

Annual Status of Education Report West Bengal 2021

West Bengal Rural

Analysis based on data
from households

17 out of 18 Districts

December 2021



About ASER 2021 in West Bengal

WHEN: Survey conducted in **households** in December 2021

WHERE: Sampling

- 30 villages in each district
- 20 households randomly selected in each village
- Children aged 3-16 surveyed
- Children aged 5-16 assessed

WHAT: Assessment

- **Basic reading and arithmetic** for all 5-16 year old children in sampled households
- One-on-one with each child

WHO: Local non-profit organizations along with students from universities and colleges conducted ASER



17 districts



510 villages



10,141 households



11,189 children

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Annual Status of Education Report

DECEMBER 2021

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ASER

WEST BENGAL

RURAL

Facilitated by PRATHAM

Compared to 2018, more children in govt schools in 2021

Table 1: % Children enrolled in different types of schools by age group and sex. 2021

Age group	Govt	Pvt	Other	Not in School	Total
Age: 6-14 All	91.5	6.5	1.0	1.0	100
Age: 7-16 All	92.0	5.7	1.0	1.3	100
Age: 7- 10 All	89.0	9.7	0.8	0.6	100
Age: 7-10 Boys	88.8	9.7	0.8	0.7	100
Age: 7-10 Girls	89.2	9.6	0.8	0.4	100
Age: 11-14 All	94.6	3.1	1.3	1.1	100
Age: 11-14 Boys	94.2	3.0	1.2	1.6	100
Age: 11-14 Girls	94.9	3.2	1.4	0.6	100
Age: 15-16 All	93.0	2.5	0.9	3.5	100
Age: 15-16 Boys	90.5	2.8	1.3	5.4	100
Age: 15-16 Girls	95.2	2.3	0.6	1.9	100

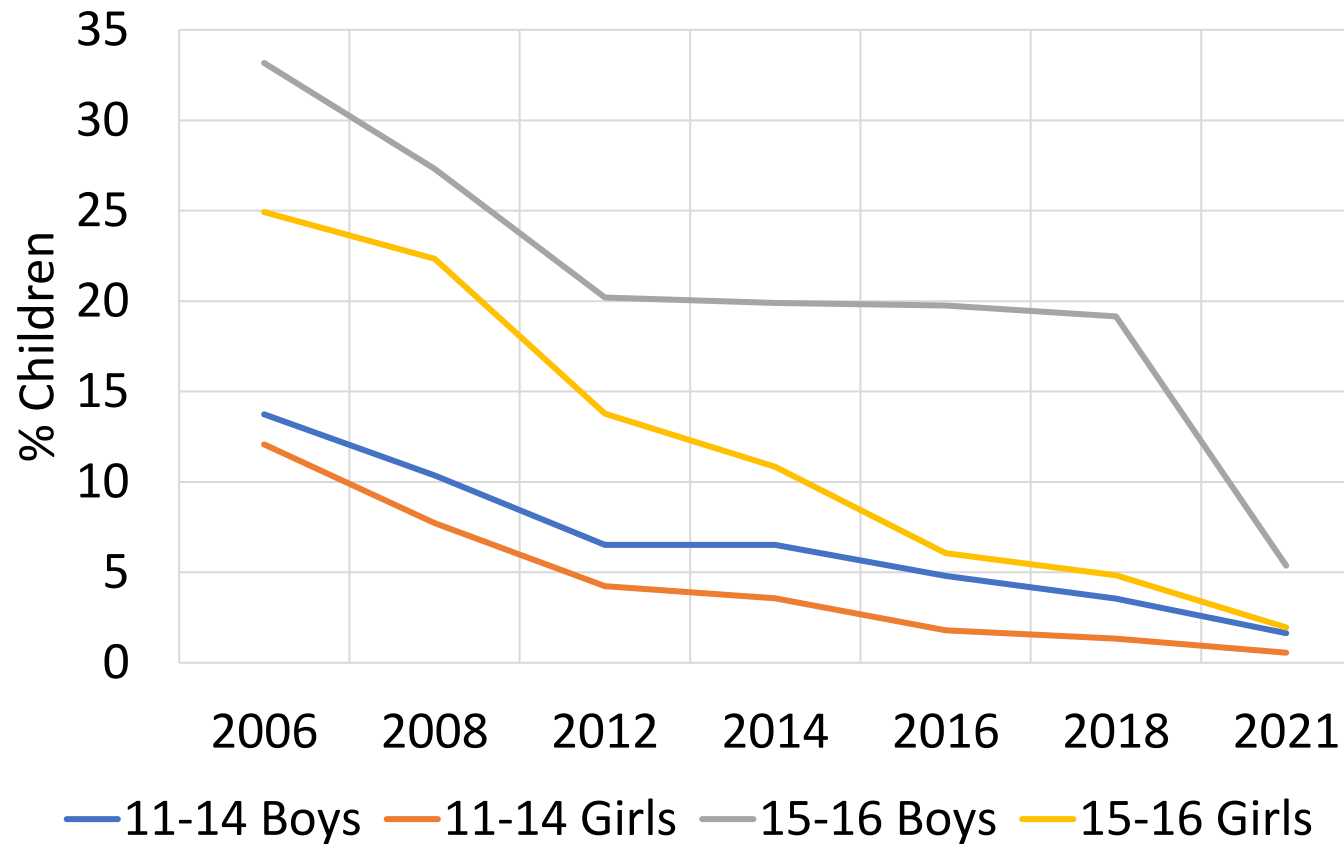
Table 2: % Children enrolled in different types of schools by age group and sex. 2018

