



Annual Status of Education Report

असर
ASER

2021

RURAL

Facilitated by PRATHAM

Main findings

November 17, 2021

Sections

- Enrollment patterns over time
- Incidence of tuition classes
- Availability of smartphones at home and children's access to them
- Learning materials and support for learning at home



About the survey

About ASER 2021 survey

- Like ASER 2020, ASER 2021 was a household survey conducted via phone.
- Like previous ASER surveys, ASER 2021 is also a rural survey.
- Sampling was done from the representative sample of households from the ASER 2018 survey – the last nationwide ASER survey that was carried out in the field.
- This is the sixteenth ASER report.

ASER 2021 coverage:

- 25 states and 3 Union Territories
- 581 districts
- 17,184 villages
- 76,706 households
- 75,234 children (age 5 to 16 reached)

Schools were also contacted via phones

They included:

- 4,872 schools which had opened
- 2,427 schools which had not yet opened at the time of the survey

Enrollment patterns & changes over time

Increase in proportion of children enrolled in government schools

% Children enrolled in different types of schools.
All India (Rural) ASER 2018-2021

Age: 6-14	Govt	Pvt	Others	Not enrolled	Total
2018	64.3	32.5	0.7	2.5	100
2020	65.8	28.8	0.8	4.6	100
2021	70.3	24.4	0.7	4.6	100

Overall, there is an increase in the proportion of children enrolled in government schools between 2018 and 2021.

Incidence of private schooling in India has been rising over time. From 2006 to 2014 there was a steady increase. After plateauing around 30% for a few years, there has been a significant decline in the pandemic years.



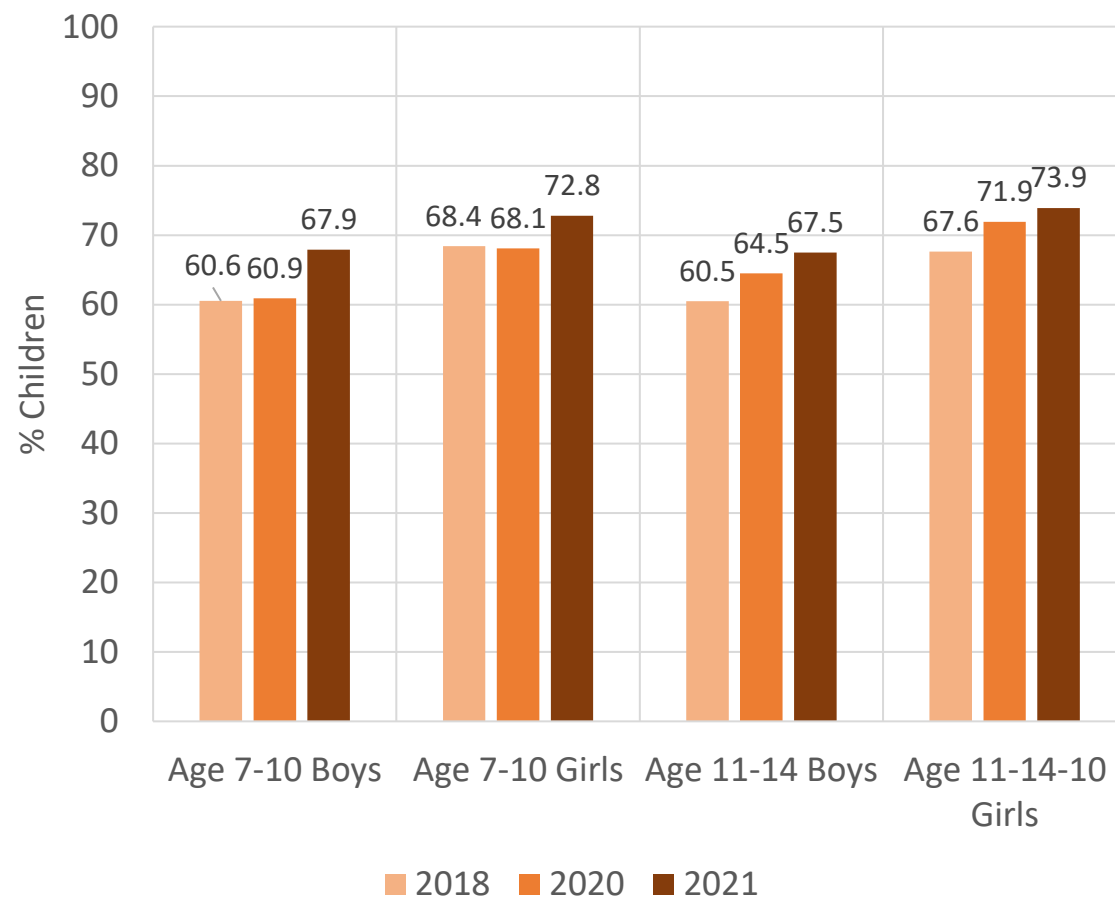
Increase in proportion of children enrolled in government schools by age, grade and gender

