

ASER 2008 NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Percentage of children not in school is dropping. Bihar has done well.

1. Nationally, the proportion of 7-10 year-olds not-in school is at 2.7%, and proportion of 11-14 year olds not in-school is at 6.3%.
2. All India proportion of 11 – 14 year old out of school girls remains steady at 7.3% over 2007 and 2008.
3. The percentage of out of school children in most states has decreased since 2007. UP and Rajasthan are exceptions.
4. In Bihar, the percentage of children (6 – 14 year old) not in school has dropped steadily over the last four years from 13.1% in 2005 to 5.7% in 2008. Over the same period, the proportion of girls 11-14 not in school has dropped from 20.1% to 8.8%.

Enrollment in private schools is increasing.

1. Among all 6-14 year olds, the proportion of children attending private schools has increased from 16.4% in 2005 to 22.5% in 2008. This increase in private school enrollment represents a 37.2 percent increase over the baseline of 2005. This increase is particularly striking in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.
2. In 2008, private schools have 20% more boys than girls in both age groups: 7-10 and 11-14.
3. Half of all school going children in Kerala and Goa go to private schools. (According to DISE, 95% of private schools in Kerala and 70% of private schools in Goa are government aided.)
4. Between 32% to 42% of all school going children In Nagaland, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan go to private schools. (DISE data indicates that in these states private schools are mostly unaided).

More and more 5 year olds entering schools.

1. In an average Std 1 class in India, 24.75% children are under 6 years of age.
2. 56.6% of all 5 year-olds are enrolled in schools rather than in pre-schools.
3. In Rajasthan, J&K, Punjab, Himachal, and Haryana over 70% of 5 year-olds are in schools and comprise 25-40% of the Std I class.
4. In Himachal, Haryana, and Tamil Nadu the proportion of 5 year olds going to school has increased by 16 to 20 percentage points over the last three years.

Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh show dramatic improvement in reading.

1. Chhattisgarh has shown a dramatic improvement in children's reading ability since 2007. The proportion of children in Std III who can read a Std I level text has increased from 31% in 2007 to 70% in 2008. The proportion of Std V children who could read a Std II level text in 2007 was 58%. This figure had gone up to 75% in 2008. Reading levels in Chhattisgarh have improved dramatically across the board.

2. In Madhya Pradesh too, reading levels in 2008 show a big jump at every level over 2006 and 2007. With 86.8% government school children in Std V being able to read Std II level text, Madhya Pradesh tops the ASER scale of reading among all states including Kerala and Himachal where 73-74% children in Std V can read a Std II text in government schools.
3. Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Himachal Pradesh are states that lead the country in terms of children's basic reading fluency. In these states children who can read letters or more in Std I are over 85% and those who can read Std II text or more in Std V is over 75%.
4. Madhya Pradesh has achieved progress in two stages with the first jump coming in 2006 and the next in 2008.
5. Karnataka and Orissa show a steady increase in proportion of children who can read from Std II to Std IV. Over 2006 to 2008, the reading levels recorded show about 5-6 percentage point improvement.
6. ASER has used essentially the same tool and the same method for four years.¹ Barring some states such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal, Andhra, and Chhattisgarh, no major change has been observed in basic reading in other states.

Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh show improvement in arithmetic also

1. ASER tests indicate that Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have made remarkable strides in improving basic math skills over the last year. In both states more than 91% children in Std I can identify numbers 1-9 or more. Although in Kerala this proportion is 96% in Std I, Kerala loses its lead by Std III.
2. In Std III, the proportion of children in Madhya Pradesh who can solve at least a subtraction problem has jumped from 61.3% in 2007 to 72.2% in 2008, while Kerala is at 61.4%.
3. In 2008, 78.2% of children in Std V in Madhya Pradesh, could correctly solve a division problem. This is the highest recorded in the country. In several other states, this figure is around 60%; for example in Himachal, Chattisgarh, Manipur and Goa.
4. In Chhattisgarh, the improvement in arithmetic is dramatic, indicative of a focused intervention. In 2008, Std II children who could identify numbers up to 100 or do higher level operations was at 77.8. This figure

¹ Even if reading levels are not compared across states and languages, the ASER tool is sensitive to reading at the very basic level of being able to read alphabets, simple words, and sentences.

for Std II in 2007 was 37.2%. Similarly, those who could at least solve subtraction in Std III jumped from 21.8% in 2007 to 63.5% in 2008.

Telling time:

1. 61% of children in Std V in India can tell time on a clock correctly.
2. In states such as UP, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, about 50% children in Std V can tell time. Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Haryana, J&K, Punjab, Uttarakhand are all above the national average.
3. In Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, where math and reading ability is recorded to be much better than the national average, more than 75% children in Std V can tell time.

Other interesting findings from the survey:

1. ASER2008 also explored village infrastructure and household characteristics to find links with education. The links will be explored later. However, here are some preliminary findings.
2. Primary schools are available within 1 km of 92.5% rural habitations and 67.1% villages have government middle schools, and 33.8% have government secondary schools. Private schools are available in 45.6% Indian villages.
3. STD booths are present in 58.5% villages while 48.3% village households have a cell phone or a land line connection.
4. Electrical connections were available in 65.9% households surveyed.
5. Pukka roads connect 71.9% villages to the outside world. The poorly connected states are Assam (32.7%), West Bengal (44.2%), Bihar (53.2%) and Madhya Pradesh (58.9%). .