

ANALYSIS BASED ON DATA FROM HOUSEHOLDS. 13 OUT OF 13 DISTRICTS

Data is not presented where sample size is insufficient.

Children's school enrollment

The ASER 2020 Wave 1 phone survey was conducted during late September 2020. This section explores patterns of enrollment among 6-16 year olds in rural India.

Have enrollment patterns changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Beyond the health consequences of COVID-19, the pandemic has caused school closures as well as economic hardships due to migration and loss of livelihoods, among other reasons. ASER 2020 explored whether this unprecedented situation is associated with shifts in children's enrollment patterns in rural India.

Table 1: % Children enrolled in school. By age group, sex and school type. 2020

Age group and sex	Govt	Pvt	Other	Not enrolled	Total
Age 6-14: All	50.3	43.8	2.0	3.9	100
Age 7-16: All	51.4	42.1	1.9	4.6	100
Age 7-10: All	44.0	50.9	2.4	2.7	100
Age 7-10: Boys	37.6	55.1	2.6	4.7	100
Age 7-10: Girls	52.0	45.6	2.2	0.2	100
Age 11-14: All	54.9	38.9	1.6	4.6	100
Age 11-14: Boys	47.7	46.9	1.0	4.5	100
Age 11-14: Girls	64.2	29.1	2.4	4.4	100
Age 15-16: All	56.4	34.0	1.4	8.2	100
Age 15-16: Boys	49.7	43.3	1.3	5.7	100
Age 15-16: Girls	63.9	23.7	1.5	11.0	100

'Other' includes children going to Madarsa and EGS.

'Not enrolled' includes children who never enrolled or are not currently enrolled.

Table 1 summarizes enrollment data for different age groups in the ASER 2020 sample. For children in the 6-14 age group, this data shows that overall, more than 50% of all children are enrolled in government schools and close to 44% are enrolled in private schools.

This marks a change from two years ago, when the last comparable ASER survey was conducted (Chart 1). There has been an increase in private school enrollment between 2018 and 2020 for boys. This increase is much higher for boys in Std VI-XII. There is not much change in girl's enrollment.

Table 2: % Children currently not enrolled in school. By age. 2018 and 2020*

Age	2018	2020
Age 6-10	0.9	3.1
Age 11-14	1.9	4.6
Age 15-16	6.9	8.2
All	2.4	4.7

A higher proportion of children in the age group 6-14 are not enrolled in school in 2020 as compared to 2018 (Table 2). But given the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 crisis, at least for young children (age 6-10), the main cause of not being enrolled in school may be that families are waiting for schools to open to seek admission.

Chart 1: % Children enrolled in private schools. By grade and sex. 2018 and 2020*



*All estimates from ASER 2018 reported here were generated after excluding households without a mobile phone, in order to make these comparable with the ASER 2020 estimates.

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Household resources

A family's resources influence the type and amount of support they can provide for children's learning, not only in terms of choosing a school for their child, but in many other ways as well. ASER 2020 asked questions about selected household resources, such as parents' own education levels; access to technology such as TV and smartphones; and availability of textbooks for the current grade. Other than the availability of textbooks, ASER 2020 Wave 1 did not explore if the household had other learning materials like other books, instructional games, etc.

How much schooling do parents of children in the ASER 2020 sample have?

Table 3: Distribution of enrolled children. By school type, mother's and father's education level. 2020

Parents' education level	Mother			Father		
	% Children in			% Children in		
	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt
No schooling	26.4	20.0	23.5	9.5	9.6	9.5
Std I-V	20.0	13.8	17.1	7.8	8.0	7.9
Std VI-VIII	25.2	14.3	20.2	21.4	11.4	16.8
Std IX-X	14.0	16.6	15.2	35.9	25.5	31.1
Std XI & above	14.5	35.3	24.0	25.4	45.5	34.7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100



Increasingly, parents of children currently in school have been to school themselves. In ASER 2020, more than half of all children's mothers (59.4%) and an even higher proportion of children's fathers (82.6%) have completed more than 5 years of school (Table 3).

Do children have textbooks at home?

Table 4: % Enrolled children who have textbooks for their current grade. By grade and school type. 2020

Std	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt
Std I-V	71.7	82.5	77.6
Std VI-XII	77.8	89.4	82.3
All	75.6	85.9	80.3

Table 4 indicates that in all grades, a very high proportion of children have textbooks for their current grade. For every grade, the percentage of children in private schools who have textbooks is higher than among children in government schools.

The comparison between ASER 2018 and 2020 shows that a much higher proportion of children now come from households with a smartphone as compared to two years ago (Table 5). Although the proportion of children from households with assets like TV and motorized vehicles increased only slightly over the last two years, the proportion owning a smartphone increased enormously - from 47.9% to 74.7%.

Do children have a smartphone at home?

Table 5: % Enrolled children with selected assets available at home. By school type and asset type. 2018 and 2020*

Household resource	% Children					
	ASER 2018			ASER 2020		
	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt
Smartphone	36.7	63.4	47.9	65.4	85.6	74.7
TV	73.5	89.7	80.3	77.3	86.0	81.3
Motorized vehicle	21.4	61.6	38.4	25.8	56.6	39.9

*All estimates from ASER 2018 reported here were generated after excluding households without a mobile phone, in order to make these comparable with the ASER 2020 estimates.

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Access to and availability of learning materials and activities

This section examines learning support available to children, as well as access to and availability of learning materials/activities during the period of school closures. The ASER 2020 survey asked households whether schools had sent learning materials or activities for children during the week prior to the survey (the reference week), which was carried out in September 2020. Learning materials included traditional materials like textbooks and worksheets in print or virtual form; online or recorded classes; and videos or other activities sent via phone or received in person.

Do families help children while studying at home?

Table 6: % Enrolled children who receive help from family members while studying at home. By grade and school type. 2020

Std	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt
Std I-V	78.6	80.6	79.7
Std VI-XII	61.7	78.4	68.3
All	67.7	79.5	73.1

Table 6 shows the proportion of children who receive help at home for learning activities.

- Taking all children across different grades together, close to three quarter of all children receive help from family members.
- For both types of schools, more younger children receive help from families than older children. Overall, 79.7% children in Std I-V receive help from family members as compared to 68.3% children in Std VI-XII.
- For each grade level, private school children get more help than government school children. For example, for children in Std VI-XII, 61.7% government school children receive help as compared to 78.4% of children enrolled in private schools.

Did children receive any learning materials or activities during the reference week and if they did, through what medium?*

Table 7: % Enrolled children who received learning materials/activities in the reference week. By grade and school type. 2020

Std	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt
Std I-V	74.8	75.5	75.1
Std VI-XII	78.3	70.3	75.1
All	77.0	72.9	75.1

Table 8: Of enrolled children who received learning materials/activities, % children who received these through different mediums. By school type and medium. 2020

School type	WhatsApp	Phone call	Personal visit	Other
Govt	88.3	5.9	7.0	3.5
Pvt	97.9	9.5	4.3	1.8
Govt & Pvt	92.6	7.5	5.8	2.8

Overall, 75.1% of all enrolled children received some kind of learning materials/activities from their teachers during the reference week (Table 7). A higher percentage of government school children received learning materials/activities as compared to private school children in the Std VI-XII.

Regardless of school type, WhatsApp was the most common medium used for sharing learning materials/activities. A higher proportion of children enrolled in private schools received materials through WhatsApp, and accessing materials via visits was more common among government school children.

Why didn't households access learning material and activities during the reference week?

