

## Education – the key indicator of social development of Kerala: An overview on its trend and pattern

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### Abstract

The prime focus on the welfare of the citizens of Kerala has been the hallmark of its development story. Kerala's achievements in human development are the basis of its national and international fame. Education in Kerala is both inclusive in nature and accessible to all the sections of population. The State, having attained very high rates of literacy and schooling, has a very well developed system that addresses the requirements and demands of all children up to 18 years. This study is descriptive and analytical in nature based on secondary data. The objectives are to examine the trend of literacy, trend of school education, trend of higher secondary and technical education, trend of university and higher education and to analyse the plan outlay and expenditure on education of the 11<sup>th</sup> five-year plan. The State, with a few exceptions, has nearly zero dropout rates between classes 1 and 10 among the different sections of population. Education in a sense is the backbone of the Kerala's exceptional development experience. The least square shows that every 10 year will make 8.29 percent improvement in literacy on average. In 1951, the literacy gap was 21.92 and it slow down to 4.04 in 2011. There were 12133 schools in Kerala during 1990-91 and this number has increased to 12981 in 2016-17. Out of the total schools, 4695 are under the government sector, 7220 are under private aided sector and the remaining 1066 are under the private unaided sector. In 2001-02, there was only 439 schools in the state they are offering syllabus other than the one prescribed by the state government. These include 331 CBSE schools, 71 ICSE schools, 24 Kendriya vidyalaya and 13 Jawahar Navodayas schools. But in 2016-17 the total number of schools other than state syllabus has increased to 1436. These include 1229 CBSE schools, 157 ICSE schools, 36 Kendriya Vidyalaya and 14 Jawahar Navodayas schools. During 2003-04 the drop-out ratio among school students in Kerala was 1.16 percent, and it slow down to 0.21 percent in 2016-17. In higher secondary, university and higher education sectors, there is a hike both in number of institutions and courses in the state. During the 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan there is a significant hike in the outlay and in the last year of plan there was Rs.1330.79 crore outlay for education.

**Keywords:** Dropout, Education, Higher secondary education, Literacy, Plan expenditure, Plan outlay.

### 1. Introduction

Kerala has achieved far better position in social indicators such as education and health among the other Indian States. Kerala has higher literacy rate, higher enrolment rate of students, higher percentage of girl, SC and ST students in schools and colleges and low dropout rate among students. Kerala state government and local self-government institutions are very particular in providing good quality infrastructure and hygienic environment in educational institutions. The state has attained a remarkable achievement in the field of Human Development Index (HDI) and Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI), which is comparable with those of the developed nations.

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## 2. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the trend of literacy
- To examine the trend of education (from School education to university and higher education)
- To analyse the plan out outlay and expenditure of education

## 3. Methodology

This study is descriptive and analytical based on secondary data. The statistical tools like, average, ratios, least square, tabular and graphical tools were used to analyse and interpretation of the data.

## 4. Literacy

Kerala has received the reputation of highest literacy rate from the beginning of twentieth century. The literacy rate of Kerala is very much comparable with the most advanced countries of the world, it was only 47.18 percent in 1951 has almost doubled to 94 percent in 2013-14. The male-female literacy gap was 21.92 percent in 1951, which has come down to 4.04 percent in 2011. A comparison of these figures with Asian countries reveals that Kerala is behind only to South Korea (98%), Philippines (96%) and Thailand (95%) The trend of literacy rate of Kerala from 1951 to 2011 is given in table 1.

**Table 1. Trend of Literacy rate of Kerala (1951-2011)**

Year	Persons	Male	Female	Literacy Gap
1951	47.18	58.35	36.43	21.92
1961	55.08	64.89	45.56	19.33
1971	69.75	77.13	62.53	14.6
1981	78.85	84.56	73.36	11.2
1991	89.81	93.62	86.17	7.45
2001	90.92	94.24	87.72	6.52
2011	93.91	96.02	91.98	4.04

Source: Census of India 2011

The trend of literacy rate of Kerala shows up to 1991, there was a rise in literacy rate in an increasing rate, but after 1991, it is in diminishing rate.