% Boys and girls enrolled in Govt school by grade. ASER 2018-2021

Std	2018		2020		2021	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Std I-II	57.9	65.1	61.1	66.7	72.0	74.1
Std III-V	62.7	71.2	65.6	73.3	70.9	77.1
Std VI-VIII	65.8	73.3	68.3	77.0	73.4	79.2

- For all ages and grades, government school enrollment has increased between 2018 and 2021.
- Even before COVID, proportion of girls enrolled in government schools was higher than that of boys for each grade and age. This continues to be the trend over time.

% Boys and girls in each age group enrolled in Govt schools: ASER 2018, 2020, 2021



Wide variations across states in government school enrollment during the pandemic

In 2018	Selected states	% Children enrolled in Govt schools in 2018	Percentage point increase in Govt school enrollment between 2018 and 2021
Under 50%	Punjab	46.0	6.8
	Haryana	41.8	6.6
	Kerala	47.9	11.9
	Uttar Pradesh	43.1	13.2
Between 51% & 70%	Rajasthan	59.1	9.4
	Maharashtra	60.5	9.2
	Karnataka	69.4	8.3
	Tamil Nadu	66.7	9.6
	Andhra Pradesh	62.2	8.4
	Telangana	56.4	3.7
	All India	64.3	6.1
More than 70%	Bihar	77.7	2.8
	West Bengal	88.0	3.9
	Jharkhand	76.1	2.5

- Maximum increase in government school enrollment seen in Uttar Pradesh and Kerala.
- Other than Telangana, more than 8 percentage points increase in government school enrollment in all southern states.
- Many other states in which there is no change or even decrease in this period.

No change in the proportion of children not enrolled

% Children not enrolled in school.
ASER 2018-2021

Age group:	2018	2020	2021
Age 7-10: Boys	1.4	4.7	4.7
Age 7-10: Girls	1.4	4.1	4.1
Age 11-14: Boys	2.9	3.9	4.3
Age 11-14: Girls	3.6	3.9	3.9

Increase in proportion of children currently not enrolled in school is higher in 2020 and 2021 as compared to 2018. Between 2020 and 2021 the numbers are relatively unchanged.

Interestingly, slightly more boys are not enrolled in school as compared to girls in both age groups.

