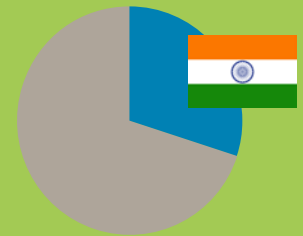




1 in 3

of the world's illiterate people live in India.



Our Presence in India



Country Information

Population	1.3 billion
Land area	3 million km ²
Languages of instruction	Hindi, English
Launch of operations	2003
Room to Read offices	New Delhi

Country Overview

With over 1.3 billion people, India is home to one sixth of the world's total population and the world's largest democracy. It is linguistically and culturally diverse country that stretches from palm tree-lined beaches in the south to the snow-capped Himalayas in the north.

Since becoming an independent nation in 1947, India has gone from depending on grain imports to building a booming agriculture industry that exports more than it imports. Over the last decade in particular, the World Bank reports that India has achieved steady economic growth to make it the third largest global economy in terms of purchasing parity. The World Bank also notes that India has seen success in decreasing poverty rates – from 46 percent twenty-five years ago to 13.4 percent in 2015.

Despite these economic improvements, prosperity has not been felt equally around the country. While some areas are progressing, others still struggle to provide basic services and lift their citizens out of poverty. India's population is also uniquely young, with more than 41 percent of the population below the age of 18, it has the largest number of children in the world. This burgeoning young population needs access to quality education in order to continue to reduce poverty, achieve gender equality and grow the job market.



three child brides in the world is a girl in India.

History and Results

Room to Read first launched its work in India in 2003. Since then, India has gone on to become our largest country of operation. When we began, our programs were limited to providing critical support by establishing libraries through our Literacy Program. Significant components of library management and reading activities were added later. As part of a strategic planning process, Room to Read made reading and writing skills acquisition a global priority, based on the understanding that children can only benefit from a school library in meaningful ways if they have the skills to read. This led to the evolution of a comprehensive literacy program that focused on both reading habits and reading skills of children in primary school. The Literacy Program is currently operational in ten states in India.

In the years since the launch of the Girls' Education Program in 2004, operations have grown to eight states. The program addresses gender inequality in India's education system by: 1) supporting girls with the resources and support they need to successfully complete secondary school and negotiate key life decisions, 2) working with their families and communities to create supportive environments for them and 3) working with government stakeholders to advocate for the importance of girls' education at the state and national levels.

Since 2015, Room to Read has initiated efforts to scale up its programs in partnership with local governments. Through specific projects, we have built systemic capacity to implement our programs across entire districts and states, leveraging government resources and systems. These projects have been immensely successful in benefiting a large number of children.

Educational Landscape

India has 266 million illiterate people, accounting for one-third of the world's illiterate population. Despite the Right to Education Act passed in 2009, that mandates free and compulsory education to all children ages 6-14 years, inadequate facilities, poor quality of education, seasonal migrations and gender biases have led to low learning levels and subsequent high dropout rates. In primary grades, 4.34 percent children drop out with this number increasing to as high as 17.86 percent by secondary school. In 2018, UNICEF estimated that 8.1 million children were not enrolled in school, the majority belonging to disadvantaged groups. If drastic measures are not taken to reverse this trend, it is estimated that this number will continue to rise, especially in disadvantaged communities.

Another challenge is India's linguistic diversity. 23 official languages and over 700 unofficial languages and dialects are spoken across the country. Most classrooms in India are multi-lingual in nature and children speak many languages, frequently differing from the official language of instruction. There is a huge dearth of children's literature and education resources available in most of these official and unofficial languages.

Girls also face unique obstacles to their education both inside and outside of school. During the last couple of decades, a number of policy measures have been taken to promote girls' education, yet gender disparities in education persist. Around 39 percent of adolescent girls ages 15-18 are not attending any educational institution, and around two thirds are engaged in household activities or child labor. Early marriage also plays a large role in keeping girls out of secondary school. One in every

Our Results in India

Literacy Program

New children benefited in 2018	484,225
Children benefited cumulatively	4,294,259
New schools in 2018	3,814
Schools cumulatively	15,404
New children's book titles published in 2018	5
Books distributed cumulatively	4,438,272

Girls' Education Program

New participants in 2018	19,997
Number of participants cumulatively	34,320
New secondary school graduates in 2018	381
Secondary school graduates cumulatively	1,500

Give with confidence. Room to Read has achieved 13 fourstar ratings from Charity Navigator since 2007, an achievement that less than 1% of charities can claim.

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