**Table 2. Trend of Literacy Rate by Sex for State and Districts 1991, 2001 and 2011- Kerala**

Sl. No	State/District	Literacy rate								
		Persons			Male			Female		
		1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011	1991	2001	2011
	Keral	89.8	90.92	93.91	93.62	94.2	96.0	86.17	87.86	91.98
1	TVM	89.22	89.36	92.66	92.84	92.68	94.60	85.76	86.26	90.89
2	KLM	90.47	91.49	93.77	94.09	94.63	95.83	87.00	88.6	91.95
3	PTA	94.87	95.09	96.93	96.56	96.62	97.70	93.29	93.71	96.26
4	ALP	93.87	93.66	96.26	96.79	96.42	97.90	91.12	91.14	94.80

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5	KTM	95.72	95.9	96.40	97.46	97.41	97.17	94.00	94.45	95.67
6	IDK	86.97	88.58	92.20	90.89	92.11	94.84	82.97	85.04	89.59
7	EKM	92.3	93.42	95.68	95.4	95.95	97.14	89.22	90.96	94.27
8	THR	90.18	92.56	95.32	93.77	95.47	96.98	86.94	89.94	93.85
9	PKD	81.27	84.31	88.49	87.24	89.73	92.27	75.72	79.31	84.99
10	MPM	87.94	88.61	93.55	92.08	91.46	95.78	84.09	85.96	91.55
11	KKD	91.10	92.45	95.24	95.58	96.3	97.57	86.79	88.86	93.16
12	WYD	82.73	85.52	89.32	87.69	90.28	92.84	77.69	80.8	85.94
13	KNR	91.48	92.8	95.41	95.54	96.38	97.54	87.65	89.57	93.57
14	KSD	82.51	85.17	89.85	88.97	90.84	93.93	76.29	79.80	86.13

Source: Kerala Economic Review 2010, Census of India: Provisional Population Totals 2012

The least square shows that every 10 year will make 8.29 percent improvement in literacy on average. In 1951, the literacy gap was 21.92 and it slow down to 4.04 in 2011

District wise analysis of literacy rate according to 2011 census shows that Pathanamthitta district (96.93) has the highest literacy rate in the state followed by Kottayam (96.40) and Alapuzha (96.26) districts. Palakkad district has the lowest literacy rate in the state (88.49). The trend of literacy rate by sex for districts in 1991, 2001 and 2011 census are given in the table 2.

### 5. School Education

There were 12133 schools in Kerala during 1990-91. Out of these 4485 were government schools, 7331 schools were private aided and 317 schools were private unaided. However, in 2016-17, the total number of schools has increased to 12981, the number of government schools has increased to 4695, number of private aided schools has decreased to 7220 and the number of private unaided schools has increased to 1066. The table 3. shows the trend of number of schools in 1990-91 and 2016-17.

**Table 3. Trend of Sector wise Number of Schools 1990-91 and 2016-17**

	1990-91				2016-17			
	High Schools	UP Schools	LP Schools	Total	High Schools	UP Schools	LP Schools	Total
<b>Government</b>	960	960	2565	4485	1225	873	2597	4695
<b>Private aided</b>	1380	1883	4068	7331	1433	1873	3914	7220
<b>Private Unaided</b>	111	72	134	317	461	242	363	1066
<b>Total</b>	2451	2915	6767	12133	3119	2988	6874	12981

Source: Kerala Economic Review 1991 and 2017

The district wise analysis of number of schools in 2016-17 shows that Malappuram district has more number of schools (1558) in the state followed by Kannur (1308) and Kozhikkode (1283).

