

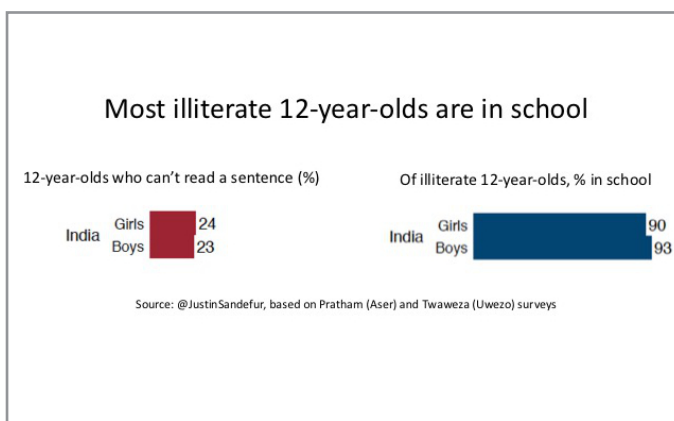
RISE in India: Non-technical Research Overview

The Country Research Team in India will conduct a six-year project intended to aid understanding of whether and why reforms undertaken on a large scale improve students' skills. In addition to rigorously evaluating the impact of ambitious reforms, the team plans to undertake research to shed light on the processes that allow – or impede - reform efforts to improve learning.

The focus is on finding feasible and effective levers for changes that are needed to improve learning outcomes in India, and to use these insights to inform policy in ways that can improve education in countries that face similar problems globally.

The sheer scale of the reforms give researchers a way to explore questions that are critical for understanding how policy tools can be wielded in enormous and complex public* education systems. The Country Research Team will analyse reforms in Delhi and Madhya Pradesh, locations that are as large as entire countries in terms of population and, in the case of Madhya Pradesh, in terms of geography. The size issue is particularly important because many reforms that prove to be successful on a small scale are difficult to replicate on a larger one - even when undertaken with great fidelity.

India is one of many countries throughout the world facing a learning crisis. Enrolment in primary school in India is almost universal, but learning outcomes are low: in 2014, only 48 percent of students in Grade 5 could read a Grade 2 text, and only 26 percent could do simple division.



The research will examine three ambitious reform efforts in three locations. Each reform seeks to improve teaching and/or governance, which have been identified as key impediments to better student learning in India and elsewhere.

The research will take place in public schools attended primarily by students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In testing the effectiveness of the reforms, the team will employ experimental and quasi-experimental methods, which are generally considered to be the most rigorous approaches to evaluate policies.

Key questions are:

- What underlying mechanisms lead to improved learning?
- Do reforms affect student achievement at scale?
- Does scale-up dilute implementation quality?

A multidisciplinary team will analyse the reforms, which address issues that are of common concern across the globe. The analysis will look closely at whether providing incentives and information that lead individual teachers and schools to improve educational quality lead to better student achievement.

The reforms include:

Adopting a tailored, “continuous improvement” approach to school governance.

Research will analyse reforms taking place in Madhya Pradesh, a state in the geographic heart of India and with the largest population of Scheduled Tribes, groups of historically disadvantaged indigenous people. The reforms are intended to improve school governance, a key concern in India and many parts of the world. The reforms rely on comprehensive school assessments that provide customised

feedback to schools in order to help them improve in achieving high-quality learning for all students. Steps include use of school report cards; technological tools to provide real-time records of student assessments and school progress; and improvement plans focused on problem-solving approaches rather than inspections with punitive consequences. The intent is to lead schools to strive to improve, and to give teachers and principals (headteachers) leeway to identify and address the issues they consider most important. The reforms were designed by the state government of Madhya Pradesh and Ark, a UK-based international education charity with financial support from the UK Department of International Development. Ark is also working on the implementation of similar programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. The programme will be extended to 20,000 Madhya Pradesh schools in 2016, and will eventually be expanded to all 120,000 government schools in the state.

Using Closed Caption Television (CCTV) technology to provide teachers with feedback in Delhi.

In 2015, the Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi committed to installing CCTV cameras in all 22,000 classrooms in its public schools. The initial motivation behind the reform was to increase monitoring to prevent corporal punishment and student vandalism, and reduce teacher absenteeism and tardiness. However, consultation with the research team led the government to expand the mission to incorporate CCTV footage as a tool to provide feedback to teachers on how to improve instruction. The information generated by this reform may eventually be used to improve teacher selection, probation, and promotion policies.

The research will seek to examine whether monitoring alone addresses some problems, and whether the CCTV footage feedback proves an effective tool to improve teaching quality, and whether teaching skills improve over time.

The research will evaluate whether learning improves as a result of:

- CCTV monitoring alone;
- CCTV monitoring combined with assessments about the time teachers spend on task; administrators will give

teachers information about benchmark goals and ways to employ classroom time more productively; or

- CCTV monitoring combined with bonuses given to teachers for meeting certain benchmarks for attendance, punctuality and time on task.

A third state-level reform to be named.

The RISE Country Research Team is currently assessing the feasibility of undertaking rigorous evaluation of multiple other reforms that state governments are embarking upon to improve teaching and governance in public schools. Reforms being considered include the consolidation of small schools into large ones that can offer better oversight, better resources and teachers for each subject and grade. The research would examine the trade-off faced in many countries between having more schools that offer more accessibility, or having fewer schools that offer more resources. Another reform being contemplated in India involves the potential introduction of Public Private Partnership schools which are modelled along the lines of academies in the United Kingdom and charter schools in the United States. A later announcement will offer details of the third reform to be analysed.

** In the RISE lexicon, a public school refers to one operated by a government at little or no cost to students. This is distinct from the definition of public schools used in England and Wales, where the term refers to selective, and expensive, independent secondary schools.*

Please contact information@riseprogramme.org for additional information, or visit www.riseprogramme.org.

RISE is supported by:

