Key Findings: All Districts
In India, compulsory education ends at age 14. To work full time in the organized sector you have to be 18. Are our youth adequately prepared for the path ahead – for further education, work and life?

There are roughly 25 million children in each single year age in India.*
- In 2005-2006, all India Std VIII enrollment was 11million.
- By 2020-21, this number was close to 22 million.
- Transition rate from Std VIII to Std IX is at 88.81% national.**

In short, today in India more children have more years of schooling than ever before.

Hence, understanding what life is like for young people in the age group 14 to 18 in rural India is very important.

* Census projections
**Data from UDISE
ASER 2023 focuses on the age group 14-18 and looks ‘beyond basics’ to explore a wider set of domains beyond foundational skills.

Domains explored in ASER 2023 are:

**Activity:** What are the youth currently doing? School/college, vocational skilling or work.

**Ability:** Are youth well prepared to handle literacy and numeracy tasks in everyday situations? Can they do simple financial calculations?

**Access, Awareness & Skills with digital devices:** Are they familiar with common digital devices and usage?
ASER 2023 is a household survey done in rural districts.

Survey reached:
Villages = 1,664
Households = 30,074
14-18 youth surveyed = 34,745

A random sample of 60 villages was visited in each district.

The sample for ASER 2023 was limited to 1-2 districts per state.

The previous ASER survey that looked closely at the age 14-18 group was ASER 2017.
Every year, ASER is conducted by one or more partner institutions in each district.

Since the focus of ASER 2023 is on an older age group, this year’s partners were colleges and universities. Volunteers were typically enrolled in degree programmes such as BSW, MSW, BEd, MEd, etc.

Over 2,000 volunteers from 37 partner institutions conducted ASER 2023.
ACTIVITY: WHAT ARE YOUTH (AGE 14-18) CURRENTLY DOING?

CURRENTLY ENROLLED
Of all youth in the age group 14 to 18:
- **53%** are still in school (Std X or below)
- **28%** are in either Std XI or XII.
- **7%** are in college.
- **13%** are currently not enrolled anywhere.

**Age 14:** 72% students are enrolled in govt institutions.
**Age 18:** This figure is about 44%.

CURRENTLY NOT ENROLLED

**Age 14:** % Youth not enrolled is low at **3.9%**.
Hardly any difference between boys and girls

**Age 18:** % Youth not enrolled is much higher at **32.6%**
33.4% females not enrolled. 31.6% males not enrolled
VOCATIONAL TRAINING
Only about 5.6% of all youth in this age group are doing vocational courses. Most of those who do such courses are enrolled in short courses of six months or less.

(Note: It is worth noting that most of the sample is still under 18 & enrolled in school or college.)

WORK outside home
33.7% of all youth age 14-18 worked for more than 15 days in the last month (excluding household work)

Of those who are in college or school, depending on age and grade, between 29% to 37% work
Of those who are not currently enrolled 55% work.

WORK at home
Household chores on a daily basis
More females (86%) reported working at home as compared to males (66%)
ABILITY: BASIC READING & ARITHMETIC | EVERYDAY TASKS
73.6% of all youth in the age group 14 to 18 can read at least this level of text.

43% of all youth can do division problems.

In Math, 45% males can at least solve the division problem as compared to 42% females.

57.3% of all youth can at least read English sentences. Of those who can read, 73.5% can understand the meaning of the sentence.

Note: ASER tests are progressive and done one on one. For example, the division task is the highest level. The person who can do this task can do all other basic arithmetic operations and has basic number knowledge.
Can you calculate time?

If this girl sleeps at this time at night and wakes up at this time in the morning then for how many hours does she sleep?

Around 45% can come up with the right answer.

59% of those who have basic arithmetic skills could correctly say how long the girl had slept.

How long is this key?

85% of all youth get it right.

What is the length of this pencil?

Less than 40% could give the right answer.

How many chlorine tablets will be needed for the big pot?

48% of all youth can give the right answer.

Of the young people who have basic arithmetic skills (i.e. can at least do the division problem on the ASER test), 63% can solve this problem correctly whereas only 37% of those who cannot do division can solve this problem.

Across all tasks, males do better than females.

For every task, those who are enrolled do much better than those who are not enrolled.
ORS is used widely. For effective oral rehydration, following instructions properly is important.

We asked young people to read instructions on an ORS package and orally answer four questions: This task was given only to those who could read at least at Std I level.

- How many packets of ORS to be mixed in 4 litres of water?
- In how many hours should the mixture be consumed?
- How many litres of the mixture can a 45 year old man be given in 24 hours?
- Based on the information given, can this ORS package be consumed in March 2024?

Overall, 65% youth could correctly answer at least 3 of the 4 questions.

69% of those who could read at least at Std II level answered correctly as compared to 38.5% of those who were not able to read at Std II level.
Need to buy 3 items for Rs 50. Which items will you buy?

61% of youth can do these calculations correctly

Males = 69%
Females = 54%

How much will the T-shirt cost?

37% youth can give the correct cost for the T-shirt

Males = 47%
Females = 28%

Which bank to get loan from? How much to repay at the end of one year?

11% can choose the bank correctly and calculate the correct repayment amount

Males = 15%
Females = 7%

FINANCIAL CALCULATIONS

Across all tasks, more youth who have basic arithmetic skills (i.e. can do at least division) are able to do financial calculations correctly.
AVAILABILITY/ACCESS & OWNERSHIP OF DIGITAL DEVICES

COMMUNICATION WITH DIGITAL DEVICES & ONLINE SAFETY

USING SMARTPHONE for EDUCATION, ENTERTAINMENT & SERVICES

DIGITAL TASKS DONE BY YOUTH (Only administered to those who could bring a smartphone for tasks)
Self-reported

**COMPUTER**
Of all youth, 9% have a computer.
Of those, 85% can use it.

Of all youth, 91% do not have a computer.
Of those 34% can use it.

**SMARTPHONE**
89% of all youth have a smart phone at home
92% can use a smartphone
Of those who can use a smartphone 31% have their own smart phone.

Of all males who can use a smartphone, 44% have their own smartphone.
Of all females who can use a smartphone, 20% have their own smartphone.
COMMUNICATION: EMAIL
92% of all youth in this age group can use a smartphone.
51% males and 30% females have an email id
20% males and 9% females have sent an email.

SOCIAL MEDIA USE
92% of all youth in this age group can use a smartphone.
90% youth used social media in the reference week.

ONLINE SAFETY
Of those who have used social media in the reference week,
52% can report/block a profile
48% know how to make a profile private
52% know how to change a password.
Self-reported
92% of all youth in this age group can use a smartphone. These questions were only asked to those who said they can use a smartphone.

For ENTERTAINMENT (In the reference week)
78% used a smartphone for watching movies or listening to songs
57% played games on a smartphone

Visible gender differences

For EDUCATION & LEARNING
66% youth reported doing some education related activity online in the reference week:
45-50% watched videos related to studies, solved doubts using online resources and exchanged notes using messaging apps

Higher usage by those who could at least read at Std II level

Not much difference by gender

For SERVICES
28% youth reported ever using online services:
17% have made payments or filled forms
7% have paid bills
4% have booked tickets

Big gender differences
67.1% youth across all districts could bring a smartphone to do digital tasks; 73% males could bring a smartphone as compared to 62% females. More 17-18-year-olds could bring smartphones.

Q: Set an alarm for 8.30am for tomorrow morning.
66% youth can set an alarm

Q: Search and tell me the name of the first woman President of India.
71% can browse and find the right information

Q: Find the “PMGDISHA Module 1” video on YouTube.
82% can find a video

Q: If found video, then share it via a messaging app.
Of those who found the video, about 89% could share

Q: Using Maps, find the time it will take to reach from your current location to the district bus stand on a two-wheeler.
37% can use a google map

Similar proportion of males and females are able to do this.
85% males and 78% females can find the specified video and of those more than 85% can share it.
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

• Most youth are still enrolled in school or college. Therefore there is still time to build their skill-sets before they leave school or college.

• The overall patterns indicate that having basic foundational skills like reading and arithmetic are very helpful even for daily tasks and common calculations. Need to plan how to improve foundational learning for those who do not have it even in this age group.

• Close to 60% youth can read simple English. This is an advantage that needs to be built on.

• The ability to do basic daily tasks involving simple comprehension and financial calculations increases substantially with the ability to do math. Building very basic math skills generates large dividends.

• Access to smartphones is high and almost every one knows how to use a smartphone. Usage however varies considerably by purpose. More than half of all young people do not have knowledge of online safety. Most use smartphones for entertainment, about half use it for education related activities. Few have used online services.

In conclusion, the ASER 2023 data suggest that we must ensure that our young people reach adulthood with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities for going forward in education but also in their capacity to navigate daily life. Serious & immediate rethinking about this age group is urgently needed in terms of their “learning for school”, “learning for work” and “learning for life”