



## **A Detailed Analysis of Decline in Number of Schools Covered under UDISE+ 2019-20**

*Is India moving towards privatisation of School Education?*

**By**

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### **Background**

Because of the limitations in the educational statistics, at the time of initiating the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994-95, the Ministry of Education, Government of India decided to develop a computerized educational management information system with the school as the unit of data collection and district as the unit of data dissemination and the task to develop such a system was assigned to NIEPA, New Delhi which joined hands with the UNICEF and contributed all through the period 1994-95 to 2017-18. It was only the year 2018-19 onwards that the renamed UDISE+ is being managed by the NIC and located in the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education but the first of its publication was released on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 by the then Minister of Education under the title, UDISE+ 2019-20 Report even failed to mention the national institutions which brought the earlier defunct school education statistics managed by the none other than the Ministry of Education to this level which practically has overcome most of the limitations in Educational Statistics in India.

At the time, when UDISE was managed by the NIEPA, New Delhi the time-lag in the educational statistics was brought to less than a year at the national level and the Annual Work Plan & Budget under the age-sis of *Sarva/Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* was being formulated on current years data both of which have now been forfeited badly. Other achievements of NIEPA towards strengthening EMIS are also fading and fast becoming history. The year 2021-22 annual plans have recently been formulated based on the outdated 2019-20 data unfortunately which is also the latest data. At the time of writing this note, the process of data collection for 2020-21 is in progress and the moot question is in which year's annual plan, data of 2020-21 will be used. UDISE at NIEPA used to bring out a set of 15 publications in a year all of which has now been discontinued along with the updating of the numerous award-winning internationally acclaimed websites including the *schoolreportcards.in*.

### **The Present Article**

While *How much we gain: A Case of UDISE+* is separately been documented, in this note, we confine to coverage of UDISE+ in terms of the number of schools covered during the period 2017-18 to 2019-20. The analysis is presented both at the all-India and wherever required, state

level and also in the rural and urban areas. Data has been obtained from the official websites and is available in the public domain.

### Coverage: Total Number of Schools

The total number of schools covered under UDISE during the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 presented in Table 1 reveals that the same has significantly and consistently declined from an all-time high of 15,58,903 schools in 2017-18 to a low 15,07,708 schools covered during 2019-20 data collection which shows that the latest data is based on a more than 51 thousand less number of schools than in the year 2017-18. In the percentage terms, the number of schools covered in 2019-20 was fewer by more than 3 per cent of schools covered in 2017-18. It may be recalled that 2018-19 was the first year from which UDISE is being managed by the NIC & Department of School Education & Literacy during which about 8 thousand fewer schools were covered than in the previous year i.e 2017-18. The latest 2019-20 UDISE data could cover only 15,07,708 schools which is fewer than 43,292 schools than the same covered in 2018-19; in percentage terms 2019-20 it was 2.8 per cent of the schools covered during the previous year. Under coverage of schools in recent years may be due to different reasons. Further, we also undertake analysis of schools by school category, management, and its rural and urban distribution all of which reveal interesting information about coverage. Before that, we undertake an analysis of the state-wise number of schools covered under UDISE during the same period: 2017-18 to 2019-20 which is presented in Table 2.

Is it because of the decline in the number of schools by 43,292 in 2019-20, the Report of the UDISE+ 2019-20 published recently (July 2021) even didn't mention it and nowhere in the document, like enrolment & teachers present the comparison of the same with the previous year's figures i.e. 2018-19? It is expected that the managers of UDISE+ will furnish the explanation of the significant decline in the number of schools covered under UDISE+ ever since it has assumed the responsibility of the same. Rather, it has shed its responsibility by mentioning "*The Ministry of Education, therefore, assumes no responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the data and indicators reported in the document*" under the disclaimer.

**Table 1: Number of Schools (All Schools)**

Year	Total Number of Schools	Increase/Decrease	%age Change
2017-18	15,58,903	-	-
2018-19	15,51,000	- 7,903	- 0.5
2019-20	15,07,708	- 43,292	- 2.8
<b>2017-18 to 2019-20</b>		<b>- 51,195</b>	<b>- 3.3</b>

Source: UDISE & UDISE+, different years. From 1994-95 to 2017-18, DISE/UDISE was maintained by NIEPA, New Delhi, and thereafter by the Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India.