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Malappuram district has also more number of government (553) and unaided schools (198) in the state. But in the number of aided schools, Kannur district is in first position (963). The trend of district wise number of schools in Kerala is given in the table 4

**Table 4. District wise Number of Schools in Kerala 1990-91 and 2016-17**

Districts	1990-91				2016-17			
	Govt.	Aided	Unaided	Total	Govt.	Aided	Unaided	Total
<b>TVM</b>	522	379	41	942	538	364	98	1000
<b>KLM</b>	414	459	24	897	430	439	85	954
<b>PTA</b>	262	439	26	727	263	429	48	740
<b>ALP</b>	323	402	20	745	334	394	43	771
<b>KTM</b>	301	576	38	915	309	560	54	923
<b>IDK</b>	174	274	13	461	205	256	35	496
<b>EKM</b>	367	551	56	974	374	541	99	1014
<b>THR</b>	256	711	28	995	263	686	81	1030
<b>PKD</b>	308	583	24	915	333	585	88	1006
<b>MPM</b>	535	776	13	1324	553	807	198	1558
<b>KKD</b>	329	873	16	1318	334	867	82	1283
<b>WYD</b>	136	114	8	258	174	112	21	307
<b>KNR</b>	278	974	6	1258	284	963	61	1308
<b>KSD</b>	280	220	4	504	301	217	73	591
<b>Total</b>	4485	7331	317	12133	4695	7220	1066	12981

Source: Kerala Economic Review 1991 and 2017

In 2001-02, there was only 439 schools in the state they are offering syllabus other than the one prescribed by the state government. These include 331 CBSE schools, 71 ICSE schools, 24 Kendriya vidyalaya and 13 Jawahar Navodayas schools. But in 2016-17 the total number of schools other than state syllabus has increased to 1436. These include 1229 CBSE schools, 157 ICSE schools, 36 Kendriya Vidyalaya and 14 Jawahar Navodayas schools. The trend in number of district wise schools other than state syllabus is given in the table 5.

**Table 5. Trend of District wise Number of Schools (other than State Syllabus)**

Districts	2001-02				2016-17			
	CBSE	ICSE	Kendriya Vidyalaya	Jawahar Navodaya	CBSE	ICSE	Kendriya Vidyalaya	Jawahar Navodaya
<b>TVM</b>	31	10	3	1	122	16	5	1
<b>KLM</b>	16	9	0	1	103	18	1	1
<b>PTA</b>	16	10	1	1	51	16	2	1
<b>ALP</b>	22	11	0	1	82	14	1	1

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<b>KTM</b>	27	4	2	1	107	18	2	1
<b>IDK</b>	10	4	0	1	50	4	1	1
<b>EKM</b>	59	11	6	1	186	28	6	1
<b>THR</b>	28	3	1	1	105	19	2	1
<b>PKD</b>	26	3	3	1	73	4	3	1
<b>MPM</b>	33	1	1	1	115	3	1	1
<b>KKD</b>	20	1	2	1	78	5	2	1
<b>WYD</b>	7	1	3	0	26	4	1	1
<b>KNR</b>	24	1	2	1	87	4	6	1
<b>KSD</b>	12	2	0	1	44	4	3	1
<b>Total</b>	331	71	24	13	1229	157	36	14

Source: Kerala Economic Review 2002 and 2017

The number of schools other than state syllabus is more in Ernakulam district in the reference period 2001 to 2017 and less in Wayanad district.

## 6. Drop-out Rate

Low dropout rate is one of the major indicators of good education system. The dropout rate from schools in Kerala is very low among the Indian states. During 2003-04 the drop-out ratio among school students in Kerala was 1.16 percent, and it slow down to 0.21 percent in 2016-17 (table 6.). The dropout ratio was 0.86 percent at lower primary section, 0.79 percent at upper primary section and 1.84 percent at high school level in 2003-04. It has improved to 0.20, 0.11 and 0.33 at lower primary, upper primary and high school level respectively in 2016-17.

The district wise analysis shows that Wayanad district has the highest dropout ratio in schools in both 2003-04 and 2016-17. Pathanamthitta district has the lowest dropout ratio in 2016-17.

