Implications of ASER report 2017

Why in news?

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The Annual State of Education Report (ASER) 2017, has been released.

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What is ASER?

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- The ASER report is being published by a NGO called Pratham.
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- ASER report is a household-based survey that collects information on children's schooling status and basic learning outcomes in almost every rural district in the country.
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- The ASER survey is an enormous participatory exercise that has involved about 500 organizations and upwards of 25,000 volunteers every year.
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- Estimates of children's schooling and learning status are generated at district, state and national levels.
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- ASER is the only annual source of data on children's learning outcomes available in India.
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- The ASER model has been adapted for use by thirteen other countries across three continents.
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What are the recent findings of the report?

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- In India 125 million children between 14 and 18 years of age are ill-equipped to read, write or do even basic arithmetic.
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- It is revealing that the gender divide in intellect levels worsens with rise in age, as girls are often compelled to drop out of school for a variety of reasons.
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- In India 76 per cent of teenage girls have no access to the computer or internet, as against 49 per cent in the case of boys.
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- Boys expressed their wish to join the army or police, while girls wished to be teachers, gendered choice of careers remains the norm for society at large.
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- The report refers to a lack of interest in pursuing education in agriculture.
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- The situation calls for a shift in policy priorities, as pointed out by Economic Survey 2016-17.
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What are the suggestions of the report?

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- Government need to focus more on increasing the number of teachers, providing basic amenities and digital infrastructure.
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- It spotlights urgent need to focus on creating excellence among educators and suggests to plug the vacancies in teaching posts.
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- Centre and State expenditure on education must increase from 3.2 per cent of GDP, inching up closer to the global norm of above 5 per cent.
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- Instead of squeezing salaries in a bid to curb the revenue deficit, and governments need to capitalise social sector expenditure.
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- Cognition skills could improve when rural students can relate to the subject matter, through which farm sector and education reforms can go hand in hand.
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Source: Business Line

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