**Table 2: State-wise Number of Schools: 2017-18 to 2019-20**

State/UT	2017-18	2018-19	Increase/ Decrease	%age Change	2019-20	Increase/ Decrease	%age Change	Change Over 2017-18 to 2019-20	%age Change
A & N Islands	417	414	-3	-0.7	418	4	1.0	1	0.2
Andhra Pradesh	63633	63621	-12	0.0	63824	203	0.3	191	0.3
Arunachal Pradesh	4061	3793	-268	-6.6	3666	-127	-3.3	-395	-9.7
Assam	70078	66324	-3754	-5.4	65907	-417	-0.6	-4171	-6.0
Bihar	88233	89224	991	1.1	90275	1051	1.2	2042	2.3
Chandigarh	225	229	4	1.8	229	0	0.0	4	1.8
Chhattisgarh	56184	56274	90	0.2	56303	29	0.1	119	0.2
D & N Haveli	346	346	0	0.0	346	0	0.0	0	0.0
Daman & Diu	143	140	-3	-2.1	137	-3	-2.1	-6	-4.2
Delhi	5723	5703	-20	-0.3	5669	-34	-0.6	-54	-0.9
Goa	1525	1486	-39	-2.6	1482	-4	-0.3	-43	-2.8
Gujarat	54141	54581	440	0.8	54629	48	0.1	488	0.9
Haryana	23235	23534	299	1.3	23699	165	0.7	464	2.0
Himachal Pradesh	18295	18212	-83	-0.5	18185	-27	-0.1	-110	-0.6
Jammu & Kashmir*	29335	29708	373	1.3	29917	209	0.7	582	2.0
Jharkhand	49530	45908	-3622	-7.3	45596	-312	-0.7	-3934	-7.9
Karnataka	77076	78233	1157	1.5	77166	-1067	-1.4	90	0.1
Kerala	17013	16701	-312	-1.8	16665	-36	-0.2	-348	-2.0
Lakshadweep	45	45	0	0.0	45	0	0.0	0	0.0
Madhya Pradesh	153593	154064	471	0.3	133379	-20685	-13.4	-20214	-13.2
Maharashtra	110315	109942	-373	-0.3	110229	287	0.3	-86	-0.1
Manipur	4812	4844	32	0.7	4663	-181	-3.7	-149	-3.1
Meghalaya	14736	14669	-67	-0.5	14730	61	0.4	-6	0.0
Mizoram	3919	3913	-6	-0.2	3924	11	0.3	5	0.1
Nagaland	2839	2752	-87	-3.1	2758	6	0.2	-81	-2.9
Orissa	69209	68717	-492	-0.7	67020	-1697	-2.5	-2189	-3.2
Puducherry	733	739	6	0.8	741	2	0.3	8	1.1
Punjab	28926	28637	-289	-1.0	28775	138	0.5	-151	-0.5
Rajasthan	105514	105883	369	0.3	106240	357	0.3	726	0.7
Sikkim	1300	1290	-10	-0.8	1277	-13	-1.0	-23	-1.8
Tamil Nadu	58474	59152	678	1.2	58897	-255	-0.4	423	0.7
Telangana	42834	42355	-479	-1.1	42575	220	0.5	-259	-0.6
Tripura	4928	4945	17	0.3	4940	-5	-0.1	12	0.2
Uttar Pradesh	275286	273235	-2051	-0.7	254352	-18883	-6.9	-20934	-7.6
Uttarakhand	24273	23559	-714	-2.9	23295	-264	-1.1	-978	-4.0
West Bengal	97974	97828	-146	-0.1	95755	-2073	-2.1	-2219	-2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1558903</b>	<b>1551000</b>	<b>-7903</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>1507708</b>	<b>-43292</b>	<b>-2.8</b>	<b>-51195</b>	<b>-3.3</b>

\*Including Ladakh

Source: UDISE, different years.

## State-wise Number of Schools

A glance at the state-wise number of schools covered UDISE + 2019-20 reveals that as many as 18 states reported a decline in the total number of schools over the previous year as against 21 states which have shown a decline during the period 2017-18 & 2018-19. In about 12 states, the per cent decline was more than a percentage point during the same period. The highest 13.4 per cent decline is observed in Madhya Pradesh which in the absolute number is as high as 20,685 schools which is considered huge. Madhya Pradesh is followed by Uttar Pradesh in terms of percentage (6.9 per cent) but in the absolute number, the decline in the number of schools covered in 2019-20 was as high as 18,883 schools. Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Lakshadweep are the only three states which have shown no decline in the number of schools covered in 2019-20 all of which are in small size and has only a few schools compared to other states. In another three states, namely Karnataka (1,067 schools, -1.4 per cent), Odisha (1,697 schools, -2.5 per cent), and West Bengal (2,073 schools, -2.1 per cent) the decline in the number of schools was in the tune of four digits.

The number of schools during the period from 2017-18 to 2019-20 further reveals that in as many as 22 states, the number of schools in 2019-20 is observed to be declined from its 2017-18 level and the number of such schools at the all-India level, as reported above is in the tune of 51,195 schools which is 3.3 per cent of total schools covered in 2017-18. In the case of five states, namely Assam (4,171 schools, - 6.0 per cent), Jharkhand (3,834 schools, -7.9 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (20,214 schools, -13.2 per cent), Odisha (2,189 schools, -3.2 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (20,934 schools, -7.6 per cent) and West Bengal (2,219 schools, -2.3 per cent), the number of schools in 2019-20 is fewer by more than two thousand schools which range between 2,189 schools in Odisha to 20,934 schools to Uttar Pradesh. Why has the number of schools covered under UDISE+ declined ever since the same was taken over by the Department of School & Literacy or is it because of the merger of schools to make the school composite one? Is the decline limited to private unaided schools or whether the government and aided schools have also been declined answers of all of which are explored in the following paragraphs? On the one hand, the number of schools is declined in the majority of states which is confined to both small as well as major states, on the other hand, a few states, such as D & N Haveli and Lakshadweep didn't see any decline all through the period 2017-18 to 2019-20. Bihar (2,042 schools, 2.3 per cent), Gujarat (488 schools, 0.9 per cent), Haryana (464 schools, 0.2 schools), Jammu & Kashmir (582 schools, 0.2 per cent), Rajasthan (726 schools, 0.7 per cent), and Tamil Nadu (423 schools, 0.7 per cent) all see a slight increase in coverage of school during the same period. The moot question is whether the merger of schools didn't take place in these states. Within these states, barring Tamil Nadu all remaining five states, including Bihar have shown a consistent increase in the number of schools covered during the same period.

## Rural & Urban Distribution of Schools

The rural and urban distribution of schools covered under UDISE during the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 presented in Table 3 reveals that more than 84 out of 100 schools are located in the rural areas (83.5 per cent), urban areas (16.5 per cent) have only 16 out of 100 such schools. Further, it has been observed that the coverage in terms of schools in the rural areas has consistently

declined from a high of 13,11,976 schools in 2017-18 to 13,04,715 schools in 2018-19 and further to 12,58,347 schools in the latest year i.e. 2019-20; thus showing a decline to the tune of 7,261 (-0.6 per cent), 46,368 (-3.6 per cent) and 53,629 schools (-4.1 per cent) respectively during the period 2017-18 to 2018-19, 2018-19 to 2019-20 and 2017-18 to 2019-20. During the same period, the number of schools covered in the urban areas has increased from 2,46,927 schools in 2017-18 to 2,49,361 schools in 2019-20. Further, it is observed that of the total decline of 43,292 schools in 2019-20, practically every school declined is located in the rural areas (46,368 schools, - 4.1 per cent) as against an increase of 3,076 schools (+1.2 per cent) in the urban areas. Both the rural and urban areas together show a decline of 51,195 schools in 2019-20 which is -3.3 per cent of total schools covered in 2017-18. Huge coverage of fewer schools than in the past year must have some valid reason but the UDISE+ 2019-20 Report failed to present details of the same less even mentioning the significant decline in the number of schools covered.

