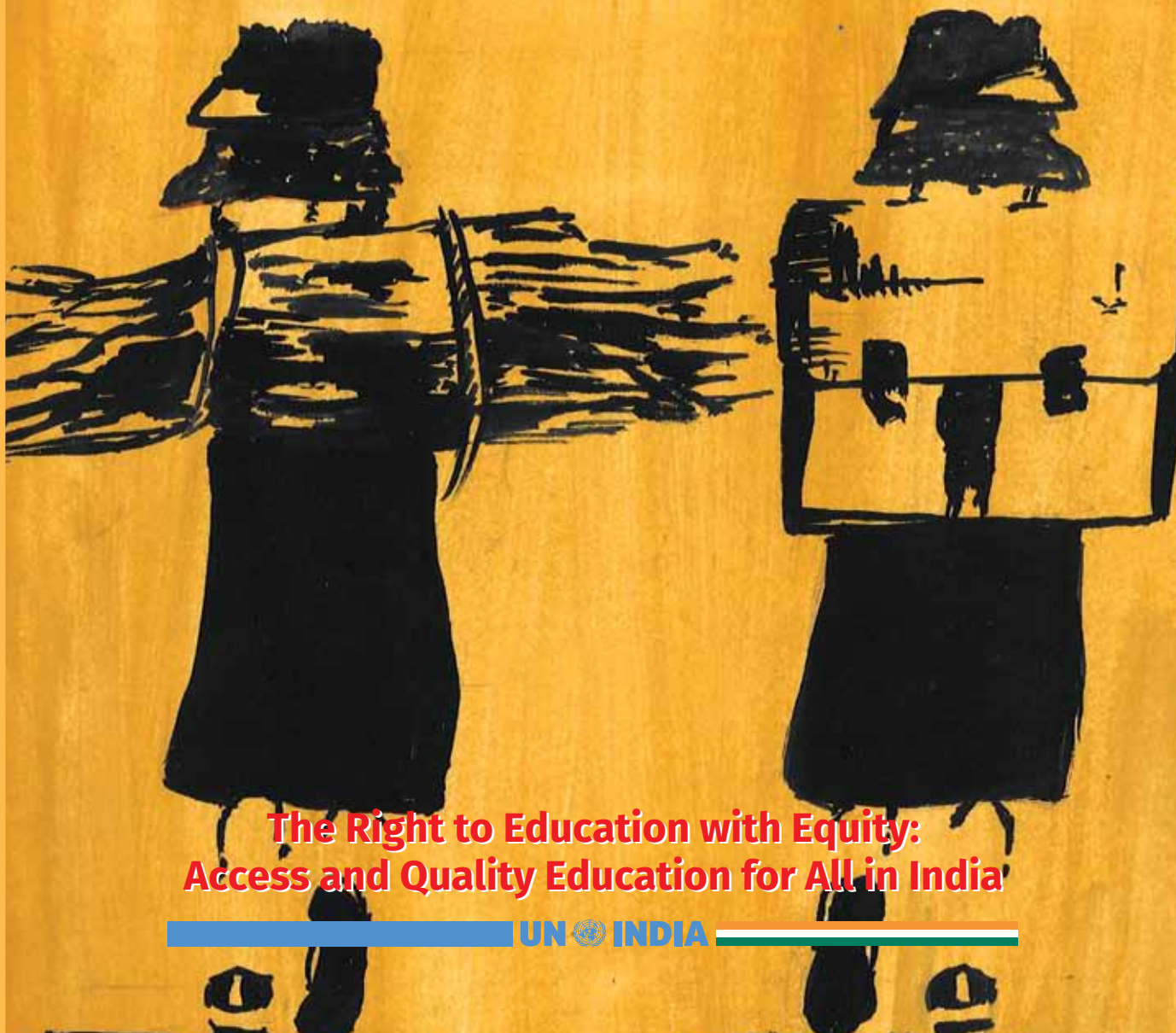




Global Education First Initiative

The UN Secretary-General's Global Initiative on Education



The Right to Education with Equity: Access and Quality Education for All in India

UN  INDIA



Message from Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO and Member of the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) Steering Committee on the occasion of the Joint UN Advocacy for Education Campaign, September 2014

This Joint Advocacy for Education Campaign comes at the right time on the right issue. India has made tremendous advances to meet the 2015 deadline for the Millennium Development Goals as well as the objectives of Education for All. The country has increased the participation of children in primary and secondary education, notably through the launch of The Right to Education Act in 2009. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Programme has been a flagship initiative to universalize elementary education across the country.

