Issues with Educating Children

What is the issue?

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- By 2030, India will have 590 million people living in its cities.
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- The youth segment of this population is expected to include 170 million workers. This segment is the preschoolers of today.
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- And yet this constituent is practically overlooked in all our policy plans and pronouncements.
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What is wrong with previous govt interventions?

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- The **Right to Education Act** (RTE) is focused on free and compulsory education till class VIII.
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- It does not prescribe preschools for the poor or education beyond class 8. Nor does it talk quality or equity.
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- The new Child and Adolescent Amendment Act passed in July 2016 is praised as progressive for it covers adolescents (up to age 18).
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- But it lacks the national commitment to abolish child labour in all forms.
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- Here, the list of hazardous occupations has been slashed from 83 to 3.
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- Now, adolescents can be put to work in chemical mixing units, cotton farms, brick kilns, among other places.
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- Even this ban can be removed by state governments, at their discretion.
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- There are very few programmes for early schools goers.
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- What the 21st century needs are creativity, innovation, problem-solving, entrepreneurship and a drive to excel.
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- But **basic education seems to be less important** in the grand scheme of things than the mission of skilling Indian youth by lakhs.
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- A UNESCO report of September 2016 says that we will achieve universal primary education only by 2050, universal lower secondary education only by 2060 and universal upper secondary education only by 2085.
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- A situation in which 50% of 300 million children in school can’t read, needs action.
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Source: The Indian Express

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