

# Primary Education in Rajasthan

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## Background

India currently has the largest non-literate population in the world with the absolute number of non-literates aged 7 and above being 282.6 million. Education is instrumental in transforming this worrying situation. With **43.6% of India's school-age population between the age of 5 and 14**, it is crucial to focus on primary education on a priority basis. The importance of primary schooling with respect to the overall development of a child and their future careers is undoubtable. Both the quantity and quality of early-stage schooling have a concrete impact in determining the standard of living for children across the country.

80% of all recognized schools at the elementary stage are government run or supported, making the government the largest provider of education in India. In the past few years, India has made great strides in improving the quality and accessibility of primary schooling. The annual average dropout rate at primary level has come down from 9.11% in 2010 to 4.13% in 2016. The enrollment rate has also increased from 81.6% in 2001 to 96.9% in 2016. This can be attributed to increasing focus on primary education related legislation, policy and schemes such as:

- **The Right to Free & Compulsory Education Act 2009** has provided children between 6-14 years with the right to free and compulsory education. It also lays down standards of infrastructure, education quality and institutional mechanisms to be met by each state.
- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)** scheme aims to make universal elementary education a reality by providing for construction of new schools, teacher training, academic resources and tools for the improvement of learning outcomes.
- **National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)** works to improve education of girls in particular, working with governments, agencies and communities to increase resources and strengthen capacity.

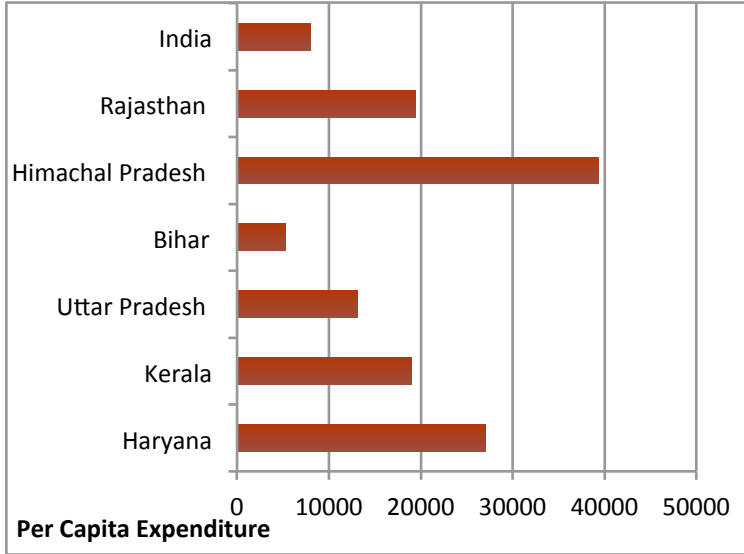
In spite of the above efforts, India's primary education system still faces a crisis. Social and economical inequalities of caste, class and gender have been identified as the major causes of education deprivation among the children majorly in rural India. Although enrollment figures are high, trends over time show that children's attendance in both primary and upper primary schools was higher in 2009 as compared to 2016, with dropout rates staying consistent. The children who stay in school get sub-par education, with **over 75% pupils finishing primary school unable to read basic sentences or do simple division**. Financing education is a critical issue preventing states from implementing RTE requirements, leading to a shortage of resources has led to massive infrastructural gaps, poor human resource capacity and high pupil-teacher ratios.

## Rajasthan

Heavy emphasis should be placed on primary education in the state, with 24% of Rajasthan's population between the ages of 6 and 14. Rajasthan has 105379 elementary schools, with 497300 teachers. Even though nationwide literacy is improving, with an average of 74%, **Rajasthan has reported one of the lowest literacy rates in the country at 67.1%**. Further, the state has the **lowest female literacy rate of 52%**. Meanwhile, the district of Dausa has a total of 874 primary schools, with an average of 2.1 teachers in each of these schools. However, a majority of schools in Dausa have an **enrollment rate of less than 50%**, which is a worrying statistic. The state government had taken up many initiatives, including the SSA, which presently covers 192 million children in over 1.1 habitations.

This report is an examination of the existing status of primary education in India and in Rajasthan, analyzing the financial resources spent, as well as the status of RTE implementation across parameters such as human resource, student enrollment, academic performance, and infrastructure requirements.

