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Enhancing Government School Enrolment: Challenges and Solutions

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ABOUT

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In December 2021, the Ministry of Science and Technology, Department of Science and Technology (Policy Research Programme) made an open call for the submission of Expressions of Interest in STI Policy Research towards the Establishment of the Center for Policy Research (CPR) by the academic and research Institutes In India. After multiple rounds of consultations and review, the DST-CPR at NISER received the final sanction order from the Government of India, Ministry of Science & Technology, Department of Science & Technology, bearing the letter No DST/PRC/CPR/NISERBhubaneswar-2023 (G) (PCPM) dated 29/03/2023.

The primary focus of the DST-CPR at NISER is to study the Energy Transition and the secondary focus is to study the Tribal Education, and Innovations for Tribal Education in Eastern India covering Odisha, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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Executive Summary

Government school enrolment in India has fluctuated over the years, with a significant decline of 8.7 million students in 2023-24, except in Kerala, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu. This decline poses a challenge to achieving a 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by 2030, as outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Despite efforts to strengthen public education, challenges like inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, and parental preferences for private schools persist. This policy brief analyses enrolment trends in government schools in Indian states, identifies key challenges and proposes solutions to improve enrolment. Major issues include infrastructural deficiencies, single-teacher schools, high pupil-teacher ratios, and socio-cultural factors influencing parental choices. To address these concerns, the policy brief recommends targeted interventions such as improving school facilities, increasing teacher recruitment, and implementing inclusive policy reforms to bridge the gap. Strengthening public education through strategic measures can help ensure equitable, high-quality education for all children in India.

Enhancing Government School Enrolment: Challenges and Solutions

1. Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: Quality Education seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable education for all. As part of this global commitment, India aims to achieve 100% enrolment in primary and secondary education and at least 50% enrolment in higher education. To accomplish these goals, the government has introduced various policies and programs, including the Right to Education (RTE) Act (2009), which mandates free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14 years; the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) (2018), which provides holistic education from preschool to higher secondary levels; the Mid-Day Meal Scheme; the National Education Policy (2020); and the Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) initiative, which delivers quality education to tribal children in remote areas. Despite these significant efforts, government school enrolment in India remains a pressing challenge.

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Government schools serve as the backbone of accessible and affordable education, particularly for marginalized and economically disadvantaged groups. However, enrolment trends have shown both progress and setbacks. While some states have sustained high enrolment rates, others have experienced a steady decline due to socioeconomic disparities, parental preferences, concerns over education quality, and infrastructural limitations.

This decline has widened educational inequalities, leading to an uneven distribution of literacy and skill development across regions and social groups (Garg et al., 2022). Research indicates that variations in state-specific policies and governance significantly impact educational outcomes across India (Besley et al., 2007; Jha et al., 2008). The urban-rural divide further exacerbates the issue, with rural areas facing acute infrastructural shortages and a lack of qualified teachers, leading to lower enrolment in government schools (Kumar et al., 2024)

Addressing these challenges requires targeted policy interventions, enhanced governance, and region-specific strategies to strengthen public education. The government must take proactive measures to improve infrastructure, remove socio-cultural barriers, and implement state-focused initiatives to boost enrolment in government schools. Ensuring quality education for all children, regardless of their socioeconomic background, is crucial for achieving educational equity and sustainable national development.

This policy brief examines government school enrolment trends across Indian states, identifies key challenges affecting enrolment, and proposes comprehensive solutions to enhance access to quality education nationwide.

2. Trends in Government School Enrolment in India

Recent data from the Ministry of Education (UDISE+ 2023-24) indicates a notable decline in government school enrolment rates across most Indian states (**Table 1**). The enrolment trends in government and private schools across Indian states from 2012-13 to 2023-24 reveal notable shifts. While overall government school enrolment in India has increased slightly from 59.59% to 61.7%, state-wise analysis shows a decline in most states, with the highest drops observed in Tripura, .

Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh. Conversely, private school enrolment has risen significantly from 28.89% to 36.3%. Some states, including Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Tamil Nadu, along with the union territory of Puducherry, recorded an increase in government school enrolment. The data highlight a growing preference for private schooling in several states, while a few regions have managed to maintain or improve public school enrolment rates.

