

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN
MAHARASHTRA**

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INTRODUCTION

The state of Maharashtra is located in western India. It is the second most populous state after Uttar Pradesh and third largest state by area in India. Maharashtra encompasses an area of 308,000 km². It shares its boundaries with the states of Madhya Pradesh to the north, Chhattisgarh to the east, Andhra Pradesh to the southeast, Karnataka to the south and Goa to the southwest. The state of Gujarat lies to the northwest, with the Union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli sandwiched in between. The Arabian Sea marks up Maharashtra's west coast. The contribution of Maharashtra in the country's industrial output is approximately 25 per cent in 2010-11. The present state of Maharashtra came in to existence on 1st May 1960 as a result of dividing earlier Bombay State into the new states on the basis of the linguistic lines. Marathi is the main language spoken by majority of the people from the state.

As per the census of 1871, the adult literacy rate of Bombay city and island for male was 22.28 and 4.95 for females. Today Maharashtra's literacy rate is higher than the national average and second highest among major states in the country as per Census 2011. Male literacy rate has reached 88.38 per cent and female literacy rate 69.87 per cent. The gender gap in literacy rate has reduced from 18.94 in 2001 to 18.51 per cent in 2011. The state has witnessed an exponential growth in number of schools, enrollment and teachers in the last few years.

HISTORY OF SCHOOL EDUCATION IN MAHARASHTRA

Maharashtra is always been considered as one of the educationally progressive states of the country. Maharashtra has a long led tradition in the field of education. It has played a pioneering role in development of the formal education system in the country. Similar to other parts of India, missionaries started formal schooling in Maharashtra. During the British rule, the social reformers like Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj played a leading role in setting up schools and colleges for people from all communities. They were the torchbearers of the movement of educating the deprived and down trodden. Several others like Vitthal Ramji Shinde, Bhaurao Patil, Dhondo Keshav Karve, Tarabai Modak, Anutai Wagh got inspired from the legendary work of earlier reformers and continued working further in independent India, for girls, tribals and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Their painstaking efforts not only gave rise to different ideas and concepts to reach the remotest section of the society, but transformed the state into one of the educationally progressive regions. Even today, thousands of students from other states and countries come to Maharashtra for higher education.

In the end of the 16th century, missionaries started three parochial schools attached to various churches (Maharashtra State Gazetteers. Greater Bombay District). These schools were mainly for Anglo-Indian and Christine children. In 1815, Bombay Education Society was formed by the European residents for their own children. Latter the Society adopted schools established by Rev.Cobbe in which Hindu, Parsi and Muslim children were admitted. The earliest missionary workers education were members of the American Marathi Mission who in 1815 opened a Hindu Boys' school and by 1831 maintained eight boys' schools and nine girls' schools in Bombay Province. Afterwards many attempts were made by the missionaries to establish native schools. However, these attempts had several limitations. The credit of opening doors of education to Indian people goes to

Mountstuart Elphinstone. In 1824, he helped to found Bombay Native School and School Book Society with the sole purpose of spreading modern education among Indians. By 1840 the society conducted three English schools and 115 primary schools in the city and the province. In 1840 the Government created a new body called the Board of Education consisting of 7 members, of whom three were nominated by the society, and transferred to it all educational institutions in the Province. Besides these English and vernacular schools, there were also indigenous schools maintained in Bombay. Between 1820 and 1830 there was a fairly wide spread network of indigenous schools in all the parts of the then Bombay Province. In 1886-87 there were total 142 schools with an enrollment of 14,493. These schools were of two types, schools of learning which imparted the ancient traditional knowledge, and the elementary schools which restricted themselves to the teaching of the three R's. These schools were mostly private ventures started by teachers in response to a local demand and were maintained with the fees and presents given by pupils. These indigenous schools had no building of their own and were held in private premises of rich patrons or in the dwelling of a teacher. They were open to all who could pay for their schooling but the strong popular prejudice against the education of women restricted their attendance to boys only for many years. Due to policy of the British government a network of schools was established across the state and increased over the years.

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

For successful implementation of the schemes and programmes introduced by the central and State government to achieve the goal of universalisation of elementary education, a strong structure has been developed by creating different departments with specialized functions.