**Table 6. District/Stage –wise Dropout Ratio in Schools: 2003-04 and 2016-17**

Districts	2003-04			2016-17		
	LP	UP	HS	LP	UP	HS
<b>TVM</b>	1.06	0.56	0.78	0.22	0.06	0.09
<b>KLM</b>	0.42	0.53	1.21	0.10	0.08	0.14
<b>PTA</b>	0.50	0.32	0.39	0.07	0.05	0.09
<b>ALP</b>	0.35	0.53	1.48	0.09	0.07	0.12
<b>KTM</b>	0.39	0.32	1.46	0.29	0.09	0.28
<b>IDK</b>	1.61	1.09	3.07	0.55	0.26	0.33
<b>EKM</b>	1.11	0.91	2.14	0.21	0.05	0.19
<b>THR</b>	0.47	0.84	1.90	0.08	0.03	0.44

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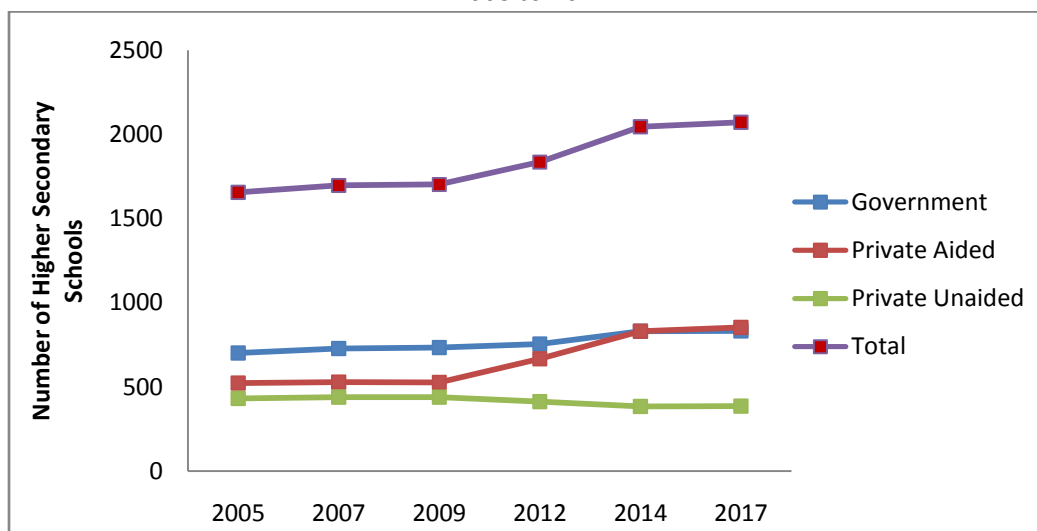
<b>PKD</b>	1.18	1.26	2.33	0.29	0.13	0.43
<b>MPM</b>	0.70	0.53	1.56	0.13	0.06	0.13
<b>KKD</b>	1.00	1.23	1.66	0.26	0.11	0.18
<b>WYD</b>	2.33	1.77	3.30	0.19	0.58	2.80
<b>KNR</b>	0.63	0.64	2.96	0.15	0.15	0.50
<b>KSD</b>	1.65	1.25	3.71	0.38	0.21	0.64
<b>Total</b>	0.86	0.79	1.84	0.20	0.11	0.33

Source: Directorate of Public Instructions, Kerala Economic Reviews 2005 and 2017

## 7. Higher Secondary Education

Higher secondary courses were introduced in the state during 1990-91 to reorganize the secondary level of education in accordance with National Education Policy. The hike of number of higher secondary schools in Kerala from 2005 to 2017 is given in (fig.1)

**Fig. 1. Hike in number of Higher Secondary Schools in Kerala during 2005 to 2017**



Source: Constructed from Economic reviews 2005 to 2017

## 8. University and Higher Education

In Kerala, at present, 14 universities are functioning. Out of these, four universities namely Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi, Calicut and Kannur are general in nature and they are offering various arts and science courses. Cochin University of Science and Technology, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, Kerala Veterinary and Animal Science University, Kerala Agricultural University, Kerala University of Health Sciences, Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies and Kerala Technical University offer specialised graduate and postgraduate courses in specified subject areas. Besides these, the National University of Advanced Legal Studies (NUALS) established in 2005, the Central University established in Kasargode district

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and the regional centre of Aligarh Muslim University in Malappuram district is also functioning in the state.

### 9. Arts and Science Colleges

There are 217 Arts and Science Colleges in the State comprising 156 private aided colleges and 61 Government Colleges. In 2016-17, Ernakulam (25) had the largest number of Arts and Science colleges in the State followed by Kottayam (23). Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode (10) have the largest number of Government colleges in the State. District-wise number of Arts and Science colleges in the State in 2016-17 is given in table 7. In addition to the government and aided colleges there are large number of unaided arts and science colleges functioning in the State.

