critical of the unrealistic over-stringency of these conditions which focus on educational inputs rather than educational outcomes especially when private schools are being closed in states where government schools are not complying with the RTE regulations (Iyer and Counihan 2018). This has created an unpredictable, corruption-prone, and unfavorable environment for such private schools whose leaders are fearful of being harassed or blackmailed for not fulfilling all recognition norms and where some private schools may find informal ways of gaining or retaining recognition (Chattopadhay and Roy 2017; Iyer and Counihan 2018) The ultimate penalty for de-recognized and unrecognized private schools is closure. According to Iyer and Counihan (2018) the RTE is threatening 15, 000 private schools with closure, potentially affecting the education of 2.2 million children across the country. Maithreyi and Sriprakash (2018, 362) also point out that these new recognition norms have narrowed the definition of 'school' and 'led to the de-recognition of a number of local and community initiatives as education providers, including home-schooling, non-formal and alternative schooling'. Such non-state school closures would put pressure on government provision supply, and combined with aforementioned government school closures, may potentially further narrow schooling options for the disadvantaged and marginalized, especially in the context of the RTE stipulation that neighbourhood schools are within walking distance of home (Rao 2016). However, Nambissan (2014, 25) argues that since it sets out quality norms and declares the illegality of for-profit schooling, the RTE Act is the main barrier to unrecognized/unregulated for-profit LFPS upscaling.

The RTE Act now presents a significant backdrop to the private and government school sectors alike. Although eleven years on from its implementation its impact on the system is not clear, there are some interesting patterns emerging from ASER and DISE data. First, following a steady rise in the proportion of children enrolled in private schools before and after the passage of the RTE (from 18.7% in 2006 to 30.4% in 2014), by 2016 the figure had more or less plateaued to 30.8% (Chattopadhay and Roy 2017). Second, quality inputs and infrastructure have improved across private and government schools over time (Chattopadhay and Roy 2016; Shah and Steinburg 2019). Third, despite a sharp decline in learning levels from 2011 to 2014 across both private and government sectors, but more pronounced in government schools (Shah and Steinburg 2019), 2016 ASER data shows an overall improvement in learning levels, with learning gains coming mostly from the government sector, rather than the private sector, of particular note since ASER does not control for home background factors (Chattopadhay and Roy 2017). There are some regional variations, however; while Punjab, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat experienced large learning gains, in Andhra Pradesh there was a decline. Nevertheless, Chattopadhay and Roy (2017, 4) argue that this marks 'an important inflection point in the national discourse about the relative value of public and private education in India'.

3.2: Voucher schemes

Model 2: Voucher schemes **Access and completion**
Headline Finding
Experimental research on two 5-year voucher programmes in rural and urban India show that they can remove or reduce the financial barriers to private school attendance which results in more socio-economically disadvantaged and marginalized children attending private schools. There is some evidence to suggest that children enrolled in private schools through some types of voucher programme may not remain in private schools and may move to the public sector. In other country contexts where voucher systems have been implemented at scale and over time (e.g. Chile), they have been found to increase social inequity and stratification through socially selective school practices.

Six studies were identified that report on findings from two 5-year longitudinal voucher scheme experiments, ENABLE situated in the dense urban context of Delhi, and the rural Andhra Pradesh School Choice Programme (APSCP). These voucher schemes provided tuition-free access to private schools for groups of children who would not normally be accessing these schools. The level of disadvantage and marginalization depended on the application eligibility criteria set in the voucher scheme. It is worth noting that most of these studies adopt experimental research designs using RCTs and are therefore in a position to provide robust causal estimates.

ENABLE invited parents of children in low-income neighbourhoods in East and North East districts of Delhi to apply to the voucher lottery who were (i) aged 5-7 years old; (ii) with a maximum household income of Rs 8,000 per month and (iii) who were not enrolled in a recognized private school already (Crawfurd et al. 2019). This led to approximately 800 children from households with lower than average income and wealth being provided with vouchers. With 105 private schools enrolling in the programme, successful applicants could rank their preferred schools using a handbook provided by ENABLE giving information such as class sizes, instruction medium and toilet facilities (Crawfurd et al. 2019). Vouchers were personalized for students with security features to prevent misuse and they were redeemable for annual tuition fees, two sets of uniforms, school textbooks and one meal per day. However, in terms of continuity and completion of private schooling, Crawfurd et al. (2019, 28) find that 'one third of children who were in a private school at the start of the programme had moved to a public school by the end (including both treatment and control students)' and suggest that this may reflect households learning about school quality over time.

In the APSCP, all parents of government schoolchildren in 180 villages across five districts in Andhra Pradesh were invited to apply to a lottery for vouchers. Vouchers covered private school fees - paid directly to schools by the programme - and uniforms, books and stationery but not transport and lunch - paid to households by the schools. This led to 23% of government schoolchildren in the programme moving to private schools (Muralidharan and Sundararaman 2015). The authors find that this resulted in the fraction of students belonging to traditionally disadvantaged SCs in private schools with vouchers being considerably higher than in a typical private school. From their study results, the authors suggest that private school voucher

programmes may lead to increased social integration and reduced social stratification and they suggest the likelihood of similar potential effects with the implementation of the RTE 25% reservation. Although in the APSCP the tuition-fee vouchers were paid directly to schools (Karopady 2014), more typically they are directly provided to parents (as in ENABLE). Additionally, in APSCP, private schools participated voluntarily and were not allowed to select students or make additional charges to parents (Karopady 2014). However, in other contexts, for example Chile where a nation-wide voucher system for all students has operated at scale and without such restrictions, a review of a substantial body of evidence has highlighted their potential to 'increase social stratification and inequities' (Aslam et al. 2017, 33).

Model 2: Voucher schemes **Quality and learning**
Headline Finding
Research reporting on findings from voucher scheme experiments suggest that providing tuition-free access to private schools via vouchers to disadvantaged children results in little or no overall advantage in learning outcomes, albeit with variation by subject and medium of instruction.

There is little focus in research on voucher schemes in existing private schools about quality issues featured in Save the Children's QLF i.e. emotional, psychosocial and physical protection, the quality of teaching and learning, participation of parents and communities and school leadership and management. Evidence that does exist (mostly in relation to learning environments and connecting with QLF2: 'physical protection') is captured in the previous section on LFPS (Karopady, 2014; Muralidharan and Sundararaman 2015). The key focus of voucher studies, however, is student achievement. Although overall these studies indicate that vouchers have no or little overall advantage for learning outcomes, there is some contention around findings.