Age group	Govt	Pvt	Other	Not in School	Total
Age: 6 -14 All	88.1	7.9	1.9	2.0	100
Age: 7-16 All	87.8	6.5	2.1	3.6	100
Age: 7- 10 All	85.5	12.5	1.0	1.1	100
Age: 7-10 Boys	84.4	12.9	1.2	1.5	100
Age: 7-10 Girls	86.4	12.2	0.7	0.7	100
Age: 11-14 All	91.8	2.8	3.1	2.4	100
Age: 11-14 Boys	90.7	3.1	2.7	3.5	100
Age: 11-14 Girls	92.8	2.5	3.4	1.3	100
Age: 15-16 All	84.1	1.9	2.4	11.7	100
Age: 15-16 Boys	76.8	2.8	1.3	19.2	100
Age: 15-16 Girls	90.9	1.1	3.3	4.8	100

Government school enrollment has increased across all age groups among both boys and girls between 2018 and 2021, and is now over 90% for 6-14-year-old children.

Decline in proportion of children not enrolled in school

Chart 1: % Children not enrolled in school. By age group and sex. 2006-2021



The **proportion of children not enrolled in school has dropped** steadily since 2006. It fell for both boys and girls in all age groups between 2018 and 2021.

- The largest decrease in children out of school is among older children (age 15-16), especially boys.
- **In 2021, 5.4% of 15-16-year-old boys are out of school, compared to almost 20% in 2018.**

Reading levels in 2021

Table 3: % Children by grade and reading level.
Children enrolled in all types of schools. 2021

Std	Not even letter	Letter	Word	Std I level text	Std II level text	Total
I	32.1	34.4	17.2	9.8	6.6	100
II	16.1	27.2	21.6	16.4	18.8	100
III	12.6	20.7	17.5	19.8	29.5	100
IV	8.0	14.0	17.5	21.3	39.2	100
V	6.5	10.6	16.1	18.4	48.5	100
VI	5.5	9.6	11.7	14.8	58.4	100
VII	3.8	7.9	13.0	14.8	60.4	100
VIII	3.0	5.5	9.8	13.0	68.7	100

In Std III, less than 30% of all children can read Std II level text – a proxy for grade level reading. Although this proportion increases in higher classes, even in Std VIII, less than 70% can read Std II level text.

Reading tool

Std II level text

কাহিনী

আমার বাড়ির সামনে একটা ডাকঘর আছে। অনেক লোকের ভিড় হয় সেখানে। নানা দেশের চিঠি আসে। সেখানে টাকাও জমা রাখা যায়। আমার মা ডাকঘরে টাকা জমিয়ে রাখেন। আমি তিনবার ডাকঘরে গিয়েছি। বাবাকে দিনাজপুরে চিঠি লিখেছি। ঘাটালের পিসিকেও একটা বড়ো চিঠি লিখেছি। আর আজ দাদাকে লিখবো। আমি ডাকঘরে গিয়ে একটা ডাকটিকিট কিনবো। সেটা খামে লাগিয়ে ঠিকানা লিখবো। খামটা আমি দাদাকে পাঠাব।

Std I level text

অনুচ্ছেদ

গরমে আম পাওয়া যায়।
মণির মা আমার আচার বানান।
শীতকালে আপেল পাওয়া যায়।
মণি আপেল খেতে ভালোবাসে।

Letters

ল প স
ক গ
ড ব ম
ট ঝ

Words

লাল দুধ
গোল
তেল টিয়া
ভোর রূপা
কুল
পাখি মোটা

Drops in reading levels over time

Table 4: Trends over time: Reading in Std I and II in govt schools. 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021

Year	% Children in Std I who can read at least letters (Govt schools)	% Children in Std II who can read at least words (Govt schools)
2014	72.4	54.8
2016	70.6	65.1
2018	73.2	66.2
2021	66.3	53.0

Substantial drops are visible in reading ability in 2021 as compared to earlier years.

