

School Survey Major Findings



Sample description

The ASER 2021 school sample comprised the head teacher or another teacher of a government school with primary classes in each sampled village, and respondents from more than 7,000 government schools across 25 states were surveyed during September and October 2021. Each respondent was asked to select one grade about which they could provide information. In a few states, schools had not reopened during the course of the survey; but in the majority, schools had reopened either all grades or some grades for children to attend in person (see Annexure 2 for details). We refer to these schools as fully reopened and partially reopened schools respectively.

Table 39: Number of schools reached by grades offered and school reopening status. 2021

Grades offered	Schools fully reopened	Schools partially reopened	Schools not reopened	Total
Primary (Std I-IV/V)	2466	41	1616	4123
Upper primary (Std I-VII/VIII)	1286	854	734	2874
Other	206	19	77	302
Total	3958	914	2427	7299

Table 40: % School respondents by designation and school reopening status. 2021

Designation	% Schools fully reopened	% Schools partially reopened	% Schools not reopened
Head teacher	44.9	55.1	52.3
Teacher	55.1	44.9	47.8
Total	100	100	100

Table 41: % School respondents by the grade they opted to provide information about. By grade and school reopening status. 2021

Std	% Schools fully reopened	% Schools partially reopened	% Schools not reopened
Std I-II	20.0	2.8	21.7
Std III-V	57.9	12.7	56.6
Std VI-VIII	21.9	83.8	21.2
Could not give information	0.2	0.7	0.5
Total	100	100	100

Table 42: School reopening status reported by school respondents (%). By grades offered and reopening status.

Grades offered	% Schools fully reopened	% Schools partially reopened	% Schools not reopened	Total
Primary (Std I-IV/V)	98.4	1.6	0.0	100
Upper primary (Std I-VII/VIII)	60.1	39.9	0.0	100
All	80.7	19.3	0.0	100

Enrollment

Table 43: School respondents reporting major changes in enrollment in recent years (%). By grade and school reopening status. 2021

Std	Enrollment in reopened schools (%)				Enrollment in schools not reopened (%)			
	Increased	Decreased	No change	Total	Increased	Decreased	No change	Total
Std I-II	72.2	7.2	20.6	100	51.9	11.4	36.7	100
Std III-V	70.0	6.7	23.3	100	53.4	11.1	35.4	100
Std VI-VIII	65.6	6.5	27.9	100	59.2	9.1	31.7	100
All	68.9	6.7	24.4	100	54.3	10.8	34.9	100

Table 44: Perceived reasons for major changes in enrollment in recent years, where these were reported (%). By grade and school reopening status. 2021

Std	School reopened						School not reopened					
	Migration	Marriage/employment	Classes not being held in Pvt school	COVID caused financial distress	Free facilities in Govt schools	Other	Migration	Marriage/employment	Classes not being held in Pvt school	COVID caused financial distress	Free facilities in Govt schools	Other
Std I-II	13.1	3.5	34.8	58.2	49.5	18.0	13.2	3.9	35.4	48.4	45.1	14.1
Std III-V	13.3	5.3	39.8	62.5	50.9	14.3	11.6	3.2	27.2	49.6	45.2	15.8
Std VI-VIII	20.5	6.5	44.5	64.5	46.0	12.5	14.8	2.8	30.7	51.1	46.9	12.5
All	15.5	5.3	40.4	62.4	49.1	14.4	12.7	3.2	29.7	49.7	45.6	14.7

Table 43 and 44 report whether school staff perceived unusual changes in enrollment patterns in recent years and the possible reasons for these. In all schools, the majority of respondents reported perceiving recent increases in enrollments, but the proportion of respondents reporting this outcome was significantly higher when schools had reopened (close to 70%) as compared to when they had not (54.3%).