**Table 7. District wise Number of Arts and Science Colleges (Government & Private Aided) in Kerala 2016-17**

Sl.No	District	Government	Private Aided	Total
1.	Thiruvananthapuram	10	12	22
2.	Kollam	2	13	15
3.	Pathanamthitta	1	9	10
4.	Alapuzha	1	12	13
5.	Kottayam	1	22	23
6.	Idukki	2	6	8
7.	Eranakulam	4	21	25
8.	Thrissur	5	17	22
9.	Palakkad	7	8	15
10.	Malappuram	8	13	21
11.	Kozhikkode	10	8	18
12.	Wayanad	2	4	6
13.	Kannur	4	9	13
14.	Kasargod	4	2	6
	Total	61	156	217

Source: Directorate of Collegiate Education 2017

### 10. Technical Education

There are 168 technical institutions functioning in Kerala under the directorate of technical education. The details of technical institutions under the administrative and financial control of Directorate of Technical Education is given in the table 8.

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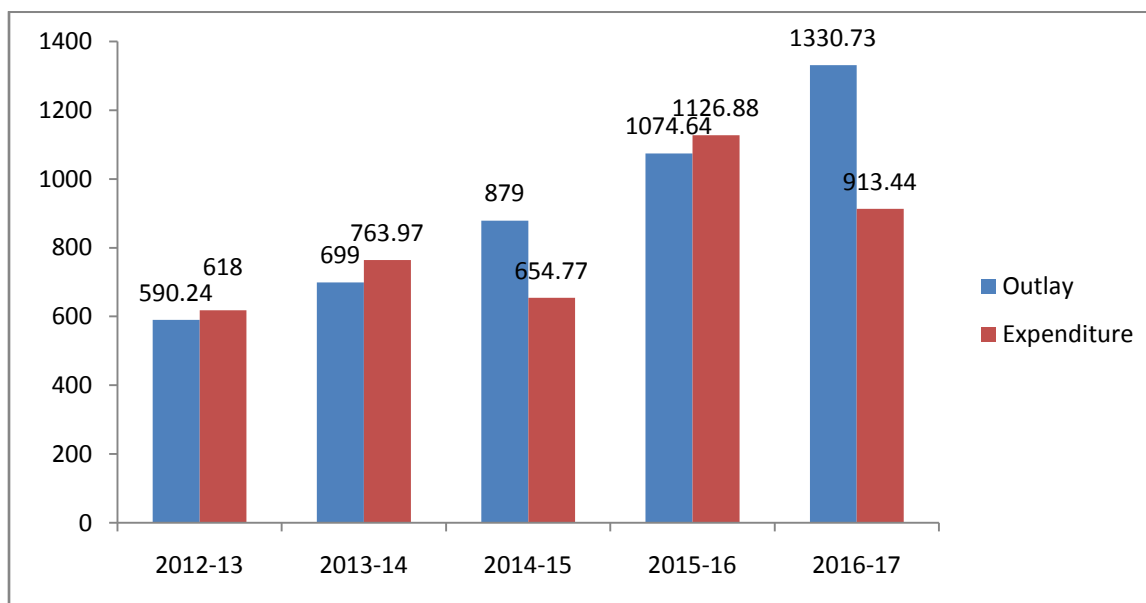
**Table 8. Technical Institutions running under Directorate of Technical Education -2017**

Sl.No	Institutions	Nos
1.	Government Engineering Colleges	9
2.	Private aided Engineering Colleges	3
3.	Government Polytechnic Colleges	38
4.	Government women's Polytechnic Colleges	7
5.	Private Aided Polytechnics	6
6.	Fine Arts Colleges	3
7.	Government Technical High Schools	39
8.	Government Commercial Institutes	17
9.	Tailoring and Garment making training Centres	42
10.	Vocational Training Centres	4
	Total	168

Source: Directorate of Technical Education 2017

### 11. Plan Outlay for and Expenditure on Education

During the first year of the 11th Five-Year Plan 590.24 crore had been earmarked for education sector of which 98.78 per cent was expended. The outlay has increased significantly during these five years with 1,330.79 crore being earmarked in 2016-17. The percentage share of higher education has increased significantly over these five years whereas outlay of technical education has increased only marginally during this period. General education got more than 80 per cent of the total allocation in all these five years. It is also seen that the percentage allocation for technical education is lower, but its percentage expenditure is better. The trend of plan outlay for and expenditure on education is given in the fig.2.

