



Education

1 Primary Education in India

Primary education or elementary education is typically the first stage of compulsory education, coming between early childhood education and secondary education.

In India, the children in these classes are generally aged between 6 to 14 years.

The comparative figures of duration of primary education in different countries is given in the table.

15 YEARS Chile	12 YEARS Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Peru, Anguilla	11 YEARS UK, New Zealand, Mauritius & 6 other countries
10 YEARS France, Canada, Norway, Spain, Iceland, Australia and 14 others	9 YEARS Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia, Hungary, Denmark, Finland, Sweden & 27 others	8 YEARS India, China, Cuba, Switzerland & 17 others
7 YEARS Brazil, Romania, Sudan and four others	6 YEARS Philippines, Georgia, Trinidad-Tobago and Sao Tome & Principe	5 YEARS Saudi Arabia, UAE, Nepal, Iraq & seven others
4 YEARS Iran, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Madagascar & Equatorial Guinea	NO LEGAL GUARANTEES US, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Singapore, Monaco, & 49 others	INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE Palestinian, Montenegro and 12 others

Despite legal guarantee, some countries charge fees & other costs involved with education. Source: Education For All Global Monitoring Report 2010

1.1 Primary Education System in India



The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is the apex body for school education in India. The NCERT provides support and technical assistance to a number of schools in India and oversees many aspects of enforcement of education policies. In India, the various bodies governing school education system are:

- The state government boards, in which the majority of Indian children are enrolled.
- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) board.
- The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) board.
- Islamic Madrasah schools, whose boards are controlled by local state governments, or autonomous, or affiliated with Darul Uloom Deoband.
- Autonomous schools like Woodstock School, Auroville, Patha Bhavan and Ananda Marga Gurukula.

1.2 Right to Education

The 86th Constitutional Amendment, 2002 inserted Article 21A in the Constitution, making the Right to Education a fundamental right. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 became operative in the country on 1st April 2010.

Main provisions of the act are:

- Every child between the ages of six to fourteen years shall have the right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school, till completion of elementary education.
- No child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education.
- Where a child above six years of age has not been admitted to any school, or though admitted, could not complete his or her elementary education, then, he or she shall be admitted in a class appropriate to his or her age.
- The appropriate government and local authority shall establish a school, if it is not established, within the given area in a period of three years from the commencement of this Act.
- The Central and the State Governments shall have concurrent responsibility for providing funds for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

Status of seats filled under RTE

Based on the report “State of the Nation: RTE Section 12(1)(C)” conducted by IIM Ahmedabad and Central Square Foundation, the provisions of the act has been poorly implemented with only 29% of the 21.4 lakh seats reserved for them getting filled. The report is based on the analysis of District Information System for Education (DISE) 2013-14 data.

- There is a wide variation across states. Delhi is right on top having filled 92% of 38,297 seats for children from economically weaker sections (EWS), Madhya Pradesh has filled 88% of 1.82 lakh EWS seats. Undivided Andhra Pradesh has an abysmal record of filling only 0.2% of 1.72 lakh seats. Uttar Pradesh has filled 3% of 5.84 lakh seats.
- In 2013-14, out of 2.06 lakh private unaided schools with Class I, only about 45,000 schools reported enrolling students under EWS category.
- The report also highlights a fair amount of inconsistency between the DISE data and data on the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan website and state websites.

1.3 Status of Primary Education in India

- **Enrolment:** Primary school enrolment in India has been a success story, largely due to various programs and drives to increase enrolment even in remote areas. Enrolment has reached at least 96 % since 2009, and girls make up 56% of new students between 2007 and 2013.
- **Access to schools-** Improvements to infrastructure has led to better access to schools. India now has 1.4 million schools and 7.7 million teachers so that 98 per cent of habitations have a lower primary school (class I-V) within one km and 92 per cent have an upper primary school (class VI-VIII) within a 3 Km walking distance.
- **MDG Goal 2-** India is on the path of achieving the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015.

1.4 Private Sector’s Contribution to Primary Education

- Private sector is making huge inroads into education in rural India. By 2019, when the RTE Act would complete 10 years, private sector will be the majority service provider.
- The private sector involvement will also be strengthened by 25 % quota of the government (under the RTE Act).
- Besides private schools, parents also spend considerable amount of money on private tuitions, making quality education more inaccessible to people without money.