Tuition classes

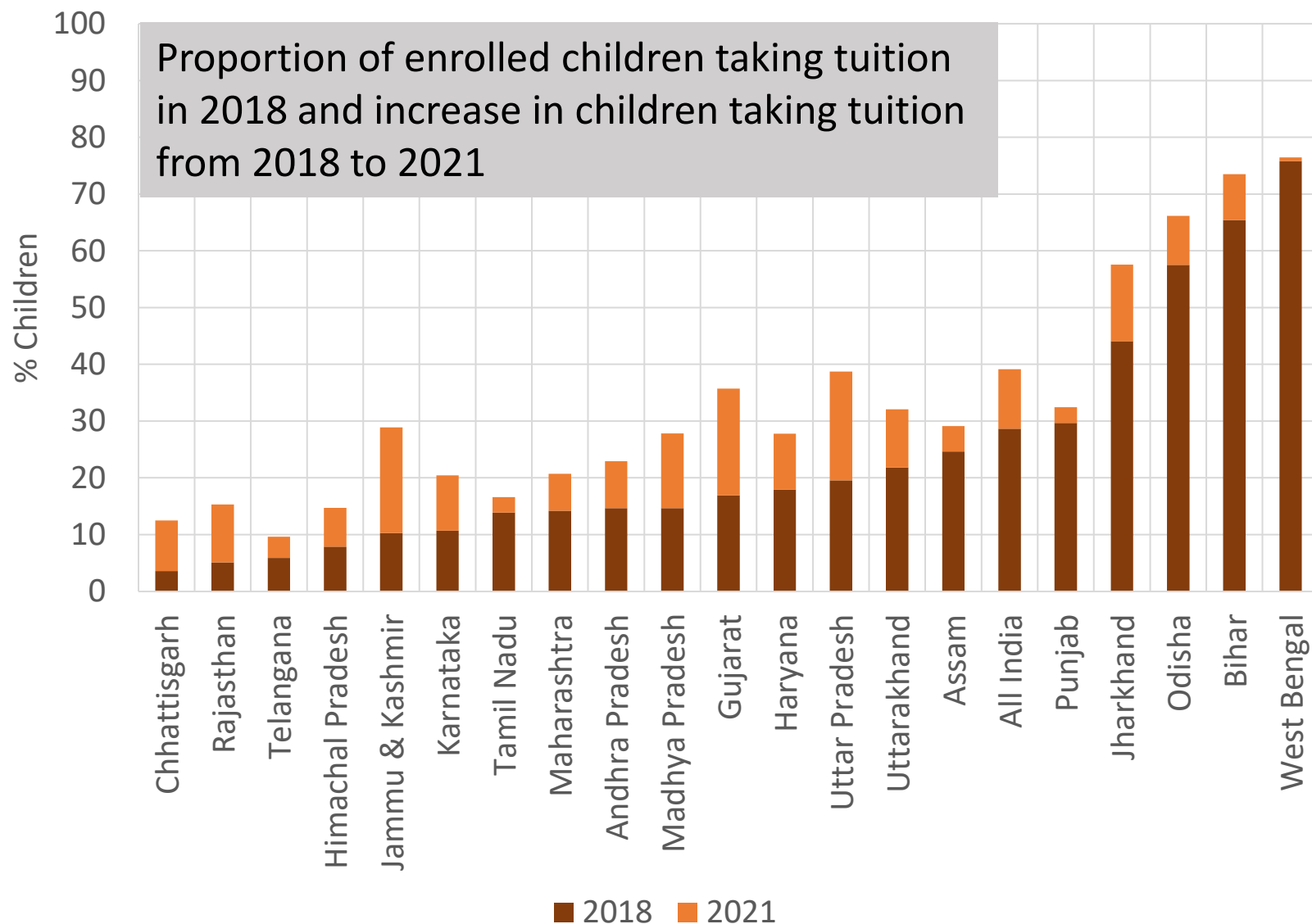
Increase in the proportion of children taking paid tuition classes

% Enrolled children who take tuition by grade			
Grade	2018	2020	2021
Std I-II	24.2	33.2	37.0
Std III-V	27.7	32.9	39.4
Std VI-VIII	28.6	30.7	38.9
Std IX & +	35.5	33.6	41.1
All	28.6	32.5	39.2

% Enrolled children who take tuition by school type			
School type	2018	2020	2021
Children enrolled in government schools	29.6	33.0	39.5
Children enrolled in privates schools	26.7	31.2	38.2
Total: Govt & Pvt	28.6	32.5	39.2

Big increases in the proportion of children taking tuition in this period across grades and type of school. By 2021, close to 40% of children attending tuition classes.

