Countrywide survey reveals deficits in student learning

Punjab, Kerala among top performers; Grade-level gaps seen in key subjects such as mathematics and language; PARAKH RS finds that 54% of Class 9 students can identify main points of a text

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Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development Rashtriya Sarvekshen assessed the performance of 21,15,022 children in Grades 3, 6 and 9 from 74,229 schools in 781 districts of the country. | Photo Credit: Getty Images/iStockphoto

The results of the Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development Rashtriya Sarvekshen (PARAKH RS), formerly known as the National Achievement Survey (NAS), have revealed that Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu and Chandigarh are the best performing States and Union Territories in school education.

PARAKH RS assessed the performance of 21,15,022 children in Grades 3, 6 and 9 from 74,229 schools in 781 districts of the country in the following subjects: language and mathematics (for Grades 3, 6, and 9), the world around us (for Grades 3 and 6), and science and social science (for Grade 9). As many as 2,70,424 teachers and school leaders responded through questionnaires.

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Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala emerged as the top performing states in Grade 3. Sahebganj in Jharkhand and Reasi and Rajouri from Jammu and Kashmir were the low performing districts for this segment.

Kerala, Punjab and Dadra Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu were the top performers for Grade 6. North Garo Hills, South Garo Hills and South West Garo Hills of Meghalaya were the three low performing districts in this category

Punjab, Kerala and Chandigarh were the best performing States for Grade 9. Shi Yomi of Arunachal Pradesh, South West Garo Hills and North Garo Hills of Meghalaya were the low performing districts in this segment.

The Kendriya Vidyalayas, run by the Union Government, recorded the lowest performance in mathematics in Grade 3. In Grade 6, government-aided and state government schools showed weak performance in mathematics. For Grade 9, students from Kendriya Vidyalayas performed the best across all subjects, particularly in language.

The results found that in Grade 3, 67% students know and use enough words to carry out day-to-day interactions effectively and could guess the meaning of new words by using existing vocabulary.

Sixty percent of the children could read short stories and comprehend their meaning — by identifying characters, storyline and what the author wanted to say — on their own. 61% students could read and comprehend the meaning of short news items, instructions and recipes, and publicity materials., the survey found.

Figuring it out

In mathematics, 68% students in Grade 3 could sort objects into groups and sub-groups based on more than one property, while 69% could identify and extend simple patterns in their surroundings, shapes, and numbers. Only 55% could arrange numbers up to 99 in ascending and descending order. It was found that 61% of students could recognise and use numerals to represent quantities up to 99 with the understanding of decimal place value system. 58% could perform addition and subtraction of two-digit numbers and 54% recognised multiplication as repeated addition and division as equal sharing. Only half of the students surveyed in Grade 3 could recognise, make, and classify basic geometric shapes and their observable properties, and understood and explained the relative relation of objects in space.

The survey showed that 61% of them could perform simple measurements of time in minutes, hours, days, weeks, and months and 50% could perform simple transactions using money up to ₹100.

Analysing Grade 6 results

In Grade 6, only 54% could represent numbers using the place value structure of the Indian number system, and could read the names of very large numbers. Only 38% students could solve puzzles and daily-life problems involving one or more operations on whole numbers.

Only 29% of the students could represent and compare commonly used fractions in daily life (such as ½, ¼) as parts of a whole, as locations on number lines and as divisions of whole numbers. 42% of students could devise strategies for estimating the distance, length, time, perimeter (for regular and irregular shapes), area (for regular and irregular shapes), weight, and volume.

About 44% of Grade 6 students could observe and identify natural (insects, plants, birds, animals, geographical features, sun and moon, stars, planets, natural resources) and social (houses, relationships) components in their immediate environment.

Only 38% of Grade 6 students asked questions and made predictions about simple patterns (season change, food chain, phases of the moon, movement of stars and planets, shapes of trees, plants, leaves, and flowers, rituals, celebrations) observed in the immediate environment. It was observed that 56% of them could explain the functioning of local institutions (family, school, bank/post office, market, and

panchayat) in different forms (story, drawing, tabulating data, reports), and analyse their roles.

A look at Grade 9 results

In Grade 9, 45% of students could explain how the Constitution came to be and understood the ideas and ideals of the Indian national movement enshrined in it as well as those drawn from India's civilisational heritage. About 54% of students could identify the main points in a text from careful listening or reading of news articles, reports or editorials.

Only 31% could explore and understand sets of numbers, such as whole numbers, fractions, integers, rational numbers, and real numbers, and their properties, the survey results said. Only 28% explored the idea of percentage and applied it to solve problems, while 31% applied fractions (both as ratios and in decimal form) in daily-life situations. It was found that 37% of students observed and explained the phenomena caused due to differences in pressure, temperature, and density (e.g., breathing, sinking-floating, water pumps in homes, cooling of things, formation of winds). One-third of the students could describe how electricity worked by manipulating different elements in simple circuits, and demonstrated the heating and magnetic effects of electricity.

With regard to natural surroundings, 47% of Grade 9 students were ability to describe the diversity of living things (insects, earthworms, snails, birds, mammals, reptiles, spiders, diverse plants, and fungi), including at a smaller scale (microscopic organisms) but just 34% distinguished the characteristics of living organisms (need for nutrition, growth and development, need for respiration, response to stimuli, reproduction, excretion, cellular organisation) from that of non-living things. It was found that 37% of students were able to describe biological changes (growth, hormonal) during adolescence, and come up with measures to ensure overall well-being.

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