The school education system in the state functions through eight different sections of the School Education and Sports Department

of Government of Maharashtra. There are eight divisions of the directorate- Mumbai, Pune, Nasik, Kolhapur, Aurangabad, Amravati, Nagpur and Latur. Pune is considered as educational hub of Maharashtra. Hence, most of the administrative offices are located in Pune though Mumbai is capital of Maharashtra. These eight sections are: 1. Directorate of Education (Secondary and Higher Secondary)2. Directorate of Primary Education; 3. Directorate of Adult Education; 4. Maharashtra State Council of Education Research and Training (Vidyaparishad); 5. Maharashtra State Council of Examinations; 6. Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education; 7. Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research (Balbharti); and 8. Maharashtra State Education Technology Institute.

Maharashtra State Council of Education Research and Training (Vidyaparishad)

Regular Training, preparation of teaching aids and evaluation is required to maintain quality education. Considering this aspect, Maharashtra state had established 'State Institute of Education' (SIE). Initially, SIE looked after primary education only. Later on, its scope was widened to pre-primary, secondary and higher secondary education. In 1984, it secured constitutional status like NCERT and was renamed as 'Maharashtra State Council of Education Research and Training (MSCERT)'. MSCERT is the apex institute of the state to provide academic support and improve quality of Primary Education. For quality improvement of school education, MSCERT carries the responsibility of teacher education, research and evaluation. Main office of MSCERT is at Pune. It is headed by Director of education. It has an Advisory Board presided by Education Minister of the State. The role and functions are primarily concerned with ensuring quality with respect of planning, management, research, evaluation and training.

Maharashtra State Council of Examinations

The council conducts the following examinations- Diploma in Teaching Education, Teacher Training Course for Anglo Indian Schools, Diploma in Physical Education, Middle School Scholarship, entrance examination for Vidyaniketans for Denotified and Nomadic Tribe and Schedule Castes, High school scholarship, National Talent Search, National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship and Government Commercial Certificate.

Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education

It came into existence in 1966 to regulate matters pertaining to secondary education. It is responsible for curriculum development, textbook production, teachers' training and conducting secondary and higher secondary examinations. Printing and distribution of secondary level textbooks is done by the Maharashtra State Textbook Development and Curriculum Bureau.

Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research (Balbharti)

This institute was established by the Government of Maharashtra in January 1967. This was as per the recommendations of the Kothari Commission to improve the quality of textbooks for grade I to VIII. The other intention was to make textbooks available at a reasonable price. Balbharati institute is an autonomous body registered under the Public Trusts Act 1950 and the Societies Registration Act, 1860. Balbharati is responsible for development, printing and distribution of primary textbooks and other relevant material. There are eight language subject committees and eight non-language committees working in the Bureau. They are entrusted with the responsibilities of preparing manuscripts of all the textbooks based on the syllabus approved by the State government. The Bureau also publishes textbooks and teachers' handbooks of non-language subjects like Mathematics, Science,

History, Geography, Environmental Studies, Physical Education and Health and Work Experience. The textbooks are published in eight languages- Marathi, Hindi, English, Gujarati, Urdu, Kannada, Telugu, and Sindhi. The Bureau undertakes the production and distribution of language and non-language textbooks of secondary and higher secondary classes. These manuscripts are prepared by the Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Pune.

Maharashtra State Education Technology Institute

The institute popularly known as Balchitrawani develops audio-visual educational programmes and telecasts it on television.

STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION

The educational pattern of 10+2+5 is followed in the State signifying first 10 years of schooling followed by 2 years of the higher secondary grades and three years of higher education required for obtaining bachelor degree. The end point of schooling and higher secondary grades are marked by public examination. Till recently, similar to educational cycles of eight other states, the primary grades were comprised of I-IV and upper primary of V-VII. The Government of Maharashtra has sanctioned the new structure as per RTE principally in October 2011. It changed the breakup upto XII grade from 4+3+3+2 to 5+3+2+2. After implementation of RTE, education structure is as follows:

I to V - Primary section,

VI to VIII - Upper primary section

IX to X - Secondary section (High school)

XI to XII- Higher Secondary section (Junior College)

However, extension of each section by one grade is still in process. As the share of private sector in secondary education is greater than the public sector, addition of grades at each level is not an easy process. Depending upon the enrollment and natural growth, the decision of adding V grade to lower primary or VIII grade to upper primary is taken.

In addition to the State board, there are a few schools affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education, Indian Certificate of Secondary Education and International Baccalaureate Board, especially in town and cities. There is a going trend observed in urban area of enrolling children in schools affiliated to boards other than the state boards.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE)

As registration of ECCE settings is not mandatory and it is outside the preview of RTE, the authentic figures of children enrolled in the different types of ECCE settings designated for the age group 3-6 is not available. The only reliable number of children who receive ECCE comes from Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). The ICDS is offered by the Department of Women and Child Welfare. As per October 2014 Monthly Progress Report there are -

553 Total projects

364 projects in Rural area.

