

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 | 66.9 | 26.6 | 0.1 | 6.5 | 100 |
| Age 7-16: All | 68.2 | 25.3 | 0.1 | 6.4 | 100 |
| Age 7-10: All | 62.8 | 31.6 | 0.2 | 5.5 | 100 |
| Age 7-10: Boys | 61.2 | 34.5 | 0.0 | 4.4 | 100 |
| Age 7-10: Girls | 64.8 | 28.1 | 0.3 | 6.8 | 100 |
| Age 11-16: All | 71.7 | 21.2 | 0.0 | 7.1 | 100 |
| Age 11-16: Boys | 68.6 | 24.4 | 0.0 | 7.0 | 100 |
| Age 11-16: Girls | 74.6 | 18.2 | 0.0 | 7.1 | 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, nearly 67% of all children are enrolled in government schools and 27% 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 a decrease in private school enrollment between 2018 and 2020. This decrease is highest for girls enrolled in Std VI-XII.

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

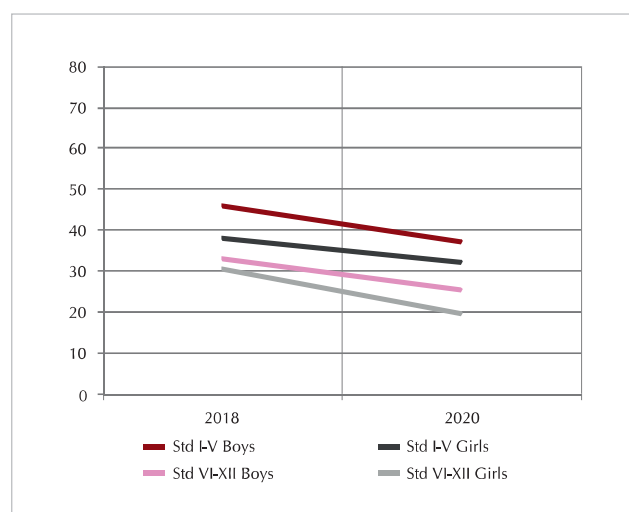


Table 2: % Children currently not enrolled in school. By age. 2018 and 2020*

| Age | 2018 | 2020 |
|-----------|------|------|
| Age 6-10 | 0.4 | 6.6 |
| Age 11-14 | 2.3 | 6.3 |
| Age 15-16 | 7.9 | 9.4 |
| All | 2.2 | 6.9 |



A higher proportion of children across age groups 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 group 6-10), the main cause of not being enrolled in school may be that families are waiting for schools to open to seek admission.

*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 | 31.6 | 16.9 | 27.5 | 26.0 | 7.1 | 20.8 |
| Std I-V | 22.0 | 9.7 | 18.6 | 19.6 | 17.3 | 18.9 |
| Std VI-VIII | 18.0 | 14.4 | 17.0 | 19.3 | 15.0 | 18.1 |
| Std IX-X | 18.6 | 36.4 | 23.6 | 19.2 | 28.6 | 21.8 |
| Std XI & above | 9.7 | 22.7 | 13.3 | 16.0 | 32.0 | 20.3 |
| 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 (53.9%) and a slightly higher proportion of children's fathers (60.2%) 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 | 32.5 | 23.2 | 29.2 |
| Std VI-XII | 42.5 | 26.6 | 39.0 |
| All | 38.5 | 24.7 | 34.6 |

Table 4 indicates that overall, close to 40% of all children have textbooks for their current grade. For every grade, the percentage of children in government schools who have textbooks is higher than among children in private 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 remained similar for the last two years, the proportion owning a smartphone increased significantly - from 42.1% to 61.5%.

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 | 35.2 | 53.7 | 42.1 | 57.0 | 72.9 | 61.5 |
| TV | 89.4 | 95.9 | 91.8 | 92.9 | 92.9 | 92.9 |
| Motorized vehicle | 45.7 | 70.0 | 54.7 | 49.1 | 69.6 | 54.9 |

*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 | 63.6 | 84.3 | 70.8 |
| Std VI-XII | 57.8 | 59.8 | 58.2 |
| All | 60.2 | 73.6 | 63.9 |

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

- Taking all children across different grades together, 63.9% of all children receive help from family members.
- For both types of schools, more younger children receive help from families than older children. Overall, 70.8% children in Std I-V receive help from family members as compared to 58.2% children in Std VI-XII.
- For primary grade level, private school children get more help than government school children. 63.6% children in Std I-V in government school children receive help as compared to 84.3% of children enrolled in private schools in the same grades.

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 | 19.0 | 25.2 | 21.2 |
| Std VI-XII | 27.2 | 30.1 | 27.9 |
| All | 23.9 | 27.4 | 24.9 |

Overall, a quarter of all enrolled children received some kind of learning materials/activities from their teachers during the reference week (Table 7). A higher percentage of private school children received learning materials/activities as compared to government school children in the same grades.

WhatsApp was the most common medium used for sharing learning materials/activities with children. Personal visits and calls were the other common mediums among government school children.

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 | 55.3 | 45.5 | 30.2 | 1.3 |
| Pvt | | | | |
| Govt & Pvt | 63.3 | 36.1 | 23.9 | 2.9 |

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 | 85.4 | 10.5 | 14.2 | 3.7 | 2.9 |
| Pvt | 73.9 | 15.9 | 21.0 | 10.1 | 2.0 |
| Govt & Pvt | 82.3 | 11.9 | 16.0 | 5.4 | 2.6 |

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 (82.3%). Overall, 16% of parents mentioned not having a smartphone as a reason with more parents of children enrolled in private school highlighting this reason (21%) than those enrolled in government school (14.2%).

Data is not presented where sample size is insufficient.

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-corded classes | Live online classes |
| Govt | 24.4 | 19.7 | 33.2 | 0.9 | 11.4 | 3.2 |
| Pvt | 26.1 | 20.4 | 24.1 | 0.7 | 23.3 | 13.8 |
| Govt & Pvt | 24.9 | 19.9 | 30.7 | 0.9 | 14.8 | 6.2 |

Even though only a quarter of all children received materials from their schools during the reference week, half of the households reported that 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.

The proportion of children doing different types of activities using traditional materials is quite similar for private and government schools. Children enrolled in private schools were more likely to be connected to online classes and recorded video lessons.

For example,

- 24.4% of government school children reported using textbooks during the reference week as compared to 26.1% private school children.
- 23.3% of private school children reported using recorded video lessons as opposed to 11.4% of government school children.
- 13.8% of private school children reported using live online as opposed to 3.2% 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 | 50.9 | 23.1 | 13.7 | 12.3 | 100 |
| Pvt | 49.0 | 21.1 | 14.7 | 15.3 | 100 |
| Govt & Pvt | 50.4 | 22.5 | 14.0 | 13.1 | 100 |

Based on responses from households, 50.9% children in government schools and 49% children in private schools did not do any of these activities during the reference week.

13% of all children did three activities or more. In this category, there is higher proportion of private school children (15.3%) as compared to government school children (12.3%).

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 | 26.7 | 25.6 | 8.9 | 36.2 |
| Pvt | 28.3 | 24.7 | 10.6 | 28.4 |
| Govt & Pvt | 27.2 | 25.3 | 9.4 | 34.2 |

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, 27.2% of all children's teachers contacted parents/families during the reference week. This proportion is slightly 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.