In APSCP, Muralidharan and Sundararaman's (2015) randomized two-stage experiment compared the test scores of lottery-winners and lottery-losers in the subjects of Telegu (the local language), English, mathematics, Hindi (the national language) and science/social studies after two and four years. They find no overall difference in the combined scores across test subjects. For both cohorts, there are very small and statistically insignificant negative effects (-0.08SD to -0.02SD) for private school pupil on Telugu and mathematics, and small positive, statistically significant effects (0.12SD and 0.19SD) for English. There is a large, statistically significant effect on Hindi test scores (0.55SD). These figures are all from an intention to treat analysis. In the average treatment effect on the treated, the results are the same, but more pronounced in both negative and positive directions. None of these results are perhaps surprising given that private schools spend considerably less time on instruction in Telugu and mathematics and considerably more in English and Hindi, the latter the government schools do not teach. In summary, there do not appear to be any large differences in effectiveness between private and government schools once pupil intake and the curriculum offer, including instructional time devoted to different subjects, is accounted for; although

considerable differences in the latter are noteworthy. These results are in line with other studies, such as Karopady (2014) who finds that children moving to private schools perform no better than their counterparts in government schools.

Muralidharan and Sundararaman (2015) also give some suggestive results relating to medium of instruction. Over half of the private schools participating in the study were English-medium. While the impact of English-medium private schools is variable, with students doing worse in some subjects (Telegu, mathematics and science/social studies) but better in English and Hindi (than if they had stayed in government schools); in Telegu-medium private schools the mean impact is positive and significant across all subjects. Related to this they consider the potential disruption of switching medium of instruction; this connects with QLF3: Teaching and Learning and the question of whether children learn better in the local language spoken at home, especially when they are first-generation learners. Tooley (2016) also points out that tests in non-language subjects were administered in different languages in Telegu-medium government and English-medium private schools making it difficult to interpret findings since they would not have been based on like-with-like comparisons. Furthermore, he observes that in poorer rural areas of India the claim to be an *English-medium* LFPS tends to be 'more of an aspiration, at least in the lower grades, than a reality' (Ibid., 583) and so students taking English-medium tests in non-language subjects (i.e. mathematics and science/social studies) might have been at a disadvantage.

In relation to ENABLE in Delhi, Wolf et al (2015) investigate the impact of the programme on the academic performance in Hindi, mathematics and English of voucher-winning, for economically disadvantaged students. Both lottery winners and losers were tested prior to the lottery and then after one and two years of the scheme. The authors find that using the vouchers to attend private schools resulted in lottery winners having statistically significantly higher performance after two years in terms of their English language scores (0.15 SD), and positive, but statistically insignificant effects for Hindi (0.04 SD) and mathematics (0.07 SD) in an intention to treat analysis. Results were the same, but more pronounced in an impact of treatment (IOT) analysis (0.25 SD, 0.07 SD and 0.12 SD, respectively). Four years after the allocation of vouchers, the authors found similar (IOT) results with large, statistically significant, positive impacts on English (0.31 SD), a negative but statistically insignificant ($p = 0.06$) impact on Hindi (-0.20 SD), and no difference in mathematics (0.03 SD) (Dixon et al 2019). Crawfurd et al (2019) revisited the same scheme six years after the start of the lottery, administering student tests in the same subjects as well as non-cognitive measures and find these differences to have diminished, with very small, statistically insignificant, estimated impacts on mathematics[12] (-0.03 SD and -0.04 SD) and English (0.04 SD and 0.03 SD) and a negative impact on Hindi (-0.08 SD and -0.09 SD) with border-line statistical significance at the 95% level. The negative impact in Hindi may be explained by government schools being mostly Hindi-medium, while almost half of private schools in the sample were English medium. Yet there was no comparative gain in English language to compensate for this reduction in Hindi results. They also find little evidence of non-academic benefits such as non-cognitive skills, parental beliefs and aspirations. The authors reflect that although 'this program was designed to give low-income students access to better quality private schools, our results suggest that a large proportion of lower-fee private schools fail to provide such quality' (Ibid. 31).

[12] All students were presented with the mathematics instrument in both English and Hindi (Crawfurd et al. 2019).

Model 2: Voucher schemes **Impact on education systems**
Headline Finding
Since private school voucher programmes produce similar learning outcomes to government schools but at significantly lower cost, some authors argue that they can increase productivity in the education system. However, this model of low-cost private provision depends on low teacher pay and working conditions which raises concerns about teacher rights and wellbeing. Additionally, where voucher systems are implemented at scale, they are likely to require potentially costly and complex additional regulation and oversight by governments..

The results in the previous section suggest that there is no overall performance difference between LFPS and government schools, with some variation relating to context, subject and duration. On this basis, some argue that since voucher schemes did not consistently improve learning outcomes for disadvantaged children, they are unlikely to raise quality across the system (Crawfurd et al., 2019; Karopady 2014). However, Muralidharan and Sundararaman (2015) argue that voucher schemes can increase productivity in the education system since students achieve similar learning outcomes in private schools but at lower costs (three times less) than in government schools[13]; additionally they have no adverse effects on the learning outcomes of students who are not lottery winners. The authors further argue that by expanding private provision, 'it may be possible to substantially increase human capital formation in developing countries like India' (Ibid. 1058). The authors acknowledge that this cost saving primarily comes from reduced teacher salaries, i.e. private schoolteachers are paid 'less than a sixth of that paid to public school teachers' (Ibid., 1014). Indian government schoolteachers are paid considerably more than private school teachers[14] and operate in contexts of high job security and relatively low teacher accountability. However, LFPS teachers tend to work with low pay, low job security and poorer working conditions in conditions of high accountability and potential threats of dismissal. This is particularly concerning when it involves 'hiring teachers at below the minimum wage … or … below the teacher's state salary scale' which Srivastava (2016a, 253) asserts is against labour laws. In theory, RTE Act regulations relating to teacher qualifications and salaries should prevent paying teachers low salaries; however, in practice this is likely to continue in certain contexts, given the flexibility for states to modify regulations (Tooley 2016) and since unrecognized schools continue to operate under the radar (Srivastava 2016b).

Although sizeable as field experiments, it is also important to remember that these voucher programmes are relatively small-scale. The argument of increasing the productivity of the education system by scaling up voucher schemes ignores the additional burden and costs placed on governments to ensure adequate regulation to set quality standards and ensure that they actually reach the disadvantaged and marginalized children for whom they are intended (Global Campaign for Education 2016). Authors reporting on findings from both voucher programmes, Muralidharan and Sundaraman (2015) and Crawfurd

[13] Crawfurd et al. (2019) find that in the urban Delhi context of their study the per pupil expenditure in private schools was approximately half that in nearby government schools.
[14] According to Muralidharan and Kremer (2009), private schoolteachers are paid approximately 3-10 times less than government schoolteachers.

et al. (2019) consider their findings to be insightful for the RTE 25% reservation. However, it is important to note that typical parent-subsidy model voucher programmes differ from the school-subsidy model of the RTE 25% reservation of free places in private schools, to which we now turn.