The new government led by H. E. Narendra Modi has doubled down on these commitments, launching a mass campaign to “Save the Daughter, Teach the Daughter.” The new leadership is betting on the transformative power of education – starting with girls and with across-the-board skills development for a ‘Skilled India.’

So much has been achieved, but sizeable challenges remain and more can be done – especially to reduce inequalities to make this fundamental right accessible to all, through special measures to reach the most disadvantaged and excluded children. We can do more also to break the barriers between formal education and skills development, to tap the full power of India’s greatest resource – the energy of its young population.

Access for all is essential for social cohesion and inclusive development, but we must also focus on improving the quality of education, to nurture the innovation and creativity India and all societies need for the century ahead. This must include education to foster new values and behaviours for global solidarity, to empower every girl and boy to shape positive change.

Linked with this campaign, access, quality and global citizenship are objectives at the heart of the Global Education First Initiative, launched two years ago by the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon, and steered forward by UNESCO, to accelerate progress across the world and shape an ambitious new education agenda to follow 2015.

UNESCO will continue to support the Government and society of India in every way to achieve their goals. In this spirit, I wish every success to this campaign and thank the United Nations Country Team for its leadership.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL EDUCATION FIRST INITIATIVE

“The cost of leaving millions of children and young people on the margins of society is far greater than the funds required to jump-start efforts to reach international goals for education, which had shown considerable promise.”

Ban Ki-moon, United Nations Secretary-General



The United Nations Secretary-General launched the five-year Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in September 2012 to accelerate progress towards the Education for All goals and the education-related Millennium Development Goals. The Initiative’s main priorities are to expand access to education, improve the quality of learning, and foster global citizenship.

The 2013-14 Education for All Global Monitoring Report shows that a lack of attention to education quality and a failure to reach the marginalised have contributed to a learning crisis that requires urgent attention. About 250 million children, many of them from disadvantaged backgrounds, are not learning the basics, making it challenging for them to acquire skills for decent work and living.

The Global Education First Initiative focuses on three priorities:



Improve the quality of learning

First, putting every child in school. The global community pledged to achieve universal primary education by 2015. However, many challenges remain. Today, some 63 million young people—including half of all adolescents in low-income countries—are receiving no post-primary education.



Put every child in school

Second, improving the quality of learning. Access to education is critical. But it is not enough. Millions of children go through school and come out without basic literacy and numeracy. Many students around the world are banking their futures on poorly trained, weakly motivated teachers without enough books and other basics to facilitate their learning.



Foster global citizenship

Third, fostering global citizenship. Education is much more than an entry to the job market. It has the power to shape a sustainable future and better world. Education policies should promote peace, mutual respect and environmental care.

