Education in India

Education in India is primarily managed by the state-run [public education](#) system, which falls under the command of the government at three levels: [central](#), [state](#) and [local](#).[7] Under various articles of the [Indian Constitution](#) and the [Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009](#), free and compulsory education is provided as a [fundamental right](#) to [children](#) aged 6 to 14. The approximate ratio of the total number of public schools to private schools in India is 10:3.[8]

Education in India covers different levels and types of learning, such as [early childhood education](#), [primary education](#), [secondary education](#), [higher education](#), and [vocational education](#). It varies significantly according to [different](#) factors, such as location (urban or rural), [gender](#), [caste](#), [religion](#), [language](#), and [disability](#).

Education in India faces several challenges, including improving access, quality, and learning outcomes, reducing dropout rates, and enhancing employability. It is shaped by national and state-level policies and programmes such as the [National Education Policy 2020](#), [Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan](#), [Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan](#), [Midday Meal Scheme](#), and [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao](#). Various national and international stakeholders, including [UNICEF](#), [UNESCO](#), the [World Bank](#), civil society organisations, academic institutions, and the private sector, contribute to the development of the education system.[9][10]

Education in India is plagued by issues such as grade inflation,[11] corruption, unaccredited institutions offering fraudulent credentials and lack of employment prospects for graduates.[12][13] Half of all graduates in India are considered unemployable.[14]

This raises concerns about prioritizing Western viewpoints over indigenous knowledge. It has also been argued that this system has been associated with an emphasis on rote learning and external perspectives.[15][16][17]

In contrast, countries such as [Germany](#), known for its engineering expertise, [France](#), recognized for its advancements in aviation, [Japan](#), a global leader in technology, and [China](#), an emerging hub of high-tech innovation, conduct education primarily in their respective native languages. However, India continues to use [English](#) as the principal medium of instruction in higher education and professional domains.[18][19][20]

Education system

Until 1976, under the Indian constitution, each state was responsible for the schools that fell under its governance; states possessed full (Unless and otherwise a Conflict between

Union govt. The state government had jurisdiction over creating and implementing education policies. After the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution of India was passed in 1976, education fell under the concurrent list,[21] which allowed the federal government (also known as the central government) to recommend education policies and programmes, even if state governments continued to wield extensive autonomy in implementing these programmes.[21] In a country as large as India, with 28 states and eight union territories, this has created vast differences between states' policies, plans, programmes, and initiatives relating to school education. Periodically, national policy frameworks are created to guide states in creating state-level programmes and policies. State governments and local government bodies manage the majority of primary and upper primary schools and the number of government-managed elementary schools is growing. Simultaneously, the number and proportion managed by private bodies is growing. In 2005–2006, 83.13% of schools offering elementary education (Grades 1–8) were managed by government, and 16.86% of schools were under private management (excluding children in unrecognised schools, schools established under the Education Guarantee Scheme and in alternative learning centres). Of those schools managed privately, one third are 'aided' and two thirds are 'unaided'. Enrolment in Grades 1–8 is shared between government and privately managed schools in the ratio 73:27. However, in rural areas this ratio is higher (80:20), and in urban areas much lower (36:66).[22] At the school level, data on enrolment, infrastructure, and teacher availability is collected through the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE+).[23].

In the 2011 Census, about 73% of the population was reported to be literate, with 81% for males and 65% for females. National Statistical Commission surveyed literacy to be 77.7% in 2017–18, 84.7% for males and 70.3% for females.[24] This compares to 1981 when the respective rates were 41%, 53%, and 29%. In 1951 the rates were 18%, 27% and 9%.[25] India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to its economic development.[26][27] Much of the progress, especially in higher education and scientific research, has been credited to various public institutions. While enrolment in higher education has increased steadily over the past decade, reaching a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 26.3% in 2019,[28] there still remains a significant distance to catch up with tertiary education enrolment levels of developed nations,[29] a challenge that will be necessary to overcome in order to continue to reap a demographic dividend from India's comparatively young population.[citation needed]