**Table 3: Rural & Urban Distribution of Schools, 2017-18 to 2019-20**

Year	Rural	%age	Urban	%age	All Areas
2017-18	1311976	84.2	246927	15.8	1558903
2018-19	1304715	84.1	246285	15.9	1551000
2019-20	1258347	83.5	249361	16.5	1507708
Increase/Decrease 2018-19	-7261		-642		-7903
<b>%age Increase</b>	<b>-0.6</b>		<b>-0.3</b>		<b>-0.5</b>
Increase/Decrease 2019-20	-46368		3076		-43292
<b>%age Increase</b>	<b>-3.6</b>		<b>1.2</b>		<b>-2.8</b>
Increase/Decrease 2017-18 to 2019-20	-53629		2434		-51195
<b>%age Increase</b>	<b>-4.1</b>		<b>1.0</b>		<b>-3.3</b>

Source: UDISE, different years.

### Rural & Urban Distribution of Schools by School Category

The rural & urban distribution of schools by type of school category reveals that the number of schools covered in 2019-20 is observed to be fewer in the case of five categories in the rural areas compared to the same in four categories in the urban areas. It may be recalled that there are ten types of school categories which are been maintained ever since the year 2012-13 during which the entire country got covered under the DISE for the first time and data was collected by using one Data Capture Format. DISE since then is known as Unified-DISE or popularly as UDISE.

The ten school categories consisting of corresponding grades are Grades I to V, I to VIII, I to XII, VI to VIII, VI to XII, I to X, VI to X, IX to X, IX to XII, and XI to XII. Both in the rural and the urban areas, the decline in the number of schools is observed in I to V, VI to VIII, IX to X, and IX to XII in addition to which the number of high schools consisting of Grades VI to X has also declined in the rural areas. In addition, the number of schools with Grades VI to X has also shown a decline in the rural areas against which the urban areas have shown a slight increase of 242 schools during the same period. Further, it may be recalled that the rural areas have shown a huge decline in the number of schools (46,368 schools, -3.6 per cent) but in the

reality, the actual number of schools declined is much higher than it as there was an increase in a few school categories which is in the tune of 41,481 schools. In reality, the actual number of decline in schools in the rural areas is in the tune of 88,191 schools majority of which is confined to primary (Grades I to V) only schools (45,804 schools, -6.1 per cent) followed by upper primary (38,751 schools, -29.3 per cent), secondary (2,117 schools, -7.7 per cent) and higher secondary (1,276 schools, -7.2 per cent) schools. During the same period, overall the coverage of schools in the urban areas has increased by 3,076 schools which is 1.2 per cent of the total schools in the previous year. However, in the urban areas, the total decline is to the tune of 5,886 schools in 2019-20 Over the previous year. The brief analysis reveals that the decline in both the rural and urban areas is confined only to a few school categories amongst which primary and upper primary schools are the most prominent ones. On the other hand, elementary (Grades I to VIII) and higher secondary (I to XII) schools are the main categories both in the rural as well as urban areas which have shown an increase in the number of the schools in 2019-20. Is it because of the merger of the primary and upper primary schools into the elementary schools but the number doesn't exactly match which indicates that a few schools might have closed down?

**Table 4: Percentage Change in Number of Schools between 2018-19 & 2019-20 & its Rural & Urban Distribution**

School Category	Rural		Urban		All Areas	
	Increase/Decrease	%age Change	Increase/Decrease	%age Change	Increase/Decrease	%age Change
PS (I-V)	-45804	-6.1	-2336	-2.9	-48140	-5.8
UPS (I-VIII)	36709	15.8	4716	6.9	41425	13.8
HSS (I-XII)	1904	5.5	1533	7.2	3437	6.1
UPS (VI-VIII)	-38751	-29.3	-2423	-23.0	-41174	-28.8
HSS (VI-XII)	1058	4.0	497	6.1	1555	4.5
SS (I-X)	1810	4.2	1852	7.3	3662	5.4
SS (VI-X)	-243	-0.6	242	2.4	-1	0.0
SS (IX-X)	-2117	-7.7	-659	-9.4	-2776	-8.1
HSS (IX-XII)	-1276	-7.2	-438	-7.3	-1714	-7.2
HSS (XI-XII)	342	4.5	92	1.2	434	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>-46368</b>	<b>-3.6</b>	<b>3076</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>-43292</b>	<b>-2.8</b>

Source: UDISE+, different years.