**Expenditure**

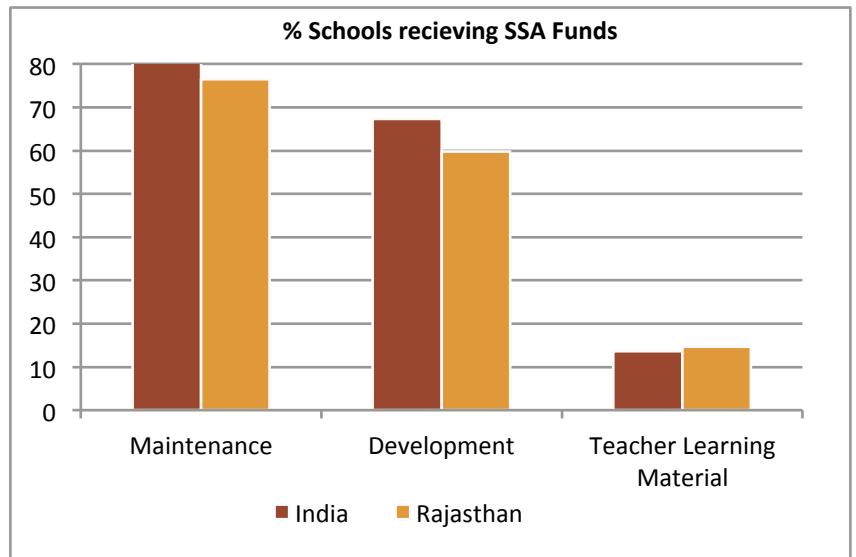


**I. Low Central Govt. Contribution:** Insufficient financing of education continues to constrain efforts to expand access to quality education, and is a major constraint to the complete implementation of primary education programmes. Central spending on education is only 4.13% of GDP, with a target of 6% that has never been met. The centre spends 9% GDP per capita on primary education, a low figure compared to countries like UK, USA and Brazil who have over 20% per capita spending. Further, budget allocations to schemes such as SSA have fallen over the years, confirming that central contribution to the sector is minimal, with most of the money being spent by state governments.

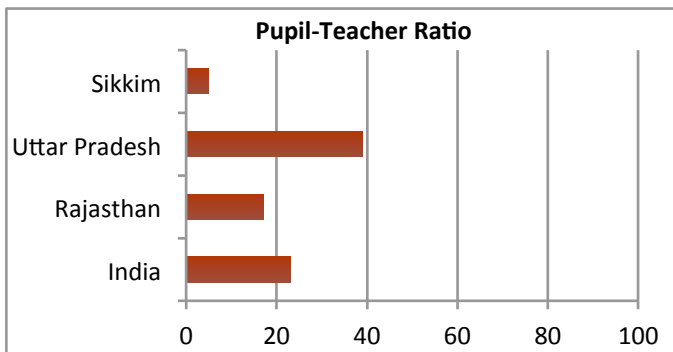
In terms of per capita expenditure, Rajasthan is in the top five states, and significantly surpasses the average central government spending.

**II. Problems in accessing SSA funds:** The multiple government approvals required to get grants leads to the final approved state budgets often being different to what states ask for, with gaps of up to 50%. Further, very few states receive their entire approved budget in a financial year – with funds for teacher training materials rarely being received.

Rajasthan is hit badly by this problem, with up to 25% of schools not receiving maintenance grants, and even less receiving money for development. Figures show that the receipt of funds in Rajasthan is lower than the national average. Dausa is badly affected with only 4.7% schools receiving TLM funds.



