



State of Education Among Children and Adolescents in Urban India

Towards Equity and Inclusion

India has made significant improvement in elementary education which is reflected in the high number of students enrolled in schools. However, according to the latest NFHS data (2015-16), 8.7% urban children aged 6-13 years had not attended schools. Also, with an increase in educational levels, the transition rate declined with a rise in repetition and drop-out rates. Learning outcomes among students were far from satisfactory. One-half of students in urban India were lagging in achieving the desired (basic) proficiency in language and mathematics subjects at class V in government and government-aided schools.¹

Key Policy Messages

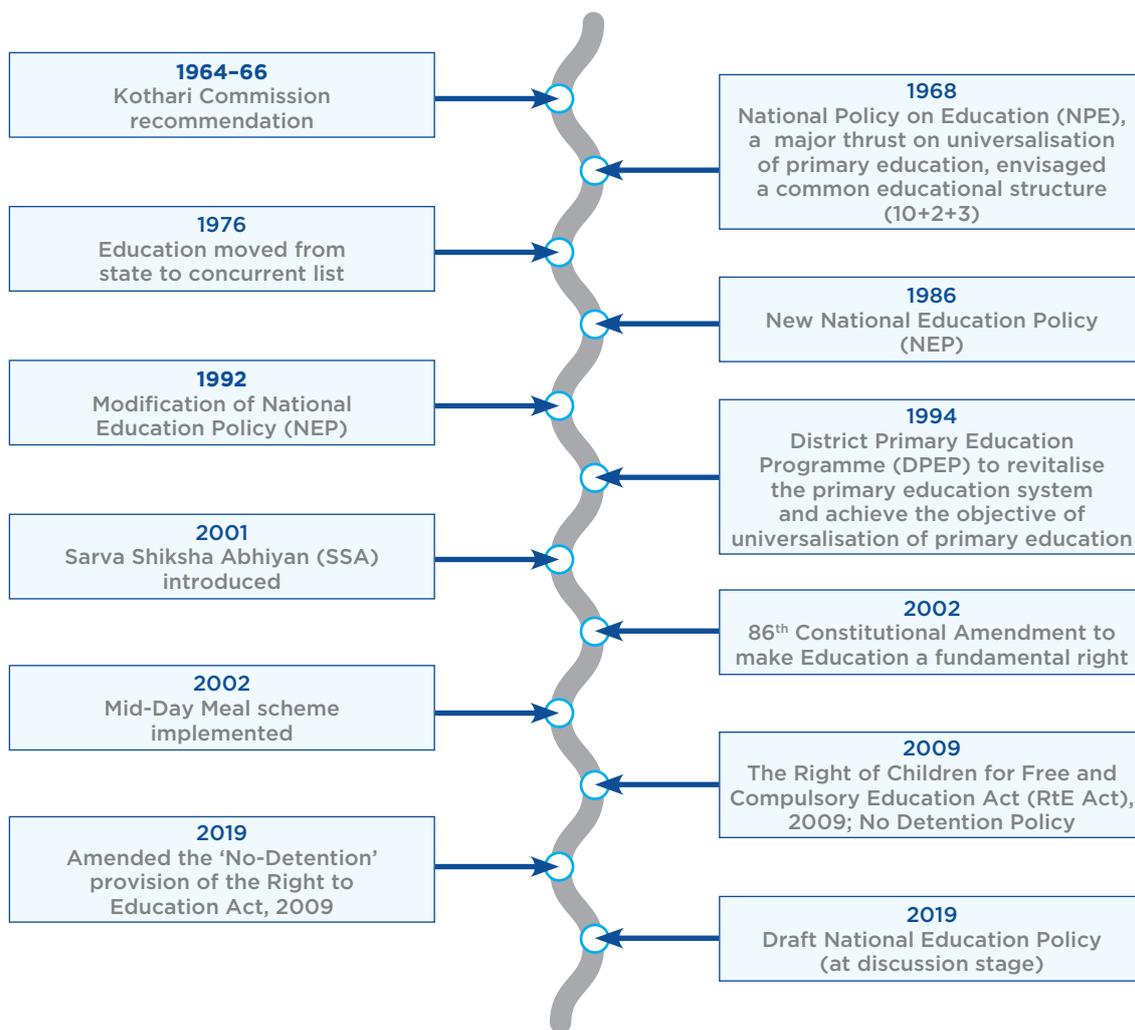
- Need to shift the objective from 'universalisation of enrolment' to 'universalisation of attendance'
- Special drive for 'age-appropriate education' and better 'learning outcomes'
- Extend the coverage of the Right to Education Act, 2009 to secondary and higher-secondary education
- Develop Standard Operating Protocol for online learning and teaching

