

# SCHOOL SYSTEM

One of the most frequently used words in India, corruption signifies a range of things. In 2005, Transparency International and Delhi-based Centre for Media Studies, a research firm, undertook the India Corruption Study. The survey covered 14,405 respondents over 20 states and included interviews with service providers &

users on the spot. The survey is not based on perception alone; it includes the experience of people in paying bribes. The results, published the same year, showed Indians pay around Rs21,068 crore as bribes while availing one of 11 public services. While some of the highlights of the survey were published, many of the details were not. The study, however, remains the most recent and the most comprehensive report on corruption in India. Apart from calculating the extent of corruption, in Rs crore, it explains the mechanics of it.

Over the week, Mint will present details of the CMS study. On Monday, we featured India's public distribution system. Today, we look at the education system. Readers are welcome to send their comments to [feedback@livemint.com](mailto:feedback@livemint.com).

## Overcharging /Bribing

### 1. Additional fee



This isn't really a bribe, but is more of coercion. Parents are often charged extra fees for purportedly enhancing the quality of an educational programme or maintaining the school building. Parents comply fearing retribution (that is, that the school will take it out on their children otherwise). There is no accountability on how this money is spent.

### 2. For issuing certificates



Schools charge students a lot of money to issue certificates to them. This isn't just for school leaving certificates; students even have to pay for transfer certificates when they leave the school mid-way through their education to join another school. Some schools even charge for proficiency or extra-curricular achievement certificates.

### 3. For admission



This isn't the tuition fee. Most schools charge a huge admission fee, payment for the student being admitted into the system. The admission fee phenomenon isn't restricted to private schools. Although most government-run or government-aided schools aren't meant to charge such a fee, most do.

### 4. For promotions



This is a whole new take on the 'pay for performance' concept. Some schools blackmail parents into paying a bribe for promoting their child to a higher class. When such a demand is made, the fear of retribution is so high that most parents just pay up without asking any questions.

### 5. Deductions from scholarships

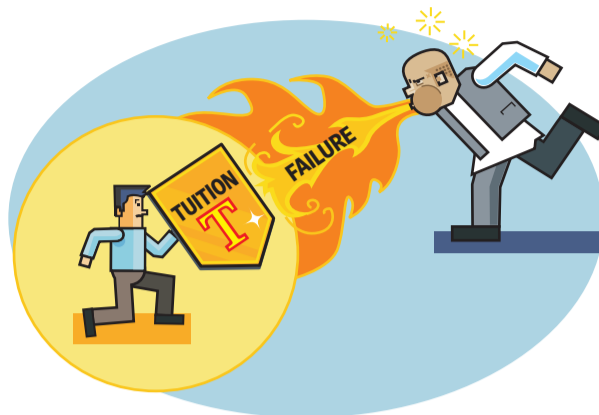


The school simply deducts a certain percentage from the scholarship awarded to students by various government bodies or philanthropic organizations.



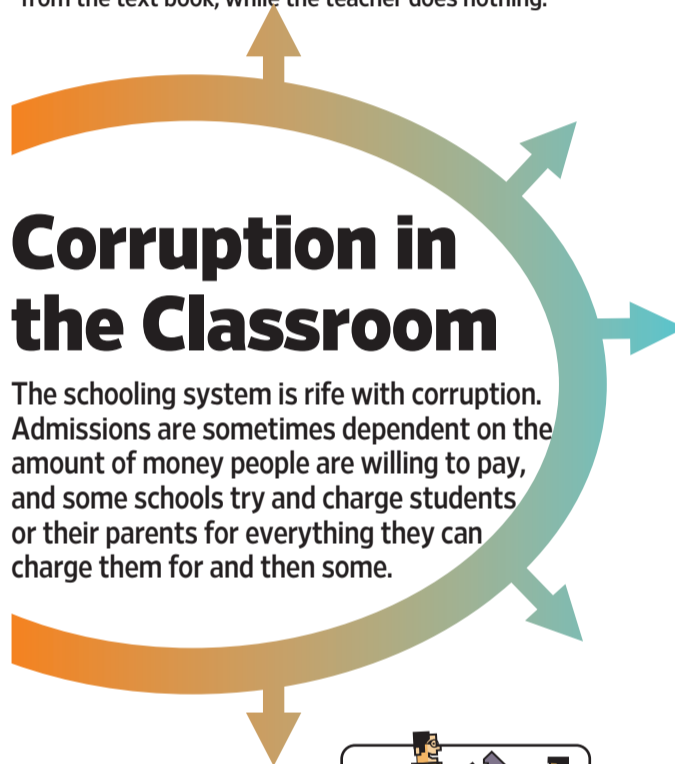
### 1 Substandard education

A common refrain among parents is that teachers do not teach students adequately in class. Often, the syllabus to be covered in a year isn't covered and students are left to complete it on their own. In some schools, one student is made to read aloud from the text book, while the teacher does nothing.



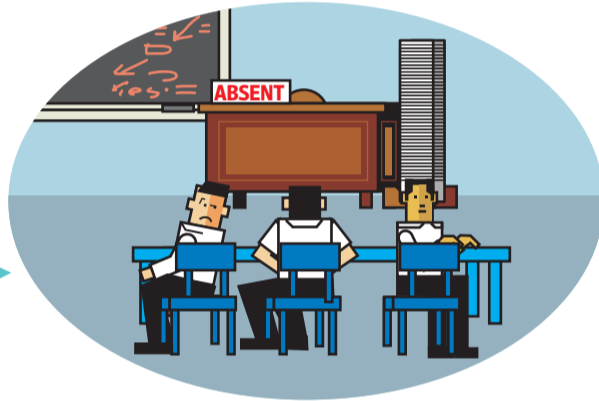
### 2 Forced tuition

Teachers have complete control on whether a student fails an exam or passes it (except in examinations conducted by a board). Teachers exploit this fact to their advantage by forcing students to take tuition from them. A 1999 report said that as many as 70% of students in urban areas receive private tuition.



