

WORLD BANK APPROVES \$500 MN EDUCATION PROJECT FOR SIX STATES

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NEW DELHI : The World Bank on Sunday said its board has approved a project worth \$500 million to improve the learning outcome and governance of government schools in six Indian states.

"India has made significant strides in improving access to education across the country. Between 2004-05 and 2018-19, the number of children going to school increased from 219 million to 248 million, but the learning outcomes of students across all age groups remains below par," it said.

The project, Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS), will be implemented through the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, the flagship central scheme, in Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan.

"STARS will help improve the learning assessment systems, strengthen classroom instruction, and remediation, facilitate school-to-work transition, and strengthen governance and decentralized management," the World Bank said. It will also address "the 'learning outcome' challenge and help students better prepare for the jobs of the future", it added. STARS builds on the partnership between India and the World Bank since 1994 for strengthening the school education system and to support the goal of providing education to all. Before STARS, the World Bank had provided assistance of over \$3 billion towards this.

"India recognizes the need to significantly improve its learning outcomes to fuel future growth and meet the labour market demands. STARS will aid India's response by strengthening implementation at the local level, investing in teacher capacity and ensuring that no child of any background is left behind from the right to education," said Junaid Ahmad, World Bank country director in India.

More than 52% of children in government-run schools in the six project states belong to vulnerable section, such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minority communities, and the World Bank said its project will deliver a curriculum that keeps pace with the evolving needs of the job market.

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