

India Education Overview

Key Indicators

78.9% - Public spending on education, % of GDP, World Bank Data (2011)

63% - Literacy rate, (2011)

Key Policies and Public Programs

National Policy of Education and the Program of Action (1992): Programs have been set up to assist with reading, school support, student support, unified teacher training, and to revitalize the primary education programs. The latter, involves providing children with access to Primary Education, reading and writing materials, and reducing the gender gap between and expanding educational opportunities to disadvantaged social groups.

District Primary Education Program: Aims to improve primary education access in 23 districts in 6 states through strengthened district institutional capacity, community participation and awareness, facilities, teacher in-service training, learning materials, targeted interventions for girls, early childhood education and construction of new schools and classrooms

Operation Blackboard: Aims to supply the bare minimum crucial facilities to all primary schools in the country. The objective of the scheme is to provide primary school students with the necessary institutional equipment and instructional material to facilitate their education. In addition they provide salaries to teachers in schools with more than 100 students for two years.

Mid Day Meal: Main goal was to serve all children in Government and Government-aided primary schools a prepared Mid Day Meal with a minimum 300 calories of energy and 8-12 gram protein per day for a minimum of 200 days. The Scheme was extended and revised in 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008 to cover and increase cooking costs, while giving more calories per day and reaching more children.

'Sarva Siksha Abhiyan': Main goal of this program was that all children aged between 6 and 11 should complete primary education by the year 2007 and all children between 6 and 14 years of age should complete eight years of schooling by 2010. The plan covered the whole country and placed special emphasis on girls' education and education of Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) children as well as children with special needs.

Education leads to individual freedom and empowerment, which yields significant societal development gains and makes an individual self-reliant. It is seen as the foundation of society, enabling economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability. Education is therefore increasingly being viewed as a fundamental right across the globe and essential for the exercise of all human rights. All individuals are entitled to education.

Elementary education forms the foundation for all levels of learning and development. It empowers and equips individuals with analytical capabilities, instills confidence and fortifies them with determination to achieve goal-setting competencies. It therefore plays pivotal role in improving the socio-economic condition of the nation. For any country to grow, it is imperative that it has in place a strong elementary school-driven education system.

Education in India is provided by the public sector as well as by the private sector with control and funding coming from three levels: central, state and local. Education in India falls under the control of both the Union government and State Government, with some responsibilities lying with the Union and the states having autonomy for others. India has made progress in terms of

increasing the primary education attendance rate and expanding literacy to approximately three quarters of the population. India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to the economic rise of India. Much of the progress, especially in higher education and scientific research, has been credited to various public institutions. In 2012, the private institutions made up 5% of education providers and in terms of value, grew from US\$40 billion in 2008 to US\$68–70 billion in 2012.

According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2012, 96.5% of all rural children between the ages of 6-14 were enrolled in school. This is the fourth annual survey to report enrollment above 96%. 83% of all rural 15-16 year olds were enrolled in school.

In accordance with the Constitutional commitment to ensure free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years, provision of universal elementary education has been a salient feature of national policy since independence. This resolve has been spelt out emphatically in the National Policy of Education and the Programme of Action 1992. This program emphasizes universal access and enrolment, universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve. Furthermore, it aimed to revive Sanskrit and other classical languages for contemporary use.

Programs have since been set up to assist with reading, school support, student support, unified teacher training, and to revitalize the other primary education programs. The latter involves providing children with access to Primary Education, reading and writing materials, reducing the gender gap and expanding educational opportunities to disadvantaged social groups. India has about 688,000 primary schools and 110,000 secondary schools. According to statistics two third of school going age children in India are enrolled in schools but the figures are deceptive as many don't attend schools regularly. At least half of all students from rural areas drop out before completing school. The government has rolled out many plans to increase the percentage of students enrolled at the elementary level. Some of these plans have been successful. For example:

- 1) **District Primary Education Program** aims to increase primary education access in 23 districts in 6 states through strengthened district institutional capacity, community participation and awareness, facilities, teacher in-service training, learning materials, targeted interventions for girls, early childhood education and construction of new schools and classrooms
- 2) **Operation Blackboard** aims to supply the bare minimum crucial facilities to all primary schools in the country. The objective of the scheme is to provide students studying in primary settings with the necessary institutional equipment and instructional material to facilitate their education. In addition they provide salaries to additional teachers in schools with more than 100 students for two years.
- 3) **Mid Day Meal** demands that all children in Government and Government-aided primary schools be served a prepared Mid-Day Meal with a minimum content of 300 calories of energy and 8-12 grams protein per day for a minimum of 200 days. The program was extended and revised in 2002, 2004, 2006, 2007 and 2008 to cover and increase cooking costs, while giving more calories per day and reaching more children.