3.3: RTE Act 25% reservation of free places in private schools

Model 3: RTE 25% reservation **Access and completion**
Headline Finding
Implementation of the national policy of the RTE 25% reservation of free places in private schools has been hindered by delays, a lack of clarity, low-level uptake by state governments and misinterpretation and evasion by private schools. A range of barriers hinder access for eligible disadvantaged and marginalized children including limited awareness of and information about the provision; application costs; a lack of online access and literacy; and the social and cultural capital required to apply. Concerns are raised about the continuity and completion of basic education by students with free places especially in HFPS given stark socio-economic background differences, fears of discrimination, parental support expectations and higher hidden school costs.

Clearly intended to enable the access of a proportion of disadvantaged and marginalized children to private schools, clause (c) of subsection (1) of section 12 of the RTE Act states:

"Schools shall admit in class I, to the extent of at least twenty five per cent of the strength of that class, children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups in the neighborhood and provide free and compulsory education till its completion". (Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India 2009).

The ambiguity around the eligibility categories 'weaker sections' and 'disadvantaged groups' have been subject to criticism and since definitions of these categories are set by state governments, there is inter-state variation (Iyer and Counihan 2019; Sucharita and Sujatha 2019). In Delhi, for example, 'weaker sections' are defined as children with parents earning less than Rs100,000 per year and 'disadvantaged groups' include children belonging to SC, ST, OBC and children with special needs and disabilities (Sucharita and Sujatha 2019). Given delays and controversy around the provision, it was not implemented until 2012 in some states. However, there is some emergent evidence in relation to (i) access, (ii) continuity and completion, and (iii) the types of private schools taking up the provision; these are discussed below.

Access

There are some limited and tentatively expressed findings that offer early indications that the RTE 25% reservation may improve access for disadvantaged and marginalized groups and reduce equity gaps in attendance. For example, in their analysis of IHDS and DISE national survey data, Chudgar and Creed (2016) find that in urban districts of states that eventually adopted

clearer regulations for the RTE 25% reservation, there was a declining private enrolment gap between poor and non-poor students and between more advantaged casts and disadvantaged castes (OBC, ST or SC). They are cautious about attributing this to Section 12(1)(c) given the 'negligible amount of time between states formulating these rules and regulations and the data collection' (Ibid.557), but they do suggest that those findings may point to the important role of regulation in addressing equity gaps around access to private schooling and 'the (uneven but ongoing) implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act will likely create further opportunities for private school access' (Ibid. 543). There is some evidence from primary empirical research to support these: in his study in a Rajasthan village, Jones (2018) finds that although local LFPS provided a 'home' for higher caste and Jain pupils, more recently the majority of children in these schools had come from STs, potentially indicating improved private school access for these groups under the RTE 25% reservation. The literature also highlights several barriers to eligible disadvantaged and marginalized children accessing private schools under the RTE 25% reservation; these are discussed below.

Low-level uptake by state governments: Assessment of implementation of Section 12 (1) (c) has been hampered by a lack of reliable admissions data and a lack of monitoring mechanisms. But Sarin et al (2017) suggest that there is a low-level uptake by state governments since only one third of States and Union Territories (11 States and 1 Union Territory out of 36 in total) having sought reimbursement funds from the Central Government. This may relate to a lack of awareness among government departments about this provision of the RTE Act and how to roll it out, a lack of clarity around the framing of rules that are intended to operationalize it and may be fueled by private school resistance and parental concerns (Sarangapani et al. 2014; Sarin et al. 2017).

Resistance by private schools: Private school leaders and associations have expressed concern that the RTE 25% reservation compromises their autonomy, may lead to government interference in private school operations, and they are unsure whether they will receive timely and full per-child subsidies from the government (Iyer and Counihan 2018; Sarangapani et al. 2014). The Act was challenged by 'powerful private-school lobbies … arguing that it impinged on their right to run their schools without undue government interference, and was thus unconstitutional' (Srivastava and Noronha 2014, 180). However, in April 2012 a Supreme Court judgment was passed upholding the Act and clarifying its applicability to unaided non-minority private schools (and aided minority schools).

Private schools misinterpreting and/or evading provision: Srivastava and Noronha (2014) identify four ways in which private schools in their study in Delhi misinterpreted and/or evaded implementation of the RTE Act 25% reservation in the early phase of implementation: (i) admitting existing students under free-seats provision; (ii) operating separate shifts; (iii) narrowly interpreting fee-free to tuition fee only without other costs; and (iv) evading implementation. They argue that this type of private school response might be 'aggravated by a lack of clarity and timely information on key aspects' (Ibid., 195) which may change as clarity on operational aspects of the provision improve. Some of this resistance might also be explained by private school staff and parents' fears and prejudices about children who are eligible for free places related to their cultural background, upbringing, and ability to contribute academically to the classroom.

Parents' financial barriers: Costs involved with the admissions process to obtain documents evidencing status/income to support their application can be exclusionary for those unable or unwilling to pay. It can also create opportunities for bribery and corruption; for example, when school/state admissions timelines are not synchronized, delays can lead to parents paying schools to secure places (Sarangapani et al. 2014; Sarin et al 2017; Srivastava and Noronha 2016). Eligible families without private internet access may have to incur private organization costs to access online facilities and, in the absence of technological literacy, they may also need help in making applications online. Once granted a free place at a private school, additional costs may be incurred, such as for transport, uniforms and books, and where families are able to seek government reimbursement on these costs, many do not receive them (Sarin et al. 2017; Srivastava and Noronha 2016).

Ineligible applicants taking up places: Some applicants may forge documents to gain access to private school free places under the RTE 25% reservation. When successful, this may lead to wealthier ineligible children taking up places reserved for socio-economically disadvantaged children (Srivastava and Noronha 2016; Sucharita and Sujatha 2018).

Parents' lack of awareness and social and cultural capital required for application: A key barrier to application by eligible groups, is a lack of awareness and understanding of the application process. Maithreyi and Sriprakash (2018, 362) argue that the RTE 25% reservation is 'in effect only open to a small proportion of parents with the social and cultural capital to work through the complex and often corrupt bureaucratic processes of allocation'. While some of the more fortunate eligible families may discover, be informed about, and helped with the application process for the RTE 25% reservation through their social networks (e.g. NGOs and employers), many eligible families are unaware of it (Srivastava and Noronha 2016; Sucharita and Sujatha 2018). This may relate to ineffective awareness campaigns and a lack of available information on how to apply (Srivastava and Noronha 2016).