Further, the state-wise change in the number of schools in the case of the selected categories presented in the Table 5 reveals that the coverage of the primary schools (I to V) declined by a huge 61,858 schools which is 7.4 per cent of the same in the previous year i.e. 2018-19. Except, in the case of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh and Lakshadweep, all the remaining States & UTs, the UDISE+ 2019-20 data is based on fewer primary schools than in 2018-19 and

**Table 5: Percentage Change in Number of Schools between 2018-19 & 2019-20  
All States, Selected Categories**

States/UTs	Primary Schools (I to V)		Elementary Schools (I to VIII)		Upper Primary Schools (VI to VIII)		All Schools	
	Increase/Decrease	%age Change	Increase/Decrease	%age Change	Increase/Decrease	%age Change	Increase/Decrease	%age Change
A & N Islands	4	1.8	-4	-5.1	0	0.0	4	1.0
Andhra Pradesh	-1742	-4.2	1254	15.6	-148	-96.7	203	0.3
Arunachal Pradesh	-349	-15.4	208	20.5	-12	-18.2	-127	-3.3
Assam	-559	-1.2	109	2.7	-162	-2.1	-417	-0.6
Bihar	-1152	-2.6	1022	2.8	-23	-8.1	1051	1.2
Chandigarh	0	0.0	0	0.0	0		0	0.0
Chhattisgarh	-307	-0.9	196	6.8	-62	-0.5	29	0.1
D & N Haveli	-2	-1.2	2	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Daman & Diu	-1	-2.0	0	0.0	-2	-5.3	-3	-2.1
Delhi	-44	-1.6	-5	-0.6	0	0.0	-34	-0.6
Goa	-9	-1.0	4	8.2	-7	-50.0	-4	-0.3
Gujarat	-133	-1.1	-76	-0.3	-34	-4.0	48	0.1
Haryana	-189	-1.9	62	2.0	-53	-2.2	165	0.7
Himachal Pradesh	-121	-1.1	34	4.4	-38	-1.9	-27	-0.1
Jammu & Kashmir	-102	-0.7	98	1.0	-36	-21.3	209	0.7
Jharkhand	-652	-2.6	87	0.5	-54	-46.2	-312	-0.7
Karnataka	-1423	-5.4	11	0.0	-496	-50.5	-1067	-1.4
Kerala	-1021	-12.6	794	24.4	-1467	-69.3	-36	-0.2
Lakshadweep	0	0.0	-1	-6.7	1		0	0.0
Madhya Pradesh	-20284	-22.9	16556	91.0	-17170	-57.2	-20685	-13.4
Maharashtra	-1243	-2.3	308	1.0	-56	-30.6	287	0.3
Manipur	-390	-13.8	102	11.3	-20	-32.3	-181	-3.7
Meghalaya	-10	-0.1	38	19.5	-18	-0.5	61	0.4
Mizoram	-54	-3.5	50	12.6	-14	-1.3	11	0.3
Nagaland	-92	-7.2	77	11.0	-10	-28.6	6	0.2
Orissa	-1981	-5.6	357	1.9	-378	-12.6	-1697	-2.5
Puducherry	-9	-3.1	1	1.3	0	0.0	2	0.3
Punjab	-166	-1.2	91	3.7	-25	-0.9	138	0.5
Rajasthan	-1511	-3.7	986	2.8	-33	-13.3	357	0.3
Sikkim	-37	-5.0	9	3.0	-1	-100.0	-13	-1.0
Tamilnadu	-465	-1.3	-70	-0.7	-22	-18.5	-255	-0.4
Telangana	-1194	-5.4	678	10.0	-131	-100.0	220	0.5
Tripura	-29	-1.1	1	0.1	0	0.0	-5	-0.1
Uttar Pradesh	-24394	-15.0	27389	168.1	-23767	-37.2	-18883	-6.9
Uttarakhand	-431	-3.0	203	9.7	-111	-3.4	-264	-1.1
West Bengal	-1766	-2.3	-151	-9.2	-213	-2.8	-2073	-2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>-61858</b>	<b>-7.4</b>	<b>50420</b>	<b>17.3</b>	<b>-44562</b>	<b>-30.5</b>	<b>-43292</b>	<b>-2.8</b>

Source: UDISE+, different years. Note: Apart from these three categories, there are seven more school categories. For reasons not known the total number of schools presented above in case of a few categories doesn't match well with the same at the all-India level presented above.

the size of the decline in coverage is to the tune of 61,858 schools (-7.4 per cent). It may be recalled that both Madhya Pradesh (20,685 schools, -13.4 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (18,863 schools, -6.9 per cent) experienced a huge decline in the total number of schools (all categories) in 2019-20 which is more than 91 per cent of the total decline in the number of schools which otherwise means that 9 out of every 10 schools declined is in these two states.

Further, it has been observed that like primary schools, upper primary schools consisting of Grades VI to VIII have also shown a steep decline in the number of schools covered in 2019-20 UDISE+ data collection which is fewer by 44,562 schools or 30.5 per cent of such schools in 2018-19. It is generally believed that a decline in the coverage of schools in 2019-20 is because of the merger of schools to make them composite schools but the same is not reflected in the corresponding elementary schools consisting of Grades I to VIII in which primary and upper primary schools are supposed to have been merged. Except in a few states, the decline in the number of schools does not suggest that it is only because of the merger of the schools as the increase in the number of elementary schools doesn't match well with the corresponding decline in primary and upper primary schools. As against a total decline of 61,858 primary schools (-7.4 per cent) and 44,562 upper primary schools (-30.5 per cent) schools, coverage of elementary schools increased only by 50,420 schools (17.3 per cent). It may also be possible that schools having VI to VIII grades don't necessarily be merged into the elementary schools; a few of them might have merged into the high school located on the same campus or located in the nearby areas. Madhya Pradesh which has experienced the highest decline in the number of schools has merged schools that are located on the same campus and has also converted a few schools into composite schools. At least the UDISE+ 2019-20 report should have discussed the actual reasons behind the decline in schools along with the state-specific reasons in the absence of which the decline may be simply be treated as UDISE+2019-20 is based on fewer schools than in the previous year.

