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# UDISE+ 2025-26: Teacher Count Crosses One Crore

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# UDISE+ 2025-26: Teacher Count Crosses One Crore

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## WHY IN NEWS

On July 8, 2026, the Ministry of Education released the UDISE+ (Unified District Information System for Education Plus) 2025-26 data along with the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2.0, showing that India's school-teacher count crossed one crore for the first time and that dropout rates fell across school levels.

## WHAT IS UDISE+

UDISE+ stands for Unified District Information System for Education Plus. It is the Government of India's official digital database for school education, maintained by the Ministry of Education. It collects information from every recognised school in the country, government, aided and private, on students, teachers, infrastructure and facilities, and is the single largest management information system for school education in the world.

UDISE+ replaced the earlier DISE (District Information System for Education) system, moving data collection online and to a real-time, student-level format. The data it generates feeds directly into national and international commitments, from India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to Sustainable Development (<https://ujjyari.com/terms/sustainable-development/>) Goal (SDG) 4.

## THE HEADLINE NUMBERS

The most striking finding is that the total number of school teachers crossed one crore for the first time in any academic year.

INDICATOR	2024-25	2025-26	DIRECTION
Total school teachers	about 1.01 crore	about 1.02 crore	Up, crosses 1 crore
Secondary dropout rate	8.2 per cent	7.0 per cent	Down
Preparatory dropout rate	2.3 per cent	1.8 per cent	Down
Secondary retention rate	47.2 per cent	51.9 per cent	Up

Crossing the one-crore teacher mark matters directly for the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR), a core quality indicator: more teachers, for a broadly stable enrolment, means smaller classes and more attention per child.

## Dropout and Retention

Dropout rates fell at critical stages. At the secondary level, dropout fell from 8.2 per cent to 7.0 per cent, and at the preparatory level from 2.3 per cent to 1.8 per cent. Retention, the share of students who continue rather than leave, rose at the secondary level from 47.2 per cent to 51.9 per cent, a significant jump at the stage where India historically loses the most students.

The report also flagged where the challenge is sharpest: the highest secondary-level dropout was recorded in Ladakh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka, showing that even strong national averages hide sharp regional variation that targeted intervention must address.

## PERFORMANCE GRADING INDEX (PGI) 2.0

Alongside UDISE+, the Ministry released the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2.0 for States and Union Territories. The PGI grades States on their school-education performance across domains such as learning outcomes, access, infrastructure, equity and governance, using a 10-tier framework. It is a benchmarking tool: it lets States see where they stand relative to peers and where they must improve, converting raw data into a comparative performance picture.

## ANALYSIS AND WAY FORWARD

The numbers point to genuine progress on access and availability. More teachers, lower dropout and higher retention are exactly the trends India needs to meet NEP 2020's target of 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030, and to honour the Right to Education (RTE) Act's guarantee of free and compulsory education for children aged 6 to 14.

The unfinished agenda is the quality-versus-access debate. Getting children into school and keeping them there is necessary but not sufficient; the harder question is whether they are learning. Foundational literacy and numeracy remain weak in many States, a concern independent surveys have repeatedly raised. A rising teacher count improves the pupil-teacher ratio only if the new teachers are trained, deployed where shortages

are worst, and not concentrated in already well-served areas. The regional spread of dropout, worst in Ladakh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka, shows that district level and stage-specific strategies matter more than national averages.

The way forward is to pair the access gains with a relentless focus on learning outcomes: strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy, deploy teachers equitably to correct the pupil-teacher ratio where it is worst, target the high-dropout States and stages, and keep using UDISE+ and PGI 2.0 as live tools for evidence-based, SDG 4-aligned policy rather than one-off scorecards.

## UPSC RELEVANCE

**GS Paper 2:** Issues relating to development and management of the social sector or services relating to education; government policies and interventions for development in the education sector and issues in their implementation; welfare schemes and mechanisms for the vulnerable.

### Prelims pointers:

- UDISE+ stands for Unified District Information System for Education Plus, maintained by the Ministry of Education; it replaced the earlier DISE system.
- In 2025-26, school teachers crossed one crore for the first time, at about 1.02 crore.
- Secondary dropout fell from 8.2 per cent to 7.0 per cent; preparatory dropout fell from 2.3 per cent to 1.8 per cent.
- Secondary retention rose from 47.2 per cent to 51.9 per cent.
- Highest secondary dropout: Ladakh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka.
- PGI 2.0 grades States and UTs on a 10-tier framework.
- NEP 2020 targets 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030; SDG 4 concerns quality education.

**Mains question:** “Falling dropout rates and a rising teacher count show progress on access, but India’s school-education challenge is now one of quality.” Critically examine in the light of UDISE+ 2025-26 and NEP 2020 targets. (15 marks, 250 words)

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**UDISE+:** Unified District Information System for Education Plus, the official digital database for school education maintained by the Ministry of Education; it replaced the DISE system.

**Release:** UDISE+ 2025-26 data and PGI 2.0 released on July 8, 2026.

**Teacher milestone:** School teachers crossed one crore for the first time, about 1.02 crore in 2025-26 (up from about 1.01 crore in 2024-25).

**Dropout:** Secondary dropout fell 8.2 per cent to 7.0 per cent; preparatory dropout fell 2.3 per cent to 1.8 per cent.

**Retention:** Secondary retention rose 47.2 per cent to 51.9 per cent.

**High-dropout States:** Ladakh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka (secondary level).

**PGI 2.0:** Performance Grading Index that grades States and UTs on a 10-tier framework.

**Policy frame:** Linked to NEP 2020 (100 per cent GER in school education by 2030), the Right to Education (RTE) Act, and SDG 4 (quality education).

**Key metric:** Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR), a core quality indicator improved by the rising teacher count.

**Sources:** *Ministry of Education* (<https://www.education.gov.in/>), *Press Information Bureau* (<https://pib.gov.in/>), *The Hindu* (<https://www.thehindu.com/>), *Indian Express* (<https://indianexpress.com/>)

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