STATUS OF EDUCATION FOR ALL IN INDIA



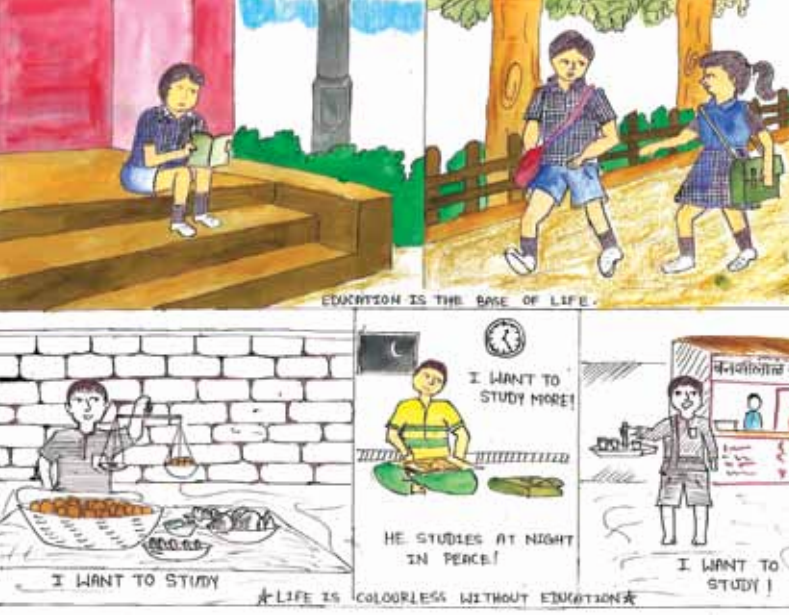
Elementary education in India is a fundamental right. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Movement) is a flagship programme of the Government of India, initiated in 2000-01 to universalise elementary education. Interventions under the programme aimed at increasing the number of schools, ensuring that schools have drinking water and toilets, providing training to teachers and improving learning outcomes. Under the SSA, special focus on providing access to education to disadvantaged groups, minorities and girls who are often left behind was also emphasized.

On 01 April 2010, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act in India initiated a rights based framework where every child between the age of six and fourteen years has the fundamental right to education. The RTE is a landmark legal provision in the Indian education system.

There has been tremendous progress since the enactment of the Right to Education Act in India:

- All states and Union Territories have notified RTE rules
- Budgetary provision for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan has more than doubled between 2009-10 and 2014-15 and the SSA programme has been adapted to ensure that no child in this age group remains out of school, and that all children study in age appropriate grades
- In 2012-13, 199.7 million children were enrolled in schools, an increase of 11.8 million¹ from 2009-10

¹District Information Systems for Education (DISE), 2009-10 and 2012-13



The Right to Education Act:

- Mandates the right of children to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education in a neighbourhood school.
- Clarifies that 'compulsory education' means obligation of the appropriate government to provide free elementary education and ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group. 'Free' means that no child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education.

- Makes provisions for a non-admitted child to be admitted to an age appropriate class.
- Specifies the duties and responsibilities of appropriate Governments, local authority and parents in providing free and compulsory education, and sharing of financial and other responsibilities between the Central and State Governments.
- Lays down the norms and standards relating inter alia to Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs), buildings and infrastructure, school-working days and teacher working hours.
- Provides for rational deployment of teachers by ensuring that the specified pupil teacher ratio is maintained for each school, rather than just as an average for the State or District or Block, thus ensuring that there is no urban-rural imbalance in teacher postings. It also provides for prohibition of deployment of teachers for non-educational work, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.
- Provides for appointment of appropriately trained teachers, i.e. teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications.
- Prohibits (a) physical punishment and mental harassment (b) screening procedures for admission of children (c) capitation fee (d) private tuition by teachers and (e) running of schools without recognition.
- Provides for development of curriculum in consonance with the values enshrined in the Constitution, and which would ensure the all-round development of the child, building on the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent and making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety through a system of child friendly and child centred learning.

PRIORITIES FOR EDUCATION FOR ALL IN INDIA

1. ACCESS TO EDUCATION WITH EQUITY

An estimated 8.1 million children between 6-13 years are out of school in India², and millions more do not attend school regularly.

- Of these, 4.1 million (3.9 per cent) are boys and 4.1 million (4.7 per cent) are girls