**RTE Implementation**



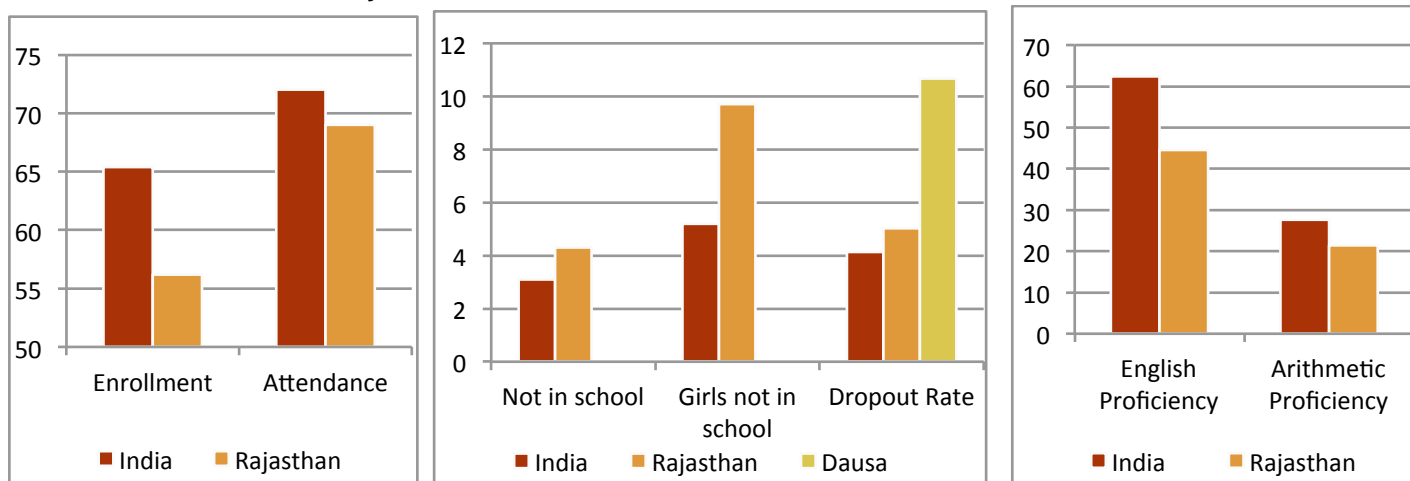
**I. Human Resources**

**Pupil teacher ratio:** A lack of teachers significantly affects the quality of education imparted in schools, especially in the primary stages, when individual student attention is crucial for development. This deficit of trained educators can be due to a shortage of training institutes or a lack of incentive. The target ratio in India is 30:1, with the average at 23. India has a long way to go, with countries like China boasting a ratio of 16:1. Rajasthan has a commendable figure of 17:1, with Dausa slightly behind at 20:1, showing that availability of educators is not a critical issue.

**Teacher Attendance:** Although there may officially be an availability of teachers in primary schools, a common problem is their lack of attendance, leading to an absence of regular and everyday instruction for children. Rajasthan's teacher attendance stands at around 85.9%, which matches the national average. However, a problematic sign is the dip in attendance rates from 2010, when it was at 90.1%. This is a worrying trend, and must be checked to ensure it does not worsen. Although, Rajasthan stands ahead of states like Manipur (65%) in terms of teacher attendance, other states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka (all at 91%) are much closer to eliminating the problem entirely.

**School Management Committees:** Under the provisions of RTE Act, constitution of a School Management Committee in every Government elementary school is mandatory, with 75% of members from amongst parents or guardians of children. These committees are a link between the school and the community, and also ensure RTE compliance and implementation. India has a national average of 94.8% schools that have reported having set up at SMC. Rajasthan surpasses this figure with 98.2%, joining several other states that have SMCs in almost every school. A few states have reported a drastically low number of SMCs, with 78% of school in Meghalaya having SMCs, and as low of 50% committees set up in West Bengal.

## II. Student Enrollment and Performance



**Enrollment/Attendance:** While India's overall enrollment ratio is at 96%, enrollment in government schools stands at around 65%. Although Rajasthan's total enrollment is the same as the national average, government school enrollment is considerably less, at 56%, showing a relative preference for private education. Rajasthan's dropout rates are marginally higher than average and 5%, while Dausa's is critical at 10.68%.

**Education for Girls:** The most troubling statistic regarding primary education in Rajasthan is the number of girls who are not enrolled in school. Rajasthan is the second-worst performer in the country with a 9.7% rate - almost double of the national average. In Dausa, the enrolment for girls is 51.5, with the gender ratio for enrolment standing at 2:1. This is an alarming statistic, in light of the fact that states like Kerala have managed to reduce the rate of girls out of school to an astounding 0.1%. Efforts must be made by the state government to employ various schemes and tools for support- in order to encourage and incentivize families to send their daughters to elementary school.

**Academic Performance:** Significant proportions of children who complete primary education do not have the required competencies in reading or arithmetic, and are inadequately prepared for secondary school. This is a possible cause for the sharp incline in dropouts seen at the secondary school level. This report uses children of 5<sup>th</sup> standard who can comprehend sentences, and those in 3<sup>rd</sup> standard who can subtract, as representations of English and arithmetic competency respectively. Rajasthan considerably lags behind the national average on both counts, showing a clear deficit in the quality of instruction at the primary level.

### III. Infrastructure

Rajasthan fairs well in terms of infrastructure availability, and has implemented the RTE impressively in terms of toilet facilities and mid day meals. However, Rajasthan falls drastically below the national average on parameters of electricity and computers, while also lagging in availability of playgrounds, disabled friendly access and libraries. While Rajasthan falls short only marginally for drinking water facilities, Dausa is outperforming in comparison to the state as well as the nation in its provision of water for primary school children. However, when it comes to electricity supply in primary schools, Dausa falls short of even poor state average, and this is a facility that needs drastic improvement.