Salient Features of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (The Right to Education Act), 2009

- Free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years
- Mandates that out-of-school children should be admitted to an age appropriate class and provided with special training to enable the child to come up to age appropriate learning level
- Mandates private schools to reserve 25% seats for underprivileged children
- Prohibits all kinds of physical punishment and mental harassment, discrimination based on gender, caste, class and religion
- Prohibits donation, capitation fee, screening test/interview of child or parents
- Teacher-student ratio, qualification of teachers as well as availability of various basic infrastructural provisions is fixed
- No child can be detained or expelled till class 8. (This is now changed through the RtE Second Amendment Bill, 2019 where any student who fails to score 40% overall marks after the re-assessment, can be detained in class 5 and 8.

¹ National Achievement Survey (NAS), 2017

Legal Provisions and Policies



Major Reasons for Not Attending School Among Urban Children and Adolescents (6-17 years)



Source: NFHS-4, 2015-16

Note: 'Supply-side problem' includes 'school too far away', 'transport problem', 'no proper schooling facilities for girls', 'no female teacher', 'did not get admission'; 'required for work' includes 'household work', 'work on farm/family business', 'work for payment', 'care of siblings'; 'others' includes 'further education not considered necessary', 'not safe to send girls (only applicable to girls)', 'others', 'don't know' etc.

Key Facts

Attendance

- Among urban children and adolescents (6-17 years), 12% did not attend school. About three-fourths of them belonged to economically poor² households
- Among the poor households, only 9% children (6-13 years) did not attend school. This share rises to 52% for adolescents (16-17 years)
- The share of girls (11%) aged 6-17 years who have not attended school is lower than that of boys (12%)

Transition

- While 98% students have successfully transitioned from primary to upper primary level, only 78% transitioned from secondary to higher secondary in 2016-17
- Transition rate from primary to upper primary was low in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Rajasthan

Completion

- 67% of children completed upper-primary on completion of 14 years of age and 42% completed higher-secondary on the attainment of 18 years of age
- 55% of urban poor children completed upper-primary on completion of 14 years of age while only 24% of urban poor children completed higher secondary at the attainment of 18 years of age
- Over-age education has been most prevalent in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Assam

Learning Achievement in Government and Aided Schools

- Only 49% students in language and 40% in mathematics have attained desired (basic) proficiency at class V
- Girls out-performed boys in achievement of basic proficiency level in language subjects, while they were at par in mathematics subjects at class V
- Basic proficiency level is low in Delhi, Telangana, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh

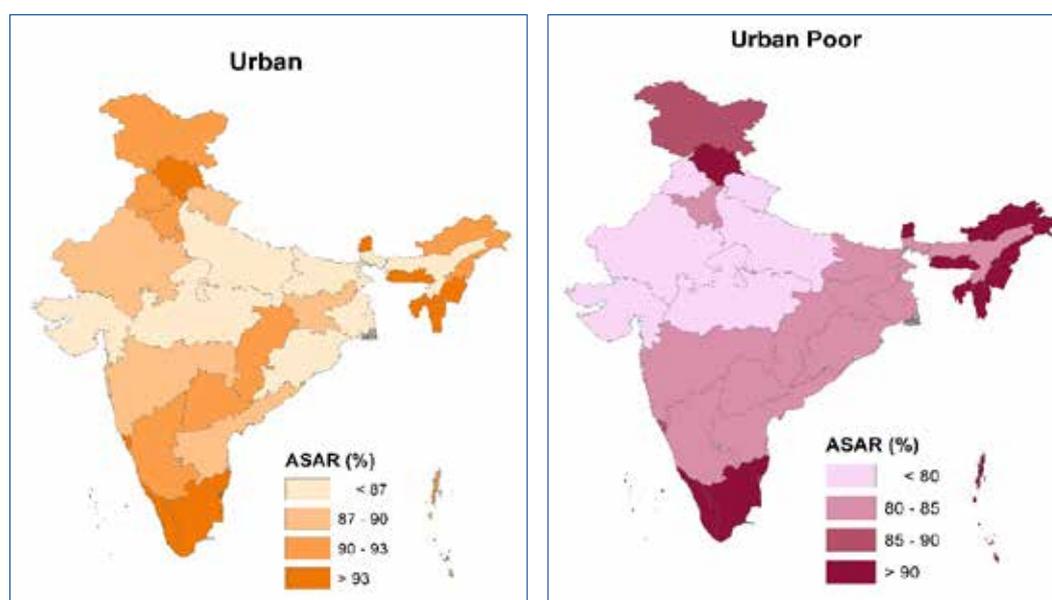
Ability to Use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools

- 61% adolescents (15-19 years) were able to use ICT tools such as desktop computer, laptop, smartphone and tablet
- Among poor households, only 43% were able to use the above ICT tools
- Boys have better access to ICT tools compared to girls
- Share of children and adolescents ability to use ICT tools is higher in states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh

Expenditure in School Education

- Two-fifths of the out-of-school children and adolescents (6-17 years) did not attend school due to high costs
- Households spent Rs. 16,141 per student in school education (class I to XII) in 2017-18, 40% of which was spent on private coaching
- The out-of-pocket expenditure per student in private schools is four times higher than in government schools
- Households spent more money on education for boys than girls across all levels of school education

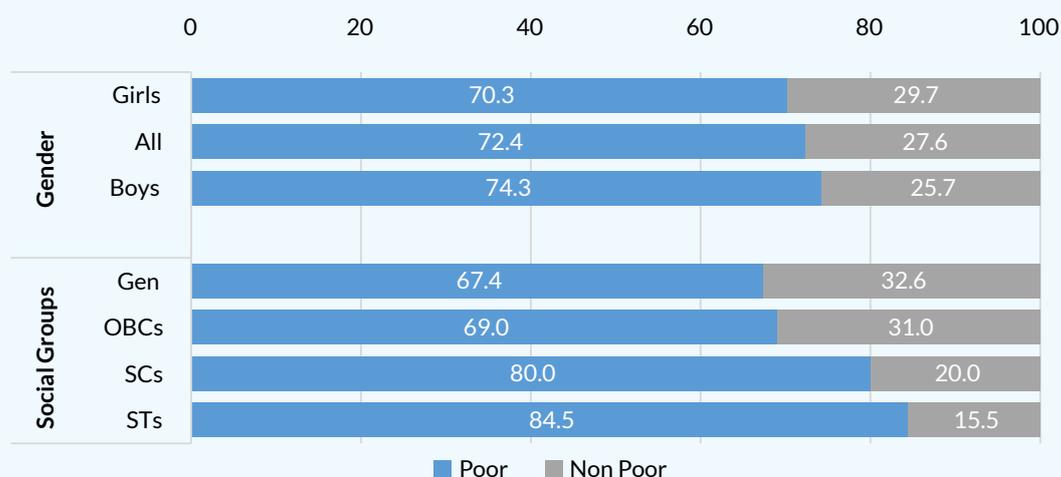
Age-specific Attendance Rate (ASAR) Among Urban Children and Adolescents (6-17 Years)



Source: Computed from NFHS-4, 2015-16

² Bottom two urban wealth quintile classes have been classified as 'poor' while the top three urban quintile classes are termed as 'non-poor' in urban India in NFHS-4 (2015-16) data

Distribution (%) of Urban Children and Adolescents (6-17 Years) Not Attending School by Household's Wealth Status



Source: NFHS-4, 2015-16

Impact of COVID-19 on School Education

- COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown to contain its spread has posed several challenges for school education globally, and India is no exception
- Besides the disruption in the school year, there is a risk that prolonged out-of-school learning may lead to alienation of children from school systems and increase the existing inequalities
- Only a handful of private schools have been able to adopt e-learning solutions
- Accessibility to online education is less prevalent among the poor due to the unavailability and inability to use ICT tools
- Students from migrant households in cities will be left out from learning due to reverse migration and uncertainty of parents' livelihoods
- High fees in private schools at a time of uncertainty in livelihoods are forcing parents to shift their children to government schools

Policy Recommendations

- While in general, 'supply-side constraints' have been reduced with increased access to schools, there is a need to make the teaching-learning process more "learner-centric" to reduce failure and drop-outs
- There should be a nationwide campaign for age-appropriate education
- Remedial classes for needy students after regular class hours should be arranged
- Build teaching capacity for socio-emotional learning to promote sustainable development
- Deploy teachers according to the strength of students, and establish a transparent and robust system for teacher recruitment
- Focus on improving digital infrastructure and training to enhance digital literacy and online learning
- Develop a standard operating protocol for online learning, and create the proper infrastructure
- Restructure the curriculum to avoid long-term interruption in academic activities
- Adopt open-source digital learning solutions and Learning Management Software to facilitate teachers to conduct online teaching. The DIKSHA platform, which is present in all states, can be further strengthened to ensure accessibility of learning to students

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