1.5 Issues Related to Primary Education

1.5.1 Toilets

- **Despite availability of toilets at government schools, majority of them remain non-functional owing to lack of water supply.**
- **Lack of toilets has contributed to increasing drop-outs, particularly among female students.**

1.5.2 Dropouts

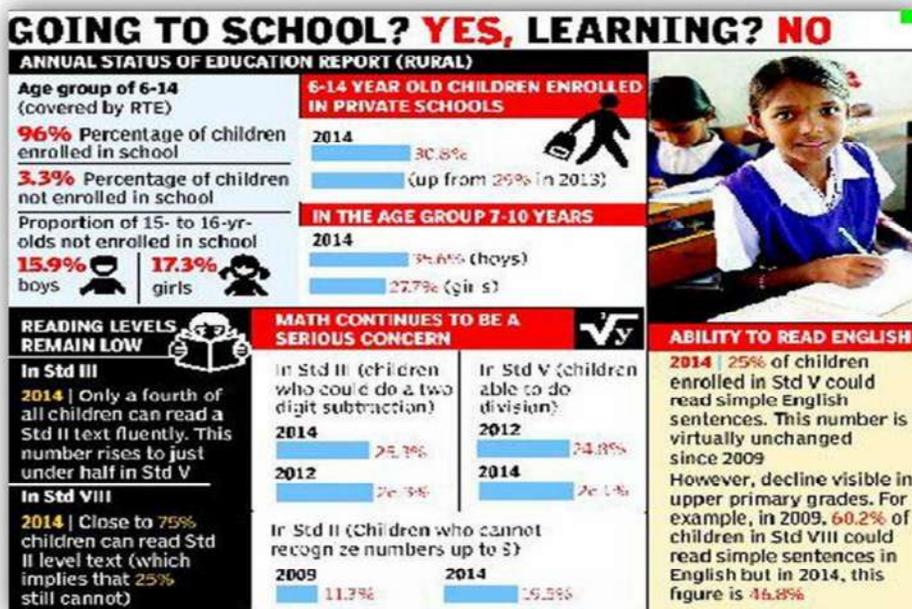
- Nationally, 29 percent of children drop out before completing five years of primary school, and 43 percent before finishing upper primary school. High school completion is only 42 percent.
- This lands India among the top five nations for out-of-school children of primary school age.

1.5.3 Learning Outcomes

The quality of learning is a major issue and reports show that children are not achieving class-appropriate learning levels.

1.5.3.1 ASER Survey 2014

- The ASER survey has shown that despite improvement in the facilities provided by the rural schools of India, the students' performance has not gone up.
- The enrolment level is near universal with 96.7% of children registered in schools during 2014, the same as 2013.
- The proportion of all children in Class V who can read a Class II text has improved by 1 percentage point from 2013 - 48.1% children of Class V could read a Class II text in 2014 against 47% in the previous year.
- In 2005, when the first ASER report was published, three out of five children in Class V were able to read a Class II text.
- Only 44.1% of Class VIII students in rural India managed to do a division in 2014, as against 46% in 2013.
- Children's ability to read English is relatively unchanged in primary school. In 2014, about 25% of children enrolled in Class V could read simple English sentences. This number is virtually unchanged since 2009
- The situation is worse in middle school. In 2009, 60.2% of children in Class VIII could read simple sentences in English but in 2014, this figure was 46.8%.
- Some education experts blame the norm of the Right to Education Act which requires the child to be admitted in an age-appropriate class.
- Some experts feel that the lack of pre-schools might have weakened the performance of students in primary and upper primary as their basics were not clear.
- Another reason could be that students in rural areas may not be practising at home as they could be the first generation to receive education. The government needs to hold workshops for parents to educate themselves so that they can help their children to study at home.
- Interest in education starts from early years. One cannot develop interest in education at the age of 6. According to the early childhood policy of the Indian government, a 3-year-old should be subjected to play-based learning, and once the child turns 5, reading, writing and number work should start. That is the time when one starts making a connection with one's brain. Almost 98 per cent of the brain develops in early age. The brain is not getting that foundation in an early stage and so there is high dropout.



1.5.3.2 A Comparison between ASER survey and National Achievement Survey by NCERT

ASER Survey	NAS survey
Conducted on households	Conducted on schools
ASER is meant to be an analysis of basic competencies in reading and mathematics across rural India, conducted by community volunteers, in the child's home	NAS is a school-based, grade specific, country-wide assessment (covering both rural and urban) but limited to government and government aided schools
Quality of learning measured by reading, writing and arithmetic has either shown no improvement or actually worsened.	Significant disparities across states
Increase in mid-day meal served in government schools. Compared to last year's 97.7 per cent, 99.50 per cent schools now serve meals. Kitchen sheds have also increased.	The rural-urban divide also seems to have been bridged with most of the Indian states showing no significant disparity between rural and urban students.