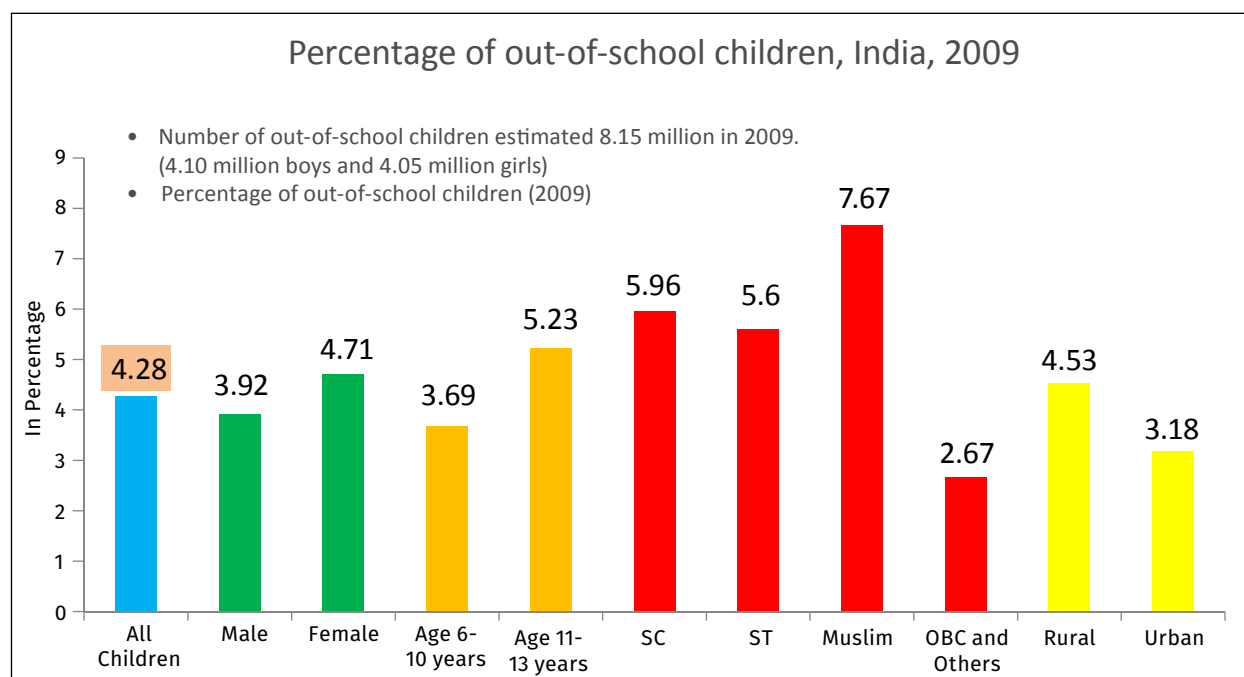
- A significant proportion belongs to disadvantaged groups including 5.9 per cent to Scheduled Castes, 5.6 per cent to Scheduled Tribes and 2.6 per cent to Other Backward Classes

- An estimated 4.5 per cent are

from rural areas and 3.1 per cent from urban areas

- Nearly 34 per cent of children with disabilities are out of school.

Despite achieving close to universal enrolment at primary level, 41 per



Source: Social Rural Research Institute - International Marketing Research Bureau (SRI-IMRB) Survey, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 2009

²All India survey of out-of-school children of age 6-13 years, SRI-IMRB, 2010

cent children drop out before reaching Class VIII³. The drop out rate is even higher for children from Scheduled Castes at 43 per cent and Scheduled Tribes at 55 per cent.

The number of schools in India that have separate toilet facility for girls has increased from 0.4 million (37 per cent) in 2005-06 to 1.24 million (88 per cent) in 2012-13. About 89 million girls in school now have access to toilets but seven million girls still lack access⁴.

There is an urgent need to provide access with a focus on equity, with special measures to bring in girls, children from disadvantaged groups and those with disabilities into schools.



³ Statistics of School Education, 2010-11, Ministry of Human Resource Development

⁴ DISE, National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi

2. QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION

Every girl and boy in India has the fundamental right to enjoy eight years of quality education, one that helps them acquire basic literacy and numeracy, enjoy learning without fear, and feel valued and included irrespective of where they come from. However, the quality of education remains one of the biggest challenges.

There is a need to shift from the Right to Education to the Right to Learn: children learn the basics of literacy and numeracy; schools are child friendly for conducive learning, and there are adequate teachers with professional qualifications for teaching.

Learning the basics:

An estimated 47 per cent of Class V students can read Class II text. National Achievement Surveys⁵

show that the overall national average score is 257 (on a scale of 0 to 500) for learning levels in language and 252 (on a scale of 0 to 500) for learning levels in mathematics. This means that many children in school are not learning the basics of literacy and numeracy.

