

Who Stays in School?

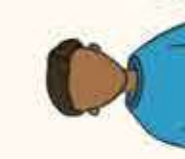
Divya, Kabir and Nayana's journey through India's education system

Anganwadi
Age 3 - 5 years

Grades I - V
Primary
Age 6 - 10 years



Like Kabir, **32%** children under the age of five are overweight in rural India

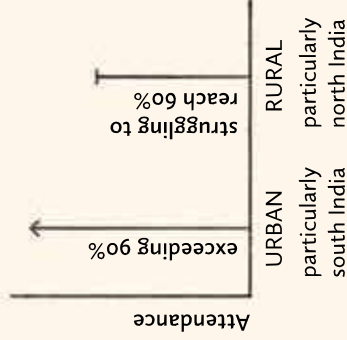


Nayana was fortunate—her Anganwadi teacher, with support from the helper, managed to engage her and her classmates in learning despite a heavy workload



India sees high early-year enrolments but significant dropouts later. Girls face socio-cultural barriers, while boys struggle with economic pressures. This infographic story follows Divya, Kabir and Nayana, three children, to highlight these contrasts using data from NFHS-5, UDISE+ 2023-24, and NAS 2021.

Their educational journey begins at the age of three. Their parents, recognising the importance of early learning, enrol them in the local Anganwadi centre.



Household Chores



Helping Family at Work



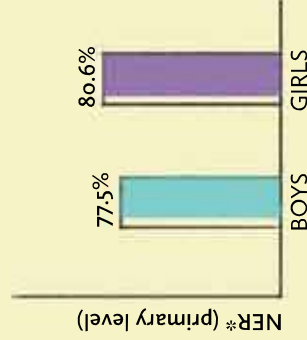
Illness at Home and Self



There is lack of FLN (Foundational Literacy and Numeracy) progress at the schools. Despite this and multiple obstacles, they showed a keen aptitude for certain subjects.

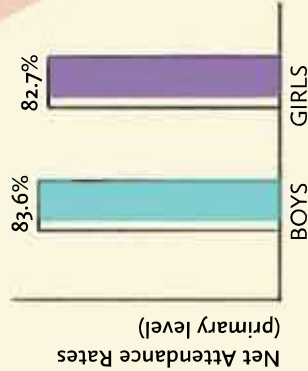


Despite their enthusiasm, the children often struggled to attend regularly. But they cherished the moments at school.



The GPI is 1.03

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) indicates parity between girls and boys. A GPI of less than 1 suggests girls are more disadvantaged than boys in learning opportunities and a GPI of greater than 1 suggests the other way around.



Lack of Functional Toilets

Lack of Menstrual Hygiene

Grades VI - VIII

Upper Primary

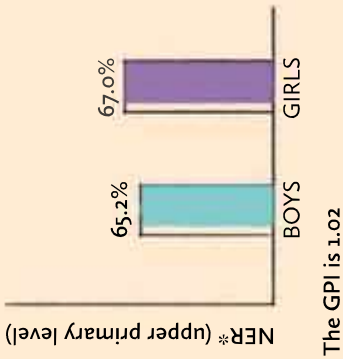
Age 11 - 13 years



Gender Disparity



At school, Nayana received support from her teacher and the block Inclusive Resource Teacher. With good resources and an enabling environment, the school helped meet her special needs.



Societal Pressures



Grades IX - X

Secondary

Age 14 - 15 years

Financial Constraints



With continued support from her schools and teachers, Nayana successfully completes her 10th standard examination.



Child Marriage



Grades XI - XII

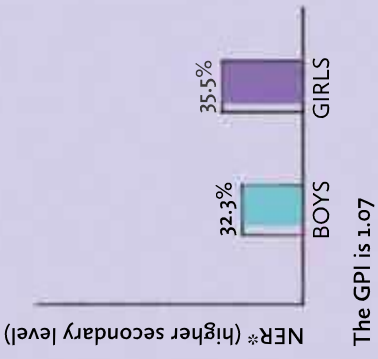
Higher Secondary

Age 16 - 18 years

Providing for Family

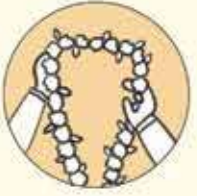
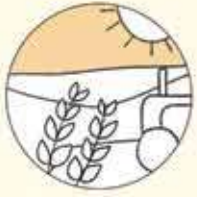


Child marriage, affecting 27% of girls before they turn 18 in some states, is a major reason for girls like Divya to drop-out.



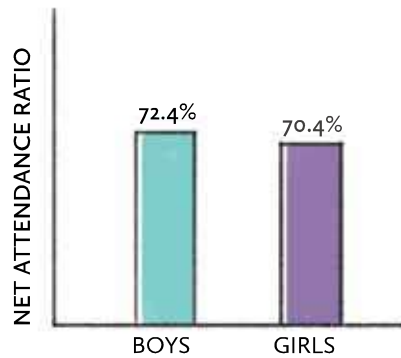
The Indian education system needs to shift from centralised to school-level planning and establish a robust system to identify and support out-of-school children. Achieving universal education requires strengthening the education system and creating an inclusive environment where every child, like Nayana, can complete their education. At the same time, we must address the barriers that force children like Divya and Kabir to drop out. Closing these gaps is key to ensuring all children can complete their education.

*Net Enrolment Rate



Divya, Kabir and Nayana's stories, though distinct, are representative of the complex realities faced by children in India. The barriers to education are multifaceted: health issues like anaemia affecting over 50% of girls, social norms like early marriage and domestic responsibilities, inadequate infrastructure like the lack of toilets and safe transport, and the constant pressure of economic necessity.

While learning outcomes, as shown by NAS 2021 data, may show minimal gender disparity in overall scores, and girls often outperform boys in language-based subjects, the fact remains that many children, are denied the opportunity to complete their education. The need for skill-based education to retain students in higher grades is also crucial.



This graph depicts the Net Attendance Ratio of Upper Primary, Secondary and Senior Secondary Grades combined. The total is 71.4%.

In conclusion, while there have been improvements in net enrolment rates in primary and upper primary education in India, much remains to be done to ensure access to and completion of secondary and higher secondary education, especially for girls. As Divya, Kabir and Nayana's stories demonstrate, the transition rates between levels are still a major concern. The declining NERs at each stage highlight the system's struggle with retention. Simply enrolling children is not enough; ensuring they stay in school and progress through the grades is crucial for achieving universal education. Strengthening vocational education in schools, evening schools to encourage retention and reduce dropouts, and awareness campaigns on the negative impacts of early marriage are crucial. We must address the factors contributing to the low NERs at the secondary and higher secondary levels.