### **Schools by Management**

Table 6 presents the number of schools covered under UDISE 2017-18 to 2019-20 by management along with the increase/decrease in a year and percentage change over the previous year. Both the schools managed by the government as well as private management including unaided and unrecognized schools have been presented. The decline in the number of schools further shows that the decline is mostly confined to schools being managed by the government managements amongst which schools managed by the Department of Education is the most prominent one. It may be observed that the number of schools managed by the Department of Education increased by 18,450 (2.3 per cent) in 2018-19 over the previous year i.e. 2017-18 against which the same has shown a steep decline during the next year i.e. 2019-20 and the decline is in the tune of 50,382 schools (6.0 per cent) which is 6 per cent less than the number of schools covered in UDISE+ 2018-19. The steep decline in the number of schools managed by the Department of education is a serious cause of concern and needs explanation about the actual reason behind the decline.

Scrutiny of number of schools by management further reveals that the number of schools under the Local Body management in 2018-19 was declined by 29,250 schools which is 13 per cent of the total such school in the previous year i.e. 2017-18. The same has further



declined by 490 schools in 2019-20. On the one hand, schools managed by the Department of Education have shown a steep decline in 2019-20 on the other hand decline in school under the Local Body management is a serious cause of concern. On the other hand, it has been observed a significant increase in the number of private unaided schools and the increase is to the tune of 11,271 schools (3.5 per cent) alone in 2019-20 in addition to which the same was increased by 4,027 schools (1.2 per cent) in 2018-19.

**Table 6: Change in Number of Schools in 2019-20 over 2018-19, All India**

School Management	2017-18	2018-19	Increase/Decrease	%age Change	2019-20	Increase/Decrease	%age Decline
Department of Education	817038	835488	18450	2.3	785106	-50382	-6.0
Tribal Welfare Department	45077	45409	332	0.7	46279	870	1.9
Local Body	225780	196530	-29250	-13.0	196040	-490	-0.2
Government Aided	84420	84623	203	0.2	84362	-261	-0.3
Private Unaided (Recognized)	322201	326228	4027	1.2	337499	11271	3.5
Other Govt. managed Schools	2750	1322	-1428	-51.9	939	-383	-29.0
Unrecognized	32916	32366	-550	-1.7	29600	-2766	-8.5
Social Welfare Department	1626	2413	787	48.4	1717	-696	-28.8
Ministry of Labor	195	356	161	82.6	353	-3	-0.8
Kendriya Vidyalaya / Central School	1435	1566	131	9.1	1259	-307	-19.6
Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya	486	505	19	3.9	626	121	24.0
Sainik School	71	64	-7	-9.9	67	3	4.7
Railway School	74	80	6	8.1	85	5	6.3
Central Tibetan School	11	14	3	27.3	16	2	14.3
Madarsa Recognized (By Wakf Board/Madarsa Board)	19354	19150	-204	-1.1	19538	388	2.0
Madarsa Unrecognized	5469	4886	-583	-10.7	4139	-747	-15.3
Other Central Government Schools			0		83	83	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1558903</b>	<b>1551000</b>	<b>-7903</b>	<b>-0.5</b>	<b>1507708</b>	<b>-43292</b>	<b>2.8</b>

Source: UDISE, different years.

In addition to schools managed by the government and private managements, UDISE also covers unrecognized schools and *madarsa* both of which have also declined recently. Overall, as reported above UDISE+ 2019-20 is based on 43,292 schools fewer than the same in 2018-19 which is 2.8 per cent of the total schools covered in the previous year. Is the decline in schools under the Department of Education is across the board to examine the same we have also analyzed the number of schools under this management by school category? Before that number of schools by type of schools is presented in Table 7.

### Number of Schools by Type

The number of schools by type presented in Table 7 reveals that the decline is confined to only five out of the ten categories. Boys, co-educational, and girls are the three types of schools for which distribution of schools is available under UDISE. Further, it has been observed that most

of the decline is confined to either primary or upper primary or higher secondary schools but affected the co-educational institutions the most. Table 7 further reveals that of the total number of schools declined during 2019-20 (43,292 schools), 89.70 per cent (38,832 schools) alone are co-educational schools and the remaining 4.54 per cent (1,966 schools) are boys and 5.76 per cent (2,494 schools) girls schools. The number of schools declined to any school category may not add up to the total number of schools declined (42,292 schools) because a few of the remaining school categories; like elementary schools have shown an increase in the number of schools covered during the same period. Users may get confused the way UDISE-plus has given names of the school categories, for example, schools having Grades I to VIII and VI to VIII both are termed as upper primary schools. Needless to mention that schools having Grades I to VIII are traditionally termed elementary schools in India.

**Table 7: Percentage Change in Number of Schools between 2018-19 & 2019-20 by Type of Schools**

Type of School	Boys		Co-Educational		Girls		Total Schools	
	Increase/Decrease	%age Change	Increase/Decrease	%age Change	Increase/Decrease	%age Change	Increase/Decrease	%age Change
PS (I-V)	-1383	-23.8	-45050	-5.5	-1707	-24.2	-48140	-5.8
UPS (I-VIII)	58	2.5	41138	13.9	229	7.1	41425	13.8
HSS (I-XII)	75	14.2	3197	5.9	165	10.8	3437	6.1
UPS (VI-VIII)	-722	-38.4	-39305	-29.1	-1147	-19.4	-41174	-28.8
HSS (VI-XII)	58	3.0	1198	4.1	299	7.7	1555	4.5
SS (I-X)	72	8.2	3567	5.4	23	1.4	3662	5.4
SS (VI-X)	-18	-2.2	193	0.4	-176	-4.5	-1	0.0
SS (IX-X)	-8	-3.3	-2732	-8.3	-36	-2.9	-2776	-8.1
HSS (IX-XII)	-121	-17.5	-1387	-6.6	-206	-9.9	-1714	-7.2
HSS (XI-XII)	23	17.6	349	2.4	62	6.4	434	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>-1966</b>	<b>-12.9</b>	<b>-38832</b>	<b>-2.6</b>	<b>-2494</b>	<b>-7.9</b>	<b>-43292</b>	<b>-2.8</b>

Source: UDISE, different years.