Child Friendly Schools and systems:

The RTE Act makes child friendly quality education the fundamental right of every child. A child-friendly school (CFS) ensures every child an environment that is physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling. A child-friendly school with improved quality of education results in children staying in schools and thus accelerated realization of the RTE. The National guiding principles for CFS have been developed and need

to be rolled out in the states.

Pupil Teacher ratio:

The RTE Act maintains that Pupil - Teacher ratio should be one teacher for every 30 students at the primary level and one teacher for every 35 children at the upper primary level. Forty one per cent schools at the primary level and 31 per cent schools at upper primary level meet the norm.

Teacher Training:

There are close to 7.7 million teachers in elementary schools in India, out of which nearly 60 per cent, i.e. 4.6 million are in government schools⁶. However, about 20 per cent of government teachers lack adequate professional qualifications, and many more lack the required skills, knowledge and attitudes to ensure effective learning.

⁵ National Achievement Survey (NAS), National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Class-3, Cycle – III, 2012-13

⁶ DISE 2013-14

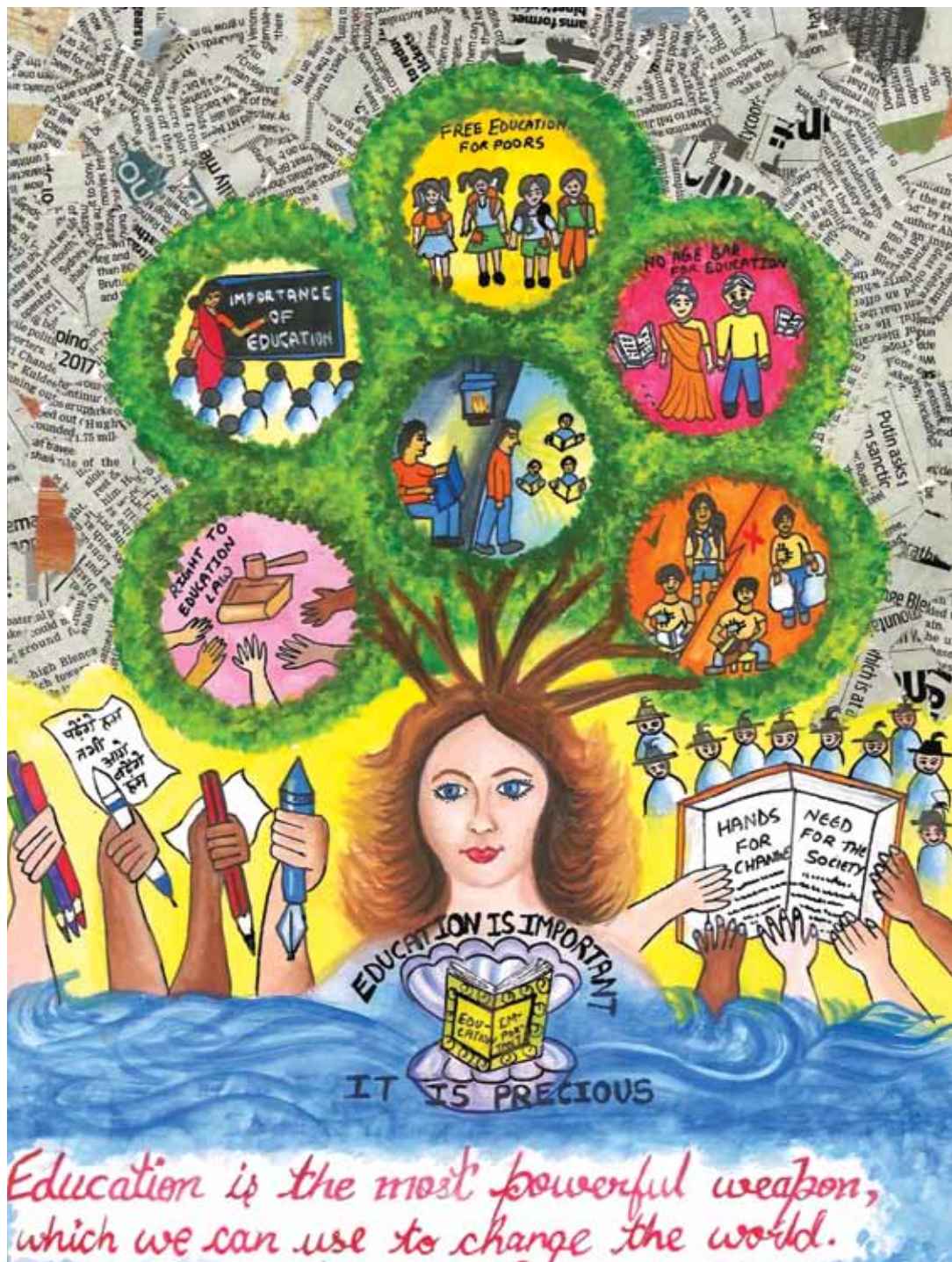
3. GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

