

Annual Status of Education (Rural) 2021

NOTES

Ipsit's Desk

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TRANSFORMATIVE INITIATIVE AND
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

POVERTY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
MONITORING AGENCY

1 Introduction

- ASER provided insights on the schooling status of children in the 5-16 age group across rural India and their ability to do basic reading and arithmetic tasks.

- This year, ASER followed a phone-based survey format, as field survey was not possible due to the pandemic. Conducted in September-October 2021, eighteen months after the first lock down, the survey explores how children in the age group of 5-16 studied at home since the onset of the pandemic and the challenges that the schools and households now face as schools reopen across states. ASER 2021 was conducted in 25 states and 3 Union Territories. It reached a total of 76,706 households and 75,234 children in the age group of 5-16 years, as well as teachers or head teachers from 7,299 government schools offering primary grades.

2 Key Findings from the report

2.1 School Enrollment Patterns

- Enrolment data from ASER 2021, 2020 and 2018 show that: At an all-India level, there has been a clear shift from private to government schools: For children in the age group of 6-14, enrollment in private schools has decreased from 32.5 percent in 2018 to 24.4 percent in 2021. According to the report, this shift is seen in all grades and among both boys and girls. However, boys are still more likely to be enrolled in private schools than girls.

- No change in children aged 6-14 not enrolled in school: The proportion of children not currently enrolled in school increased from 1.4 to 4.6 percent in 2020. This proportion remained unchanged between 2020 and 2021. In case of Odisha, enrollment had been in the range of 80-90 percent to start of with in comparison to other states and national breakdown.

Table 1: % Children aged 6-14 enrolled in Govt school.2018, 2020 and 2021

Source: ASER 2021

State	ASER 2018			ASER 2020			ASER 2021		
	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All	Boys	Girls	All
Odisha	85	88.4	86.7	78.5	84.5	81.5	82.6	84.9	83.7
India	60.7	68	64.3	62.6	69.4	65.8	67.9	73	70.3

- There is a fair amount of variation in enrollment in the national level , driven by an increase in government school enrollment is driven by large northern states like Uttar

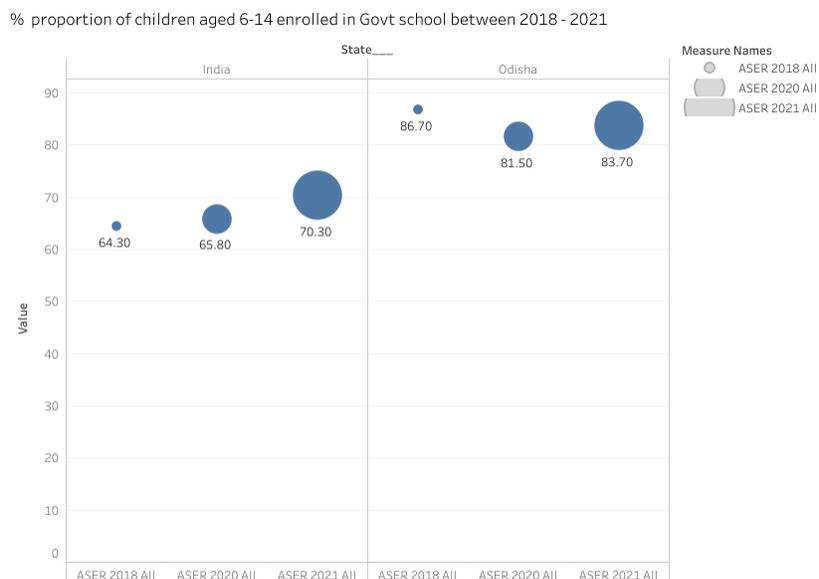
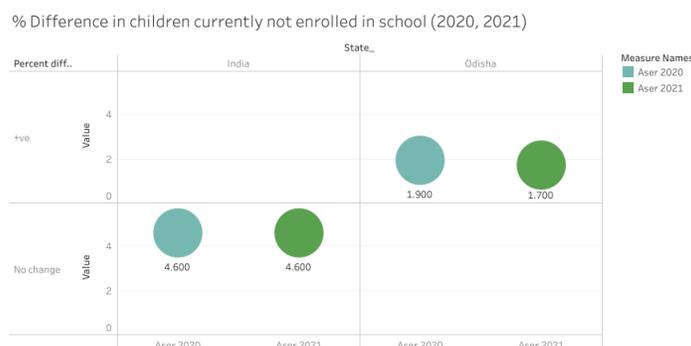