Increase in the proportion of children taking paid tuition classes by state



Note:

*NE states not included in chart.
In Kerala % children taking tuition dropped from 28.2% in 2018 to 18.8% in 2021.*

Even before COVID, in 2018, there were large variations across states in proportion of children who took paid tuition classes.

However in the period 2018 to 2021 there is a marked increase across almost all states in percentage children attending tuition classes.

Smartphones at home and children's access to them

Availability of smartphones has increased in families during the pandemic

% Enrolled children who have a smartphone available at home. By school type. 2018, 2020 and 2021

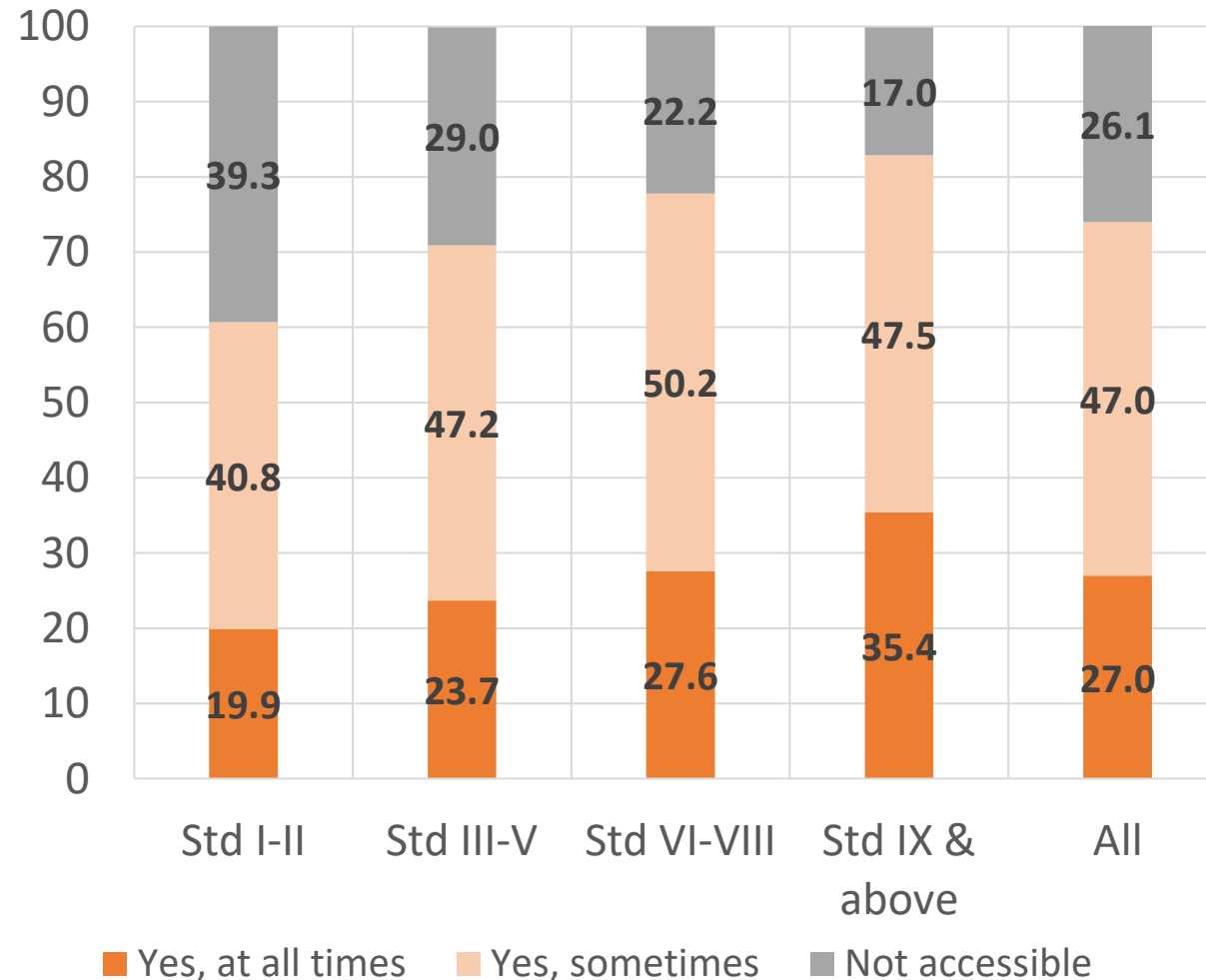
Children enrolled in:	ASER 2018	ASER 2020	ASER 2021
Govt	29.6	56.4	63.7
Pvt	49.9	74.2	79.0
Govt & Pvt	36.5	61.8	67.6

