

Money alone can't teach kids to read & write

CMP Check II: ET Finds Higher Spends Do Not Guarantee Quality Education



Swaminathan S Anklesaria Aiyar
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GIVEN the poor literacy and school completion rates in India after more than 50 years of independence, the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) of the new coalition government promises to increase public spending on education from 4.1% of GDP to 6%. However, many developing countries have achieved better results with far little spends. And there we have India's problem — wasteful spending.

India spends 4.1% of its GDP on education but boasts of just 65% literacy. China, on the other hand, spends only 2.2% of GDP on education, yet has 91% literacy. Sri Lanka and Indonesia spend only 1.3% of GDP on education, yet have literacy rates of 92.5% and 88% respectively..

Even the UK

Asia (see table) have achieved high literacy rates by spending around 2% of GDP or less on education.

Public spending per student should be a certain proportion of per capita GDP. This ratio in India equals that of the US at 20.8%. This is much higher than that in the UK (15.8%), China (11.56%), Sri Lanka (6.1%) or Indonesia (6%). This drives home the same point, that by international standards India already spends a high proportion of funds on education. The problem is not lack of money but lack of quality. Teachers in government schools earn twice or thrice the salary that teachers in private schools earn, yet are unmotivated, skip school, and teach very little. One survey by Pratiche in select West Bengal schools showed that only 7% of students could spell their own names.

One

quence of lack of quality education is a very high drop-out rate, or wasted education spending, in other words. It must be noted that just 59% of students in India complete Class Five. • Teachers in China on 3-yr

MUCH INPUT, LITTLE OUTPUT

	Public Education GDP	Over-15 Literacy Rate*
India		91.0
China	2.2	88.0
Indonesia	1.3	92.3
Sri Lanka	1.3	90.5
	4.4	NA
		NA
		NA

education, far below the CMP target of 6%. The UK and the us are high wage economies where education is relatively expensive. Many low-wa- ge countries in

*Indian Data For The Over-7 Rate i Source: World Development Indicators04

