

PLAYING WITH LEARNING: ON STATUS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Education and related issues

The [Annual Status of Education Report 2019](#) data on early childhood education in rural areas makes the case that the pre-school system fails to give children a strong foundation, especially in government-run facilities. Going by the findings, the percentage of girls in government schools is higher than in private institutions, the cognitive skills of children attending official anganwadi playschools do not match those attending private schools, and there is a significant percentage of underage children in the first standard of formal school, in violation of the stipulated age of six. It is beyond question that children will be benefitted greatly if they are provided a properly designed environment to acquire cognitive skills. These skills are critical to their ability to verbalise, count, calculate and make comparisons. What the ASER data sampled from 26 Indian districts seem to indicate is an apparent imbalance in State policies, which is disadvantaging the less affluent as anganwadis and government schools are poorly resourced. Official policies are also not strict about the age of entry, resulting in four and five year olds accounting for a quarter of government school enrolment, and over 15% in private schools.

Chalk and cheese in private vs. government schools

Substantive questions of pre-primary and early children education raised even by meagre surveys such as ASER call for a deeper look at how governments approach funding of institutions and teacher training for better outcomes. It is as important to let teachers feel invested in anganwadis as play-and-learn centres aiding children in acquiring cognitive skills, as it is to provide physical infrastructure. Building human resource capabilities would depend on teachers being recruited on the basis of aptitude, their training in credentialed colleges and assurance of tenure of service. It is unsurprising that in the absence of policies with strong commitment, according to the ASER data, two-thirds of those in the second standard cannot read a text at age seven that they were meant to read a year earlier. The performance only marginally improves for those in the third standard. There are similar inadequacies for numeracy skills. It is a paradox that students appear to fare somewhat better in private schools with poorly paid teachers. Nationally, the problem is of a weak educational foundation with little scope for creative learning in the three-to-six year age group, and a governmental system disinterested in giving children motivated, well-trained teachers. There is no dearth of literature on what works for creative teaching and learning, including from programmes such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Neither is there a lack of financial resources. What remains is for governments to show commitment to education.

You have reached your limit for free articles this month.

Register to The Hindu for free and get unlimited access for 30 days.

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Sign up for a 30-day free trial. [Sign Up](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper ,crossword, iPhone, iPad mobile applications and print. Our plans enhance your reading experience.

Why you should pay for quality journalism - [Click to know more](#)

Please enter a valid email address.

From the abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, to the landmark Ayodhya verdict, 2019 proved to be an eventful year.

Subscribe to The Hindu now and get unlimited access.

Already have an account? [Sign In](#)

Sign up for a 30-day free trial. [Sign Up](#)

To continue enjoying The Hindu, You can turn off your ad blocker or [Subscribe to The Hindu](#).

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

Crack