1.6 General Issues in Rural Schools

- Private resources for promoting rural education are minimal to non-existent. Allocated public resources are more often than not, not effectively utilized.
- Single teacher schools, most of them with just a single room, are unable to provide even the basic environment for learning.
- Lack of adequate classroom facilities means that children from different age groups typically sit in the same classroom, leading to boredom and disinterest.
- Driven by pressing short-term economic needs, most parents are reluctant to send their children to school. They often pose obstacles to learning. In some cases, the State has to offer incentives, such as subsidized rice through the mid-day meal scheme to attract children to school.

1.7 General Issues in Urban Schools

- Teaching and learning methods used in most schools discourage questioning, learning, application and creativity.
- An education system focused on exams and marks ("factory approach") has produced few world-class creators and original thinkers.
- Teachers are the missing link in Indian education. Although demand for quality teachers greatly exceeds supply, the teaching profession has become a profession of last resort attracting either low calibre individuals or people for whom teaching is a hobby or only a supplementary source of family income.
- Teacher training and education institution standards have declined over the years and little effective knowledge and skill transfer takes place. Like much of the education system, teacher education has become pedantic and is divorced from application. A degree in teacher education is no longer therefore a guarantee of teaching skill.

1.8 Some Suggestions

• Teacher Education

- The lack of learning in India's schools call for changes to teacher education. A collaboration between foreign universities' schools of education with Indian teacher training institutes is necessary.
- Such a collaboration could help build capacity and upgrade teacher education both in terms of curriculum and pedagogy, which is much needed in Indian teacher education institutions like the District Institutes of Education and Training.
- Such collaborations could be facilitated through technology, collaborative research projects, teacher exchanges, and subsidized online courses for teachers in India.

• Building Good Assessment Systems

- Good assessments are useful at the classroom level for teachers to gauge their students' understanding and also to inform policy.
- The need for regular and useful assessments in India is something that Indian departments of education are focusing on at the central and state level.

• Gender studies education:

- Boys and girls should be taught to think about gender equality from an early age and the curriculum should include gender studies with appropriate teacher training.

• Skills Development

- Making education more practically relevant to the labor market should be a priority.

• Resources

- Currently spending on education is low in India, and stands at 3.4 percent of the GDP. This needs to be increased.

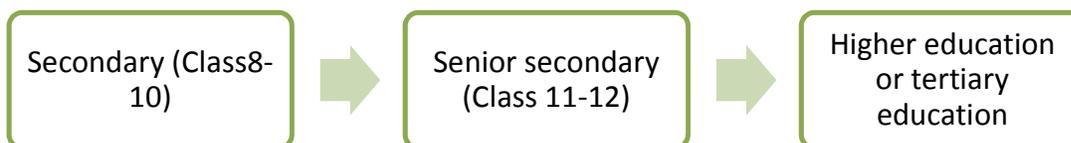
Targets for the Twelfth Plan

1. Ensure universal access and, in keeping with letter and spirit of the RTE Act, provide good-quality free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years;
2. Improve attendance and reduce dropout rates at the elementary level to below 10 per cent and lower the percentage of out-of-school children (OoSC) at the elementary level to below 2 per cent for all socio-economic and minority groups and in all States;
3. Increase enrolments at higher levels of education and raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the secondary level to over 90 per cent, at the Senior Secondary level to over 65 per cent;
4. Raise the overall literacy rate to over 80 per cent and reduce the gender gap in literacy to less than 10 per cent;
5. Provide at least one year of well-supported/well-resourced pre-school education in primary schools to all children, particularly those in educationally backward blocks (EBBs); and

6. Improve learning outcomes that are measured, monitored and reported independently at all levels of school education with a special focus on ensuring that all children master basic reading and numeracy skills by class 2 and skills of critical thinking, expression and problem solving by class 5.

2 Higher Education in India

2.1 Education System after Primary Level in India



Generally higher education programmes result in the awarding of certificates, diplomas or academic degrees.

University Grants Commission is the main governing body at the tertiary level, which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by autonomous institutions established by the UGC. These institutions include: AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education), NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council), MCI (Medical Council of India) etc.

India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and China.

2.2 Achievements of Higher Education

- Some institutions of India, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), National Institute of Technology (NITs), International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT-H), University of Mumbai and Jawaharlal Nehru University have been globally acclaimed for their standard of education.
- The IITs enroll about 8000 students annually and the alumni have contributed to both the growth of the private sector and the public sectors of India.
- Foreign universities actively seek Indian students.