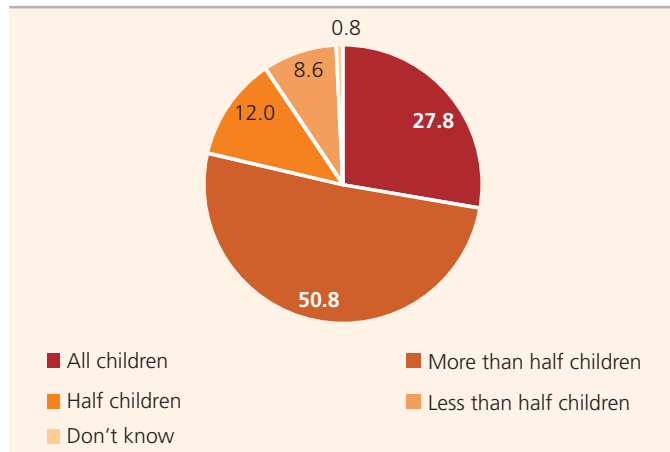
Among both reopened and not reopened schools, COVID caused financial distress, free facilities provided by government schools and classes not being held in private schools were cited as the major reasons for this increase. More respondents in reopened schools reported these as reasons as compared to respondents in not reopened schools.



Schools reopened

Attendance

Chart 12: School respondents' estimate of children's attendance on last working day prior to survey (%). 2021



COVID prevention measures

Table 45: Measures for COVID prevention reported by respondents (%). By grades offered. 2021

Grades offered	% School respondents who reported:		
	Receiving notification for implementing measures	Inspection for COVID prevention measures	Taking at least one dose of COVID vaccine
Primary (Std I-IV/V)	92.6	61.9	98.2
Upper primary (Std I-VII/VIII)	94.6	69.5	99.3
Total	93.5	65.4	98.7

Table 46: COVID prevention facilities reported by respondents to be available in school (%). By grades offered. 2021

Grades offered	Water	Soap	Sanitiser	Temperature gun	Extra masks	Quarantine room	COVID prevention guidelines displayed in schools	No facility
Primary (Std I-IV/V)	93.5	93.8	95.3	28.4	73.0	2.9	74.4	0.4
Upper primary (Std I-VII/VIII)	91.9	89.2	95.0	35.0	72.4	6.0	79.1	0.7
Total	92.8	91.7	95.1	31.4	72.7	4.3	76.5	0.5

Table 47: Training received by school respondents for implementation of COVID prevention measures (%). 2021

Std	% School respondents who received training	Of those who received training, type of training received:			
		Brief instructions (in person or online)	Series of in person/online training sessions	Enrolled in/ completed an online course	Other kinds of training
Std I-II	70.2	80.9	23.3	7.0	2.4
Std III-V	71.8	79.3	27.2	10.5	2.2
Std VI-VIII	76.3	85.5	27.2	8.3	1.0
All	73.1	81.7	26.6	9.1	1.8

Norms for children's attendance varied across schools and states, but only 27.8% of respondents reported that all children who were supposed to attend school on the working day prior to the survey actually did so (Chart 12).

ASER 2021 also asked about COVID prevention measures in reopened schools. Almost all respondents reported having taken at least one dose of the COVID vaccine (Table 45). Even though temperature guns and quarantine rooms were rare in schools, common provisions for COVID prevention were widely available, including water (92.8%), soap (91.7%), and sanitiser (95.1%). 73.1% respondents also reported receiving training/orientation for implementing COVID prevention measures in school (Table 47).

Teaching-learning activities in class

Table 48: Classroom activities reported by school respondents during the reference week (%). By grade. 2021

Std	Regular curriculum	Extra-curricular activities	Revision of last year's curriculum	Other
Std I-II	65.9	45.7	51.9	12.6
Std III-V	68.7	42.1	55.3	12.8
Std VI-VIII	84.4	40.0	43.5	6.9
All	73.5	42.0	50.8	10.8

Table 49: Materials used in class by school respondents during the reference week (%). By grade. 2021

Std	Text-books	Work-sheets	Online recorded videos	Charts and models	Other
Std I-II	66.8	46.6	27.3	53.7	12.4
Std III-V	75.4	54.0	26.6	48.9	11.5
Std VI-VIII	86.1	52.1	20.2	30.5	8.1
All	77.5	52.1	24.6	43.5	10.5

Table 50: Challenges faced by school respondents in teaching currently (%). By grade. 2021

Std	% School respondents facing challenges in teaching	If facing challenges, then type of challenges faced:						
		Teaching same content multiple times	Low attendance	Children unable to catch up with curriculum	Technical/connectivity issues	Implementing COVID guidelines in class	Lack of support from parents	Other
Std I-II	68.7	45.0	26.9	58.4	12.3	21.0	22.2	17.6
Std III-V	72.4	46.1	25.1	70.1	17.6	23.4	22.8	14.5
Std VI-VIII	67.8	46.5	36.6	61.8	33.8	22.4	26.8	12.2
All	70.2	46.0	29.1	65.4	22.0	22.7	24.0	14.3

Most teachers reported that children studied the regular curriculum in class during the reference week (73.5%), but patterns varied by grade. More respondents who provided information about Std VI-VIII reported teaching the regular curriculum in the classroom (84.4%), as compared to 65.9% for Std I-II. Teachers reported that children in lower grades did more extra-curricular activities as compared to children in higher grades (Table 48).

