

### **Question: Why is it not the job of government to run schools?**

Parents are first and foremost responsible for the education of their children. Even the poor are extraordinarily concerned about their children's education. In India, where government schools have almost totally broken down, around 70 per cent of the children study in private for-profit schools. The poor work hard to save and scrimp small amounts of money to pay these private schools.

For their part, these private schools are focused on providing the best possible education, else parents will pull out their children from the school. It goes without saying that just like a private shop is accountable for the products it supplies if it wants repeat business, so also private schools are more accountable for student outcomes. It is hard to impossible to hold teachers to account in a government school system.

It is fundamentally impossible for any bureaucracy to manage hundreds of thousands of teachers in a dispassionate manner. The best government systems are racked with chronic inefficiency – and under the current governance system, with chronic corruption.

A government has a role in ensuring that the children of the poorest of the poor receive high quality education. This can be readily achieved through vouchers for the poor. But a government has no role in managing schools, which should be entirely left to the market.

The failure of the government managed system has nothing to do with the intentions of government teachers; it's just that the system can't work. When bad teachers cannot be fired they do not care to report in time and sometimes do not even attend school. Most such bad teachers have been appointed through corruption.

We should get the government completely out of school ownership and management. Privatizing all government schools (including letting them become for-profit) will ensure that all schools in India become fully accountable to parents and the country's land allocated to school education are managed efficiently.