In their survey of over 1500 households, Dongre et al (2019) found that following a campaign informing households in urban Ahmedabad[15] about the RTE 25% reservation and how to apply, the choice set of schools accessible to disadvantaged households was expanded to types of schools they would not previously have had access to. However, they also found that applicants who were more likely to apply and be allotted a place 'were relatively more advantaged in terms of condition of the house (*pucca*[16] walls, flush toilets), parental education levels, mother tongue being Gujarati [i.e. the local language indicating non-migrant households] and mother's mobile phone ownership' (Ibid., 7).

Continuity and completion

Dongre et al (2019) find in their urban Ahmedabad survey that after 15-18 months, less than 4% of students who applied for a school place under the mandate moved from their allotted school (whether private or government school) and only one student dropped out of the school system altogether. Despite the relatively short timescale measured this indicates some

[15] Dongre et al (2019) described Ahmedabad as being one of the first cities to implement the RTE 25% reservation mandate.
[16] *Pucca* buildings are made of good quality materials e.g. concrete, in contrast to *kutcha* buildings that are made of materials such as mud and thatch.

potential of the mandate to retain students in allotted schools. In their study in Bengaluru and Delhi, Sarangapani et al.'s (2014) find that private school managements expressed anxiety about the continuity, survival and completion of children with free places, noting the lack of guidance and dialogue within and between schools and administration on ensuring completion of schooling. Additionally, the authors find that parents of children with free places were unable to provide academic support to their children at home as was the expectation in the private schools they attended.

Types of private school engaging with the provision

There is some indication that some of the more elite and dominant private schools continue to resist the implementation of the RTE 25% reservation (Sarin et al. 2017). Equally, eligible parents are also found to avoid applying for free places in these HFPS which have traditionally been the domain of the upper and middle classes (Sucharita and Sujatha 2019). Srivastava and Noronha (2016) found that parents of children with free places to attend HFPS 'expressed concern about their relative social background vis-à-vis the general peer group' (2016, 574). Similarly, Sarin et al. (2017, 15) suggest that children with free places might struggle to cope in such schools and be more likely to drop out. In their study in urban Ahmedabad, Dongre et al. (2019, 7) find that only 12.2% of households applying for a free school place applied to HFPS, and assert that 'worries about high levels of non-tuition expenditure, unpleasant experiences during admission process and fear of discrimination post admission may partly explain why the disadvantaged households avoid 'elite' schools despite the mandate'. However, it is important to note that given the huge expansion of LFPS, there are comparatively fewer HFPS which may also explain the lower proportion of children taking up free places in those schools. Additionally, there is some indication that concerns around school recognition regulations of the RTE Act may lead to an unwillingness for private schools to engage with the RTE 25% reservation for fear of drawing attention to recognition norms which may be more likely to affect LFPS.

Model 3: RTE Act 25% reservation of free places **Quality and learning**
Headline Finding
Research in a small number of cases of HFPS indicates how they can offer free places to disadvantaged and marginalized children under the RTE 25% reservation in quality learning environments that provide active and child-centred teaching and learning through bilingual (English plus local language) provision. There is a lack of data on learning outcomes for disadvantaged children in these contexts but some indications that greater exposure to English, technical skills and a global outlook can offer career benefits. Ethnographic research offers insights into two modes of implementation of the RTE 25% reservation by schools: (i) separate provision whereby children with free places are educated in a school building separate to the private school;, and (ii) same provision, whereby children with free places are included into the private school and learn in classrooms alongside fee-paying children. With regard to the latter model, one quasi-experimental study finds that including free-place children in private school classrooms can lead to positive and less discriminatory social behaviours among fee-paying children and mixed and modest impacts on their academic outcomes.

Notably, there is an absence of studies focusing on the learning outcomes of disadvantaged children with free places in private schools under the RTE 25% reservation. There is, however, some quasi-experimental evidence of the impact on *fee-paying children in HFPS* of learning alongside disadvantaged children in terms of both their academic outcomes as well as their social behaviours. Two research studies using in-depth ethnographic approaches offer some insights into the inputs and process of education for children offered free places by private schools under this provision, with a particular focus on issues of inclusion. This ethnographic evidence is discussed below with reference to Save the Children's (2017) QLF (see Appendix E) where relevant.

Although the fee levels of the private schools in these ethnographic studies are not specified, descriptive data indicates they are likely to be HFPS. They provide quality infrastructure and facilities (connecting with QLF 2 'physical protection'), and active and child-centred teaching and learning (connecting with QLF3 'teaching and learning') in bilingual classrooms acknowledging the importance of learning both English, valued for employability and social mobility, and learning in languages children understand (Chattopadhay and Roy 2017; Tikly and Barrett, 2011). The studies offer insights into two modes of implementing the RTE 25% reservation. In Sucharita and Sujatha's (2019) study, children with free places were offered the *same provision* as fee-paying children within the private schools; whereas in Byker's (2015a) study they were offered *separate provision*. These resonate with the different models of private school inclusion identified in Day Ashley's (2005; 2006) earlier research pre-dating the RTE Act on private school outreach in India (i.e. private schools that go beyond their usual remit to additionally provide education to disadvantaged children living locally who would otherwise be out-of-school).

Same provision

Sucharita and Sujatha's (2019) study is conducted in two recognized English-medium private unaided schools in Delhi[17] that include children with free places into their school learning alongside fee-paying children in the same classes and therefore offer the same provision. The private schools (likely to be HFPS) were described as having 'state-of-the-art infrastructure with AV [audiovisual] room, a well-stocked library, sports equipment, pottery room etc.' and articulating their school ethos that indicates they are broadly progressive/child-centred in orientation: 'to impart values', to find out [children's] real qualities', to 'work on the multiple intelligences of children', 'learning by experience', to encourage teachers 'to think out of the box' and 'to make the school a happy place for every child' (Ibid., 317).

A key eligibility requirement for holding free places in the private schools was a household income of under Rs 100, 000 per year as per the Delhi state rules (although some ineligible applicants had been found by school managements to have gained places). In both schools, the parents of children with free places were found to be highly aware and well-informed and with strong social networks which are likely to have aided access to these private schools; and children also had prior exposure to other private schools (most likely in LFPS). In one school in the study children with free places tended to be from more advantaged backgrounds, with fathers in teaching and managerial roles and most parents educated up to secondary level. In

[17] Sucharita and Sujatha's (2018, 316) describe Delhi as being 'at the forefront in implementing this provision'.

the second private school, they came from more diverse backgrounds including drivers, night guards, cooks, electricians, carpenters and shopkeepers.