Table 2: Children (6 -14 years) not currently enrolled in school. 2018, 2020, 2021
Source: Aser 2021

State	AESR 2018			AESR 2020			ASER 2021		
	BOYS	GIRLS	ALL	BOYS	GIRLS	ALL	BOYS	GIRLS	ALL
Odisha	0.9	1	1	1.5	2.3	1.9	1.5	1.9	1.7
India	2.3	2.6	2.5	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.8	4.4	4.6

Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana and southern states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. In the case of Odisha In contrast, the variation registered a negligible constant while in many north-eastern states, government school enrollment fell during this period, and the proportion of children not enrolled in school has increased. Time will reveal if these patterns constitute a transitory phase, as schools reopen across states; or whether they will become a permanent feature of schooling in rural India.



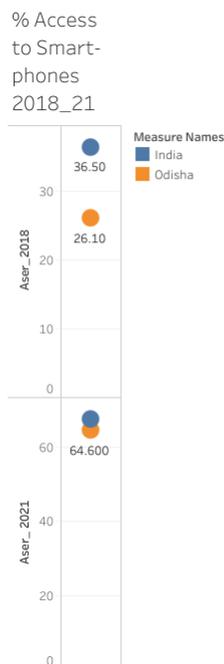
2.2 Access to Smartphones

- Smartphones became the predominant source of teaching-learning when schools shut down and moved to a remote model of teaching-learning last year, giving rise to concerns about the most marginalized being left behind.

- Smartphone ownership has almost doubled since 2018: The availability of smartphones has increased from 26.1 percent in 2018 to 64.6 percent in 2021. *According to ASER 2021, more children in private schools have a smartphone at home (79 percent) as opposed to government school going children (63.7 percent) in comparison.*

Table 3: Enrolled children with a smartphone available at home, 2021,
Source: ASER 2021

State	AESR 2018	AESR 2020	AESR 2021
Odisha	26.1	49.3	64.6
India	36.5	61.8	67.6



- Household economic status makes a difference in smart phone availability: As parents' education level increases (a proxy for economic status), the likelihood that the household has a smartphone also increases. However, even among children whose parents are in the 'low' education category, over a quarter bought a smartphone for their studies since March 2020 as per the report.

- Smartphone availability does not translate into access for children though: Although over two thirds of all enrolled children have a smartphone at home (67.6 percent), over a quarter of these have no access to it (26.1 percent). There is also a clear pattern by grade, with more children in higher classes having access to a smart phone as compared to children in lower grades.

2.3 Learning Support at Home

- ASER 2021 followed up on the questions asked in ASER 2020 about whether the child is provided learning support at home and who is providing it.

- Learning support at home has decreased over the last year in the national level, whereas in the case of Odisha, the proportion was exponential in the start off range in 2018 which was further strengthened in 2021. Centrally, The proportion of enrolled children who received learning support at home decreased from three quarters of all enrolled children in 2020 to two thirds in 2021, with the sharpest drops visible among children in higher grades as per the ASER report.