- Availability of smartphones in households has almost doubled since 2018. This is true of families where children are enrolled in government schools and in private schools.
- In ASER 2020, we found that a smartphone had been bought for studies for one out of ten children since the lockdown began in March 2020. When asked the same question in ASER 2021, this proportion had increased to 27.9%.

However, having a smartphone at home does not automatically translate to children having access to the device

% Enrolled children who have a smartphone at home and proportion who can access it. ASER 2021

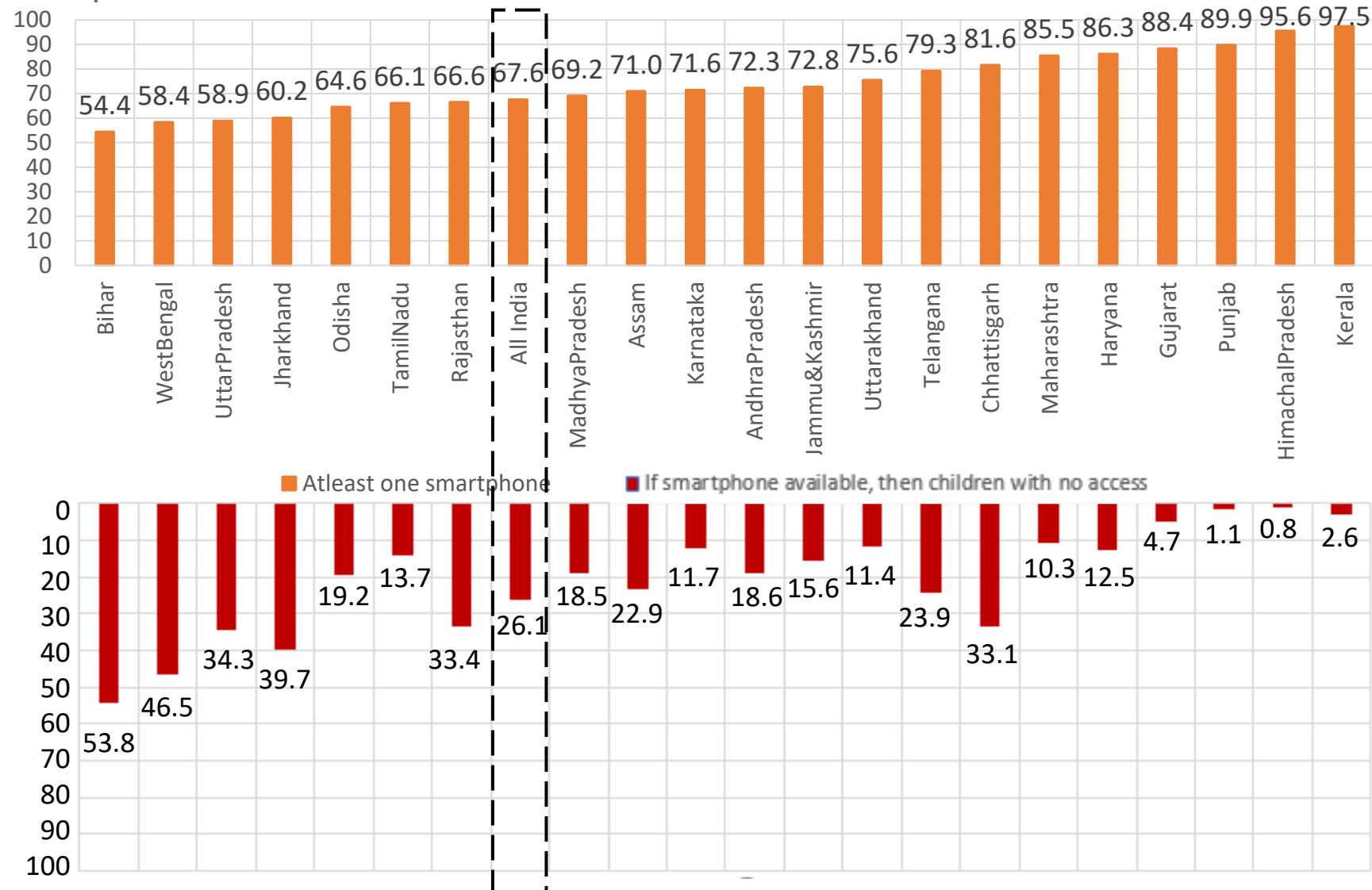
Grade	Smart phone at home
Std I-II	64.9
Std III-V	66.6
Std VI-VIII	66.6
Std IX & +	72.6
All	67.6