Both private schools in the study strictly followed the Delhi state RTE rules that children with free places should be educated without discrimination, unsegregated and together with fee-paying children in the same classrooms; they should wear the same uniform, use the same learning materials and facilities,including information and communications technology (ICT), and benefit from the same extra-curricular activities and sports. In order to do so, the schools made certain changes to enable what Sucharita and Sujatha (2018, 320) refer to as 'peripheral inclusion', as a first step towards social inclusion. These resemble some of the structural changes made by an inclusive private school in Day Ashley's research on private school outreach (2005). They included upholding the spirit of celebration (e.g. by sharing sweets) but banning of expensive ways of celebrating birthdays, special days etc.; prohibiting money and expensive items such as stationary being brought into school; closing the school canteen which required payment; and 'sensitizing children towards each other's needs and values' and emphasizing 'empathy building and appreciating each other's individuality' (Ibid. 320). Such practices connect with QLF5: 'school leadership and management' and specifically the importance that 'inclusive … policies are in place' (Save the Children 2017, 2).

The classroom learning environments were structured so that seat rotations and weekly random seating arrangements gave all children the opportunity to interact and sit at the front, and prevented group formations in class. Children were all encouraged to participate equally, given opportunities to develop leadership skills and children with free places were frequently praised for doing well, for example in their responses to teachers' questions in class or when they performed well in subjects which was reported as being frequently the case in sports and arts. The schools also made pedagogical changes which focused on recognizing cultural diversity. Thus, examples used in teaching and learning were adapted to recognize the diversity of children's home backgrounds and life experiences, especially efforts were made to not use examples in classrooms that assumed middle/upper class lifestyles. Most notably, given the recognition that an English-medium education created language barriers for children with free places who did not speak English at home unlike the fee-paying children, 'teachers opted for bilingual teaching while transacting in the classroom, which was otherwise absent in the school' (Sucharita and Sujatha 2018, 321). Teachers also used more repetition and gesturing in the classroom to aid understanding. Teachers had also started to make contact with parents of children with free places to discuss their progress, again these interactions were in the local language of Hindi (connecting with QLF4: 'parents and community').

Sucharita and Sujatha (2018, 323) describe the constant and challenging process of negotiation between stakeholders required 'to make social inclusion a reality'. Despite their efforts to create inclusive learning environments, some teachers expressed concerns about the potential emotional and psychological impact when free place children experienced negative interactions with peers especially in the context of their very different home backgrounds, experiences and the stratified social context in which these schools exist (this would relate to QLF2: 'emotional and psychosocial protection'). However, the authors give instances of observed free place and fee-paying children interacting freely, sharing lunch and playing together at lunchtime, and argued that adults may be more aware of and affected by socio-cultural differences than children.

Separate provision

Byker's (2015a) study describes a form of separate provision under the RTE 25% reservation: an 'Equal Opportunity School' (EOS) provided by a private school located on the southern periphery of Bangalore (Bengaluru) to educate disadvantaged and marginalized children (Grades 1-6) in the local surrounding villages. Providing education through an EOS in a separate building to the private school is described by Byker as one of the RTE 25% reservation options that a number of private schools are taking up. The study indicates that the private school is one of the international schools in the area serving the wealthiest families of Bengaluru and the EOS is located on the campus border of one of these schools. Parents of children attending the EOS are described as labourers of the local brick kiln and ragi fields.

Byker (Ibid.) describes the EOS as a 'community school' model offering education that reflects community customs and traditions. The EOS in this study aimed to prepare pupils as citizens with both a strong community sense and a global outlook, thereby bridging the gap between local and global (perhaps reflecting that this provision was likely run by an international school). It did so by focusing on the development of English language proficiency and technological literacy through the use of laptop computers. Indicating the material benefits of provision by a wealthy international school, the EOS building is described by Byker (2015a) as 'first-class'; situated in its own campus landscaped to resemble a village, the school was a brick building with separate boys and girls bathrooms and flush toilets (connecting with QLF2: 'physical protection').

Byker (2015a) describes the 5th grade classroom being equipped with teacher computer and smartboard and laptops for single use by 25 students in two shifts per day (50 students in total). English and mathematics are learnt daily and account for more than half of the weekly schedule with science, social studies, Kannada and ICT accounting for the rest. The author describes an ICT lesson indicating active, participatory and project-focused pedagogy as children created their own advertisements on PowerPoint, enabling them to develop technical knowledge, gain practical experience of the software, develop their graphic arts skills, apply their English language learning and communicate their ideas in both text and verbally through presentations (in English) to class (connecting with QLF3: 'teaching and learning'). The benefits of this type of educational experience was described by schoolteachers as having immediate effects such as the development of confidence and self-esteem as well as longer lasting effects (connecting with QLF1: 'emotional and psychosocial protection'). The development of the sought-after skills of English proficiency and technological literacy (which students saw as being intrinsically connected i.e. English being the dominant language of technology) was likely to be beneficial for students' future careers and increase their likelihood of securing middle class jobs in a 'globalized India', such as the city of Bengaluru represents. Therefore rather than focusing on including children with free places into the private school to learn alongside and interact with fee-paying children together in the same classrooms, the school vision in this case was to level up the equity gap by offering language, technical skills and a global outlook for disadvantaged and marginalized children that might lead to better job prospects and potentially enable to access to middle-class careers.

These two different responses to the RTE provide an ethnographic snapshot of what is happening on the ground in private schools as well as the possibilities and limitations of different models of inclusion. However, it is not clear how common such responses are. Sucharita and Sujatha (2018) noted the difficulties in obtaining access to private schools for research purposes,

indicating that the private schools in their study were examples of 'better practice' rather than typical. Sarangapani et al. (2014, 5) find that private schools in their study in Delhi and Bengaluru 'were not committed to bringing fundamental changes in attitudes or pedagogies that would foster inclusion' and did not equip their teachers to do so. Evidence also indicates that schools are not supported on how to how to implement the policy, including how to educate and include disadvantaged children, who may be first generation learners and with specific needs. There is no evidence of investment in additional resources such as recruitment of specialists with experience in the education of socio-economically disadvantaged children to teach, or to train existing teachers.

Additionally, there is some evidence from a natural experiment in 17 elite schools in Delhi with over 2,300 children (Rao 2019) that offering the 'same provision' to disadvantaged and marginalized children with private school free places has positive effects on the social behaviours of wealthier fee-paying children. In this study, Rao (Ibid.) was able to leverage variation across cohorts and schools - due to the staggered introduction of the RTE 25% reservation policy and the exemption of some elite schools for historical reasons - to identify the effect of the presence of poorer free-place children on wealthier fee-paying children's social behaviours and academic outcomes. Using a combination of administrative data, field and lab experiments, and through using difference-in-difference and instrumental variables analysis to estimate causal effects, Rao (Ibid., 774) finds that 'having poor classmates makes rich students (i) more prosocial, generous, and egalitarian; and (ii) less likely to discriminate against poor students, and more willing to socialize with them', effects which are driven by personal interactions between the two groups of students. The study also found mixed but modest impacts on the learning outcomes of fee-paying children (negative effect on English language but no effective on mathematics or Hindi). However, it did not investigate the social behaviour or academic effects of presence of wealthier fee-paying children on poorer free-place children.

