

KU FOCUS



A LESSON FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party teaches how to transform schools in India

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Pradeep Paswan used to skip school for weeks, sometimes months.

power in Delhi on the promise to improve basic services: health, electricity, water and education. The party's leader, Arvind Kejriwal, who became Delhi's chief

Almost 100 per cent of students who appeared for their final high school examinations last year passed, compared to 87 per cent who appeared in 2012,

tion at the time, Atishi. The two would question school officials, pointing to rundown classrooms, misleading records and leaky taps.

"You would enter a school and you could smell the toilets from 50 metres away," said Atishi, who goes by one name. "The message was that if the government can't even clean schools, how is the government serious about education?"

The government enlisted private companies to clean hundreds of schools. It hired retired defence personnel as "estate managers" who oversaw repairs. The estate managers freed up school principals to focus on academic work.

Between 2015-21, the Delhi government spent about \$10 billion (769 billion rupees) on the 1,037 schools it runs, which serve about 1.8 million students. That was more than double what the previous governments,



Manish Sisodia, the local education minister, visits a school in New Delhi last month. The minister led the push to transform the moribund education sector. — PHOTOS: SAUMYA KHANDELWAL/THE NEW YORK TIMES