The third priority of the Global Education First Initiative is to foster global citizenship, which aims to develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learners need for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable⁷. The formulation of the goals for the post 2015 development agenda take into consideration the importance of Global Citizenship Education.

With 65 per cent of India's population under 35 years of age, India is poised to become the world's youngest country over the next two decades. In addition to access and quality education, global citizenship education in India can transform lives and give people the understanding, skills and values they need to cooperate in resolving the interconnected challenges of the 21st century.



⁷ UNESCO 2014



EDUCATION

Key recommendations to ensure quality education for all

The priorities of the Global Education First Initiative in India find resonance in the targets of the Right to Education Act. With 31 March 2015 approaching as the second important milestone of the RTE targets, recommendations to accelerate efforts to implement RTE targets for policy makers, educationists and practitioners are suggested:

- *Increase* enrolment and ensure retention of out of school children (OOSC), especially children from backward communities, through improved identification system for OOSC and their mainstreaming into age appropriate classes
- *Enhance* reading, writing, speaking and numerical skills by introducing effective early grade reading and math approaches and expanding Quality Early Childhood Education
- *Adapt* curriculum and train teachers for inclusive education to ensure quality education for children with disabilities
- *Strengthen* Teacher Management Policy to attract qualified staff, ensure quality teacher training and provide on-the-job support
- *Establish* a robust system for learning assessment to improve teaching learning outcomes
- *Integrate* child-friendly principles into state education planning to ensure that schools have the infrastructure and are equipped with age appropriate teaching learning materials
- *Promote* use of information and communications technology to expand access and improve quality of learning and teaching
- *Ensure* appropriate infrastructure including separate toilet facilities for adolescent girls for gender parity
- *Mainstream* Global Citizenship Education in the education system by promoting transformative teaching that promotes critically thinking and encourages engagement with local and global communities

Image Credits

- Cover page: Areh Bedi, Male, Age 16, Class XI, Amity International School, Saket, New Delhi
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- Page 4 : Akanksha, Female Age 16, D.A.V. Public School, Faridabad
- Page 5 : Bidave Ashutosh Shivanand, Male, Age 14, Shri Sant Dnyaneshwar Vidhyalaya, Pune
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- Page 10: Nidhi Shrimal, Female, Age 14, Tagore Public School, Shastri Nagar, Jaipur
- Page 11 : Palak Gidwani, Male, Class XII, B.E.M.S.S.S.

The art work is a selection of some of the best entries received from a a creative expression and art competition on the theme **Right to Learn**. In August 2014, the UN in India team on the Global Education First Initiative announced this competition and reached out to schools through their networks including UNESCO Associated Schools, UNESCO Clubs, Kendriya Vidyalayas and NinelsMine. Nearly 250 schools participated and over 2,000 entries were received including paintings, pencil sketches, comic strips, posters, collages, poems, stories, write-ups and slogans.

UNESCO Associated Schools is a global network of 9,900 educational institutions in 180 countries that include pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools, vocational schools and teacher training institutions that work in support of international understanding, peace, intercultural dialogue, sustainable development and quality education in practice.