% Children enrolled in Std I in govt schools who can read letters or more has decreased by 7 percentage points since 2018 and **is now below 2014 levels.**

Similar decline is visible in the proportion of Std II children who can read at least words.

Table 5: Trends over time: Reading in Std III, V and VIII in govt schools. 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021

Year	% Children in govt schools who can read Std II level text (Govt schools)		
	Std III	Std V	Std VIII
2014	32.9	51.8	76.3
2016	34.0	50.2	72.3
2018	36.6	50.5	63.0
2021	27.7	48.0	68.3

The proportion of children in Std III and V who can read a Std II level text has also declined.

This is not the case for Std VIII, by which time children's reading ability is more firmly built.

Arithmetic levels in 2021

Table 6: % Children by grade and arithmetic level. All schools. 2021

Std	Not even 1-9	Recognise numbers		Subtract	Divide	Total
		1-9	10-99			
I	30.0	40.4	20.1	6.8	2.6	100
II	12.6	34.3	30.0	14.0	9.1	100
III	9.2	28.8	32.7	15.5	13.9	100
IV	6.7	18.4	34.9	19.7	20.2	100
V	5.2	13.6	31.8	23.2	26.2	100
VI	5.3	11.2	31.6	18.8	33.2	100
VII	2.5	8.5	39.0	16.8	33.2	100
VIII	1.7	6.4	37.6	17.3	36.9	100

Arithmetic tool

সংখ্যা পরিচয় ১-৯		সংখ্যা পরিচয় ১০-৯৯		বিয়োগ		ভাগ
১	৪	৫১	৮৩	৪৬ - ২৯	৬৩ - ৩৯	৭)৮৭৯(
৭	৩	৩৭	৬৫	৪৭ - ২৮	৪৫ - ১৭	৬)৮২৪(
৬	৯	৫৫	২৬	৯২ - ৭৬	৮৪ - ৫৭	৪)৯৮৫(
৫	২	৯১	৪৩	৫২ - ১৪	৬৬ - ৪৮	৪)৫১৭(

পাঁচটি ভিত্তিসে। করুন, ৪টি সঠিক বলতে হবে।

পাঁচটি ভিত্তিসে। করুন, ৪টি সঠিক বলতে হবে।

যে কোন দুটি করতে বলুন, দুটিই সঠিক হতে হবে।

যে কোন একটি করতে বলুন, একটিই সঠিক হতে হবে।

Only about 30% of children in Std III can do subtraction (2 digit with borrowing). This skill is expected by Std II. This proportion increases in higher classes, but even in Std VIII close to half cannot do subtraction and over 60% cannot do division (3 digit by 1 digit) problems.

Decline in arithmetic levels since 2018

Table 7: Trends over time: Arithmetic in Std I and II in govt schools. 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021

Year	% Children who can recognise at least single-digit numbers (govt schools)	
	Std I	Std II
2014	74.0	84.7
2016	73.5	91.0
2018	77.8	92.6
2021	68.5 ↓	86.4 ↓

Drops are visible in arithmetic as well.

In **Std I**, there has been almost a **10 %age point drop** since 2018 in the proportion of children who can recognise single-digit numbers. This figure is currently below the 2014 level.

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Year	% Children who can do subtraction (govt schools)	% Children in who can do division (govt schools)	
	Std III	Std V	Std VIII
2014	33.0	31.3	40.4
2016	35.5	28.6	32.5
2018	35.5	29.2	28.9
2021	27.3 ↓	25.9 ↓	36.8

A drop in arithmetic ability is also visible among older children. For example, the proportion of children in **Std III who can do subtraction fell by 8.2 %age points between 2018 and 2021.**