Demand for private schools has been growing over the years.[30]While a consensus over what is the most significant driver of this growth in private schooling has not yet emerged, some authors have attributed this to a higher demand for English-medium education[31], a dissatisfaction with the quality of public schools,[32][33] greater affordability of private

schools,[30] and non-availability of the preferred field of study in government schools.[34] After the adoption of the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009, private schools were required to be 'government-recognized'. A private school would be eligible for government recognition when it met certain conditions.[30]

At the primary and secondary level, India has a large private school system complementing the government-run schools, with 29% of students receiving private education in the 6 to 14 age group.[35] Certain post-secondary technical schools are also private. The private education market in India had a revenue of US$450 million in 2008, but is projected to be a US$40 billion market.[36]

As per 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 trend of high enrollment has continued consistently since the mid-2000s. Between 2007 and 2014, India maintained an average school enrolment rate of 95% for children aged 6–14, according to ASER reports. As an outcome, the number of students in the age group 6–14 who are not enrolled in school has come down to 2.8% in the academic year 2018 (ASER 2018).[37] Another report from 2013 stated that there were 229 million students enrolled in different accredited urban and rural schools of India, from Class I to XII, indicating a steady growth, including a 19% increase in enrolment of girls since 2002.[38] While India is moving toward universal enrollment, concerns remain about the quality of education, especially in government-run schools. While more than 95 percent of children attend primary school, just 40 percent of Indian adolescents attend secondary school (Grades 9–12). Since 2000, the World Bank has committed over $2 billion to support India's efforts in improving educational infrastructure and learning outcomes. Teacher absenteeism remains a significant challenge, with studies indicating that nearly 25% of teachers may be absent on any given day.[39] States of India have introduced tests and education assessment system to identify and improve such schools.[40] The Human Rights Measurement Initiative finds that India is achieving only 79.0% of what should be possible at its level of income for the right to education.[41]

Although there are private schools in India, they are highly regulated in terms of what they can teach, in what form they can operate (they must be a non-profit to run any accredited educational institution), and all the other aspects of the operation. Hence, the differentiation between government schools and private schools can be misleading.[42] However, in a report by Geeta Gandhi Kingdon entitled: *The Emptying of Public Schools and Growth of Private Schools in India*, it is said that for sensible education-policy making, it is vital to take account of the various changing trends in the size of the

private and public schooling sectors in India. Ignoring these trends involves the risk of poor policies/legislation, with adverse effects on children's education.[43]

In January 2019, India had over 900 universities and 40,000 colleges.[44] In India's higher education system, a significant number of seats are reserved under affirmative action policies for the historically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. In universities, colleges, and similar institutions affiliated with the central government, there is a maximum of 50% of reservations applicable to these disadvantaged groups, at the state level it can vary. Maharashtra had 73% reservations in 2014, which is the highest percentage of reservations in India.[45][46][47][48]

History

Main article: History of education in India

A child learning alphabets, showing the first letters of the Brahmi alphabet, 2nd century BCE.[49]

Early education in India commenced under the supervision of a *guru* or preceptor after initiation.[50] The education was delivered through Gurukula. The relationship between the Guru and his Shishya (students /disciples) was a very important part of education.[51] Taxila is an example of an ancient higher learning institute in ancient India, possibly dating as far back as the 8th century BCE. However, it is debatable whether or not this can be regarded as a university in modern-day terms, since the teachers living there may not have had official membership of particular colleges, and there did not seem to have existed purpose-built lecture halls and residential quarters in Taxila, in contrast to the later Nalanda university in eastern India. Nalanda was the oldest university-system of education in the world in the modern sense of university, and all subjects there were taught in the Pali language.[52]