- Across all grades, 67.6% of all enrolled children have at least one smartphone available at home. But 26% of them have no access to it at all.
- There is substantial variation in access to smartphone by grade of children. More children in higher classes have access to smartphone as compared to children in lower grades.

Variations by state in access to smartphone even if there is a smartphone at home

% Enrolled children who have a smartphone at home & proportion who have no access despite having smartphone at home: ASER 2021. Selected states



Example:

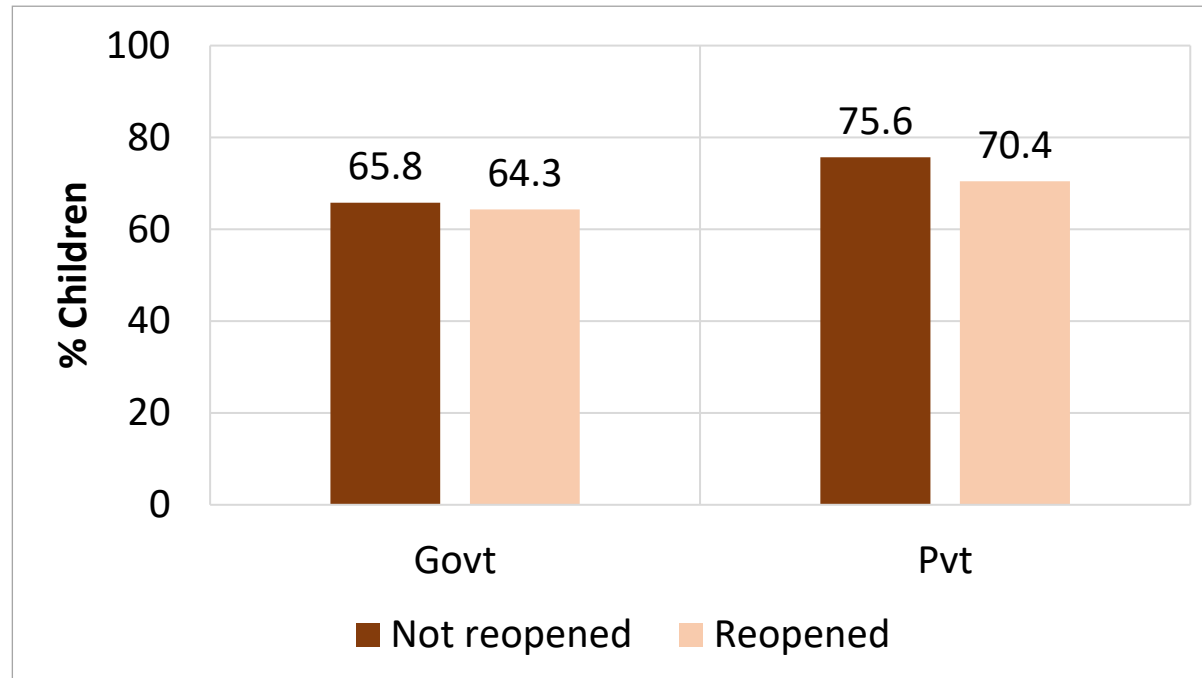
All India 67.6% children have a smartphone at home. But even in such households, 26.1% children still have no access to smartphones.

