

Annual Status of Education Report

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असर
ASER 2013 RURAL

Facilitated by PRATHAM



INDIA Findings

ASER coverage & reach

- ASER is an annual household survey to assess children's schooling status and basic learning levels in reading and arithmetic.
- ASER has been done since 2005.
- One government school in each sampled village is also visited.
- The aim of ASER is to reach all rural districts of India.
- The survey is facilitated by Pratham but carried out by a local organization or institution in each district.

ASER 2013 is the 9th annual report.

Coverage and reach	India
No. of districts covered	550
No. of villages covered	15,941
No. of households surveyed	327,397
No. of children surveyed (3-16)	569,664
No. of schools visited	14,724

The sample size of ASER is larger than that of the NSS survey rounds.

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Section 1

Schooling : Enrollment Attendance & School Facilities



School enrollment continues to be very high across the country

OVERALL ENROLLMENT

- % Children (age group 6-14) enrolled in school is very high at 96.7 in 2013.
- Enrollment figures have been 96% or more since 2009.
- There is hardly any gender difference between the proportion of children who are still out of school.

PRIVATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

- % Children (age group 6-14) enrolled in private schools is 29% in 2013.
- Private school enrolment figures were 28.3% in 2012. This number has risen from 18.7% in 2006.
- Boys are more likely to attend private school than girls.

Girls (age 11-14) still out of school in some states

The following states had higher than 10% girls (age 11-14) out of school in 2006. Two states, Rajasthan and UP, still have a high proportion of girls out of school.

States	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013
Rajasthan	19.6	14.8	12.1	8.9	11.2	12.1
Bihar	17.6	8.8	4.6	4.5	5.2	4.6
West Bengal	12.1	7.7	5.5	4.3	4.2	4.0
Jharkhand	13.0	9.4	4.9	6.4	6.3	5.2
Orissa	13.7	12.0	7.2	6.4	6.6	5.3
Chhatisgarh	13.6	8.7	3.2	4.3	3.8	3.8
Gujarat	11.7	10.9	8.0	6.1	7.1	6.6
Uttar Pradesh	11.1	10.2	9.7	9.7	11.5	9.4

School attendance varies across the country

Of all enrolled children, % who are attending school on the day of the visit	Government schools	Total
90% or more	TN	1
80-89%	HP, PN, GJ, MH, KaR, KeR, SK, NG, MZ	9
70-79%	J&K, UTK, HR, MG, AS, OD, CHH, AP	8
60-69%	RJ, TR	2
less than 60%	UP, BH, MN, WB, JH, MP	6
Total states		26

Overall, children's attendance in school on the day of the visit has gone from 74.3% in 2009 to 70.7% in 2013 in primary schools and from 77% in 2009 to 71.8% in 2013 in upper primary schools.

School facilities improving over time

During ASER 2013, 14724 government schools were visited. Data was collected not only about facilities but also about whether they were being used.

Of all schools visited, % schools which have:	INDIA	INDIA	INDIA	INDIA
	ASER 2010	ASER 2011	ASER 2012	ASER 2013
Drinking water available and useable	72.7	73.5	73.0	73.8
Toilets available and useable	47.2	49.0	56.4	62.6
Girls' toilets available and useable	32.9	43.7	48.1	53.3
Library available and books being used	37.9	42.2	43.8	40.7
Kitchen shed in school	82.1	83.7	84.3	87.0
Midday meal served on day of visit	84.6	87.5	87.0	87.2

Note : This data is based on school observations from visit to schools. During ASER, a government school is visited in the randomly sampled village, on the day of the survey in Sept-Oct-Nov. Data on facilities is based on these school visits.

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Section 2

Learning Outcomes

Policies, plans
and practice

Evidence to
action



Big change since last year in the policy framework

12th Plan document - Planning Commission



Since 2012, the policy framework in India for elementary education has been changing. The focus is shifting to learning outcomes. Here is what the Planning Commission document states:

From the Twelfth Plan document – Chapter on Education:

The four main priorities for education policy have been access, equity, quality and governance. The Twelfth Plan will continue to prioritise these four areas, but will place the greatest emphasis on improving learning outcomes at all levels.

From Box 21.1 Targets for the Twelfth Plan :

Improve learning outcomes that are measured, monitored and reported independently at all levels of school education with a special focus on ensuring that all children master basic reading and numeracy skills by class 2 and skills of critical thinking, expression and problem solving by class 5.

Policy framework is changing ..

New guidelines for SSA for 2014-15

New possibilities for action

SSA guidelines for 2014-15 Annual Work Plans incorporate learning outcomes as a major priority. This is a welcome and much needed step. Here is an extract from the SSA guidelines for making district and state level SSA plans:

Under SSA, the States/ UTs are expected to plan and implement interventions to ensure learning enhancement in children. These interventions can be broadly divided into three major categories: **First**, defining class wise subject wise learning outcomes/ indicators; **Second**, planning specialized programmes and interventions including monitoring mechanism and systemic reforms; and **Third**- learning assessment and evaluation of the interventions.

The challenge ahead is now is for states to seriously focus on how to improve children's learning and on how to plan, implement and track effectively.

