Education & Children Bulletin

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Should India Celebrate Bal Diwas?

In India, November 14th is celebrated as Bal Diwas (Children's Day). It has been more than six decades that the country has been celebrating this day. It, however, begs the question: Is it worth a celebration even as children continue to bear the burden of climate change, malnutrition, wasting and stunting. Of the many concerns, the two key ones are only 3.5% of GDP is being spent on education and 32 million children in India have never attended school. According to Census 2011, the number of out-of-school children in the 5-17 age group was 8.4 crore. However, according to a survey commissioned in 2014, by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the number of out-of-school children in the 6-13 age group was 60.64 lakh. The critical point is not so much about the numbers being high or low, but the fact that children are getting left behind in school education. While there are schemes in place, the results tell a different story. For how long factors such as poverty, accessibility, the need to supplement household income, keep pulling children out of school?

How Happy are Children in India?

A report by World Vision India and the Institute of Financial Management and Research, titled India Child Well-Being Report 2019, measures happiness of the country's children. The findings were based on a study of 24 data indicators, including health, education, human rights and family income. Children were the happiest in Kerala, with the state coming out tops with a score of 0.76. Madhya Pradesh, with a score of 0.44, was in the last quartile in child well-being. Among the Union Territories, the well-being score for the National Capital Territories of Delhi was 0.53, closely followed by Dadra Nagar Haveli at 0.52.

Recommended Watch-
Build a School in the Cloud- A TED Prize talk by Sugata Mitra

In 1999, Sugata Mitra's pioneering "Hole in the Wall" experiments helped bring the potential of self-organized learning to the public's attention. Research since then has continued to support his startling conclusion that groups of children, with access to the Internet, can learn almost anything by themselves. From the slums of India and villages of Cambodia, to schools in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, the USA and United Kingdom, Professor Mitra's experimental results offer an intriguing new future for learning: a future in which 'knowing' may be obsolete. His innovative and bold efforts towards advancing learning for children all over the world earned him the first ever $1m TED Prize award. At the 2013 TED conference, Sugata asked the global TED community to make his dream a reality by helping him build the ultimate School in the Cloud where children, no matter how rich or poor, can engage and connect with information and mentoring online.

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