Model 3: RTE 25% reservation of free places **Impact on education systems**
Headline Finding
There are many challenges of implementation with the RTE 25% reservation policy, not least ensuring accessibility, continuity and completion for eligible disadvantaged and marginalized children. There is also a lack of support and guidance for schools on how to educate and include children with free places effectively. Despite this, most authors in the studies reviewed are broadly positive about its potential to contribute to bridging educational and social divides in a highly stratified system, if implemented effectively and with effective guidance and support structures in place.

In their survey of households from a slum in Delhi, Srivastava and Noronha (2016) find that participating in the RTE 25% reservation through accepting free places to private schools does not reduce the quality of teaching in government schools. Although they show no adverse effect on quality, as with voucher schemes, these findings do not indicate that RTE *raise* quality across the system. We have seen that there are a number of barriers to disadvantaged children accessing free places and completing basic education in private schools under the RTE 25% reservation as intended. We have also seen, in some

detail, attempts by a small number of HFPS to honour the RTE 25% reservation, albeit in different ways, which gives some indication of the potential of this provision.

In the context of limited evidence, opinions are divided about this potential. A host of concerns are raised by those who are critical about the potential of the RTE 25% reservation. These concerns range from the promotion of unfair distribution, its legitimization of privatization in education, that school leaders may perceive children eligible for free places as deficient thereby hindering the inclusion process, and that the ideal of the 'common school system' which arguably underpins the provision may not be fully realized (cited in Sucharita and Sujatha, 2018).

Most of the authors in the studies reviewed are more hopeful about its transformative potential. It responsibilizes private schools to 'contribute to the national efforts towards universalizing education' (Sarangapani et al., 2014, 2) and, if implemented effectively and as intended, it can enable 'a proportion of the most disadvantaged children … [to] have access to schools previously the preserve of the most privileged' (Srivastava and Noronha 2014, 196). It could also 'make classrooms more diverse and inclusive' (Dongre et al. 2019 , 30) and bring children together to interact in ways that transcend socio-economic and class divisions (see Sucharita and Sujatha 2018). As we have seen from ethnographic examples of implementation of the provision in HFPS and the use of ICT in those classrooms, it may also offer steps towards helping to bridge the digital divide (Ibid.; Byker 2015a). Thus, the RTE 25% reservation of free places in private schools may have the potential to 'bridge the socio-economic inequalities' (Dongre et al. 2019, 30) and cut through the 'hyper- segmentation' that has characterizes the school education system in India (Srivastava and Noronha 2014, 181).

4. Conclusion

This report has set out to review and assess the evidence on three models of private school provision in India identified in recent quality literature: LFPS, voucher schemes and free places under the RTE 25% reservation according to key criteria relating to access, quality and systems impact from Save the Children's (2016) *Global Policy Position.* These three models have different implications for the most disadvantaged and marginalized children. Although highly prevalent in India, analyses of survey data show that LFPS tend to be out of reach to the most disadvantaged and marginalized children largely due to fees charged. Voucher schemes may remove or reduce this financial barrier, but experimental evidence suggests that there are no substantial learning gains for children moving from government schools to private schools with tuition-free vouchers. There may be productivity gains, however, due to the low-cost model offered by voucher funded schemes but perhaps to the detriment of adequate teacher pay, working conditions and wellbeing which raises concerns about the sustainability of the model. Due regard also needs to be paid to regulations required to implement voucher systems on scale, and evidence from other contexts (e.g. Chile) warns of the potential of voucher systems to increase inequities and social stratification. Additionally, concerns are raised in the literature about advocacy for a 'second wave' of for-profit corporate-backed upscaling of LFPS including through state-sponsored voucher schemes, to which organizations like Save the Children need to be alert given their commitment to not supporting commercial provision of education. Theoretically, the RTE Act 2009 interrupts the potential for such activity through the framework of the right of every child, without discrimination, to free, compulsory and equitable education and the legal obligation for schools to be regulated/registered and not-for-profit (Nambissan 2014). The RTE Act includes the 25% reservation of free places in private schools specifically for disadvantaged and marginalized children. This literature review highlights a number of implementation issues with this policy, but ethnographic and quasi-experimental research also illustrate its potential to lead to the development of inclusive practices in schools that may have equity and social justice benefits for children and may potentially contribute to bridging divides across the school education system.

4.1 Gaps and areas for further research

This literature review has captured the research evidence on pro-poor private school provision in India at a particular moment in time where there is much shifting ground in the sector. We are starting to learn more about the impact of the RTE Act 2009 on private schools. Additionally, our understanding of the 'second-wave' of LFPS and 'affordable' private schools[18] is still nascent (Nambissan 2014; Srivastava 2016a) and further research is needed to aid our understanding of the nature of profit, revenue and income in private school provision. There is also a gap in research on corporate social responsibility and education, although some studies are starting to refer to this (e.g. Srivastava 2016b; Sundar and Godal 2017). Beyond analyses of all-India data sets which give a nation-wide picture of developments in private provision, primary and empirical studies tend to be small-scale and geographically clustered around certain states and cities, mostly concentrated on Bengaluru (Karnataka), Delhi, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, with some individual studies in Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Kerala, Patna (Bihar), Telegana

[18] There is no clear definition of 'affordable private school' but Nambissan (2014, 12) refers to these schools as catering to a 'higher-end market segment' than LFPS, serving the 'middle of the pyramid' and so distinct from HFPS/elite private schools.

and Uttar Pradesh. This needs expanding to other states to gain a clearer picture of the impact of private provision across the country. In relation to Save the Children's three key criteria for the assessment of education models (access and completion; quality and learning; impact on the system), there are further gaps as identified below.

Access and completion

Research is required into access to private schools in relation to disability and religious background, particularly where religious affiliation is associated with discrimination, and in the light of the RTE 25% reservation. More understanding is also needed about factors which may enable access to quality education (whether in private or government schools) such as parental aspiration, level of parental education and private tuition. We also need ethnographic research on decision-making practices within families and longitudinal studies on the impact of education expenditure (including school tuition fees hidden school costs and private tuition) on welfare sacrifices within the family and differential impacts on family members.

Quality and learning

Due to recent ethnographic research, we have a better emerging sense of teaching and learning approaches used in LFPS classrooms as well as modes of RTE provision of 25% free places in some more progressive/child-centred HFPS. However, pedagogical and inclusive practices remain an under-researched area in private schools and we have little sense of the pedagogies and inclusion processes used when children are offered free places in LFPS under the RTE 25% reservation. Additionally, research into longer term educational and livelihood outcomes of students graduating from different types of private provision, with different mediums of instruction, would build on existing ethnographic work.

