



Out of School Children



About 258 million children and youth are out of school across the world, for the school year ending in 2018. This total includes 59 million children of primary school age, 62 million of lower secondary school age and 138 million of upper secondary age (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018)



Definitional Issues in Estimation...?

Varying sources of statistics in India both official and unofficial talk of different numbers, so far as Out-Of-School Children [OOSC] are concerned. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) survey (IMRB-SRI, 2014) estimated this figure as 6 million, while for the same year, the National Sample Survey (NSS) figure is 20 million (CPR, 2020). These figures are differentiated as 'never enrolled' and 'dropped out' estimated number of children.

This varying picture of the same issue are due to a host of methodological problems such as differences in defining the 'drop out' case by each data source, estimating 'never enrolled', 'dropped out' children and

so on. These problems are supplemented by discrepancies and inefficiencies in the overall system of collecting and collating data. An analysis conducted by Centre for Policy Research (CPR) on links between school attendance and socioeconomic factors tried to estimate 'out-of-school' children by using 'not employed before' for children not enrolled in school (Bhatti, 2017). In Karnataka, the SDMC members in school level have been instrumental in monitoring school drop outs meticulously (PAC, 2020). They have both access to this information as well as capacity to provide accurate data on this issue, hence may be one of the better source of information.

Contextual Effect...!



This situation of puzzling data on varying numbers of out-of-school children is compounded not only by societal changes but also by contextual changes. The coronavirus pandemic has caused an "unprecedented education emergency" with up to 9.7 million children affected by school closures at risk of never going back to class, Save the Children emphasises this month (July 2020). The British charity cited UNESCO data showing that in April, 1.6 billion young people were shut out of school and university due to measures to contain COVID-19 -- about 90% of the world's entire student population. "For the first time in human history, an entire generation of children globally, had their education disrupted," it said in a new report, Save our Education. It said the economic fall-out of the crisis could force an extra 90 to 117 million children into poverty, with a knock-on effect on school admissions. (Save the Children, 2020)

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