Table 4: Enrolled Students Taking tuitions. 2018, 2020, 2021,
Source: ASER 2021

State	ASER 2018	ASER 2020	ASER 2021
Odisha	57.5	52.4	66.2
India	28.6	32.5	39.2

% difference in Enrolled Students taking tuitions 2018-21

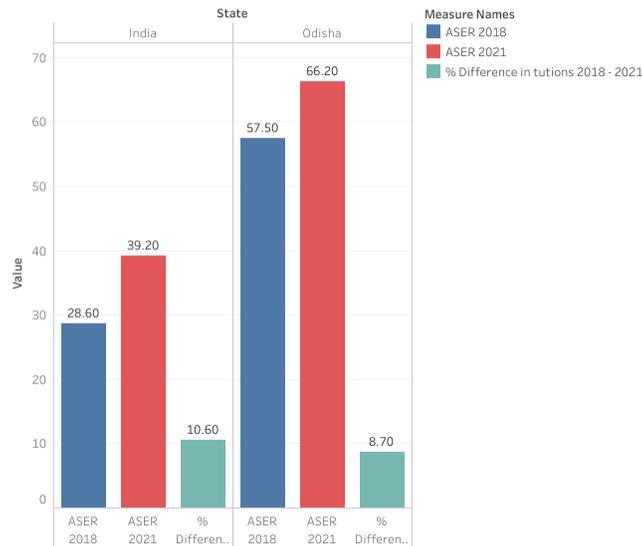


Table 5: :State and School type, children helped at home for studying 2021

Source: ASER 2021

State	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt
Odisha	66.7	77.2	68.2
India	64.8	71.9	66.6

- The report reiterated that school reopening is driving decreasing support, which was among the challenges: Among both government and private school going children, those whose schools have reopened get less support from home.

2.4 Access to Learning Materials

- ASER 2021 followed up on the questions asked in ASER 2020 about whether children have textbooks for their current grade and whether they received any additional materials from their school teachers in the week prior to the survey (reference week). These could take the form of traditional materials like worksheets in print or virtual form; online or recorded classes; and videos or other activities sent via phone or received in person. For children whose schools had reopened, these materials could also include homework given by the school.

Table 6: Enrolled children who have textbooks for their current grade, 2020/21

Source: ASER 2021

State	AESR 2020			AESR 2021		
	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt
Odisha	88.7	88	88.6	95.2	96.3	95.3
India	84.1	72.2	80.5	92.3	90.7	91.9

- Almost all children have textbooks, In Odisha the percentile difference moved to 7 - 8 points from 2020 to 2021, in all facets be it, govt, pvt, both. One of the reasons were improved access and penetration materials for studies: Almost all enrolled children had text books in all grades. This proportion has increased over the last year, for children enrolled in both government and private schools.

- Slight increase in additional materials received: Overall, among enrolled children whose schools had not reopened, more children received some kind of learning materials or activities (other than textbooks) from their teachers during the reference week. This is a slight increase over 2020, when 35.6 percent children received learning materials in the reference week.

2.5 Policy Implications

- As schools reopen after 18 months of lock down, it is essential to understand the impact of school closures so that policies to address these issues can be formulated accordingly.

- Enrollment: The enrollment of children in government schools has been major in Odisha. Government schools and teachers had been better equipped to deal with this influx since the past three years.

- Building on family support: Family support has reduced since 2020 as schools reopen, but remains significant especially for early primary grades. Parental engagement with children's learning can be integrated into planning for learning improvement, as advocated by education policies. Reaching parents at the right level is essential to understand how they can help their children.

- Children are doing a variety of different activities at home; many of these are provided by family members and private tutors in addition to schools. Effective ways of learning need to be developed that combine traditional teaching-learning with newer ways of reaching-learning. The methods often require the hybrid methods and integration with convergence platforms which could utilise equitable access and needs assessments of populaces.

- The proportion of children attending private tuition classes has shot up since 2018 during an extended period of school closures and uncertainty. This might lead to a bigger learning gap between students who can and cannot afford paid tuition, ways of approach to as patterns move and diverge, a common base of minimum thresholds that could be reverted, and managing learning continuities.

- Expectedly, children from families who had low education and also did not have resources like smartphones had less access to learning opportunities. There is evidence of effort even in these households: parents have been purchasing smartphones specifically for their children's education. However, these children will need even more help than others as schools reopen. Implementation frameworks would play an important role, multimodal approach to bridge gaps and mitigating learning loss by assessing learning, acting on evidence, and aligning all actors towards learning would be key in contributing to learning's cause.

- Smartphone access: ASER 2021 confirms that even if there is a smartphone in the family, an important driver for access and connectivity in an changed environment, 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.
