

Enrollment in the 6-14 age group continues to be very high. But the proportion of out of school children has increased, especially among girls in the age group of 11 to 14.

- Overall, enrollment numbers remain very high. Over 96% of all children in the age group 6 to 14 years are enrolled in school. This is the fourth consecutive year that enrollment levels have been 96% or more.
- Nationally, the proportion of children (age 6 to 14) who are not enrolled in school has gone up slightly, from 3.3% in 2011 to 3.5% in 2012. A slight increase is seen for all age groups and for both boys and girls.
- Girls in the age group of 11 to 14 years are often the hardest to bring to school and keep in school. In 2006, in eight major states, more than 11% girls in this age group were not enrolled in school. By 2011, this figure had dropped to less than 6.5% in 3 of these states (Jharkhand, Gujarat and Odisha) and less than 5% in 3 others (Bihar, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal). The situation in these states remained more or less unchanged in 2012. However in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, the proportion of out of school girls (age 11-14) has increased from 8.9% and 9.7% respectively in 2011 to more than 11% in 2012.

Private school enrollment continues to rise in almost all states.

- At the All India level private school enrollment has been rising steadily since 2006. The percentage of 6 to 14 year olds enrolled in private schools rose from 18.7% in 2006 to 25.6% in 2011. This year this number has further increased to 28.3%. The increase is almost equal in primary (Std. I-V) and upper primary (Std. VI-VIII) classes. In 2012, among all private school children (age 6-14), 57.9% were boys.
- In 2012, more than 40% of children (age 6-14 years) in Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Meghalaya are enrolled in private schools. This percentage is 60% or more in Kerala and Manipur.
- Increase in private school enrollment is seen in almost all states, with the exception of Kerala, Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya (where private school enrollment was over 40% even last year) and Tripura.
- Since 2009, private school enrollment in rural areas has been rising at an annual rate of about 10%. If this trend continues, by 2018 India will have 50% children in rural areas enrolled in private schools.

Reading levels continue to be a cause for serious concern. More than half of all children in Std. V are at least three grade levels behind where they should be.

- In 2010 nationally, 46.3% of all children in Std. V could not read a Std. II level text. This proportion increased to 51.8% in 2011 and further to 53.2% in 2012. For Std. V children enrolled in government schools, the percentage of children unable to read Std. II level text has increased from 49.3% (2010) to 56.2% (2011) to 58.3% (2012).
- For all children in Std. V, the major decline in reading levels (of 5 percentage points or more) between 2011 and 2012 is seen in Haryana, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Kerala. Even private schools in Maharashtra and Kerala, with a large proportion of aided schools, show a decline in reading ability for Std. V.

- The percentage of all children enrolled in Std. III who cannot read a Std. I level text has increased steadily from 53.4% (2009) to 54.4% (2010) to 59.7% (2011) to 61.3% in 2012. For children enrolled in government schools, this figure has increased from 57.6% in 2010 to 64.8% in 2011 to 67.7% in 2012.

2012 was the year of mathematics. But it has been a bad year for basic arithmetic for children in India.

- In 2010, of all children enrolled in Std. V, 29.1% could not solve simple two-digit subtraction problems with borrowing. This proportion increased to 39% in 2011 and further to 46.5% in 2012. Barring Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala, every major state shows signs of a substantial drop in arithmetic learning levels.
- Comparing the cohort of children who were in government schools in Std. V in 2011 with the cohort in Std. V in 2012, there is evidence of a more than 10 percentage point drop in the ability to do basic subtraction in almost all states. Exceptions are Bihar, Assam and Tamil Nadu where the drop is less; and Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala where there has been either improvement or no change from 2011.
- The proportion of all children enrolled in Std. V who could not do division problems has increased from 63.8% in 2010 to 72.4% in 2011 to 75.2% in 2012. In rural India as a whole, two years ago about two thirds of all children in Std. V could not do simple division. In 2012 this number is close to three fourths.
- Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra are all states where the cohort in Std. V in 2012 seems to be substantially weaker than the cohort in Std. V in 2011. In the southern states, the situation is unchanged from 2011 except in Kerala where there is a significant improvement.

ASER 2012 assessed basic English.

- In ASER 2012, children were given a set of simple English reading and comprehension tasks. Across rural India, 48.9% children enrolled in Std. V could read English words or more, and 22.5% could read simple English sentences. Among all children enrolled in Std. VIII, 47% could read sentences. Of those who could read words or sentences, well above 60% could convey the meaning in their own language.

Private inputs into children's education, such as private schooling and private tutoring, are widespread. And their influence on children's learning outcomes is substantial.

- Whether enrolled in government schools or private schools, across rural India in the elementary grades (Std. I-VIII) about a quarter of all children also go to paid private tutors.
- Another way to think about private inputs into education is to categorize children into four groups:
 1. Children in government schools who do not go to private tutors;
 2. Children in government schools who go to private tutors;
 3. Children in private schools who do not go to private tutors; and
 4. Children in private schools who go to private tutors.

In 2012, the above four groups comprised 54.5%, 18.8%, 20.7% and 6% of all students in Std. V. Children in categories 2, 3 and 4 – amounting to about 45% of all children in Std. V in rural India - receive some form of private input into their education, either in the form of schooling or tuition.

- The influence of additional inputs in the form of tuition on children's ability to read or to do arithmetic is clear. Whether enrolled in government schools or in private schools, children receiving this additional support have better learning outcomes than those who do not.

The proportion of small schools is rising in India.

- A total of 14,591 schools were visited during ASER 2012. Of these about 60% were government primary schools with classes up to Std. IV or V and the rest were upper primary schools which had primary sections.
- The proportion of government primary schools with enrollment of 60 or fewer students has increased over time. In the last 3 years, this figure has increased from 26.1% in 2009 to 32.1% in 2012.
- The proportion of children in primary grades who sit in multigrade classrooms is also rising. For Std. II, this number has gone up from 55.8% in 2009 to 62.6% in 2012. For Std. IV, it has risen from 51% in 2010 to 56.6% in 2012.

School facilities show improvement over time.

- Based on RTE norms, the pupil teacher ratio shows improvement. In 2010, the proportion of schools meeting these norms was 38.9%. This number has risen to 42.8% in 2012.
- 73% of all schools visited had drinking water available. However, just under 17% did not have drinking water facility at all. A water facility was available, though not usable in the remaining schools.
- The proportion of schools without toilets has reduced from 12.2% in 2011 to 8.4% in 2012 and the proportion of schools with useable toilets has increased from 47.2% in 2010 to 56.5% in 2012. Approximately 80% of schools visited had separate provision for girls' toilets. Of schools which had this separate provision, close to half had useable girls' toilets, as compared to a third in 2010.
- The mid-day meal was observed being served in 87.1% schools that were visited.