Table 9: Of enrolled children who did not receive learning materials/activities during the reference week reasons given by parents. By school type and reason. 2020

School type	School not sending	No internet	No smartphone	Connectivity issues	Other
Govt	46.3	20.8	48.1	2.1	0.6
Pvt	59.4	22.5	27.7	0.0	0.7
Govt & Pvt	53.0	21.7	37.7	1.1	0.7

Respondents could specify more than one reason.

Among enrolled children who did not access learning materials or activities during the reference week, the most common reason cited by parents was that the school had not sent materials (53%). Overall, 37.7% of parents mentioned not having a smartphone as a reason, with more parents of children enrolled in government school highlighting this reason (48.1%) than those enrolled in private school (27.7%).

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Children's engagement with learning materials and activities

While the previous section looked at whether households received learning materials and activities from schools in the week prior to the survey in September 2020, this section analyses whether children actually engaged with different kinds of materials and activities during that week. Households were asked about a variety of materials and activities received from any source, including traditional materials like textbooks and worksheets (in print or virtual format), lessons that were broadcast on television or radio, and online activities such as pre-recorded videos or live classes.

Did children do learning activities during the reference week?

Table 10: % Enrolled children who did learning activities during the reference week. By school type and type of material. 2020

School type	Traditional		Broadcast		Online	
	Text-book	Work-sheet	TV	Radio	Videos/re-recorded classes	Live online classes
Govt	58.9	35.9	21.1	0.4	24.8	10.9
Pvt	70.5	45.3	9.5	0.5	38.0	20.3
Govt & Pvt	64.2	40.2	15.8	0.5	30.9	15.3

Not only did a significant proportion of children receive materials from their schools during the reference week, but households also reported that most children did do some learning activity during that week. These activities were shared by diverse sources such as schools, families, and private tutors, among others.

For both types of schools, the proportion of children doing activities using traditional material like textbooks is higher as compared to online resources. The proportion of children doing different types of activities is higher for those in private schools as compared to government schools. Children enrolled in private schools were much more likely to be connected to online classes and recorded video lessons.

For example,

- 58.9% of government school children reported using textbooks during the reference week as compared to 70.5% private school children.
- 38% of private school children reported using recorded video lessons as opposed to 24.8% of government school children.
- Further, 20.3% children in private schools accessed live online classes during the reference week as compared to 10.9% of government school children (Table 10).

How much did children do during the reference week?

Table 11: % Enrolled children by the number of learning activities done during the reference week. By school type and number of activities. 2020

School type	No activity	1 activity	2	3 or more	Total
Govt	29.1	25.9	20.6	24.4	100
Pvt	24.0	19.8	21.0	35.2	100
Govt & Pvt	26.8	23.1	20.8	29.4	100

Based on responses from households, 29.1% children in government schools and 24% children in private schools did not do any of these activities during the reference week.

Close to 30% of all children did three activities or more. In this category, there is higher proportion of private school children (35.2%) as compared to government school children (24.4%).

How much contact was there between school and home during the reference week? And since schools closed?

Table 12: % Enrolled children in contact with schools. By school type and type of contact. 2020

School type	Contact to discuss learning materials/activities or child's progress/wellbeing			Contact for administrative purposes
	Teacher visited or called parent/child in the reference week	Parent/child visited or called teacher in the reference week	Of those who had no contact in the reference week, teacher or parent/child called or visited each other at least once since the lockdown	Teacher or parent/child contacted each other at least once since the lockdown
Govt	55.4	48.9	46.9	65.0
Pvt	60.6	50.4	39.5	49.3
Govt & Pvt	57.8	49.6	43.7	59.2

Even when schools are closed, contact between the home and school is important. ASER 2020 explored this issue in two ways: whether parents and teachers had been in touch (phone or visit) during the reference week; and if not, whether there had been contact since the lockdown began in March 2020. The data indicates that overall, close to 60% of all children's teachers contacted parents/families during the reference week. This proportion is higher among families of children in private than in government schools (Table 12).

'Contact for administrative purposes' includes contact by phone calls, personal visits or SMS/WhatsApp.