Of the total decline of 48,140 primary schools, 45,050 schools (93.58 per cent) alone are co-educational as against 1,383 (2.87 per cent) boys schools and the remaining 1,707 (3.55 per cent), girls schools. Quite a similar pattern is also observed in the case of upper primary schools which is declined by 41,174 schools of which 95.46 per cent (39,305 schools) alone are co-educational schools. Further, it has been observed that both in terms of absolute and percentage terms, the number of girls schools declined is a bit lower than boy's schools. As many as 3,272 fewer girls' schools were covered under UDISE 2019-20 compared to 778 more girls schools were added but confined to only four categories. In addition to primary and upper primary schools, a good number of secondary schools consisting of Grades IX & X (2732 schools) and higher secondary schools (Grades IX to XII, 1387 schools) have also declined all of which are

co-educational; these schools are 8.3 and 6.6 per cent of the total decline in co-educational schools.

As mentioned above, we now analyse the decline in the number of schools in the case of primary, upper primary, etc schools under the Department of Education and Private managements.

**Table 8: Number of Schools declined by Category under DoE & Private Unaided Management, 2018-19 & 2019-20**

School Category	Department of Education				Private Unaided			
	2019	2018	Change over 2018	%age Change	2019	2018	Change over 2018	%age Change
PS (I-V)	474781	523383	-48602	-9.29	89517	98023	-8506	-8.68
UPS (I-VIII)	151482	114112	37370	32.75	107315	95263	12052	12.65
HSS (I-XII)	15713	12674	3039	23.98	35174	29501	5673	19.23
UPS (VI-VIII)	66024	108196	-42172	-38.98	16673	17257	-584	-3.38
HSS (VI-XII)	21281	19463	1818	9.34	6879	6212	667	10.74
SS (I-X)	16244	17128	-884	-5.16	43495	40600	2895	7.13
SS (VI-X)	16335	17089	-754	-4.41	11295	13404	-2109	-15.73
SS (IX-X)	11986	11580	406	3.51	9083	8568	515	6.01
HSS (IX-XII)	8942	9448	-506	-5.36	7624	7724	-100	-1.29
HSS (XI-XII)	2318	2415	-97	-4.02	10444	9676	768	7.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>785106</b>	<b>835488</b>	<b>-50382</b>	<b>-6.03</b>	<b>337499</b>	<b>326228</b>	<b>11271</b>	<b>3.45</b>

DoE: Department of Education

Source: UDISE+ different years.

### The Number of Schools by Category: DoE & Private Unaided Managements

As has already been presented above the decline in the number of schools covered in UDISE-plus 2019-20 over the previous year is mainly confined to the Department of Education. Contrary to which, on the other hand, schools managed by the private unaided managements during the same period has shown significant increase because of which it has become essential to know more about school categories those who have decreased or increased. As has already been reported that the total number of schools covered under the Department of Education was declined by 50,382 schools as compared to an increase of 11,271 schools under the private unaided managements. The number of schools declined under the Department of Education is confined to six out of ten school categories and in the rest, two out of four categories, the decline in the number of schools is steep which is to the tune of 48,602 schools in case of primary and 42,172 schools in the case of upper primary-only schools. But for the increase in the number of schools in a few school categories, the actual number of the total number of schools declined under the Department of Education is about 93,015 schools. Similarly, the actual number of schools increased under the private unaided management is many more than 11,271 schools; which is 22,570 schools. Scrutiny of the number of schools under private unaided management further reveals that the number of primary schools is declined by 8,506 (8.68 per cent) and on the other hand, elementary education has seen a steep increase which is to the tune of 12,052 schools (12.65 per cent). It may be recalled that the coverage of the number of private unaided schools

under UDISE has increased significantly over a period which in the latest 2019-20 data is 337.5 thousand schools which otherwise means that for every 2.33 schools managed by the Department of Education, there is at least one private unaided school in India, the ratio in the previous year was 2.56. During the first year of the unification of SEMIS and DISE, a mere 256.3 thousand private unaided schools were covered in 2012-13. Is India moving towards the privatization of school education? the available data suggest that slowly but surely we are moving in that direction which is also reflected in the per cent share of enrolment in privately managed schools to total enrolment at school education in India.

Further, it has been observed that not only the primary and upper primary schools are declined but UDISE 2019-20 data also suggest that the same in case of schools having secondary and higher secondary grades have also shown a decline; however, the percentage of such schools in case of schools run by the Department of Education is a bit lower than the decline in case of other types of schools mentioned above. On the other hand, the coverage of private unaided schools during the same period has shown a mixed picture. On the one hand, primary (8.68 per cent), upper primary (3.38 per cent), secondary (15.73 per cent) and higher secondary (1.29 per cent) schools have shown a decline, on the other hand, the schools in the remaining categories, such as higher secondary (19.23 per cent), secondary (6.01 per cent) and senior secondary (7.94 per cent) have shown an impressive increase over the previous year.

The above analysis of the number of schools covered in UDISE 2019-20 indicates that of the total 42,292 schools declined the most of the schools have declined alone in the states of Madhya Pradesh (20,685 schools) and Uttar Pradesh (18,883 schools) which amount to 93.56 per cent of the total schools declined. Further, the analysis also indicates that the majority of schools that declined were confined to the Department of Education. On the other hand, schools managed by the private unaided managements have increased by more than 11 thousand during the same period. Given this, we have separately analysed the decline/change in the number of schools in these two states under the Department of Education and Private Unaided managements details of which are presented in Tables 9 & 10.