85 projects in Tribal areas.

104 projects in Urban Slums.

108,005 Anganwadi and mini Anganwadi centers out of which 97,183 Anganwadis are providing preschool education for more than 21 days per month

Total 2,855,873 children take the benefit of preschool education provided in Anganwadi centers

According to 2013-14 DISE data, 13.14 per cent of the total enrolment in primary classes is in preprimary classes.

SCHOOL EDUCATION

In this section, the comparison has been made between the state and national figures on various indicators showing progress of elementary education over a span of 10 years. The indicators have been grouped as per the categories given in the DISE data

I SCHOOL-BASED INDICATORS

Primary education in Maharashtra is mostly managed by the public sector.

1. Number of Schools

The constitution promised free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-16. It took more than fifty years to fulfill that promise. As a result of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a flagship programme of the Government of India, from 2003-04 to 2013-14, a large number of primary and upper primary schools were opened across the state which also got reflected in the ratio of primary to upper primary school. The total number of schools in the state increased by almost 19 per cent from 2003-04.

Table 1
Level-wise Enrollment

Year	Pri. only	Pri+UP	Pri.+U P+ Sec+ H.Sc	UP only	UP+ Sec+ H. Sec	Pri+ UP +Sec	Pri+ Sec	Total
2003-04	42058	23575	2165	135	9635	NA	NA	77381
2013-14	52991	28145	591	80	4740	1558	8074	96179

There is an increase of 24.29 per cent in the number of schools over the period of ten years. Ratio of primary to upper primary schools was 1.93 in 2003-04 as against 2.04 for all states. New categories were added in the DISE data, hence in some categories number of school seems to be reduced over the years. Apart from Marathi and English medium schools, Gujarati, Hindi, Urdu medium schools also are part of the educational system in the state. In the period of 10 years percentage of rural schools reduced from 80 to 78 per cent highlighting a trend of urbanization. In 2014-15 flash statistics of Maharashtra, 27 different categories of school management have been reported which broadly include different government departments such as education, local bodies, railway, social welfare, tribal welfare, military schools and so on.

The private management includes private aided, private unaided, private military schools, Vedic schools, aided and unaided madarsas etc. The largest share is of Zilla Parishad managed being 62313 followed by private aided on the second rank with 19294 schools. Off the total number of schools, 1.25 per cent primary schools are the special schools for children with special needs and the percentage of special schools out of all schools stands for 1.30 per cent. It includes schools for children having problem of mental retardation, visual impairment, hearing impairment and slow learners. Most of these schools are located in towns and cities; hence the rural and tribal children are either enrolled in the normal schools if the level of impairment is less or completely deprived from education. Many CWSN drop out, as a result of not getting adequate assistance in schools.

The government share in total number of schools is 69.98 in the year 2013-14. The last few years witnessed a steady growth of the share of private sector in education. Since 2003-04 to 2013-14 it has increased from 22.63 to 30.02. It indicates a trend of gradual replacement of prominent player i.e. government in education by private sector. In a country like India, the major issues related to education – equity and equality are likely to become more complex and vulnerable population will become more marginalised if the same trend persists in the coming years. According to Education Development Index 2013-14, Maharashtra stands at 31 and 28 rank respectively at the primary and upper primary level in terms of access.

2. Instructional and Working Days

Every year, most of the schools except from Vidarbha region especially government and government aided schools start the first term on 15th June. Due to hot climatic conditions in Vidarbha region i.e. eastern part of Maharashtra, the schools reopen late on 27th June. Despite the government resolution, many private

unaided school management resist to follow these dates of reopening.

Table 2
Instructional and Working Days

	2003-04	2013-14	2013-14
	All Schools	Primary	Upper Primary
Maharashtra	214	224	227
All State	208	224	225

Over the period of 10 years, there was an addition of 10 instructional days at the primary level and 12 at the upper primary level which is not much different than the national average.

3. Schools with All-weather Roads, SMC and CCE

Maharashtra has a well spread network 2.43 lakh km. of roads across the state. All weather and fair weather roads connect more than 99 per cent villages. 97.1 per cent schools are approachable by all weather roads in 2013-14 as against the national average of 89.12. The School Management Committees have been established in 96.7 per cent schools which is much higher than the national average of 91.06. in 98.74 per cent of the schools, CCE is being conducted where as national average stands at 80.62 per cent.