Across all grades, textbooks were reported as the most common material being used by respondents to teach in class (77.5%), with some variation by grade. More respondents reported using interactive materials like charts and models for children in lower grades as compared to their counterparts in higher grades (Table 49).

Close to three quarters of all respondents reported facing challenges in teaching their grade currently (Table 50). The most commonly reported challenge was that children were unable to catch up with their grade-level curriculum (65.4%).

Mid-day meal

Table 51: Status of mid-day meal provision reported by school respondents (%). By grade. 2021

Std	Children eating mid-day meal in school				Ration/fund given to students at least once in 3 months				
	All children	Some children	Not eating	Total	All children	Some children	Submitted list to Govt	Not distributed	Total
Std I-II	49.0	2.3	48.7	100	79.6	6.1	3.4	10.9	100
Std III-V	52.5	1.8	45.6	100	80.0	6.2	3.4	10.4	100
Std VI-VIII	13.5	2.2	84.4	100	77.0	12.1	3.5	7.4	100
All	38.8	2.0	59.2	100	78.9	8.2	3.4	9.5	100

Schools yet to reopen

Sharing materials/activities and contact

Table 52: Status of textbook distribution reported by school respondents (%). By grade. 2020 and 2021

Std	ASER 2020				ASER 2021			
	All children	Some children	Not distributed	Total	All children	Some children	Not distributed	Total
Std I-II	87.1	6.2	6.8	100	90.7	5.5	3.8	100
Std III-V	88.3	6.1	5.7	100	90.3	6.0	3.7	100
Std VI-VIII	83.5	7.3	9.2	100	89.1	7.4	3.5	100
All	86.8	6.4	6.8	100	90.1	6.2	3.7	100

Table 53: Status of sharing of additional learning materials/activities with children reported by school respondents (%). By grade and medium. 2020 and 2021

Std	ASER 2020					ASER 2021				
	% School respondents	If shared materials/activities, then medium:				% School respondents	If shared materials/activities, then medium:			
		WhatsApp	Phone call	Personal visit	Other		WhatsApp	Phone call	Personal visit	Other
Std I-II	65.4	80.8	25.5	64.8	7.6	67.5	68.7	24.2	62.5	4.5
Std III-V	66.8	79.8	26.9	59.8	10.6	74.1	72.3	24.4	64.9	6.8
Std VI-VIII	66.3	84.4	34.0	56.5	19.4	81.2	82.1	27.8	54.3	6.5
All	66.4	81.2	28.5	59.9	12.3	74.2	73.9	25.1	62.0	6.3

Table 54: School respondents' reported contact with parents and children during the reference week to discuss learning materials/activities, child's progress or wellbeing (%). By grade. 2020 and 2021

Std	ASER 2020		ASER 2021	
	Teacher visited or called parent/child	Parent/child visited or called teacher	Teacher visited or called parent/child	Parent/child visited or called teacher
Std I-II	46.6	23.0	52.1	35.3
Std III-V	46.9	25.7	52.6	35.0
Std VI-VIII	47.2	29.9	51.9	37.4
All	46.9	26.3	52.3	35.6

In schools that had not reopened, respondents were asked whether they had distributed textbooks to children and whether they had provided any additional learning materials or activities during the reference week.

The majority of school respondents reported that textbooks had been given to all enrolled children across all grades (90.1%) (Table 52). Three quarters also reported sharing additional learning materials/activities with children, an increase of close to 8 percentage points over 2020; this was more often reported by respondents providing information for higher grades than by those giving information for lower grades. WhatsApp continues to be the most common medium for sharing learning materials and activities (73.9%), followed by personal visits (62%) (Table 53). More than half the respondents reported visiting or calling parents/children during the reference week to discuss learning materials or children's progress, a slight increase over 2020 levels (Table 54).