## **Uttar Pradesh**

Table 9 indicates that a total of 18,883 schools (15.65 per cent) in 2019-20 were fewer than in 2018-19 in Uttar Pradesh, the actual number of such schools is much higher than this as the number of schools under a few categories has increased which is to the tune of more than 30 thousand schools which otherwise reflect that the actual number of schools declined by 49,130 alone in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The distribution of schools in Uttar Pradesh under the Department of Education in 2019-20 reveals that barring schools having Grades I to VIII and VI to XII, all other categories have fewer schools than in the previous year i.e. 2018-19. On the other hand, barring schools having Grades IX to X, IX to XII, and XI to XII, all other categories have shown an increase over the previous year in case of private unaided management and the number of increase in case of a few school categories is quite impressive. Of the total 6,317 private unaided schools added in 2019-20, 3,635 (28.43 per cent) alone were the elementary schools compared to which 1,058 primary schools (2.72 per cent) were added during the same period.

**Table 9: Schools by Department of Education & Private Unaided Management: Uttar Pradesh**

School Management	Number of Schools Covered					
	Change over 2018-19			%age Change		
	Department of Education	Private Unaided	All Schools	Department of Education	Private Unaided	All Schools
PS (I-V)	-25297	1058	-24394	-22.34	2.72	-15.01
UPS (I-VIII)	23634	3635	27389	23872.73	28.43	168.07
HSS (I-XII)	0	948	1074	0.00	41.34	30.26
UPS (VI-VIII)	-23707	44	-23767	-51.15	0.30	-37.17
HSS (VI-XII)	89	811	1064	18.20	17.77	12.37
SS (I-X)	-3	280	443	-33.33	20.97	15.92
SS (VI-X)	-25	336	277	-51.02	9.59	6.83
SS (IX-X)	-16	-536	-599	-1.11	-13.48	-10.81
HSS (IX-XII)	-13	-251	-358	-8.55	-4.64	-6.01
HSS (XI-XII)	-1	-8	-12	-50.00	-26.67	-32.43
<b>Total</b>	<b>-25339</b>	<b>6317</b>	<b>-18883</b>	<b>-15.65</b>	<b>7.22</b>	<b>-6.91</b>

Source: UDISE+ different years.

Uttar Pradesh data further reveals a decline of 25,297 primary schools and 23,707 middle/upper primary schools in 2019-20 compared to which an increase to the tune of 23,634 elementary schools has been observed which may be because of the merging of primary and upper primary schools into it but the UDISE+ 2019-20 report is silent on it. Nor from the state sources, the real reason behind the steep decline in the number of schools covered under UDISE+ 2019-20 can be known. If the decline is due to the merging of schools, equally important is to know criteria based on which schools have been merged or a few of them are even closed down.

### Madhya Pradesh

Quite a similar picture like Uttar Pradesh emerges when we analyse coverage of schools under UDISE+ in 2019-20 in the state of Madhya Pradesh under the Department of Education which has also witnessed a huge decline in the number of schools which is to the tune of 22,334 schools (-25 per cent) against which the number of private unaided schools has increased by 6.92 per cent (2,019 schools). The bifurcation of schools under the Department of Education in Madhya Pradesh further shows that the majority of schools that are declined are the primary only schools (18,553 schools, -31.28 per cent) which is followed by upper primary schools (17,072 schools, -29.27 per cent). Maybe because of primary and upper primary schools, the elementary schools increased by more than 13 thousand during the same period. Not only did the primary and upper primary schools are declined but a few schools under secondary (Grades IX & X, 1,871 schools) and higher secondary (Grades IX to XII, 1,688 schools) categories under the Department of Education have also shown a decline during the same period.

**Table 10: Schools by Department of Education & Private Unaided Management:  
Madhya Pradesh**

School Management	Change over 2018-19			%age Change		
	Department of Education	Private Unaided	All Schools	Department of Education	Private Unaided	All Schools
PS (I-V)	-18553	-1263	-20284	-31.28	-28.31	-22.92
UPS (I-VIII)	13300	3101	16556		18.25	90.97
HSS (I-XII)	1065	153	1217		3.86	29.51
UPS (VI-VIII)	-17072	-24	-17170	-74.38	-29.27	-57.16
HSS (VI-XII)	680	-1	709		-0.96	308.26
SS (I-X)	1522	154	1677		5.16	55.68
SS (VI-X)	283	-13	301	69.19	-28.26	57.44
SS (IX-X)	-1871	-50	-1981	-54.71	-27.62	-41.59
HSS (IX-XII)	-1688	-35	-1705	-51.91	-9.83	-36.54
HSS (XI-XII)	0	-3	-5	0.00	-23.08	-31.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>-22334</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>-20685</b>	<b>-25.00</b>	<b>6.92</b>	<b>-13.43</b>

### Concluding Observations

The above analysis reveals that there is a decline in the number of schools covered under UDISE in the recent past and most of the schools declined under the government management in general and the Department of Education in particular. On the other hand, the coverage of private unaided schools is on the rise the percentage share of which is increased from a mere 22 per cent in 2015-16 to 35 per cent in 2019-20 which is also reflected in the corresponding enrolment at the all levels of schools education in India all which reflect that slowly but surely India is moving towards privatisation of school education? Is this a cause of concern or a policy shift from the government to privatisation of school education? Or our parents have become conscious and are convinced that their wards can get quality education only in the private schools? The percentage of government schools have come down from 76.4 per cent in 2011-12 to 67 per cent in 2018-19 and further to 65.1 per cent in 2019-20. Is the decline due to low coverage of government schools under UDISE+ or because of merging and de-merging of government schools. Coverage of unaided private schools under UDISE+, as reported above have increased by more than 11 thousand schools as compared to a decline by more than 42 thousand schools in the case of government schools in 2019-20. Data managers may like to provide details of the drastic decline in the number of schools covered under government management in recent years or most specifically from the year i.e. 2018-19.

