Need for Educational Reforms

Why in news?

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PEW Research Centre in New York, a think-tank focusing on public issues released a research study with findings of a comparison of schooling standards in over 90 countries.

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What does the study highlight?

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- The study uses parameters prescribed by the UNESCO for assessing schooling standards, and number of years of schooling as the proxy for education accomplishment.
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- It does not take into account the quality of education on offer.
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- It focuses on “educational attainment” among the major religions of the world.
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- It concludes that Hindus have the “lowest” level of “educational attainment” in the world.
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- The “Christian” average is 9.3 years of schooling and “Buddhists”have 7.9 years.
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- Muslims and Hindus of the world undergo 5.6 years of schooling against the global average of 7.7 years.
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- It also points out that the Indian school educational system is at the bottom of the international league, along with Sub-Saharan Africa.
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What similar studies highlights?

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- **PISA** is the measurement standard adopted in Europe and utilised in a large number of countries.
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- It also studied Indian school quality in two states.
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- India ranked second last among 110 countries beating only Kyrgyzstan.
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- India pulled out of the PISA study, thereafter.
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- The **Annual Status of Education Report** conducted by Pratham, an Indian NGO, had assessed in 2014 that 75% of all children in Class III, over 50% in Class V and over 25% in Class VIII could not read texts meant for Class II.
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- Reading levels for all children enrolled in government schools in Class V showed a decline between 2010 and 2012.
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- **National Survey Sample** results in 2015 indicated sharp decline in learning outcomes in mathematics, science and English in the secondary schools.
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- A recent study in Delhi has come out with the finding that only 54% of the city’s children can read something.
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Where does the main problem lie?

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- There is ample evidence that the Indian child is as good a learner as any in the world.
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- Indian Americans are among the highly educated communities in the US.
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- It is just sheer lack of basic opportunity that has kept the Indian child at very low education standards.
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- The main problem is the abysmal quality of governance, with politics permeating every aspect of educational administration.
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- Factors other than merit play a significant part in the management of affairs.
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- Proper governance standards, with adequate incentives, and checks and balances, have not been put in place.
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- The focus of the entire structure at the Centre and the states is on the minister, secretary, and the educational regulatory institutions.
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- It is not focussed on the student, teacher, principal and school.
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- The system is not “inclusive” and does not give a second chance to the weaker sections.
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- The fundamentals of teacher management, teacher education and training as well as school governance and management are lacking at every step.
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- The curriculum is rote-oriented and little practical thought has been given to pedagogy at any stage.
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Source: Indian Express

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