Table 1: Enrolment Rate in Schools by Management Across Indian States in 2012-13 and 2023-24

	2012-13			2023-24		
	Govt	Private	Others	Govt	Private	Others
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	73.80	22.17	4.03	70.18	29.82	0.00
Andhra Pradesh	**12.71**	43.20	44.09	**47.77**	52.09	0.15
Arunachal Pradesh	81.02	18.84	0.13	64.57	34.14	1.29
Assam	79.50	7.59	12.91	74.97	22.72	2.31
Bihar	97.66	2.29	0.05	82.40	12.48	5.11
Chandigarh	66.64	33.36	0.00	61.88	35.12	3.00
Chhattisgarh	77.74	21.03	1.23	69.54	30.32	0.14
Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu	76.36	29.71	0.16	70.95	28.94	0.10
Delhi	**43.27**	33.31	23.42	**60.15**	39.85	0.00
Goa	**84.39**	15.60	0.02	**86.61**	13.39	0.00
Gujarat	**6.27**	36.18	57.56	**61.68**	38.31	0.01
Haryana	52.94	45.54	1.52	39.85	58.64	1.51
Himachal Pradesh	69.25	30.70	0.04	58.32	41.68	0.00
Jammu and Kashmir	58.78	41.22	0.00	54.06	45.74	0.19
Jharkhand	78.02	13.41	8.57	71.77	16.48	11.76
Karnataka	66.22	33.62	0.16	54.04	45.95	0.00
Kerala	**69.83**	25.28	4.88	**72.45**	25.99	1.56
Ladakh	NA	NA	NA	47.62	52.38	0.00
Lakshadweep	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Madhya Pradesh	66.05	33.88	0.07	57.07	42.56	0.37
Maharashtra	**54.22**	20.02	25.76	**70.63**	29.18	0.19
Manipur	40.30	56.24	3.46	35.54	62.84	1.62
Meghalaya	79.61	19.77	0.62	72.78	23.66	3.56
Mizoram	73.43	25.95	0.61	50.75	46.97	2.28
Nagaland	46.44	53.56	0.00	34.35	65.63	0.03
Odisha	87.60	9.07	3.33	79.68	19.13	1.20
Puducherry	48.87	51.13	0.00	43.21	56.79	0.00
Punjab	**48.77**	25.04	26.18	**50.19**	49.79	0.01
Rajasthan	**36.23**	50.71	13.06	**49.93**	49.22	0.85
Sikkim	72.28	27.72	0.00	59.82	40.18	0.00
Tamil Nadu	**42.07**	38.49	19.43	**53.39**	46.39	0.22
Telangana	NA	NA	NA	39.19	60.76	0.05
Tripura	99.85	0.00	0.15	77.61	20.42	1.97
Uttar Pradesh	59.13	39.85	1.02	49.40	47.40	3.20
Uttarakhand	56.11	42.70	1.19	42.99	54.39	2.63
West Bengal	91.62	6.47	1.92	88.80	6.61	4.59
India	**59.59**	**28.89**	**11.52**	**61.70**	**36.30**	**2.00**

Source: UDISE+ Annual Report 2012-13 and 2023-24

In rural areas, government school enrolment remained relatively stable, decreasing slightly from 66.72% in 2012-13 to 66.3% in 2021-22, while private school enrolment saw an increase from 20.37% to 23.82% during the same period (**Table 2)**. The data reveals a significant decline in government school enrolment across various states, alongside a corresponding rise in private school enrolment. Mizoram experienced the sharpest drop in government school enrolment, falling from 89.4% in 2012-13 to 54.4% in 2021-22, followed by Uttarakhand, Delhi, and Bihar. Conversely, private school enrolment in Mizoram surged by 20.4 percentage points in 2021-22. Only seven states recorded growth in government school enrolment in rural areas, with Tamil Nadu leading the way, increasing from 43.9% in 2012-13 to 68.6% in 2021-22. This was followed by Rajasthan (a rise of 14.66 percentage points), Gujarat (an increase of 13.1 percentage points), and Kerala (a growth of 2.97 percentage points) **(Fig. 1)**.