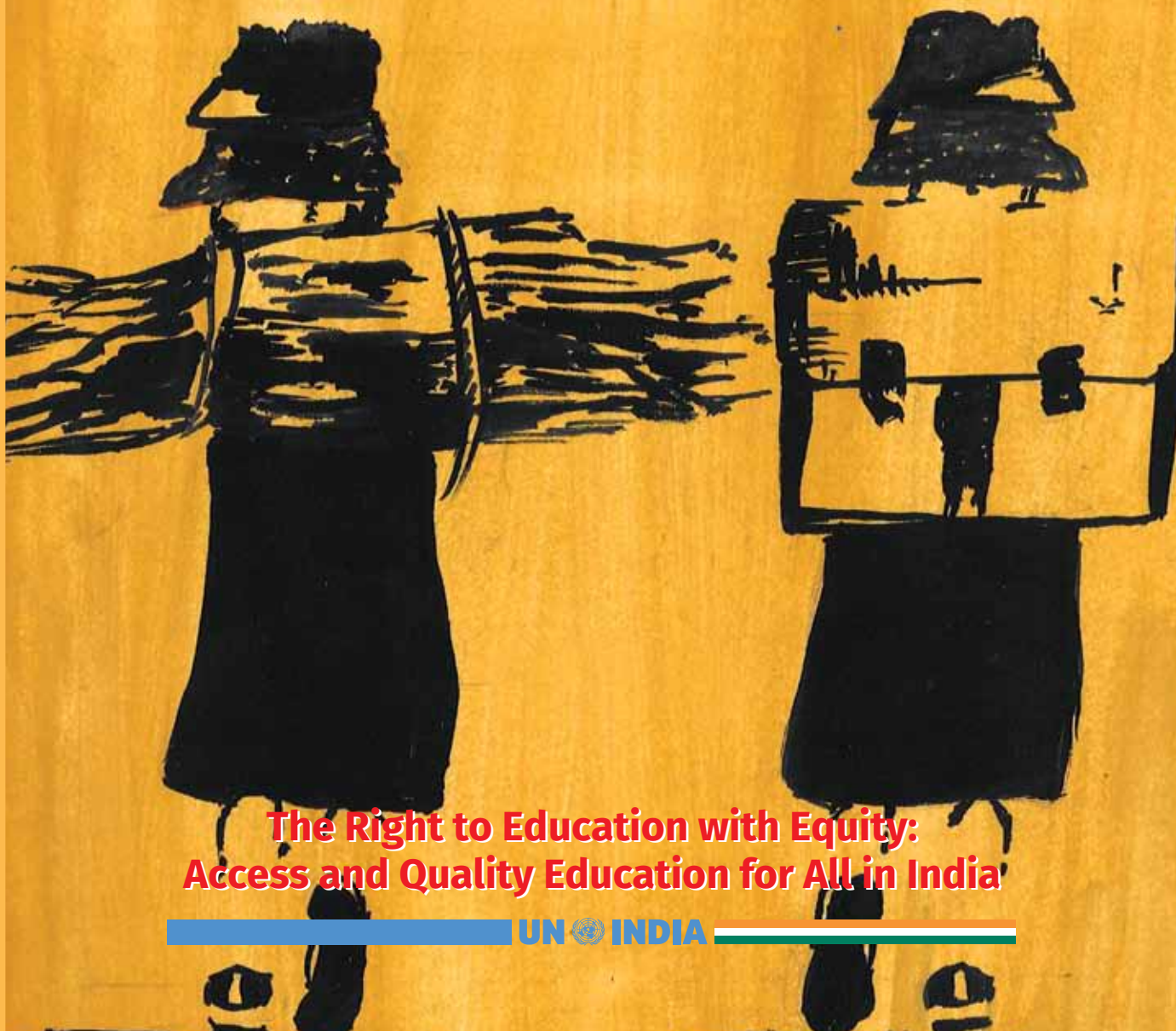
Set up in 1965 in India, the Kendriya Vidyalayas (Central Schools) cater to the educational needs of children of Central Government employees including Defence and Para-Military personnel who have transferable jobs. They charge no tuition fee for boys up to Class VIII, girls up to Class XII, students from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and staff children. Competition entries were received from Kendriya Vidyalaya schools from across 17 states in India.

NinelsMine is a child rights movement advocating for allocation of six per cent GDP for education and three per cent for health to improve lives of children in India.



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