4. Classrooms

Due to the funds provided under SSA, new classrooms were built in many schools.

Table 3
Availability of Classrooms

Indicators	State (2003-04)	All States (2003-04)	State (2013-14)	All States (2013-14)
Classrooms	4	3.1	5.1	4.8
Average Student – Classroom Ratio	34.27	41.88	32	28

% of single teacher schools	9.15	12.93	2.01	8.32
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Though status of number of classrooms improved over the years in the state and is better than the national average, average students - classroom ratio at the national figures are better than Maharashtra. Percentage of single teacher schools dropped by almost 7 per cent where as at the national level, it came down by 5 points.

5. Student Classroom Ratio

In the year 2003-04, the student classroom ratio was 34.27 as against the national average of 41.88 per cent. At the primary level, the ratio has reduced considerably from 35 to 25 in the last ten years.

Table 4
Student- Classroom Ratio 2013-14

Educational Level	Maharashtra	India
Elementary	33	28
Secondary	51	50
Higher Secondary	66	50

II. Facility Indicators

The position of Maharashtra has been shown in the table given below on some of the important facility indicators.

Table 5
Facility Indicators

Indicators	State Figures (2003-04)	National Figures (2003-04)	State Figures (2013-14)	National Figures (2013-14)
Drinking Water	79.55	77.89	99.26	95.31
Girls' Toilet	38.50	28.24	97.57	84.83
Boundary Wall	55.99	50.55	76.35	61.87
Computers	16.57	7.68	50.63	23.30
Ramp	2.37	5.10	89.15	82.33
Library	NA	NA	94.12	76.13
Kitchen Shed	NA	NA	57.35	74.92
Mid-day Meal	NA	NA	97.09	88.60
Textbooks	NA	NA	69.61	73.14

The data in the above table show that over the period of 10 years, the State has made a tremendous progress on most of the facility indicators especially with ramps and girls' toilet. The gap between state and national figures has increased in 2013-14 as compared with 2013-04. Except kitchen shed and textbooks, proportion of schools having these facilities is better than the national average. Still there is long way to go for computers and textbooks.

1. Drinking Water

Table 6
Availability of Drinking Water 2013-14

Level	Maharashtra	India
Primary	99.16	95.29
Upper Primary	99.65	97.18
Secondary	99.90	98.08
Higher Secondary	99.90	98.75
All	99.31	95.39

In Maharashtra, proportion of schools with drinking water facility increased more at the higher educational level where as at the country average, exactly opposite trend is observed.

2. Girls' Toilet

One of the important reasons for girls' dropout is non-availability of toilets at the higher level of education.

Table 7
Availability of Girls' Toilet -2013-14

States	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	All States
Maharashtra	97.43	97.50	99.30	100	98.49
All States	84.12	90.20	95.57	95.56	91.23

Though, on paper the percentage of schools having girls' toilet seems to be significant, the actual number of functional toilet is much lesser than this.

The other indicators show that medical checkups were conducted 91.07 per cent of the schools; ramp is built in 88.09 per cent of the schools. Playground as available in 83.36 per cent of schools and 52.79 per cent of the schools have computers.

The proportion of single teacher school in the state is very less being just 3.47 per cent.

The state stands on at the 4th rank at the primary level and the 7th at the upper primary level on the Education Development Index for infrastructure.

III. Enrollment Related Indicators

1. Enrollment

A significant rise in the enrollment is observed. In the year 2003-04, there were 13,720,246 children enrolled in grade I-VII. By 2013-14 this figure increased up to 16158791.

Table 8
Enrollment in 2013-14

Level	Boys	Girls	Total	Girls' Participation
Primary	5394839	4793970	10188809	47.05
Upper Primary	3199903	2770079	5969982	46.40
Secondary	1922496	1608355	3530851	45.55
Higher Secondary	677934	530530	1208464	43.90

One can see that girls' share gradually reduces at the higher level of education. It has dropped by 2 per cent since 2003-04.

Table 9
Participation of Girls

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	Girls' Participation
2003-04	7200561	6519685	13720246	48.70
2013-14	8594742	7564049	16158791	46.80

Over the period of 10 years there is an increase of almost 17.77 per cent in enrolment. Whether this increment has to be credited to the success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or mere population increase can be an issue of another research.

Table 10
Participation of SC and ST Students

Year	% of SC Students		% of SC Students	
	Primary	Upper Primary	Primary	Upper Primary
2003-04	14.8	15	12	9
2013-14	13.3	14.2	12.4	10.6

Percentage share of SC students shown to be reduced over the period of 10 years where as an increase in the share of SC students was observed during the same period.