In urban areas, government school enrolment saw a notable decline, dropping from 44.05% in 2012-13 to 39.8% in 2021-22, while private school enrolment rose from 48.17% to 53.28% during the same period. This shift highlights a growing preference for private schools in urban regions. Government school enrolment decreased in nearly every state, with the most dramatic drop observed in Bihar, where it fell by 36.02 percentage points (from 91.6% in 2012-13 to 55.6% in 2021-22), followed by Assam, which saw a decline of 21.2 percentage points (**Fig. 2**).

Figure 1 presents the percentage point changes in enrolment in government and private schools in rural areas between 2012-13 and 2021-22. Figure 2 presents the percentage point changes in enrolment in government and private schools in urban areas during the same period.

Figure 1: Percentage Point Difference in the Enrolment Rate of Government and Private Schools in Rural Areas for the year 2012-13 and 2021-22

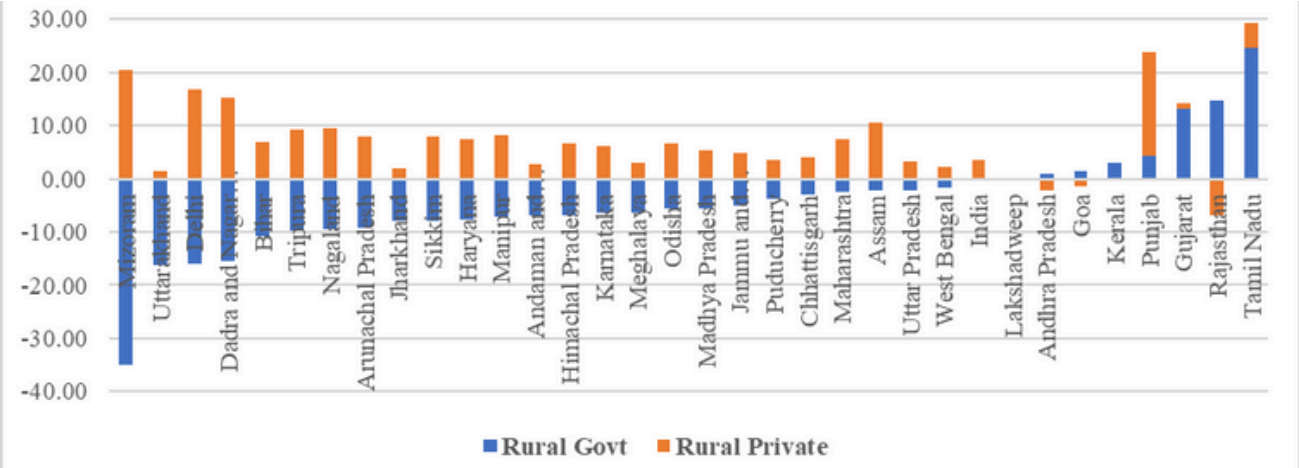
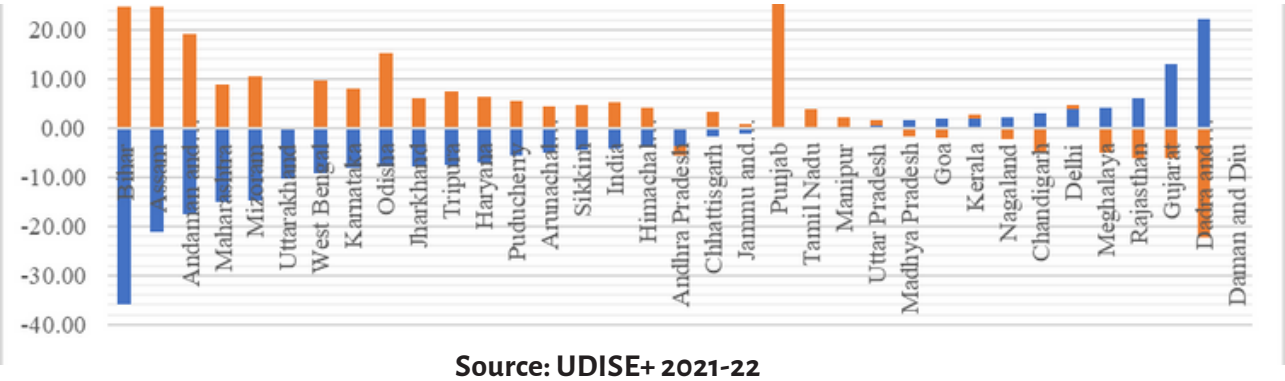


