

Annual State of Education Report (ASER) -2020

October 29, 2020

In news

ASER survey finds that nearly 20% of rural children had no textbooks due to COVID-19 Impact

Key findings of the report

- As per the ASER survey conducted in September, in Andhra Pradesh, less than 35% of children had textbooks, and only 60% had textbooks in Rajasthan. More than 98% had textbooks in West Bengal, Nagaland and Assam
- The ASER survey mentions that in the week of the survey, about one in three rural children had done no learning activity at all
- It also states that about two in three had no learning materials or activity given by their school that week, and only one in ten had access to live online classes.
- The ASER survey provides a glimpse into the levels of learning loss that students in rural India are suffering, with varying levels of access to technology, school and family resources resulting in a digital divide in education.

Enrolment:

- It found that 5.3% of rural children aged 6-10 years had not yet enrolled in school this year, in comparison to just 1.8% in 2018.
- This seems to indicate that due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic, families are waiting for the physical opening of schools to enrol their youngest children, with about 10% of six-year-olds not in school.

- Among 15-16-year-olds, however, enrolment levels are actually slightly higher than in 2018.
- Enrolment patterns also show a slight shift toward government schools, with private schools seeing a drop in enrolment in all age groups.

Smartphones:

- In 2018, ASER surveyors found that about 36% of rural households with school-going children had smartphones.
- By 2020, that figure had spiked to 62%. About 11% of families bought a new phone after the lockdown, of which 80% were smartphones.

Learning materials

- However, two thirds of rural children nationwide reported that they had not received any learning materials or activities at all.
- In Bihar, less than 8% got such materials from their schools, along with 20% in West Bengal, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- On the other hand, more than 80% of rural children in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala and Gujarat received such input.
- Many children did learning activities on their own, with or without regular input.
- Of the 70% who did some activities, 11% had access to live online classes, and 21% had videos or recorded classes, with much higher levels in private schools.
- About 60% studied from their textbooks, and 20% watched classes broadcast on TV.
- In Andhra Pradesh, half of all children did no learning activity at all, while in Kerala, only 5% of children were left out.

Parental education:

- As per the survey, about 20% of children whose parents

had less than five years of education got learning materials, compared to 46% among parents who had studied beyond Class IX themselves.

- Almost 40% in low education households got no materials and did no learning, compared to 17% of high education families.
- However, almost 40% of low education families persevered and did some learning activities even without receiving any learning materials at all, the survey found.

About ASER

- ASER is a nationwide **survey of rural education and learning outcomes in terms of reading and arithmetic skills that has been conducted by the NGO Pratham** for the last 15 years.
- This year, the survey was conducted via phone calls, reaching 52,227 rural households with school age children in 30 States and Union Territories.