Support for learning

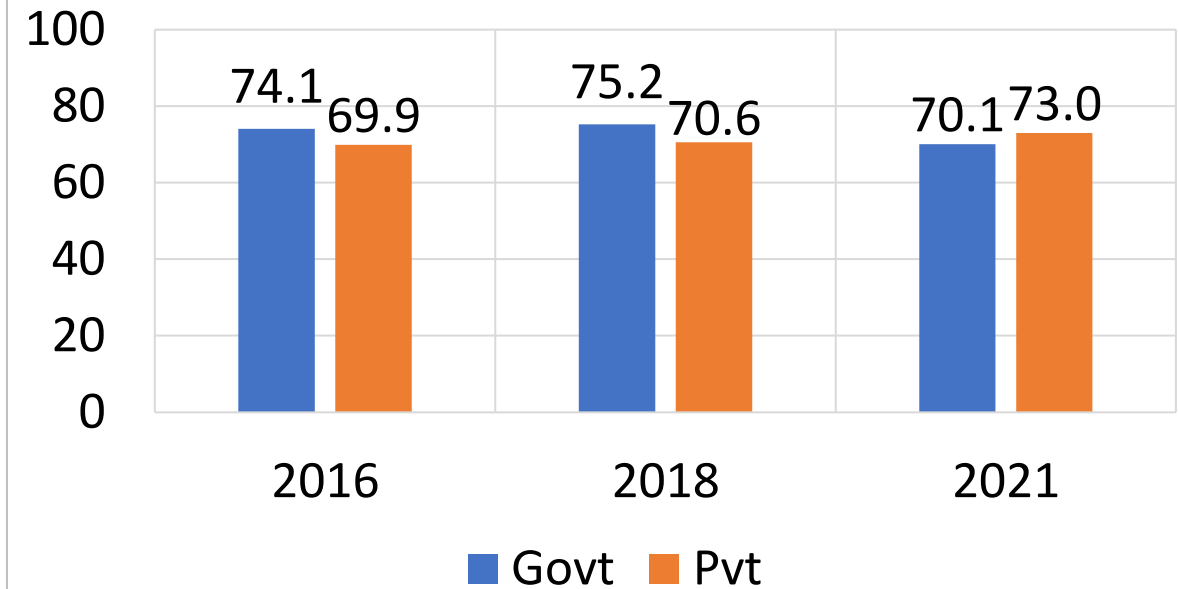
Table 9: % Children with learning resources available at home. By school type. 2021

School type	Smart-phone	Radio	TV	Reading material (other than textbooks)
Govt	64.5	10.8	55.4	2.8
Pvt	81.4	19.2	72.4	6.9
Govt & Pvt	65.5	11.3	56.4	3.1

Table 10: % Children/parents of children in govt schools who had different kinds of contact with the school teacher in the reference week. By grade. 2021

Std	Received learning material	Discussed material/child's progress	Discussed COVID prevention guidelines
I-II	12.7	19.2	13.9
III-V	14.8	19.8	15.2
VI-VIII	19.2	18.9	16.5
IX & above	29.7	24.8	22.4
All	18.0	20.2	16.4

Chart 2: % Children who take tuition. By school type. 2016, 2018 and 2021



The proportion of children taking tuition has remained steady at around 70% since 2016.

Older children were more likely to have had contact with a school teacher, whether to receive and discuss learning material or COVID guidelines.

Way forward

- **COVID-19 has caused significant ‘learning loss’ in foundational skills like reading & math**
Children’s foundational reading and arithmetic levels have dropped substantially between 2018 and 2021, especially for primary classes.
- **For Std III and above, “catch up” is urgently required with focus on building foundational skills of reading and arithmetic.**
Before the grade level curriculum can be taught, providing the support needed to ensure that every child acquires basic skills is key to their ability to get back on track with their education.
- **For children in Std I & II, time and attention needs to be paid to readiness skills.**
These children have not had the benefit of exposure to pre-school. Before moving into teaching-learning activities at grade level, it is essential that they are given time and opportunity to develop appropriate physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, pre-math and language skills.