Figure 2: Percentage Point Difference in the Enrolment Rate of Government and Private Schools in Urban Areas for the year 2012-13 and 2021-22



Source: UDISE+ 2021-22

Table 2: Enrolment rate by Location and Management Across States for the Years 2012-13 and 2021-22

States/UTs	2012-13				2021-22			
	Rural		Urban		Rural		Urban	
	Govt.	Private	Govt.	Private	Govt.	Private	Govt.	Private
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	84.36	13.26	73.98	22.57	77.5	15.98	56.42	41.71
Andhra Pradesh	11.15	29.42	16.51	66.27	12.0	27.34	12.75	64.30
Arunachal Pradesh	86.03	13.81	72.90	27.10	76.9	21.75	67.91	31.45
Assam	80.79	5.83	77.35	17.78	78.6	16.31	56.14	42.38
Bihar	98.20	1.76	91.64	8.19	87.3	8.62	55.63	32.76
Chandigarh	97.98	2.02	63.92	36.08	NA	NA	66.94	31.28
Chhattisgarh	88.20	10.64	46.17	52.34	85.2	14.80	44.41	55.51
Dadra and Nagar Haveli and	91.45	8.55	49.64	49.76	76.1	23.92	71.86	27.48
Daman and Diu	69.98	29.82	75.69	24.31	NA	NA	NA	NA
Delhi	47.50	23.71	43.20	33.48	31.4	40.44	46.91	34.51
Goa	89.64	10.34	82.31	17.68	91.2	8.81	84.17	15.83
Gujarat	**6.65**	**17.81**	**5.77**	**67.74**	**19.8**	**18.85**	**18.91**	**61.57**
Haryana	63.67	35.02	34.14	64.36	55.9	42.56	27.28	70.68
Himachal Pradesh	76.53	23.46	38.23	61.50	69.7	30.26	34.25	65.54
Jammu and Kashmir	71.30	28.70	32.22	67.78	66.4	33.60	31.19	68.70
Jharkhand	86.60	8.33	49.74	35.44	78.7	10.29	42.05	41.45
Karnataka	81.74	18.25	45.79	53.84	75.5	24.49	37.81	61.86
Kerala	**74.33**	**21.46**	**63.15**	**33.00**	**77.3**	**21.13**	**65.10**	**33.78**
Ladakh	NA	NA	NA	NA	60.7	39.28	24.18	75.82
Lakshadweep	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.0	0.00	NA	NA
Madhya Pradesh	82.66	17.33	29.00	70.78	77.2	22.77	30.74	69.01
Maharashtra	46.41	9.73	65.98	29.13	44.0	17.06	50.85	38.08
Manipur	46.63	50.36	27.86	69.16	39.4	58.69	28.05	71.20
Meghalaya	82.83	16.62	60.78	39.02	76.6	19.71	64.80	34.03
Mizoram	89.48	9.84	55.47	44.18	54.4	30.24	40.81	54.84
Nagaland	59.06	40.94	19.84	80.16	49.5	50.44	22.04	77.96
Odisha	92.85	5.23	60.11	29.78	87.2	11.88	52.29	45.04
Puducherry	53.34	46.66	50.70	49.30	49.7	50.29	45.13	54.87
Punjab	58.36	17.79	41.06	32.65	62.8	37.17	40.97	58.94
Rajasthan	**44.30**	**37.73**	**18.25**	**81.68**	**59.0**	**30.97**	**24.34**	**75.62**
Sikkim	81.68	18.32	63.73	36.27	73.8	26.15	59.10	40.90
Tamil Nadu	**43.97**	**26.39**	**47.05**	**43.11**	**68.6**	**30.97**	**47.11**	**46.78**
Telangana	NA	NA	AN	NA	21.8	20.01	17.85	72.31
Tripura	94.38	5.53	86.96	12.98	84.6	14.69	79.35	20.43
Uttar Pradesh	60.20	38.71	33.00	65.26	58.1	41.94	33.58	66.37
Uttarakhand	68.06	31.05	36.94	61.79	51.9	32.53	26.51	62.00
West Bengal	94.09	4.58	86.59	9.47	92.4	6.74	77.38	19.18
India	**66.72**	**20.37**	**44.05**	**48.17**	**66.3**	**23.82**	**39.80**	**53.28**

Source: UDISE+ Annual Report 2012-13 and 2021-22

This trend underscores concerns about the effectiveness and perception of public education systems. The variations in enrolment can be attributed to multiple factors, including differences in education quality, infrastructure availability, socio-economic backgrounds of students, and state-level education policies.