School Facilities	Rajasthan	Dausa, Rajasthan	National Average	Best Performing States <sup>1</sup>	Worst Performing States
<b>Drinking Water</b>	<b>94.35</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>95.78</b>	100 (Delhi)	62 (Meghalaya)
Toilets for Boys	98.97	99.5	96.45	100 (Delhi/Telangana)	83 (Bihar)
Toilets for Girls	99.40	97.6	96.95	100 (Delhi/Telangana)	84 (Bihar/Meghalaya)
Boundary Walls	66.75	66.7	55.17	100 (Chandigarh)	9 (Tripura)
<b>Playground</b>	<b>35.56</b>	<b>34.3</b>	<b>54.14</b>	97 (Punjab)	18 (Odisha)
Kitchen Shed	90.8	74	89.7	99 (Tripura)	51 (Manipur)
<b>Library</b>	<b>50.27</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>79.61</b>	100 (Chandigarh) 99 (Tamil Nadu)	8 (Manipur)
Mid Day Meal	91.8	99.2	87.1	99.5 (Andhra Pradesh)	24.6 (Nagaland)
<b>Electricity</b>	<b>19.84</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>52.4</b>	100 (Delhi)	9 (Jharkhand)
Medical Check-up	78.97		66.04	95 (Gujarat)	12 (Manipur)
<b>Ramp for Disabled</b>	<b>64.71</b>	<b>71.8</b>	<b>83.8</b>	100 (Delhi)	52 (J&K)
<b>Computer</b>	<b>5.91</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>10.36</b>	99 (Puducherry) 97 (Kerala)	1 (Assam)
Classroom Condition (Good)	89.08	80	81.82	97 (Puducherry)	53 (Meghalaya)

Source: DISE – 2015-16

### Best Practices Across States

#### GUJARAT: Migration Tracking and Management

Gujarat sought to solve the problem of children of migrant workers, who are often displaced from their schools resulting in disruptive learning. Two initiatives were introduced to tackle the issue:

##### 1. Migration Monitoring System for Out of School Children

SSA Gujarat developed migration cards, with unique pre-printed numbers, and information about origin and destination - for both intrastate and inter-state migrant children. An online web-based software was then developed, based on the information in the cards, to ensure the tracking of these children. Master trainers were selected from a range of stakeholders, including NGO's, and training was provided for all Block and Cluster level project staff. Migration forms for online tracking were also

<sup>1</sup> States of Chandigarh, Lakshadweep, D & N Haveli, Daman and Diu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands have not been taken into account when determining the best performing states, as the population of these states are too dissimilar to Rajasthan, thereby making a comparison futile.

provided to all schools. Tracking of children from inter and intrastate migrating parents and mainstreaming of 51,119 out of school children has been carried out.

**2. Seasonal Hostels:** A total of 602 Seasonal Hostels have housed 19,043 children of migrated parents with enrollment in neighboring schools. This ensures retention of children from migrant families, with provisions for boarding and lodging.

### **WEST BENGAL - Shisu Shiksha Karmasuchi**

In order to increase accessibility to quality education, the Panchayat and Rural Development Department decided to set up the Shisu Shiksha Kendras wherever there were at least twenty children not having access to any existing primary school or require some special dispensation, which are not available in the formal primary schools. These were opened at the initiative of the community and were owned and managed by them. Funds were provided by the State Government, while the Panchayats acted as facilitators. The curriculum was the same as those for formal schools, as prescribed by prescribed by the West Bengal Board of Primary Education Textbooks.

### **RAJASTHAN: LifeLines Education (Mobile Based Teacher Training)**

OneWorld, the Government of Rajasthan and UNICEF have partnered to launch a program, by which over 4.5 lakh teachers in over 100,000 schools can avail of a training service whereby the telephone serves as the medium of user interface. It involves the use of high-end communication technology and custom-made computing applications. The technology enables teachers to receive continued academic guidance and didactic advisory in their local language, and provides them with access to curricular instruction and teaching guidance from experts. The initiative has had great success in rural Rajasthan, with teachers acknowledging its positive effect on the standard of qualitative learning.

### **MADHYA PRADESH - Pratibha Parv**

Moving away from mere infrastructure development, Pratibha Parv was launched across all government schools in Madhya Pradesh in 2011 by the School Education Department to improve qualitative dimensions of primary education. It is a comprehensive initiative for the assessment of teaching and learning, and evaluation of educational facilities and activities. Students are evaluated through regular tests, and facilities are periodically monitored. Information on weak schools, blocks, districts and statewide rankings are made available to decision-makers to further enhance the process for improving the performance of schools and students. Having covered approximately 1,00,00,000 students in 1,12,788 schools, this initiative has successfully contributed to raising the attendance of primary school students from 71 to 78%.

### **Sources**

#### *Statistics:*

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