



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)

This article covers “Daily current events “and the topic is the ‘Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)’ which is in news, it covers “Education” In GS-2, and the following content has relevance for UPSC.

For Prelims: About ASER report findings

For Mains: GS-2, Government policies, and interventions, Education

Why in news:

The Pratham Foundation recently published the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), a countrywide assessment that examines the effectiveness of learning in schools.

ABOUT ASER

- The country’s level of fundamental literacy and numeracy is captured by this important annual, citizen-led household countrywide survey.
- It tries to ascertain whether or not students in rural India are enrolled in classes and are gaining knowledge.
- At the national, state, and district levels, the survey provides representative estimates of the enrollment status of children aged 3 to 16 as well as their proficiency in basic reading and math skills.
- The first ASER, which was done in 2005 and repeated annually for ten years, is directed by the Pratham Foundation.

- After a break of 4 years, ASER 2022 will be the nation's first field-based "basic" ASER. It occurs just as students are returning to class after a protracted period of school closure.

TOOLS OF TESTING OF ASER

- **Reading Tools** – The ASER reading assessment tool is divided into four levels: letters, words, a brief paragraph (text at the standard level 1), and a lengthier "story" (Std 2 level text). The youngster receives the best grade she can safely complete.
- **Maths Tool** – There are four levels in the ASER Math tool: number recognition (1–9), number recognition (11–99), two-digit subtraction with borrowing, and three-digit by one-digit division. The youngster receives the best grade she can safely complete. A youngster who is unable to complete the first level will be designated at the "Beginner" level.

KEY FINDINGS OF ASER

Admission and attendance

- The number of students enrolled generally increased between 2018 and 2022, notwithstanding the pandemic-related closures of some schools.
- Between 2018 and 2022, there was a significant increase in the percentage of kids (aged 6 to 14) enrolling in government schools.
- The percentage of 11–14-year-old girls not enrolled in school in all of India in 2022 is 2%, continuing the downward trend that began in 2006.
- In 2022, there were more 3-year-olds who were enrolled in some kind of early childhood education.
- Additionally, nationwide, from 26.4% in 2018 to 30.5% in 2022, more students in grades I through VIII were enrolled in paid private tuition programs.
- The average teacher attendance rate grew somewhat between 2018 and 2022, but the average student attendance rate has remained stable at roughly 72% for the past few years.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

■ Proportion of children in govt schools up from 65.6% in 2018 to **72.9%** in 2022

■ Children taking private paid tuitions up from 26.4% in 2018 to **30.5%** in 2022

■ Reading levels down to pre-2012 levels – only

ENROLMENT IN 6-14 AGE GROUP AT A RECORD HIGH:

98.4% children now enrolled in school, up from 97.2% in 2018

20.5% children in Class 3 can read a Class 2 textbook, down from 27.3% in 2018

Annual Status of Education report

Basic literacy level

- Readability at the Basic Literacy Level significant decline in math and reading skills,
- Children's fundamental literacy levels have declined significantly, with reading abilities declining much more steeply than numeracy skills and returning to pre-2012 levels despite the excitement parents and students show for schools.
- The proportion of Class 3 students in public or private schools who could read at the level of Class 2 fell from 27.3% in 2018 to 20.5% in 2022.
- States with better reading proficiency in 2018 such as Kerala (from 52.1% in 2018 to 38.7% in 2022), Himachal Pradesh (from 47.7% to 28.4%), and Haryana (from 46.4% to 31%) show declines of more than 10 percentage points from 2018 levels.
- Nationally, the percentage of Class 5 students in public or private schools who can at least read a text at the Class 2 level dropped from 50.5% in 2018 to 42.8% in 2022.
- For kids in Class 8, the declines in basic reading proficiency are less; from 73% in 2018 to 69.6% of students enrolled in public or private schools in 2022 were able to read at least basic text.

Mathematical and Calculation Skills

- From 28.2% in 2018 to 25.9% in 2022, class 3 students who could at least subtract decreased in proficiency.
- Additionally, from 27.9% in 2018 to 25.6% in 2022, the percentage of Indian students in Class 5 who can do division has decreased marginally.

- Students in Class 8 perform fundamental math with a wider range of abilities. From 44.1% in 2018 to 44.7% in 2022, the percentage of kids nationwide who can divide has slightly risen. This rise is the result of better results for girls and students attending public schools, whilst boys and students attending private schools exhibit a fall from 2018 levels.
- Government school students in Class 8 fared much lower in Punjab (from 58.4% to 44.5%) than in Uttar Pradesh (from 32% to 41.8%) and Chhattisgarh (from 28% to 38.6%) in 2022 compared to 2018.

Tuition Classes

- The data also reveals a sharp increase in the number of pupils enrolling in tuition classes. There is a rise in the percentage of kids who attend tuition classes between 2018 and 2022 across all states.
- Families that wanted to save money on tuition fees removed their children from private schools, but they also made investments in private tuition classes, which climbed as the percentage of these pupils increased from 26.4% in 2018 to 30.5% in 2022 in both private and government schools.
- The fact that most students choose to study math and science in their tuition programs, may also explain why reading learning gaps are more pronounced.

Impact of the Covid Pandemic on Girls' Education

- The research also allays concerns that the pandemic would cause families to pull their daughters out of school and drive them into young marriages.
- In the age range of 11 to 14 years, it is discovered that the proportion of girls who were not enrolled in school decreased from 4.1% to 2%.
- The proportion of older females in the 15–16-year-old age range who are not enrolled in school has decreased even more dramatically, from 13.5% in 2018 to 7.9% in 2022.

Major Concerns

- **Resources are insufficient:** India's education spending as a percentage of GDP is 3.1%, falling short of the 6% objective set for NEP 2020.
- **Bias in favor of the English language:** Children in rural areas have had difficulty studying because of the emphasis on the English language.
- **Lack of Practical Experiences:** Prioritizing theoretical knowledge over practical understanding.
- **The teacher counts:** The teacher-to-student ratio is too low.

MEASURES WERE TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

Elementary Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan• Mid-Day Meal• Mahila Samakhya
Secondary Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan• Girls Hostel Scheme• National Scheme of Incentives to Girls for Secondary Education• Inclusive Education for the Disabled at the Secondary Stage• Scheme of Vocational Education• National Merit-cum-Means Scholarship Scheme• Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
For Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scheme for construction and running of Girls' Hostel for students of secondary and higher secondary schools
others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scholarship schemes for Minority students• National Scholarships

Piyush Singh