Secular institutions cropped up along Buddhist monasteries. These institutions imparted practical education such as medical studies. A number of urban learning centres became increasingly visible from the period between 500 BCE to 400 CE. The important urban

centres of learning were Nalanda (in modern-day Bihar), Vikramashila, and Odantapuri among others.[53] These institutions systematically imparted knowledge and attracted a number of foreign students to study topics such as Buddhist Páli literature, logic, and páli grammar. Chanakya, a Brahmin teacher, was among the most famous teachers, associated with the founding of the Mauryan Empire.[54]

Shramanas and Brahmanas historically offered education by means of donations, rather than charging fees or the procurement of funds from students or their guardians.[55] Later, stupas and temples also became centres of education; religious education was compulsory, but secular subjects were also taught. Students were required to be brahmacharis or celibate. The knowledge in these orders was often related to the tasks a section of the society had to perform. Arts, crafts, Ayurveda, architecture, etc., were taught.

With the advent of Islam in India the traditional methods of education increasingly came under Islamic influence.[56] Pre-Mughal rulers such as Qutb-ud-din Aybak and other Muslim rulers initiated institutions which imparted religious knowledge.[56] Scholars such as Nizamuddin Auliya and Moinuddin Chishti became prominent educators and established Islamic monasteries.[56] Students from Bukhara and Afghanistan visited India to study humanities and science.[56] Islamic institution of education in India included traditional *madrassas* and *maktabs* which taught grammar, philosophy, mathematics, and law influenced by the Greek traditions inherited by Persia and the Middle East before Islam spread from these regions into India.[57] A feature of traditional Islamic education was its emphasis on the connection between science and humanities.[57]

British rule and the subsequent establishment of educational institutions saw the introduction of English as a medium of instruction. Some schools taught the curriculum [58] through vernacular languages with English as a second language. The term "pre-modern" was used for three kinds of schools – the Arabic and Sanskrit schools which taught Muslim or Hindu sacred literature and the Persian schools which taught Persian literature. The vernacular schools across India taught reading and writing the vernacular language and arithmetic.[59] British education became solidified into India as missionary schools were established during the 1820s.[60]

18th century

Main article: Dharampal § Relevance

Dharampal was instrumental in changing the understanding of pre-colonial education in India.[61][62] Dharampal's primary works are based on documentation by the colonial government on Indian education, agriculture, technology, and arts during the period of

colonial rule in India.[63][64] His pioneering historical research, conducted intensively over a decade, provides evidence from extensive early British administrators' reports of the widespread prevalence of indigenous educational institutions in Bombay, Bengal and Madras Presidencies as well as in the Punjab, teaching a sophisticated curriculum, with daily school attendance by about 30% of children aged 6–15.[65]

In 1818, the fall of Maratha Empire lead to large parts of India coming under British rule.[66] During the decade of 1820–30, detailed surveys of the indigenous education system that were prevalent in their provinces were conducted by the British.[66]

G.L. Prendergast, a member of the Governor's Council in Bombay Presidency, recorded the following about indigenous schools on 27 June 1821:[67]

"I need hardly mention what every member of the Board knows as well as I do, that there is hardly a village, great or small, throughout our territories, in which there is not at least one school, and in larger villages more; many in every town, and in large cities in every division; where young natives are taught reading, writing and arithmetic, upon a system so economical, from a handful or two of grain, to perhaps a rupee per month to the school master, according to the ability of the parents, and at the same time so simple and effectual, that there is hardly a cultivator or petty dealer who is not competent to keep his own accounts with a degree of accuracy, in my opinion, beyond what we meet with amongst the lower orders in our own country."

Colonial period and English education

In 1835, the English Education Act was passed by the British in India. This act made English the formal medium of education in all schools and colleges. This act neglected both indigenous schools and mass education, as only a small section of upper-class Indians were educated to become the connecting link between the government and the masses.[68] This act is today popularly known as Macaulayism.[69]

"We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population."[70]

According to sociologist Hetukar Jha, this act lead to the decline of indigenous schools which flourished in villages and towns, and simultaneously, the British policy in 1835 skewed in favor of the filtration theory of education, which worked to block to a significant extent the entry of the middle classes and below.[68]