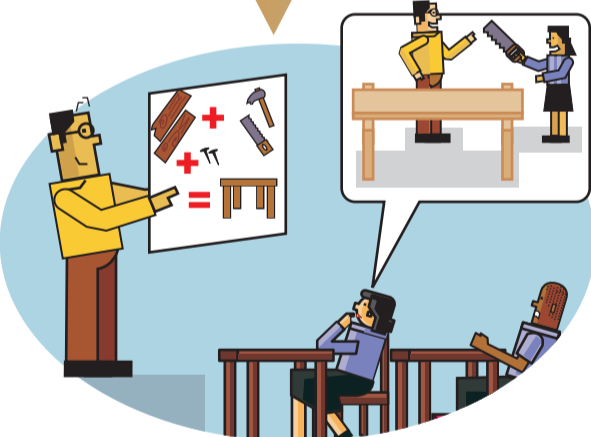
## Corruption in the Classroom

The schooling system is rife with corruption. Admissions are sometimes dependent on the amount of money people are willing to pay, and some schools try and charge students or their parents for everything they can charge them for and then some.



### 3 Teacher absenteeism

In government schools, teachers frequently do not show up in class. The local administration has no way of ensuring that they do. Those students who attend schools spend all their time there doing other things.



### 5 Lack of equipment

Although students are charged fees related to equipment and supplies, there is little accountability. Students (and teachers) have to make do with poor quality equipment, or no equipment at all.



### 4 Poor quality midday meals

The government provides free meals to school children under a midday meal scheme. The quality of food served is usually very bad—the good grain is routed to the open markets and poor, cheaper grain is used in its stead.

## Suggested Solutions

### 1. Entrepreneur-Teachers



Schools that perform poorly could be given to teacher-committees to run. The fund allocation to each school by the government should be linked to outcomes such as: enrollment rate, attendance, drop-out rate, and grades or marks of graduating students.

### 2. Making schools accountable



Schools should be more accountable to their customers (that is, students and their parents). Every school should have a committee of parents. The staff should be answerable to this committee, which can look into things such as the standard of education, utilisation of funds, and other issues concerning the quality of education.

### 3. Facilitating the creation of more private schools

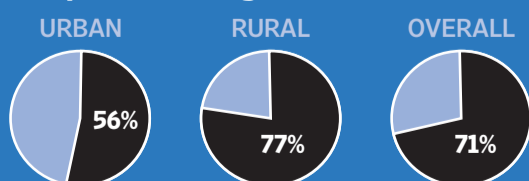


Although it is the responsibility of the government to provide education for all, the private sector has a role to play. However, it isn't easy for a private firm or an individual to start a school. The government should ease regulations and requirements concerning the creation of schools. Only then can the current shortage in schools be met.

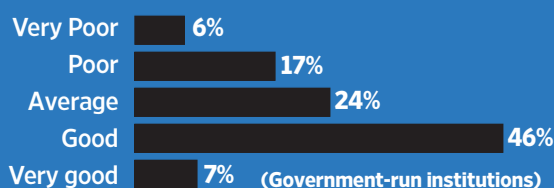
### Number of households that deal/have dealt with schools

82 million

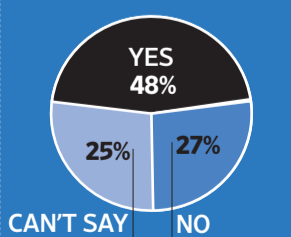
### Dependence on government schools



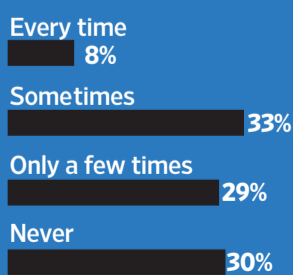
### Perception about quality of education



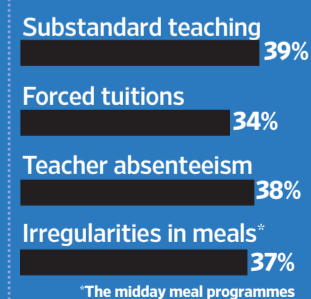
### Is there corruption in schools?



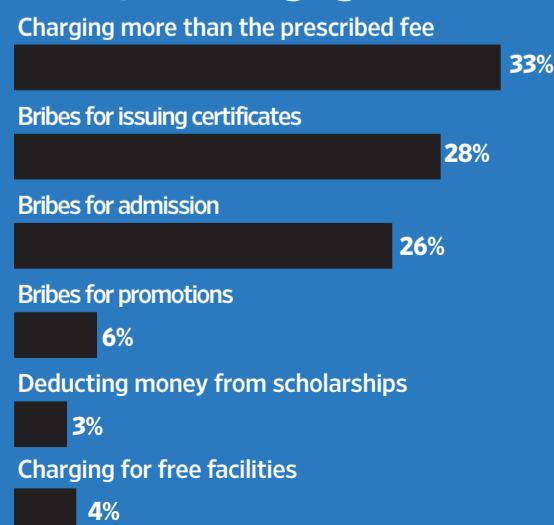
### How often do you face corruption?



### Common irregularities faced by parents



### The mechanics of bribes/overcharging



Total value of corruption in education (up to 12th standard)

Rs **4,137** crore/year