**For more information,
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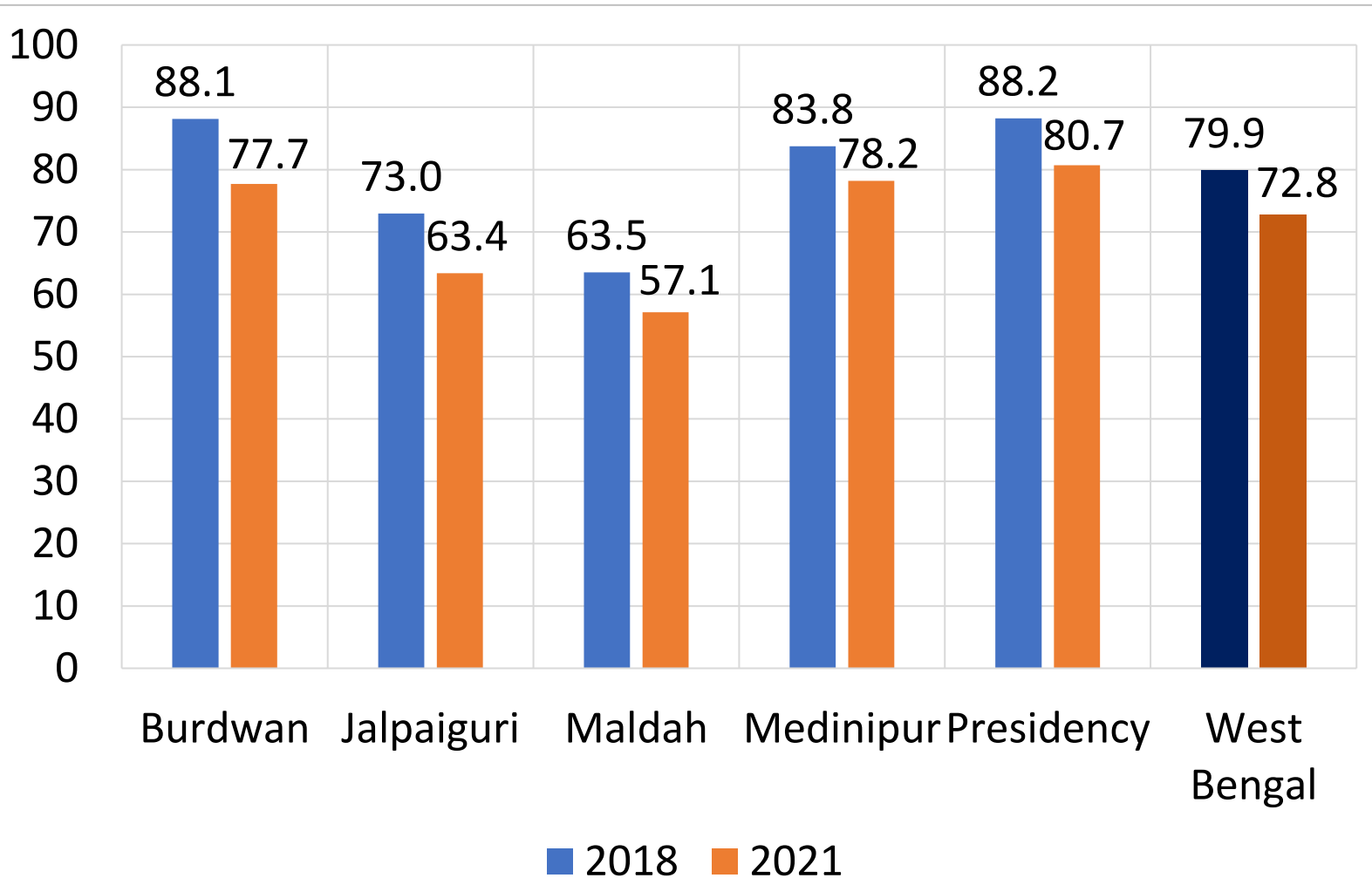
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Annexure 1: Reading - Divisional variations

Chart 3: % Children in govt schools in Std I-II who can read at least letters. By division. 2018, 2021



In all divisions, a decline is visible in the proportion of children in Std I-II in govt schools who can recognise at least letters.

