

One School Board for the entire Country

What are the issues with education?

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- The twin issues of accessibility and affordability combine into a deadly double blow for parents struggling to educate their children.

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- Especially, for the poor, access to affordable government education is limited due to the absence of requisite physical and soft infrastructure.

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- At the higher education level, the Centre has targeted to achieve a 30% enrolment level in higher education by 2020.

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- If one in every three eligible students who have completed high school actually wants to join college, **we need to create 40 million university seats.**

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- Despite the spectacular growth in private sector education, we are still millions of seats short of the target.

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What happened recently?

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- Apart from the constitutionally mandated reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, we have all kinds of other quotas at the State level.

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- Recently, in Tamil Nadu, the State government decreed that as much as 85% of engineering and medical college seats in the State will be reserved for students who had completed the qualifying exam under the State's own board of secondary education.

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- The move followed a dismal showing by State-board students in the NEET for admission.

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- Simultaneously, in Delhi — the Aam Aadmi Party government passed a resolution in the State Assembly demanding that Delhi University reserve 80% of its seats for students from Delhi.

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Why employers apply strict filters?

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- As hundreds of engineering seats are goes-begging, as word gets around that the graduates are proving to be unemployable in the job market.

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- The trouble is that our education system has never been able to convince stakeholders that it performs its human resource development function of equipping a candidate with the appropriate skills and knowledge.

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- Hence, employers apply stricter filters to decide on who gets a job offer and who doesn't.

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What could be the way forward?

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- In our country, a high school degree is just not good enough to become a doctor or engineer, which is why we have exams like NEET, JEE, and so on.

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- The only workable solution is to **ensure uniformity in the quality of education** at the school level to start with.

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- This means, for instance, going for a nationwide CBSE system, instead of State boards of varying quality.

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Source: The Hindu

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