While states like Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan have successfully boosted government school enrolment in rural areas, others such as Mizoram and Bihar have experienced significant declines, with many students shifting to private schools. Addressing these disparities will require targeted, state-specific interventions to improve the appeal and quality of public education.

3. Why Government School Enrolment is Decreasing in Many States?

Among the various educational institutions, government schools have historically played a pivotal role in offering affordable and accessible education to millions of children, particularly those from economically weaker sections. However, a growing trend of declining enrolment in government schools across many Indian states has emerged as a pressing concern, raising questions about the effectiveness and sustainability of public education in the country. The decline in government school enrolment is not merely a statistical anomaly but a multifaceted issue reflecting broader socio-economic, policy, and governance challenges. This phenomenon has implications not just for the students who forgo the opportunity to study in these institutions, but also for the entire educational ecosystem. Government schools, which were once seen as the cornerstone of basic education, are increasingly being overshadowed by private schools. Parents from diverse income groups are exhibiting a preference for private institutions, driven by a perception that they offer better quality education, modern infrastructure, and superior teaching methodologies.

3.1 Economic Status and Parental Preference

One of the primary reasons for the declining enrolment in government schools is the perception that these schools provide subpar education compared to private schools. Studies and surveys have consistently highlghted gaps in teaching quality, outdated curricula, and a lack of innovative teaching methodologies in government institutions (Kulal et. al, 2024). Teacher absenteeism, inadequate teacher-student engagement, and a lack of motivation among educators further exacerbate this issue.

Many parents believe that private schools offer better learning outcomes and opportunities for their children to excel academically (Narang and Bedi, 2024).

3.2 Quality of Education and Infrastructure Gap

A major determinant of enrolment in government schools is the perceived quality of education. In states where government schools provide competent teaching, well-maintained classrooms, and modern learning resources, enrolment rates tend to be higher. However, in states where government schools suffer from poor infrastructure, lack of proper sanitation, and outdated teaching methodologies, parents prefer to send their children to private institutions, even under financial strain (Chatterjee et. al, 2018).

3.3 Single-Teacher Schools

A significant challenge in the government school system is the existence of single-teacher schools, particularly in rural and remote areas. According to recent data, India has over 1,10,971 single-teacher schools, which cater to approximately 4 million students (UDISE+, 2023-24). States such as Madhya Pradesh (11.9%), Andhra Pradesh (11.3%), and Uttar Pradesh (8%) account for a large share of these schools (**Table 3**). The lack of adequate teaching staff severely impacts the quality of education, as a single teacher must manage multiple grades and subjects simultaneously. This issue discourages parents from enrolling their children in government schools, contributing to declining enrolment rates. In Himachal Pradesh, single-teacher schools have less than 20 children, while in Kerala, they have 10 students on average. Kerala has the least number of single-teacher schools and the least number of students studying in such schools in the entire country.