The data shows that the higher the percentage of families who have at least one smartphone in the home the lower the likelihood that children will have no access.

Learning materials and support for learning at home

Decline in learning support at home, especially where schools have re-opened

% Enrolled children getting learning support at home



- Compared to last year, learning support that children receive at home decreased from 74.9% in 2020 to 66.6% in 2021.
- This decrease could be due to school reopening for both school types, with more children whose schools have not reopened receiving help as compared to those whose schools have reopened.
- Children seem to get less learning support from fathers in 2021 as compared to 2020.

Children have current textbooks – even more so this year than last year

% Enrolled children who have textbooks for their current grade

Std	ASER 2020			ASER 2021		
	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt
Std I-II	79.8	69.7	76.2	88.1	88.1	88.1
Std III-V	85.5	72.0	81.4	92.7	90.5	92.1
Std VI-VIII	86.3	73.7	82.8	94.1	90.9	93.3
Std IX & above	82.7	73.5	80.0	93.2	92.9	93.1
All	84.1	72.2	80.5	92.3	90.7	91.9

- Even in September 2020 at the time of ASER 2020 survey, a substantial portion of children had textbooks for their current grade.
- This figure has gone up in 2021 with a reduction in the gap between government schools and private schools. Still slightly higher fraction of government school children have textbooks in 2021 as compared to their counterparts in private schools.

Children receiving learning materials other than textbooks

% Enrolled children who received learning materials or activities other than textbooks in the reference week. These could include worksheets, other print materials, phone messages, etc.

Std	Schools not open (2020)		Schools not open (2021)		Schools open (2021)	
	Govt	Pvt	Govt	Pvt	Govt	Pvt
Std I-II	27.9	35.8	31.5	39.4	40.9	47.9
Std III-V	33.7	40.4	39.2	46.9	44.1	48.3
Std VI-VIII	35.4	42.7	41.1	50.7	45.7	50.7
Std IX & above	34.8	43.4	36.4	53.9	47.9	53.0
All	33.5	40.6	37.6	46.9	45.0	50.2

Across all types of schools and grades, the availability of learning materials was higher in 2021 than in 2020.

A comparison of schools that are open with those that are still closed indicates that more materials are available when children are able to go to school, as homework constitutes a major source of learning material.

Concluding thoughts

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ASER 2021 was a phone survey like ASER 2020 and was carried out in September-October 2021. At this time in many states schools had opened at least for some classes. ASER 2021 provides a snapshot of India at a time of transition in terms of school re-opening.

- **Enrollment:** Significant increase in the proportion of children enrolled in government schools in many states. Time will tell if this is a temporary phenomenon or a more permanent feature. In the meanwhile, some states need to be prepared for the implications of this increase at the classroom level.
- **Tuition:** During an extended period of school closure and uncertainty, it is not surprising to see the emergence of “tuition” or local coaching classes as a response. Nationally, in 2018, less than 30% children took tuition classes. But by 2021, this number has reached 40%. In eastern states like West Bengal, Odisha and Bihar, the current level is well above 60%. Again time will tell if this increase across the board is a permanent feature of the education landscape or only a transitory phenomenon.
- **Smartphones:** ASER 2021 confirms that even if there is a smartphone in the family, children often do not have access to it. This finding needs to be taken into account as future plans are made for remote learning or the use of digital content and devices.
- **Learning support:** In 2021, though access to textbooks is almost universal, remote provision of teaching learning materials remains inadequate.



ASER 2021 report along
with all previous reports
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