**Fig.2. Plan outlay for and expenditure on education in Crores (2012-13 to 2016-17)**

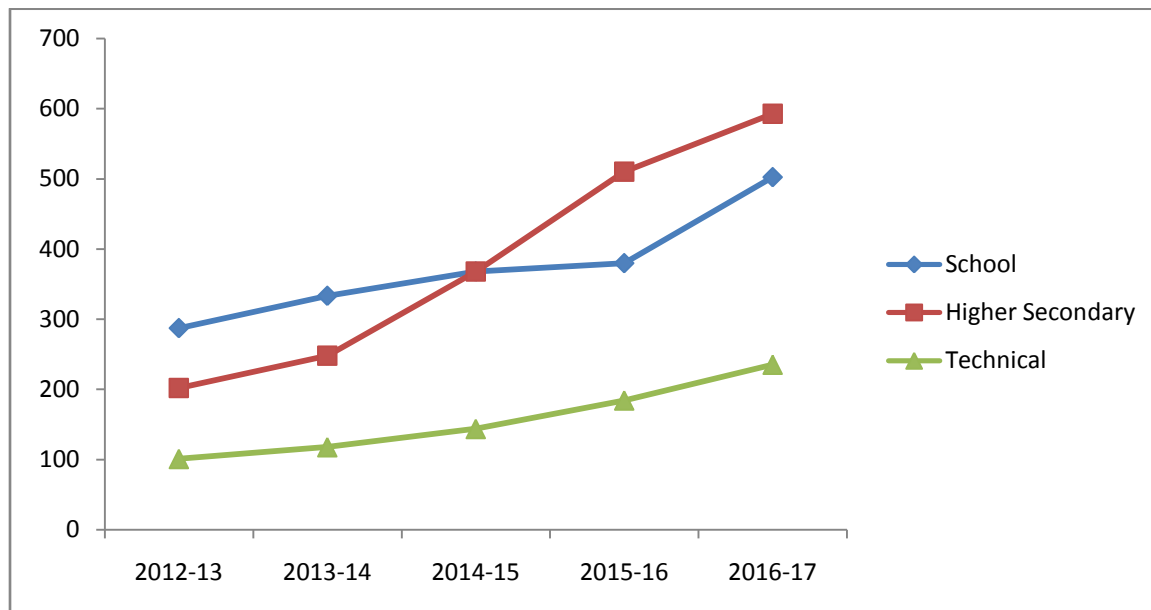
Source: Kerala Economic Review 2017



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The total outlay and expenditure is for three sectors. They are School, Higher secondary and Technical institutions.

Fig.3. Total Outlay for Education for various sectors



Source: Kerala Economic review 2017

Though the total outlay for all the three sub-sectors is increasing over these five years (Figure 3), except for the last year, the percentage share of school education shows a declining trend during this period. It decreased from 56 per cent in 2012-13 to 37.8 per cent in 2016-17. This may be due to the fact that the State has achieved most of the primary targets in school education.

### 13. Conclusion

Even though Kerala ranked first in literacy and in better position in the case of dropout rate, Kerala's rank in the Educational Index is only 8<sup>th</sup>. It is seen in the report that the indicator of "the percentage of the State Budget earmarked for Education" in Kerala is below the national average. Likewise, clean toilets available for girls are also not up to the mark. Though the methodological validity of the index can be debatable, Kerala's 8<sup>th</sup> position in educational ranking raises some critical questions regarding the education system of the State. Many other reports including ASER Report, Expert Committee Reports of 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan and Working Group Reports of 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan send out warning signals on the consistent fall in the quality of education in the State and this requires immediate attention and urgent action of the Government.

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