Table 3: State-Wise Data on Schools, Enrolments and Teachers Across States

States/UTs	Teacher Ratio	Teachers Per School	Enrolments Per School	with Zero Enrolments	with Single Teachers	in Single Teacher Schools
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	13	14	175	3	11	87
Andhra Pradesh	26	6	142	84	12611	218016
Arunachal Pradesh	13	7	93	240	618	7980
Assam	20	6	122	0	2633	92888
Bihar	32	7	225	117	2637	291127
Chandigarh	26	45	1155	0	0	0
Chhattisgarh	21	5	102	108	5840	215592
Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	28	12	327	0	1	5
Delhi	28	29	820	0	13	454
Goa	21	10	205	4	238	3142
Gujarat	29	7	214	274	2462	87322
Haryana	22	11	238	81	867	40828
Himachal Pradesh	14	6	80	6	3473	65819
Jammu & Kashmir	16	7	108	119	1330	31054
Jharkhand	35	5	161	199	8353	410199
Karnataka	27	6	157	1078	7821	274814
Kerala	**22**	**18**	**396**	**104**	**76**	**1224**
Ladakh	9	6	57	35	83	733
Lakshadweep	14	25	340	0	0	0
Madhya Pradesh	24	5	124	1211	13198	587208
Maharashtra	29	7	197	18	8196	167534
Manipur	16	9	139	83	320	7699
Meghalaya	19	4	72	146	1451	51456
Mizoram	13	6	75	39	96	3039
Nagaland	13	12	152	12	31	368
Odisha	23	5	126	8	1065	50189
Puducherry	19	18	333	0	0	0
Punjab	22	10	219	15	2092	69532
Rajasthan	22	7	156	2167	7688	225187
Sikkim	8	12	97	1	34	282
Tamil Nadu	24	9	221	490	2758	80586
Telangana	21	8	170	2097	5985	88429
Tripura	18	8	140	10	311	6885
Uttar Pradesh	27	6	163	906	8866	611950
Uttarakhand	18	6	105	45	3447	53773
West Bengal	31	6	192	3254	6366	248696
India	**25**	7	**169**	**12954**	**110971**	**3994097**

Source: UDISE+ 2023-24

This can be compared to the fact that in Uttar Pradesh, the average number of students in a single-teacher school is 70; in Bihar, it is 96.

3.4 High Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR)

The Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) according to the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 specifies the ideal ratio of students to teachers in schools to ensure quality education. The Act has mandated one teacher for 30 students in primary and 35 students for upper primary schools. A high PTR is observed in states like Jharkhand (35), Bihar (32) and West Bengal (31) indicating that overcrowded classrooms where individual attention to students is limited. High pupil-to-teacher ratios in government schools can negatively impact the quality of education. Overcrowded classrooms limit the amount of individual attention teachers can provide, which leads to suboptimal learning experiences (Tilak et. al, 2018). Private schools, on the other hand, often highlight smaller class sizes as a key selling point.

3.5 State-Specific Education Policies

Different states have varying approaches to education policy, which directly impact government school enrolment. For example, states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan have successfully improved government school enrolment through policy initiatives such as infrastructural enhancements, curriculum upgrades, and better teacher training programs. Meanwhile, in states where government education policies have not been adequately implemented or where there is strong competition from private schools, government school enrolment remains low.

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme plays a crucial role in attracting students to government schools in many states. States that have effectively implemented this scheme, such as Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh, witness relatively higher retention rates. However, in some states, poor implementation and irregularities in the scheme lead to reduced enrolment and attendance.

4. Government School Enrolment in Eastern India

Government school enrolment in Eastern India exhibits significant variations across states such as Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal. In Bihar, government schools accounted for 97.66% of total enrolment in 2012-13, but this figure dropped to 82.4% by 2023-24. The decline is even more pronounced in rural areas, where enrolment fell by 10.89 percentage points in 2021-22. This trend is largely driven by a growing preference for private schools, which are perceived to offer better quality education and English-medium instruction.

Odisha has witnessed marginal decline in government school enrolment rate from 87.6% in 2012-13 to 79.68% in 2023-24. Efforts such as the Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya program have aimed to enhance the quality of public education, yet private schools continue to attract students, particularly in urban areas. Similarly, Jharkhand has seen a decrease in government school enrolment from 78.02% in 2012-13 to 71.77% in 2023-24, as more students opt for private institutions.

Chhattisgarh, which has a significant tribal population, has also experienced a steady decline in government school enrolment, dropping from 77.74% in 2012-13 to 69.54% in 2023-24. Notably, in 2012-13, government schools in the state had a balanced gender ratio (49.64% boys and 50.36% girls), while private schools had a lower proportion of female students (55.66% boys and 44.34% girls), reflecting socio-cultural barriers and financial constraints that prioritize boys' education. By 2023-24, government school enrolment showed a slight gender shift, with 48.5% boys and 51.5% girls, while private school enrolment continued to rise.

In Bihar, the proportion of girls enrolled in private schools declined from 45.16% in 2012-13 to 38.97% in 2023-24. West Bengal, however, saw a slight increase in the enrolment of girls in private schools and continues to have one of the highest proportions of students in government schools (88.6%).

Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha still have a high share of students in government schools, whereas private schools dominate in many northern and southern states. Consistent with national trends, government schools tend to enrol more girls than private institutions, particularly in states like Bihar and Jharkhand, where socio-economic factors heavily influence school choices. While some states, such as Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan, have successfully boosted government school enrolment through improved infrastructure, Eastern Indian states continue to face challenges, including poor pupil-teacher ratios, inadequate school facilities, and concerns over education quality. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensuring equitable access to quality education in the region.

5. Need for Systemic and Policy Reforms in the Public Education System

The persistent decline in government school enrolment underscores the urgent need for systemic and policy reforms in India's public education sector. Addressing this challenge requires a comprehensive approach that tackles infrastructural deficits, governance issues, socio-economic inequalities, and cultural barriers. As noted in the PROBE Report (2006), government schools set the benchmark against which private institutions compete, making it imperative to enhance the quality of public education to prevent further student migration. Strengthening School Development Plans under the RTE Act, 2010, can serve as a catalyst for reform, with school-based management actively involving communities and educators to address both academic and emotional needs. Each schoo Ghould develop a transparent and publicly accessible development plan with clear indicators for improvement. Additionally, longstanding issues such as lack of accountability must be addressed through strategic investments in leadership development, improved teacher incentives, and a stronger regulatory framework, including better-functioning School Management Committees. Ensuring that teachers receive adequate training and addressing the chronic shortage of educators in public schools are critical to improving instruction quality. Establishing and enforcing benchmarks for education quality in both government and private schools is essential, and one effective measure would be the creation of autonomous bodies in each state to assess schools and evaluate student learning outcomes. Making this information publicly accessible would enhance transparency and drive greater accountability across the education system.

6. Policy Recommendations

To address the decline in government school enrolment and make public education more attractive, comprehensive policy interventions are required to address the quality, infrastructure, socio-economic barriers, and governance. Some key policy recommendations include:

- **Enhancing Infrastructure and Pupil-Teacher Ratio**: As per the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+), in 2023-24, India had 110,971 single teacher schools. Filling up of existing vacancies through regular recruitment and training of teachers is critical to improving education quality. The government should invest in improving the infrastructure of government schools, ensuring proper sanitation, digital learning facilities, and adequate teacher training to improve the quality of education.

- **Financial Incentives and Scholarships:** There should be an increase in funding for government schools in states with lower enrolment, particularly in rural and tribal areas. Providing financial incentives such as free textbooks, scholarships, and direct benefit transfers can encourage parents to enrol their children in government schools, particularly in states with lower enrolment rates and among marginalized communities.

- **Public Awareness and Community Engagement**: Encouraging community participation and parental engagement through awareness campaigns can help improve perceptions of government schools. Strengthening governance through school management committees, and ensuring accountability may improve the performance in public schools.

- **Strengthening Inclusive Education Policies:** There should be the development of state-specific inclusive policies that focus on marginalized and underrepresented communities, especially for girls, ensuring equitable access to quality education both in government and private schools

- **Regional and Social Customization of Policies**: States should tailor their education policies to address specific challenges unique to their region and social groups. Ensuring proper implementation of region-specific programmes can serve as a major incentive for students, particularly in rural and economically weaker areas.

- **Community Engagement and Parental Awareness**: There should be conduct of outreach programs to educate parents about the benefits of government schooling and ensure their active participation in their children's education.

7. Conclusion

Enhancing government school enrolment is crucial for ensuring equitable access to quality education. Despite various policy initiatives, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, socio-economic barriers, and parental perceptions persist. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy. First, governments must prioritize investment in school infrastructure, ensuring that schools are equipped with adequate classrooms, sanitation facilities, electricity, and digital learning resources. Second, improving teacher recruitment is crucial to enhancing education quality and restoring public confidence in government schools. Additionally, public awareness campaigns should be launched to address misconceptions about government schools and emphasize the long-term benefits of education.

Achieving higher enrolment in government schools is not just an education goal but a catalyst for sustainable development. To achieve the goal of universal enrolment at the primary and secondary level by 2030, the government should ensure that every child has access to quality education, breaking cycles of poverty, fostering gender equality, and contributing to long-term socio-economic progress.

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