Systems

The evidence review has raised the issue of closures of both government schools and private and other non-state schools. The impact of these closures on access to education for the disadvantaged and marginalized is little understood and should be the focus of future research. Additionally, there are indications of effective government schools and children from the wealthiest sections of society attending government schools; we need to know more about what is working well in these schools.

4.2 Implications for policy implementation

The literature review will help inform a wider policy implementation project in the Indian context. Given fast moving changes in this field and a lack of data in the literature on certain areas such as specific profits made by some organizations involved in private provision, it should be read alongside case-by-case assessments of providers on the ground in their particular contexts. Additionally, given the financial barriers of user fees for LFPS attendance and, given that only a limited proportion of disadvantaged and marginalized children can access private school education through the national policy of the RTE 25% provision or voucher experiments, the majority of the most disadvantaged and marginalized children in India attend government schools. According to Alcott and Rose's (2015) analysis of rural ASER household-based survey data, over 80% of poor children in rural India attend government schools.

Some implications of the literature review for policy at different levels of operation include the following:

1. *Capacity building within the organization:* Understandings gained from the literature review can help inform Save the Children staff about the impact of different models of private school provision on access for the disadvantaged, quality of education and the wider education system. This can help enable informed and potentially influential participation with stakeholders in national education sector dialogue and debate on private education provision.

2. *Advocacy and state regulation:* The question of how state governments can be supported to effectively and appropriately regulate for quality education that is fully inclusive of disadvantaged and marginalized children should be considered. Advocacy might focus on consistent regulation across both private and government school provision that takes a 'working together' approach. This could be guided by quality and regulation frameworks that go beyond infrastructure and input quality norms, such as Save the Children's QLF (2017), recent evidence on inclusive practices in schools (e.g. UNESCO 2019a) and the Abidjan Principles (2019) which set out states' legal obligations to ensure the right to education, especially in the context of concerns around the commercialization of education.

3. *Working alongside school leaders and practitioners:* In the absence of official guidance on how to include disadvantaged and marginalized children into private schools under the RTE Act, school leaders and teachers should be supported to develop inclusive education practices e.g. through official teacher training programmes and/or school interventions. .

4. *Empowering parents and communities*: Building on existing community mobilization efforts, disadvantaged and marginalized parents and communities should be empowered to understand their rights under the RTE Act and supported to apply for, access and complete free places in schools for which they are entitled. Engagement with communities could focus on discussion and debate about what counts locally as a 'good quality education' with a view to enabling their participation in school decision-making.

4.3 Lessons for other contexts

This India-focused literature review is the first stage in a wider project investigating how Save the Children's Global Policy Position can be implemented in a single national context. It provides a review of recent, good quality research evidence that informs a case study conducted in India. Forthcoming findings from this wider policy project will be used to inform policy implementation, advocacy and future progamme planning within Save the Children India. But the project may also offer lessons for other country offices.

Although findings are understood within geographic contexts with their own economic, cultural, social, political situations and histories, there is value to comparison with other contexts. Some models of private provision reviewed are India-specific e.g. the national policy of the RTE 25% reservation, but other models e.g. LFPS and vouchers are found in other national contexts, and findings may have particular resonance for countries that have reached near universal elementary education. However, it is also important to recognize the complexities of policy transfer (Phillips and Ochs 2003) and the dangers of simplistic and uncritical policy copying and borrowing (Crossley, 2008).

Following this literature review, two further project outputs are planned: (i) a policy implementation guidance report for Save the Children India, based on a case study involving observations of models of private provision, interviews with various stakeholders and engagement with local networks and partners; and (ii) a lessons learnt guide setting out the steps identified from the project that would need to be taken by other country offices to implement Save the Children's *Global Policy Position* in their specific contexts. This approach seeks to strike a balance between being sensitive to the differences between contexts yet open to the possibilities of learning from elsewhere.

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Appendices

Appendix A: List of sources checked

Research databases	Websites
EBSCO Education Database	Abdul Lateef Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)
EconLIt – EBSCO	ASER India
Education Rersearch Extracts	Centre for Civil Society
ProQuest Social Sciences	Centre for Global Development (CGD)
Research Papers in Economics (REPEC)	Centre for Universal Education, Brookings
Social Science Research Network (SSRN)	DFID
	Education Development Trust
	Education Innovations
	Global Campaign for Education
	Global Partnership for Education
	Health and Education Advice and Resource Team (HEART)
	Oxford Policy Management
	PERI
	Results for Development (R4D)
	RISE
	UNESCO Global Monitoring Report
	UNESCO IIEP
	Young Lives
	World Bank

Appendix B: Table of search terms

Key search terms	Synonyms/related terms
educat* *AND* privat* *AND* India	learn, teach, tutor, instruct, pedagog* market, neoliberal
AND	
1. 'right to education'	RTE, free place, reserv*
OR	
2. 'corporate social responsibility'	CSR, philanth*, charity, responsible/responsibility, business, company/ies, corporate.
OR	
3. 'public private partnership'	PPP, public, partner, intervention, incentive, policy, interact/interaction, relationship, collaborat*, regulat*, plan, voucher, subsid*, grant, scholarship, cash transfer
OR	
4. school	institution, academy, provider/provision, fee, cost, budget, affordable, non-elite, community, commercial, chain, income, profit, return, revenue, invest, LCPS, LFPS
OR	
5. equity	access, complete/completion, include/inclusive/inclusion, exclude/exclusion, segregation, margin, disadvatag*, depriv*, poor/poverty, girls, social justice
OR	
6. quality	achieve, attain, outcome, standard, perform, improv*, skills, learn, child-centred, relevant, effective, safe, protect, wellbeing, needs, emotional, psychological, engagement
OR	
7. system	impact, regulation/regulate.

Truncation used so that searches return words with different endings e.g. privat = private, privatization, privatized.

Appendix C: List of studies included in the review

Key= Primary and empirical [P&E]; Experimental [EXP]; Quasi-experimental [QEX]; Secondary [S]; Theoretical and conceptual [T&C]; Observational [OBS]; Non-systematic review [NSR]

