

Request for proposals

Studying the impact of regulations on the private school sector in India

1. About Central Square Foundation

Central Square Foundation is a non profit organization working with the vision of ensuring quality school education for all children in India. We are driven by our mission to transform the school education system towards improving the learning outcomes of children, especially from low-income communities. We believe that foundational learning is essential to achieve better learning outcomes of all children in school. Development of foundational literacy and numeracy skills by Class 3 will bridge the wide learning gaps that exist today, leading to an improvement in the quality of learning at all stages of education. Improved foundational learning has benefits at both the individual and system level as it is directly correlated to increased workforce participation and better quality of life, and is a key lever in pulling up the entire system's performance. In order to achieve our goal, we partner with social impact organizations to bring innovative solutions in education, as well as work with the government to drive scalable, sustainable and positive impact. We also collaborate with the private sector, nonprofit organizations and other ecosystem stakeholders to create effective proven tools around critical issues such as early learning, technology in education, classroom instruction methods and governance.

2. About the research project

We are inviting research proposals to study the impact of regulations on the private school sector in India. Currently, private unaided schools account for around 34% of all school going students in the country¹. Enrollment numbers in private schools have increased by 16 million between 2010-11 to 2014-15 while enrollment numbers in government schools have decreased by 11.1 million during the same time.² Yet, the current regulatory landscape doesn't necessarily reflect the importance of private schools - especially their impact on learning outcomes.

Existing regulations emerge from three key sources - legislation (whether central or state), court judgements, and board affiliations. And they tend to focus excessively on inputs and processes (like infrastructure, finances and governance) instead of learning outcomes and addressing the market failure of information asymmetry.³ ⁴ It is also possible that the existing regulations are actually generating more market failures by, for example, raising entry barriers for private schools in India.

Given that neither regulation nor market forces are driving better quality private schooling, learning in private schools is expectedly poor and is declining over time. In 2007, 43.9% of students from rural private schools were able to divide a three digit number by a single digit. But by 2018, only 33% of students from rural private schools could do the same calculation. Similarly, in 2007, 57.6% of all

¹ Analysis of U-DISE 2017

² Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, "Private School Phenomenon in India" *IoE, University College London and IZA*, (March 2017),

³ Maria Marta Ferreyra and Pierre Jinghong Liang, "Information Asymmetry and Equilibrium Monitoring in Education" *Carnegie Mellon University*, (February 2012)

⁴ Tahir Andrabi, Jishnu Das, and Asim Ijaz Khwaja, "Report Cards: The Impact of Providing School and Child Test Scores on Educational Markets," *American Economic Review* 107, no. 6 (June 2017): 1535–63, <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20140774>

students from rural private schools could read a longer standard II level paragraph, by 2018, this had fallen to 56.7%.⁵

Given all this, it is important to study private school sector regulations from inception to legislation to practice. For instance, it'll be important to understand the norms that drive current regulations. Equally, it'll be critical to evaluate the impact of existing regulations and examine if regulations are adequately catering to the current requirements of the education system.

Answering these questions will be the first step in developing evidence based policies and regulations that allow private schools to improve learning quality.

In the above context, we are specifically interested in research proposals broadly under the following themes:

- The impact of de jure and de facto regulatory structure on the private school sector in India, especially in terms of
 - Norms and expectations that drive the principles and framing of regulations for the private school sector in India
 - Whether the expected/intended consequences of the regulations are achieved
 - Unintended consequences of the regulations

3. Format for submission of proposals

Interested applicants can submit their proposals [here](#). These proposals can be based on either ongoing research or new research and would preferably analyse the regulations across a few states in India. All submissions will be evaluated by a review panel constituted by CSF, which will shortlist the proposals based on their relevance to the themes and academic merit. CSF will provide funding of INR 30 lakhs for this research project.

In case of any questions or for more information, please write to akash@centralsquarefoundation.org.

4. Deadline

The deadline to submit the proposal is **15 June 2020**.

5. Eligibility

- Researchers with appropriate credentials and interest
- Doctoral students undertaking research
- All disciplines are welcome, but specialists in regulatory analysis and impact will receive more weightage

⁵ "ASER 2018," <http://www.asecentre.org/education/data/india/statistics/level/p/66.html>, (Over time - Arithmetic - type of school - Govt. and Private only)