Things for states to act upon:

- How will learning goals be articulated for different levels of education?
- What concrete plans will be put in place for implementing these goals?
- How will implementation take place?
- How will progress be tracked?

Three major challenges for improving learning in India

- Std. I-II: Building foundations for learning especially reading, listening, speaking, writing and basic arithmetic.
- Std. III-V: Ensuring that basic skills are in place & enabling children to move towards grade level content and skills.
- Std. VI-VIII: Ensuring that appropriate basic skills are in place & enabling children to move towards grade level content and skills.

Evidence and data from ASER for the last 8-9 years can be helpful in the planning and implementation process as well as for tracking progress over time. The available evidence can provide a “reality check” for the current status and for what is possible.

Reading tasks in ASER

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SAMPLE

BASIC ASER READING TOOL: HINDI

Std. II level text

रामपुर में कुछ ज़मीन ख़ाली थी। वहाँ कुछ नहीं उगता था। वहाँ कोई खेलने नहीं जाता था। एक दिन कुछ लोग आये। उन्होंने गाँव के लोगों को बुलाया। सबने मिलकर तय किया कि यहाँ बगीचा बनाया जाये। खाद मंगाकर हर तरह के पौधे लगाये गये। सही समय पर पानी दिया गया। आज वहाँ एक सुंदर बगीचा है। इसलिए वहाँ सब खेलने जाते हैं।

Std I level text

बगीचे में एक पेड़ है।
पेड़ पर एक तोता रहता है।
तोते का रंग हरा है।
वह लाल टमाटर खाता है।

Letters

न र च
म स
प ग द
ल थ

बच्चे से कोई भी 5 अक्षर पढ़ने को कहें।
कम से कम 4 सही होने चाहिये।

Common simple words

आग सोच
ताला
गिर पैसा
देश
पानी बूढ़ा

बच्चे से कोई भी 5 शब्द पढ़ने को कहें।
कम से कम 4 सही होने चाहिये।

A child is asked to do different reading tasks. She is recorded at the highest level that she can read.

Quick look at Std. I-II: What can we say about early reading?

Reading levels : All India ASER 2013 (rural)	Std. I	Std. II
Can read simple Std. I sentences and/or Std. II level text	8	22.8
Can read words but cannot read sentences yet	12.6	20.8
Can read letters but cannot read words yet	32.3	33.4
Cannot recognize letters yet	47.3	23.1
Total	100	100

ASER is done each year in the Sept-Oct-Nov period.

By the middle of Std. II, there are still over 50% children who cannot read simple everyday words in the regional language.

Most Std. II textbooks assume that children will be reading simple words and sentences by the beginning of Std. II but most children are not there yet.

- What are reasonable learning goals for Std. I-II for the coming years?
- What interventions are being planned for Std. I-II for building early foundations for learning for the 2014-15 school year?

Reading ability in Std. III & Std. V

Reading levels: All India ASER 2013 (rural)	Std. III	Std. IV
Can read Std. II level text	21.6	47
Can read simple Std. I sentences but cannot read Std. II level text	18.5	21.2
Can read words but cannot read sentences yet	22.2	14.2
Can read letters but cannot read words yet	25	12.6
Cannot recognize letters yet	12.7	5
Total	100	100

For a variety of reasons, close to 78% of children in Std. III and about 50% of children in Std. V cannot read Std. II text as yet. Without immediate and urgent help, these children cannot make progress in the education system.

Grade level teaching of the syllabus cannot be done effectively unless the basic skill of reading with understanding is in place. Without this fundamental skill, the child cannot progress in other subjects either.

Are there changes over time in reading?

% Children in Std III and V at different READING levels by school type 2009-2013

Year	% Children in Std III who can read at least Std I level text			% Children in Std V who can read Std II level text		
	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt. & Pvt.*	Govt.	Pvt.	Govt. & Pvt.*
2009	43.8	58.2	46.6	50.3	63.1	52.9
2010	42.5	57.6	45.7	50.7	64.2	53.7
2011	35.2	56.3	40.4	43.8	62.7	48.3
2012	32.4	55.3	38.8	41.7	61.2	46.9
2013	32.6	59.6	40.2	41.1	63.3	47.0

Reading levels of government school children had declined especially in the period 2010 to 2012. There is not much change since last year.

Private school children's reading levels increased since last year.

Issues to think about in reading

Reading is a fundamental skill. Without being able to read with understanding a child cannot move forward successfully within the education system. Inability to read affects children's progress in all subjects.

ASER estimates that the number of children not able to read fluently is substantial in Std. III to V. Indications are that there may be a significant proportion of such children in Std. VI to VIII as well. Grade level teaching is not effective for these children.

All of these children need immediate and urgent help to catch up.

For 2014-15:

- What are the realistic learning goals for children who are several grade levels behind?
- What are the action plans to enable such children to reach basic skill levels?
- If grade level teaching or grouping is not effective then what methods will be used?
- Will teacher training, materials, monitoring and measurement be aligned to achieve basic goals?

