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Thousands of teacher positions vacant in AP & Telangana

HYDERABAD: The national achievement survey (NAS) conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has exposed the poor standards of education in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Both states failed to meet the mandatory pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) in schools.

The survey revealed that 32.03 per cent of schools in AP and 35.79 per cent in Telangana failed to meet the pupil-teacher ratio. The national average of pupil-teacher ratio at primary school level is 24:1, upper primary level 17:1, and secondary school level at 28:1. The NCERT has also expressed concern over increasing number of teacher vacancies.

Andhra Pradesh, which has a sanctioned teacher posts of 1,47,139 has 17,129 vacancies. As many as 13,049 teacher posts are vacant in Telangana. The survey revealed that 31% of headmaster posts are vacant. It also pointed out the high absenteeism among teachers. Citing the survey by Michael Kremer of World Bank that pegged teachers' absence from schools at 25 per cent, the NAS noted that 50 per cent of the teachers were found not to be teaching at all.

The nationwide survey was conducted on a sample of 2,77,416 students in 7,216 government, aided and private schools. Urban students performed better than their rural counterparts in English, mathematics, science, social sciences and modern Indian languages. Girl students have scored significantly higher than boys in languages and one-third of students could not answer 33 per cent questions in English, mathematics and science.

The survey showed that students from schools with ICSE and CBSE performed better in academics than students of state boards. Only 16.61 per cent primary and 68 per cent secondary schools in AP have electricity supply, and 10.25 per cent primary and 69 per cent secondary schools in Telangana have power connection. Only 29.30 per cent schools in AP have computer and internet facility while in Telangana 23.17 per cent schools have such facilities. However, schools fared better on the library front. As many as 86.19 per cent schools in AP and 77.38 per cent in Telangana have libraries.

The NCERT expressed concern over untrained teachers in government schools. It recommended separate cadre of head-teachers to be filled up through direct recruitment. It also recommended induction program for headmasters, in-service training for school leadership and setting up leadership academies in every state.

A new program called national program on school standards and evaluation (NPSSE) will be put in place with an aim to evaluate the performance of schools.