Elementary education in India is a constitutional commitment and a fundamental right of every child of age between 6 to 14 years, are we still working in that direction? It may be recalled that several centrally sponsored schemes were launched over time to achieve the goal of universal

school education in India. Over a while, the focus of these programmes was shifted from strengthening infrastructure to improving retention and further to the quality of education. Both under the *District Primary Education Programme* and *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* programme, a large number of government schools were opened based on the criteria that each of the habitations of the country must be made available a primary school within a distance of 1 km and an upper primary school within a distance of 3 km from the habitation; are these norms still relevant? Are these being still followed or have become irrelevant? Even within the newly opened schools a student-teacher ratio of 25: 1 was being maintained in case of primary and 35:1 in case of upper primary level. Hundreds of thousands of schools with even less than 25 students, were provided teacher(s) as per the criteria laid down. Still, at one point in time, there was a shortage of over a million teachers which were never met fully to meet the challenges of the unfinished task of universal schools education in India. Maybe because of these reasons the process of merging and de-merging of schools was recently initiated which is termed as rationalisation and consolidation of elementary and secondary schools. Initially, Odisha, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh were the three states selected under SATH-E which has come to end in March 2020. These states were selected aiming to become the role model states in school education. The aim was to merge small schools having enrolment up to 20 with the nearby (not necessarily within a distance of 1/3 km) located school equipped with the better number of teachers, infrastructure, TLM, libraries and other facilities which are essential for smooth functioning of a school. These small schools were termed as surplus schools with more than one school in the neighbourhood and it was ensured that citizen voices will be respected and merging will not force children to drop out but the new school may not necessarily be located in the neighbourhood as specified under the RTE 2009 Act. At the school level, it was envisaged that MIS will help School Manager, in fact, the Head Master/Principal of the school in determining the aims of the school, formulating strategic plans, distributing resources, and evaluating staff performance as well as organizational success partially which is currently being looked after under the ongoing *Shaala Siddhi* programme. Needless to mention that the data collected through the seven domains of *Shaala Siddhi* is supposed to take care of most of these aspects? *Shaala Siddhi* programme is presently being managed by NIEPA. Data up to 2020-21 indicates that in as many as 3,43,028 schools either the self-evaluation under *Shaala Siddhi* is completed or in progress. Are the areas mentioned in SATH-E not supposed to be taken care of by the ongoing *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan*? It should have been covered under the annual work plan formulation under *Samagra Shiksha*? The merging and closing of schools shouldn't have been guided and monitored from the top? Are a few questions answer of which is not available in the public domain.

Even years before the process of merging and de-merging of schools was initiated recently, the process of merging was initiated and a good number of schools were merged in the states of Odisha, Rajasthan, etc which was protested by the activists, teachers, and parents. The Report Card of RTE: 2010 to 2020 by RTE Forum indicated that as many as 1,47,494 schools were either closed down or merged till 2017. Does it mean that schools under the DPEP and later SSA were opened without using scientific techniques such as School Mapping advocated by the apex international institutions of education planning i.e. IIEP, Paris and NIEPA, New Delhi? Have we opened new schools where they were not required or viable or in the process had we denied the right of many locations that deserved to have been provided with a new school or up-gradation of an existing school? Or the academic inputs about the location to open a new school were denied

for non-academic reasons? Had we shown hurry in the opening of schools in the past and now again we are in a hurry to merge or de-merge or close down. At the time the Country was opening new schools the need for GIS Mapping was felt because of which School GIS covering all the states was developed. Is school GIS being used to close down or merge schools?

**Table 11: Share of Government & Private Managements: Schools & Enrolment  
2018-19 & 2019-20**

Management	Schools			Enrolment		
	2018-19	2019-20		2018-19	2019-20	
	%age	%age	Number	%age	%age	Number
Government	67.0%	65.1	981146	49.0%	48.6%	121927212
Private Unaided	21.0%	22.4	337499	34.0%	35.4%	88913012
Government Aided	5.0%	5.6	84362	11.0%	10.8%	27014238
Other Government Managements	3.0%	3.4	51424	2.5%	2.5%	6215384
Madrassa	2.0%	1.6	23677	1.0%	1.3%	3183258
Unrecognized	2.0%	2.0	29600	2.0%	1.5%	3718579
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,51,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>15,07,708</b>	<b>24,43,38,584</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>25,09,71,683</b>

Source: UDISE+ 2018-19 & 2019-20

The merger of schools has been advocated by the NITI Aayog to consolidate resources including teachers. The project was supposed to be monitored by both the state, as well as a central level for which Central Project Monitoring Unit and National Steering Group were created at the national level. At the state level, State Project Monitoring Unit was supposed to have been created. The national-level monitoring teams are being assisted by international agencies, such as The Boston Consultancy Group (BSG). Ironically another international agency, The World Bank played a pivotal role in formulating policy to open new schools under DPEP and now another international agency is helping India to merge, de-merge or even close down schools. Primal Foundation for Education Leadership was another private agency engaged in developing the roadmap along with BCG to kick starts the data-driven analysis to promote academic monitoring of school education across the country. As it looks from the available resources that the process of merging and close down of schools initiated through three states will spread to the remaining states of the country. Are the national level institutions, like NIEPA consulted or was a part of formulating conceptual note? NIEPA used to be a great advocate of the use of the school mapping technique to decide to open a new school or up-gradation of an existing school. Both under the DPEP and SSA, states claim to have applied school mapping in deciding the location of a new school? It would be of interest to know whether school mapping is being carried out now in deciding which school is to be merged/closed down and to merge to which school. In response to the request of the state, SATH-E 2.0, was commenced for another two years, from October 2020 in the initial three states. However, as it seems from the media coverage that all are not happy with the merging and demerging of schools as there are allegations that the process has adversely been affected by the efforts being made under RTE 2009? Hopefully, *The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights* is closely monitoring the process of merging and closing down of schools and will ensure that it will not violate the Constitutional provisions and



concept of the neighborhood as specified in The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE 2009), and will not affect children adversely and citizens right in the affairs of education at the local level shall be protected.

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