

Over 2cr Indian kids study in English-medium schools

Enrolment Up 274% In 8 Years, Beats Marathi & Bengali

Anahita Mukherji TNN

New Delhi: The last eight years have seen a staggering rise in the number of children studying in English-medium schools across the country. Data on school enrolment for 2010-11 shows that, for the first time, the number of children enrolled in English-medium schools from Classes I to VIII has crossed the two crore mark—a 274% rise since 2003-04.

For the fourth year in a row, English is the second-largest medium of instruction in India, ahead of both Marathi and Bengali, according to a yet-to-be released report on countrywide school enrolment by the National University of Education, Planning and Administration (NUEPA) under its District Information System for Education.

“The collection of information under DISE has improved over the years, and now gives a true picture of enrolments by medium of instruction across the country,” says Professor Arun C Mehta of NUEPA. **Experts fault state govts’ handling of Eng demand**

New Delhi: While Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and English have all seen a rise in enrolment in schools in 2010-11 when compared with the previous year, English has seen the highest rate of increase, a yet-to-be released report by the National University of Education, Planning and Administration (NUEPA) has revealed.

While there is an obvious demand for English, academicians and policy-makers alike believe that state governments are handling this demand in an extremely unimaginative manner. “There is a wealth of research which shows that the best medium of instruction for a child to have a conceptual understanding of a subject is his mother tongue. Just because people want their children to study English does not mean that they need to enroll them in an English-medium school. If Indian-language schools did a good job teaching English, parents would not need to send their children to English-medium schools,” said R Govinda, vice-chancellor of NUEPA. He himself studied in a Kannada-medium school where he picked up good English, he pointed out.

“There has been extensive research to show that the number of years for which children study a language does not necessarily translate into them being able to speak or read the language. It is seen that if you show mastery over your first language and can read and write it fluently, you can learn a second language, such as English, a lot faster,” says Professor Anita Rampal, dean of the faculty of education at Delhi University. She points to countless instances where textbooks are in English but children can’t make sense of them.

MESSAGE IN THE MEDIUM		
Total enrolments in classes I-VIII		
Language	2009-10	2010-11
English	1.72	2.04
Hindi	8.60	9.09
Figures in crore		
Growth Rate of English	Growth Rate of Hindi	
18.9%	5.6%	