Table 11
Girls' participation by Caste (2013-14)

Level	General	SC	ST	OBC	Muslim
Elementary	46.32	47.90	48.58	48.41	49.84
Secondary	45.69	45.96	49.93	46.08	48.12
Hr. Secondary	46.67	46.62	45.54	43.67	50.60

The table 11 shows caste and level wise participation of girls' enrollment. One can see that the participation rate of Muslim girls is highest among all categories. The Muslim boys require to look for the employment once they reach adolescence. Except Muslims, in all other castes, proportion of girls reduces at the higher level of education.

2. Transition Rate

The Maharashtra figures of transition rate are better than all India figures for all educational levels and castes. In the year 2003-24, it was 94.69 from primary to upper primary. It has increased up to almost 99 per cent after ten years.

Table 12
Educational Level-wise Transition Rates from primary to Upper primary

Level	Maharashtra		India	
	2003-04	2013-14	2003-04	2013-14
Primary- Upper Primary	94.69	98.95	74.15	89.58
Elementary – Secondary	NA	99.29	NA	91.95
Secondary- Higher Secondary	NA	77.24	NA	68.91

Once can see a sudden drop in transition rate from secondary at the higher secondary level. The transition rate improved in Maharashtra as well as at the national level over the last 10 years.

Table 13
Caste-wise Transition Rate in 2013-15

Caste	Maharashtra	India
All	98.95	89.58
SC	98.79	87.37
ST	97.10	85.23
OBC	99.92	91.19
Muslim	97.37	87.79

Table No.13 shows that in all caste categories, Maharashtra figures are better than the all India figures. The transition rate of OBC students is highest among all categories.

Table 14
Average Annual Dropout Rate 2013-15

Level	Maharashtra	India
Primary	0.97	4.67
Upper Primary	1.74	3.13
Secondary	16.20	14.54
XI-XII	3.20	NA

The highest dropout rate is observed at the secondary level. At this level, the Maharashtra figures are higher than all India figure. On outcome related variables, Maharashtra stands on 14th and 15th rank at the primary and upper primary level respectively on Education Development Index. The outcome related variables are comprised of enrolment related indicators.

III. TEACHER INDICATORS

1. Number of Teachers

As per the 2013-14 data, there are total of 711614 teachers in the state, out of which 56.58 per cent are males and 43.42 are female teachers. Out of the total number of teachers 2.89 per cent are appointed on contractual basis. Of the total number of teachers, 99.8 per cent regular teachers, 87.4 contractual and 98.8 per cent private management school teachers are professionally trained. 64.36 per cent of the teachers have academic qualification of graduation and above. Of the total number, 11.79 per cent of the teachers belong to ST and 7.03 to SC category respectively.

2. Pupil-Teacher Ratio

The average pupil teacher ratio in Maharashtra is well with the norms set by the RTE at the primary level. In the year 2003-04, it was 33.42 at the primary level and 29 at elementary level.

Table 15
Level-wise Teacher-Pupil Ratio

Level	Maharashtra	India
Primary	25	25
Upper Primary	17	17
Secondary	22	26
Higher Secondary	43	41

The difference between Maharashtra and country figures is negligible. The average number of teachers per school is 5.3. At the primary level, there are average 4.3 teachers per school. The state holds 17th rank at both primary and upper primary level on Education development index.

CONCLUSION

Maharashtra has done tremendous progress over the last ten years on the Composite Educational Development Index of 2013-14 made up of four indicators i. e. access, infrastructure, teacher and outcomes, Maharashtra holds 13th rank on. Unfortunately none of the indicators considered under Educational Development Index students' performance is taken into account. The overall picture of educational scenario of any region is incomplete if performance of students is not considered. It is the vital statistics required to picturise the roadmap of development. ASER has reported declining performance of students over a period of years especially after implementation of RTE. According to ASER 2014 data, 76.5 per cent students from VIII are not able to read standard II text. In the year 2005, this proportion was around 20 per cent. Only 22.1 per cent from standard VIII can do subtraction and 32.9 can do division. In the year 2005, 74 and 53 per cent

respectively. Access and good infrastructure may have good impact on enrollment and transition rates, but it does not ensure quality education. Now it is time to think about the quality Universalisation of Quality Elementary education, otherwise there will be no education in spite of having sufficient number of schools, trained staff and so on

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