

PARAKH RASHTRIYA SARVEKSHAN: NATIONAL

NEWS: How did Himachal achieve a high rank on the NAS?

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS

PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan, India's revamped national learning assessment, revealed significant gains in states like Himachal Pradesh due to educational reforms, but also exposed persistent learning gaps, especially in higher grades and remote districts. The survey supports NEP 2020 goals of evidence-based, equitable education.

Context: Himachal Pradesh's Rise in PARAKH RS Rankings

- In the recently announced **PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (PARAKH RS)** findings, **Himachal Pradesh** surged from **21st position in 2021 to a top-5 rank** in 2025.
- This improvement is seen as a **model of educational rebound and systemic reform**.

What is PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan (PARAKH RS)?

1. Meaning and Mandate

- **PARAKH** stands for **Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development**.
- It is the **renamed version** of the earlier **National Achievement Survey (NAS)**.

2. Institutional Background

- Set up as an **autonomous institution within NCERT** in **2023**, as per the **NEP 2020 recommendations**.
- Functions under the aegis of the **Ministry of Education**.

3. Objective and Scope

- To develop **norms, standards, and frameworks** for student assessment across India.
- Aims to measure **learning outcomes** objectively and guide education policy decisions.
- Conducts a **national-level competency-based test every three years**.

4. Grades and Subjects Covered

- Evaluates students in **Classes 3, 5, 8, and 10** (now called Grades 3, 6, and 9).
- Key subjects assessed include:
 - **Language**
 - **Mathematics**
 - **Science/EVS**

- **Social Science and Civics**

Himachal Pradesh: A Model of Educational Rebound

1. School Consolidation

- **Over 1,000 under-enrolled schools** were merged, optimizing:
 - **Teacher deployment**
 - **Infrastructure use**
- This reform was aligned with **declining student enrolment due to reduced fertility rates** (NFHS-5).

2. Administrative Unification

- The entire school education system (from **pre-primary to Class 12**) was placed under a **single directorate**.
- Led to **better coordination, policy alignment, and unified accountability mechanisms**.

3. Decentralised Governance

- Greater **school-level autonomy** was encouraged.
- Enhanced **teacher participation, student identity, and community engagement**.

4. Exposure-Based Learning

- Teachers and top-performing students were sent on **domestic and international exposure visits**.
- Helped infuse **motivation, innovation, and modern pedagogical practices**.

5. Cluster-Based School Management

- Schools were grouped into **clusters** for:
 - **Peer learning among educators**
 - **Resource sharing**
 - **Stronger monitoring and community involvement**

Top Performing States and Districts in PARAKH RS

| Grade | Best Performing States/UTs |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
|--------------|-----------------------------------|

| | |
|---------|------------------------------------------|
| Grade 3 | Punjab, Himachal Pradesh , Kerala |
|---------|------------------------------------------|

| | |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Grade 6 | Kerala, Punjab, Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------|

| | |
|---------|----------------------------|
| Grade 9 | Punjab, Kerala, Chandigarh |
|---------|----------------------------|

Grade **Best Performing States/UTs**

Grade **Lowest Performing Districts**

Grade 3 Sahebganj (Jharkhand), Reasi & Rajouri (J&K)

Grade 6 North, South, South West Garo Hills (Meghalaya)

Grade 9 Shi Yomi (Arunachal Pradesh), North & South West Garo Hills

Key Learning Insights by Grade

Grade 3 (Foundational Learning)

- **Language Skills:**
 - 67% demonstrated effective vocabulary use.
 - 60% could comprehend short stories.
- **Mathematics:**
 - 69% could identify patterns.
 - 61% understood place values (up to 99).
 - Only **54–58%** could do basic arithmetic.
 - 50% struggled with **money management and geometry**.

Grade 6 (Upper Primary Stage)

- **Math:**
 - Only **38%** could solve multi-step problems.
 - Just 29% understood **fractions**.
 - Estimation and geometry tasks performed by ~42%.
- **Science/EVS:**
 - 44% observed natural and social surroundings accurately.
 - 38% displayed curiosity about natural phenomena.
- **Civics & Social Understanding:**
 - 56% understood local institutions.
 - Only 38% could relate learnings to social/cultural experiences.

Grade 9 (Secondary Stage)

- **Social Science:**
 - 45% understood constitutional values and historical causes.
- **Language:**
 - 54% could extract key ideas from reading material.
- **Mathematics:**
 - Only 28–31% understood **fractions, percentages**, or number properties.
- **Science:**
 - 34–37% understood **electricity, biology, and physical changes** during adolescence.
 - Conceptual understanding of **cause-effect in scientific phenomena** was limited.

Major Concerns Highlighted by PARAKH RS

1. Persistent Learning Deficits

- Particularly in:
 - **Fractions and arithmetic (Grade 6–9)**
 - **Science reasoning and observation**
 - **Measurement and application-based problem-solving**

2. Grade 9 Weakness Alarming

- Indicates students are **not prepared for abstract thinking or board-level complexity**.
- Suggests a **lack of conceptual transition from primary to secondary levels**.

3. Geographical Inequality

- **Remote and tribal districts**, especially in **northeastern states**, perform poorly.
- Reflects disparities in **school infrastructure, teacher availability, and language barriers**.

Conclusion

PARAKH RS provides **evidence-based insights into India's learning outcomes** and guides policy towards **foundational and remedial interventions**. Himachal Pradesh's performance shows how **institutional reform, decentralisation, and teacher motivation** can lead to systemic educational revival.

Yet, the survey also highlights **stark learning gaps and regional inequalities**, particularly in mathematics and science at higher grades, which require targeted responses.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/education/how-did-himachal-achieve-a-high-rank-on-the->

[nas-explained/article69793282.ece](#)