List of private schools/LFPS studies

No.	Author	Year	Location	Research design
1	Alcott and Rose	2015	India and Pakistan Rural	P&E; OBS, statistical data analysis (descriptive and regression analysis)
2	Azam	2017	India	P&E; OBS, statistical data analysis (descriptive and regression analysis)
3	Carr-Hill and Sauerhaft	2019	India and Pakistan	T&C
4	Chattopadhay and Roy	2017	India	T&C
5	Chaturvedi	2014	India	P&E; OBS, statistical data analysis (descriptive and regression analysis)
6	Chudgar and Creed	2016	India	P&E; OBS, statistical data analysis (descriptive and regression analysis; longitudinal data)
7	Dahal and Nguyen	2014	India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan	S; NSR and P&E; OBS, statistical data analysis (descriptive analysis)
8	Datta and Kingdon	2019	India Rural	P&E; OBS, descriptive analysis and regression analysis (longitudinal)
9	Endow	2018	Delhi and National Capitol Region	P&E; OBS, mixed methods (household survey, interviews, tests)
10	James and Woodhead	2014	Andhra Pradesh	P&E; OBS, mixed methods (household survey and interviews)
11	Jayadeva	2019	Bengaluru (Bangalore), Karnataka Urban	P&E; OBS, ethnographic research
12	Jones	2018	Village in Rajasthan Rural	P&E; OBS, mixed methods (household and community-level surveys, school enrolment data and household case studies)
13	Kelly et al	2016	Rajasthan Rural	P&E; OBS, survey (descriptive analysis and regression analysis)
14	Maitra et al	2016	India	P&E; OBS, statistical data analysis (descriptive and regression)
15	Mathew	2019	Village in Kerala Rural	P&E; OBS, ethnographic research
16	Morrow and Wilson	2014	Andhra Pradesh	P&E; OBS, interviews
17	Mousumi and Kusakabe	2019	Delhi Urban	P&E; OBS, mixed methods (school survey, household survey, observations)
18	Nambissan	2014	India	T&C
19	Rolleston and Moore	2019	Andhra Pradesh and Telegana	P&E; OBS, school survey data analysis (value added model; longitudinal)

20	Sahoo	2017	Uttar Pradesh Rural	P&E; OBS, village and household data: statistical analysis (descriptive and regression)
21	Sarin et al.	2017	India	P&E; OBS, mixed methods (household survey, fieldwork)
22	Singh	2015	Andhra Pradesh	P&E; OBS, statistical data analysis (value added; longitudinal)
23	Singh and Bangay	2014	Andhra Pradesh	P&E; OBS, mixed methods (household and educational data; qualitative surveys; qualitative sub-study)
24	Singh and Sarkar	2015	Andhra Pradesh	P&E; OBS, mixed methods (household and community statistical data analysis: descriptive and regression; qualitative sub-study)
25	Singhal and Das	2019	India Rural	P&E; OBS, statistical data analysis including descriptive, regression and QEX; instrumental variable and regression analyses.
26	Smith and Joshi	2016	India and China	S; NSR
27	Srivastava	2016a	Global South, especially India, Pakistan and Uganda	T&C
28	Tooley and Rangaraju	2015	Patna, Bihar Urban	P&E; OBS, mixed methods (school survey and household interviews)

List of voucher scheme studies

No.	Author	Year	Location	Research Design
29	Crawfurd et al	2019	Delhi Urban	P&E; EXP, RCTs/randomized designs/interventions
30	Dixon et al	2019	Delhi Urban	P&E; EXP, RCTs/randomized designs/interventions
31	Karopady	2014	Andhra Pradesh Rural	P&E; EXP, RCTs/randomized designs/interventions
32	Muralidharan and Sundararaman[19]	2015	Andhra Pradesh Rural	P&E; EXP, RCTs/randomized designs/interventions
33	Tooley	2016	Andhra Pradesh Rural	S; NSR
34	Wolf, Egalite and Dixon	2015	Delhi Urban	P&E; EXP, RCTs/randomized designs/interventions

[19] This study was included in Day Ashley et al. (2014) as a working paper (Muralidharan and Sundararaman 2013).

List of RTE Act 25% reservation studies

No.	Author	Year	Location	
35	Byker	2015a	South Bengaluru (Bangalore), Karnataka Peri-urban	P&E; OBS, case study
36	Dongre et al	2018	Ahmedabad, Gujarat Urban	P&E; OBS, household survey (double difference estimation)
37	Iyer and Counihan	2018	India	S; NSR
38	Maithreyi and Sriprakash	2018	India	T&C
39	Rao	2019	Delhi	P&E; QEX; (difference-in-difference, instrumental variable and regression analyses)
40	Sarangapani et al.	2014	Bangalore (Bengalaru), Karnataka and Delhi	P&E; OBS, mixed methods (interviews and observations)
41	Shah and Steinberg	2019	India	P&E; OBS, statistical data analysis (regression analysis; longitudinal data)
42	Srivastava and Noronha	2014	Delhi Urban	P&E; OBS, mixed methods (household survey and school level data)
43	Srivastava and Noronha	2016	Delhi Urban	P&E; OBS, (household survey and school level data)
44	Sucharita and Sujatha	2018	Delhi Urban	P&E; OBS, case study

Appendix D: Template for data extraction

Full reference of text (with URL/DOI):	
Model of private education provision/ financing/ regulation i.e. RTE, CSR, PPP, PS or other (state broad category & specify language used in text to describe model.) Primary or secondary (specify ages)	
Type of study, design and method (i) refer to table below for broad categories (ii) name method used as described by author	
Any concerns about quality of the paper - would it be assessed as 'low' in the BE2 Note (2015) assessment criteria and grading scale?	
Geographic location: (i) urban, peri-urban or rural (ii) give indicators of location as provided e.g. state, district, block, cluster & city/town/village (be alert to language used). (iii) state whether India only focus or if study was comparative with other countries (and name countries)	
Describe key findings of the paper, particularly in relation to: (i) Equity (access and learning) (ii) Quality (iii) Systems	
Any other/related issues that may be relevant to the review or have implications for stakeholders? I.e. cost effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, accountability, regulation.	
What factors account for the findings in the author's view?	
Does the author identify unintended consequences– how are they described/explained?	
Describe the overall methodological strengths and weaknesses/limitations of the study identified by (i) the author (ii) the reviewer	

Appendix E: Save the Children's (2017) Quality Learning Framework

The Quality Learning Framework (QLF)
QLF1: Emotional and Psychosocial Protection
Teachers, children, and their friends are positive and respectful to one another. Children develop social and emotional skills, such as how to manage their emotions and make responsible decisions.
QLF2: Physical Protection
Learning environments are safe and accessible to all children and plans are in place to reduce and prevent any risks to their safety. There are clean latrines and handwashing facilities. Children are supported to be healthy and well-nourished.
QLF3: Teaching and Learning
Teachers use active, child-centred teaching practices in languages children understand. They use appropriate learning materials and books and monitor each child's progress individually.
QLF4: Parents and Community
Children, parents and community participate in decisions about their school. They support children's learning outside school.
QLF5: School Leadership and Management
School leaders lead learning and manage the school resources well. Inclusive and protective policies are in place that promote the safety and wellbeing of children and teachers.

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Save the Children International,
30 Orange Street,
London
WC2H 7HH
UK
Charity no. 1076822
http://www.savethechildren.net

For more information, please contact:
Rowan Ainslie - Early Learning Programmes and Advocacy Officer
rowan.ainslie@savethechildren.org

Save the Children