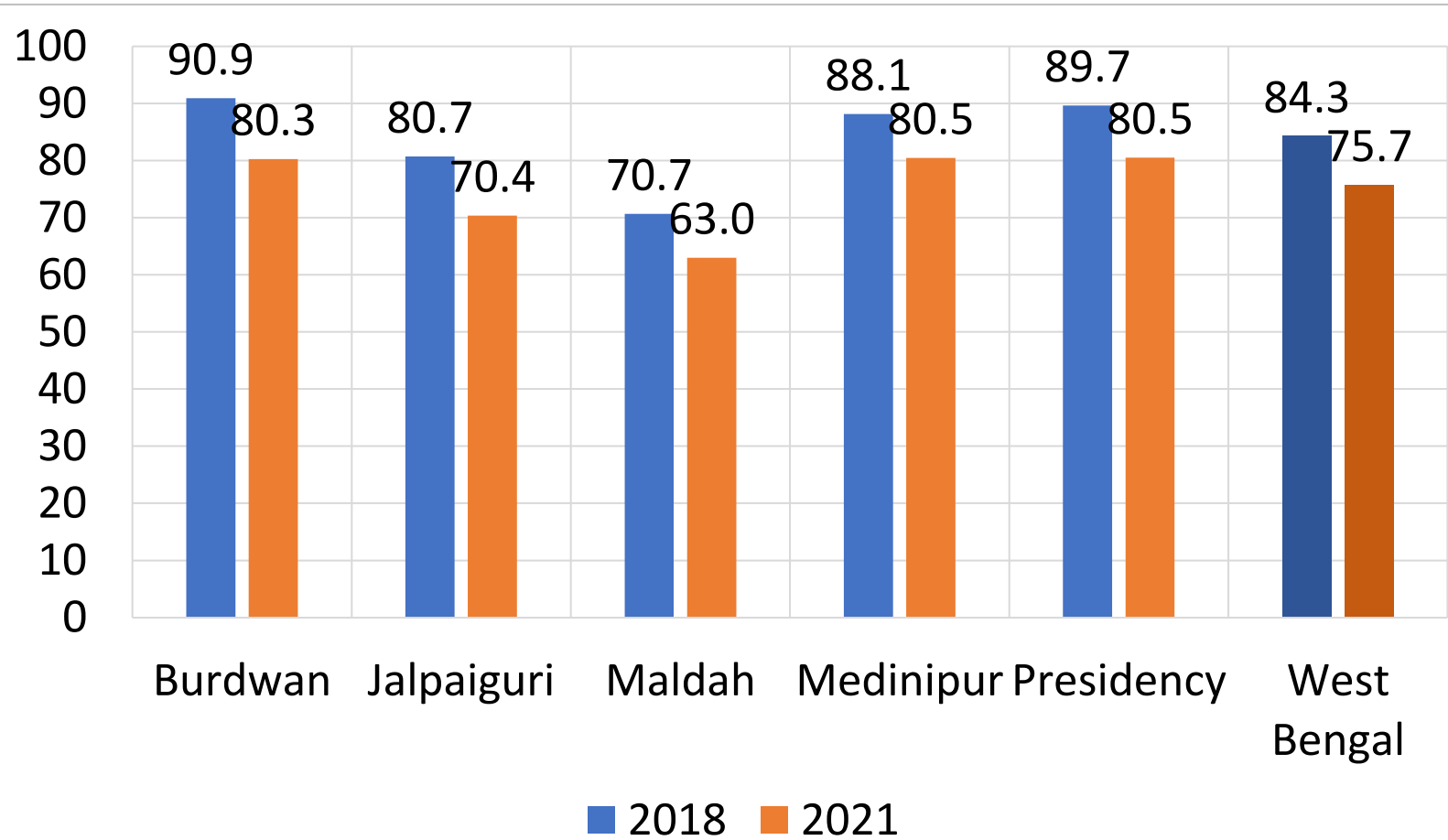
Presidency, Medinipur and Burdwan have the highest proportion of children in Std I-II who can read at least letters, while Malda lags behind.

The following districts come under each division:

- **Burdwan:** Birbhum, Bardhaman, Hooghly
- **Jalpaiguri:** Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar (*Estimates do not include Darjeeling as it was not surveyed due to logistical constraints*)
- **Malda:** Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad
- **Medinipur:** Bankura, Purulia, Paschim Medinipur, Purba Medinipur
- **Presidency:** Nadia, North Twenty Four Parganas, Haora, South Twenty Four Parganas

Annexure 2: Arithmetic - Divisional variations

Chart 4: % Children in govt schools in Std I-II who can recognise at least single-digit numbers. By division. 2018, 2021



Across all divisions, a fall is visible in the proportion of Std I-II children who can recognise at least single-digit numbers.

Similar to reading, Presidency, Medinipur and Burdwan do best while and Malda lags behind.

The following districts come under each division:

- **Burdwan:** Birbhum, Bardhaman, Hooghly
- **Jalpaiguri:** Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar (*Estimates do not include Darjeeling as it was not surveyed due to logistical constraints*)
- **Malda:** Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad
- **Medinipur:** Bankura, Purulia, Paschim Medinipur, Purba Medinipur
- **Presidency:** Nadia, North Twenty Four Parganas, Haora, South Twenty Four Parganas