Performance of Indian Universities in Global Rankings

- Not even one Indian higher education institution made it to the top 200 club in the Times Higher Education (THE) rankings for 2014-15. India marks its presence in the 276-300 range.
- The QS World University Rankings published in 2013 ranked IIT Delhi at number 222 with a 49.4% score, IIT Bombay at 233, and IIT Kanpur at 295.
- The University of Mumbai was ranked 41 among the Top 50 Engineering Schools of the world by America's news broadcasting firm Business Insider in 2012 and was the only university in the list from BRICS nations viz. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- The Indian School of Business situated in Hyderabad was ranked number 12 in global MBA rankings by the *Financial Times* of London in 2010 while the All India Institute of Medical Sciences has been recognized as a global leader in medical research and treatment.

Problem Areas

Though some Indian universities score better on academic reputation, on the other parameters the poor performance can be attributed to:

- Lack of corpus of research grants comparable to global standards.
- Lacunae in recruitment and retention of students from India and abroad.

Suggestions: To improve domestically and to compete globally, following steps can be taken:

- Generating a healthy competition by incentivising good performance i.e. treating universities on the basis of their outcome and performance.
- Identifying and empowering 50 top universities in every possible manner to seek global excellence as done by Russia.
- Granting extensive autonomy to the universities in terms of curriculum, recruitment, tenure and agenda setting with greater say of the faculty and students.
- Increasing funding, including corporate funding for Indian universities.
- Incentivising research and publications among faculty members.

Thus, changes are required at the level of policymaking, regulation and governance in higher education for Indian universities to achieve global excellence and higher rankings.

2.3 Issues Related to Higher Education in India

- Driven by market opportunities and entrepreneurial zeal, many institutions are taking advantage of the lax regulatory environment to offer 'degrees' not approved by Indian authorities, and many institutions are functioning as pseudo non-profit organisations, developing sophisticated financial methods to siphon off the 'profits'.
- Regulatory authorities like UGC and AICTE have been trying to extirpate private universities that run courses with no affiliation or recognition. Students from rural and semi urban background often fall prey to these institutes and colleges.
- One of the fundamental weaknesses of the system is lack of transparency and recommendations have been made to mandate high standards of data disclosures by institutions on performance.

2.4 Foreign Universities in India

Present rules permit foreign universities to collaborate with Indian partners through various mechanisms. However, few globally renowned universities collaborate with India. Moreover, for opening a campus in India, an educational institution needs to be in the top 400 in one of three global rankings:

- The UK-based Times Higher Education Ranking
- The UK-based Quacquarelli Symonds ranking
- The China-based Shanghai Jiao Tong University rankings

There are three views on the issue of foreign educational institutions operating in India:

- Proponents argue that it would increase choices for students and enhance competition in the sector. Indian students pay heavy tuition fees to foreign universities. It will help Indian students get foreign education at an Indian price. Additionally, it will help those Indian students who are unable to go abroad due to financial constraints.
- Secondly, there are some experts who support limited entry based on the reputation of the institution.
- Opponents argue that it would limit access and lead to commercialisation. It is not a great idea to aim for foreign investment in education when there is underutilisation of domestic capital in the sector. High-ranking educational institutes are reluctant to open new campuses for the fear of brand and quality dilution.

Having a mature higher education system has its own benefits and many nations in the world such as the USA, the UK and Australia are reaping those benefits. They attract a significant number of students from countries all over the world. This not only brings foreign money but also adds to their diversity which has its own intangible benefits for a country.

Today's requirement is not of foreign universities but upgradation of existing universities which are able to compete with foreign universities. There is no doubt that there is a huge demand and supply gap in our higher education system. Inviting foreign universities to fill this gap seems attractive, but this should not stop us from building our higher education system indigenously. The Indian education system should not be degree-driven, instead it must be dividend-driven.

2.5 Initiatives taken by the Government

- Government is planning to bring 800 experts, industry experts and researchers from across the world to teach in institutions in the country, with no cost to the students.
- The Government is also planning to digitise every certificate of the students, from school level to the higher education level.

2.6 Opportunities and Suggestions

Given its low-cost education structure, India presents one of the best opportunities in the world for generating returns from investment in education. Modest injections of capital and resources can produce significant improvements in education quality and output.

- With the given resource limitations, a case can be made to focus on low capital-intensive skill-based education.
- In Korea, the best students enter the teaching profession because the social status of a teacher is very high. We need such a system in India.
- The government must help students with more scholarships. But, a student should be in a position to avail of the scholarship irrespective of whether he attends a government or private institution.

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