Elementary Education

According to the Constitution of India, elementary education is a fundamental right of children aged between 6-14 years. India has about 688,000 primary schools and 110,000 secondary schools. According to statistics, two third of school age children in India are enrolled in schools. However, these figures are deceptive because many of these children don't attend schools regularly. At least half of all students from rural areas drop out before completing school. The government has rolled out several plans to increase the percentage of students enrolled in elementary education. The plans such as 'Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), District Primary Education Program (DPEP), Operation Blackboard, Mid Day Meal have mostly been successful.

Literacy, Enrolment, and Gender

An important educational advancement indicator is literacy. According to the 2011 census, the number of literates in India is 763.5 million. Of this number, 482.7 million literates are in rural areas and 280.8 million literates in urban areas. Out of an increase of 202.8 million literates during the decade 2001-2011, rural areas accounted for 120.8 million and urban areas 82.0 million. The highest number of rural literates has been recorded in Uttar Pradesh (85.3 million). Maharashtra (40.1 million) has recorded the highest number of literates in urban areas. Male literates numbered 434.7 million (56.9% of total literates). The highest number of male literates in rural areas is returned in Uttar Pradesh (51.8 million), while the lowest are returned in Lakshadweep (5,949). In urban areas, the lowest number of male literates is returned in Lakshadweep (22,074) and the highest number in Maharashtra (21.9 million). Female literates numbered 328.8 million (43.1% of total literates). The highest female literates in rural areas are returned in Uttar Pradesh (33.5 million), while the lowest are returned in Lakshadweep (5,339). In urban areas, the lowest number of female literates is returned in Lakshadweep (19,191) and the highest number in Maharashtra (18.2 million).

- **Male literacy-** It works out to 80.9% (rural-77.2%; urban-88.8%). The highest male literacy rate in rural area is returned in Kerala (95.4%), while the lowest in Arunachal Pradesh (61.4%). In urban areas, the lowest male literacy rate is returned in Uttar Pradesh (80.4%) and the highest in Mizoram (98.0%).
- **Female literacy-** It works out to 64.6% (rural-57.9%; urban-79.1%). The highest male literacy rate in rural area is returned in Kerala (90.8%), while the lowest in Rajasthan (45.8%). In urban areas, the lowest male literacy rate is returned in Jammu & Kashmir (69.0%) and the highest in Mizoram (97.3%). Female literacy has increased 10.9% in the past 10 years

Meanwhile, enrolment at the primary and upper primary level has increased significantly. Enrolment in primary classes increased from 135.21 million in 2010-11 to 137.10 million in 2011-12. The total enrolment of children in schools, primary levels and above is over 193.05 million in 2011-12.

The ratio of male to female enrolment and percentage of female enrolment in primary and upper primary classes reveals that there is consistent improvement in female's share in enrolment. The average of 644 districts in 2011-12 indicates a ratio of male to female enrolment of 0.94 in primary classes and 0.95 in upper primary classes.

The improvement in female enrolment is also reflected in girls' share of total enrolment. In primary classes, the share of girls' enrolment in 2011-12 was 48.35 percent, and at the upper primary level it was 48.63 percent. The data indicates a steady increase in girls' enrolment over the years. The percentage of girls' enrolment in government-managed schools was found to be higher than in private managed schools for both primary and upper primary enrolment.

Availability of teachers in schools is an important variable for quality education. In 2011, there were about 6.7 million teachers engaged in teaching in schools imparting elementary education in the country. All the schools in the country now have an average of 3 or more teachers.

The percentage of teachers in Government schools was 64.13 percent in 2011-12 as compared to 65.55 in 2010-11, making the total of teachers in Government schools over 430,000. The percentage of teachers' in government-aided schools is 8.06, showing a decline since 2006-07, when it was 11.25 percent. The total number of private teachers in India is above 200,000 while the total number of teachers in madarsas is over 180,000. The total number of primary school teachers is over 250,000.

Enrollment in the 6-14 age group continues to be very high. But the proportion of out of school children has increased, especially among girls in the 11-14 age group. Reading levels continue to be a cause for serious concern. More than half of all children in grade 5 are at least three grade levels behind where they should be.

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