Arithmetic continues to be a cause for concern

Children expected to do this kind of subtraction by Std. II

$$\begin{array}{r} 51 \\ - 35 \\ \hline \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 67 \\ - 48 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Children expected to do this kind of division by Std. III/IV

$$6 \overline{) 769}$$

% Children who can at least do subtraction problems. All schools

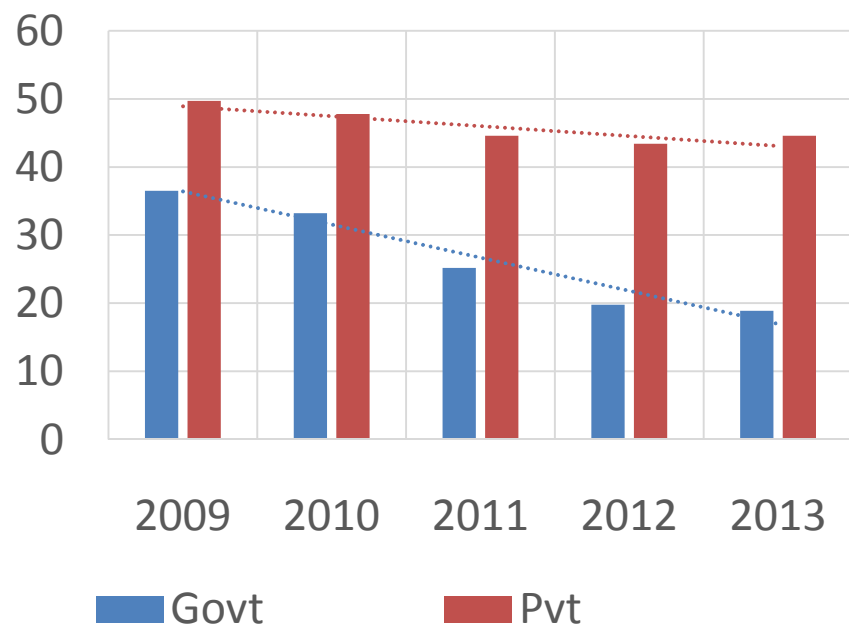
Year	Std. III: INDIA	Std. V: INDIA
ASER 2010	36.3	70.8
ASER 2011	30.0	61.2
ASER 2012	26.4	53.6
ASER 2013	26.1	52.3

% Children in Std V who can do division problems. All schools

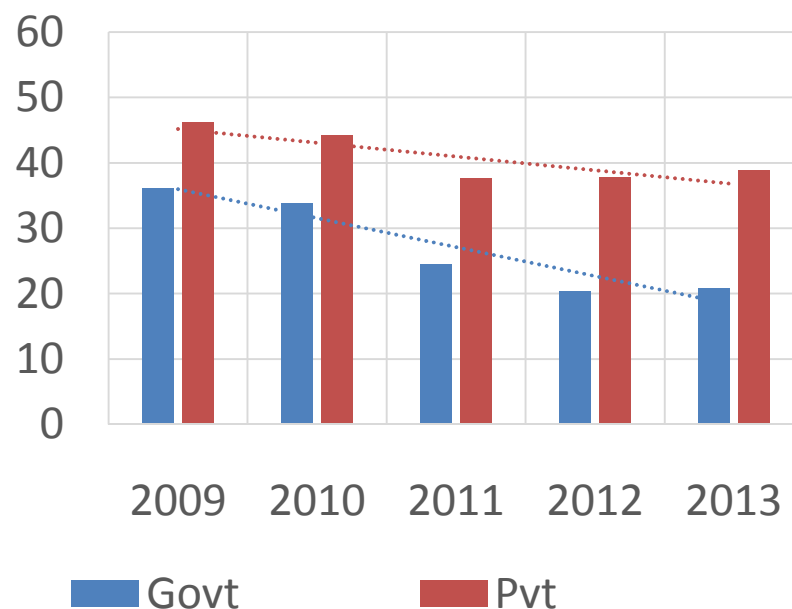
Year	Std. V: INDIA
ASER 2010	36.2
ASER 2011	27.6
ASER 2012	24.9
ASER 2013	25.6

Widening gap between government and private schools

% Children in Std III who can at least do subtraction



% Children in Std V who can do division



Although there has been a declining trend in past years, since last year arithmetic levels seems to be unchanged for government schools. For the last few years, decline in learning level among private school children is much less. These together have led to a widening gap in learning between the two kinds of children.

The way forward .. Important decisions to be made

The national policy framework in India is starting to focus on learning goals, implementation and assessment. Now states need to plan, implement and measure progress with respect to learning outcomes.

Planning for learning improvement needs to be a multi-year process.

ASSESSMENTS

We hope that all state level assessments will generate estimates of basic reading ability and basic arithmetic skills.

If many children cannot read with understanding, pen and paper tests cannot be done. The measurement has to be done orally one on one.

It is important to connect assessments that are being done with the action to improve learning?

GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION

What are the reasonable and realistic learning goals that will be proposed by each state for the school year 2014-15 and for the years ahead? For many children reaching grade level expectations is difficult in the coming year.

What can be done in each state in the 2014-15 school year to help all children in Std. III to Std. V achieve basic reading fluency with comprehension and basic maths?



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