

# Annexure 11: Key findings from the classroom observations

## Overview

Prior to the rollout of the large-scale 'basic' ASER survey in September 2024, a 'deep dive' exercise was conducted in Std II classrooms in 24 schools spread across 8 states of India. This was done in order to understand whether and how the systemic push towards universal acquisition of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) coming from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat Mission 2021 was translating into changes in teaching-learning practices, environments, and materials in these classrooms. Std II was selected as this is the final year of the 'foundational' stage of education, as defined by the NEP 2020.

## Sample

In each state, a district adjoining the state capital was purposively selected. In each district, a convenience sample of 3 schools was selected — one remote rural school that was difficult to reach by public transport, one well-connected rural school located close to a main highway, and one school in an urban area. A total of 24 schools were selected in this way. In each school, two separate lessons were observed in the classroom<sup>1</sup> where Std II students were sitting, followed by an interview with the teacher teaching these lessons. Due to limitations faced in some schools, a total of 45 lessons were observed across these 24 classrooms.

## Observation process

Immediately on entering the classroom, observers recorded some general information about the classroom. In cases of multigrade classrooms, they observed where Std II students were located.

Next, observers recorded a 'snapshot' of the classroom — what the teacher was doing, what most students in Std II were doing, and what materials were being used at that specific moment. To take a snapshot, observers seated towards the back of the classroom first located the teacher and observed what she was doing; and then quickly scanned the room to note what the majority of Std II students were doing. They then marked teacher activity(ies), student activity(ies), class organisation, and the teaching-learning materials being used from a set of options provided in the classroom observation format. Finally, they wrote a short 2-3 sentence description of the classroom activity that had been observed and captured in the snapshot.

Repeat snapshots were recorded every 8 minutes for the entire duration of the lesson, generating an overall picture of the teaching-learning activities that occurred during the lesson. This process produced an average of 4-5 snapshots per lesson, and a total of 215 snapshots across the sample.

At the end of each lesson, a set of summary indicators and a longer text description captured an overview of what had taken place during the observed lesson as a whole. Across the sample, this generated a total of 45 lesson summary observations.

**Table 1: 'Deep dive' sample description**

State	District	Schools visited	Classrooms observed	Lessons observed						Snapshots	Teachers interviewed
				Language	Math	English	Mixed	None	Total lessons		
Assam	Kamrup Rural	3	3	2	3	0	0	0	5	27	3
Chhattisgarh	Gariyaband	3	3	3	1	2	0	0	6	28	3
Himachal Pradesh	Solan	3	3	1	3	0	2	0	6	29	3
Madhya Pradesh	Raisen	3	3	3	1	0	2	0	6	28	3
Odisha	Puri	3	3	2	2	0	1	1	6	30	3
Rajasthan	Ajmer	3	3	3	0	1	0	0	4	20	3
Uttar Pradesh	Sitapur	3	3	2	3	0	1	0	6	27	3
West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	3	3	3	1	0	2	0	6	26	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>24</b>

**Table 2: Range of students in the observed classrooms. By type of classroom (n=24)**

Type of classroom	No. of classrooms						Total
	0-10 students	11-20 students	21-30 students	31-40 students	41-50 students	>50 students	
Single grade	1	6	0	2	0	1	10
Multigrade	4	5	5	0	0	0	14

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of convenience, we use the term 'classroom' to denote a set of students taught by a single teacher during the observation, even though 2 of these 24 'classrooms' were actually outside (one in a verandah, one outdoors).

## Classroom infrastructure and Teaching Learning Material (TLM)

**Table 3: Classroom infrastructure (n=24)**

Indicator	No. of classrooms	%
There is space for every student present to sit comfortably*	21	87.5
There is space for the teacher to walk up to every student	19	79.2
All the students are sitting on chairs/benches	12	50.0
All the students are sitting on mats/tat pattis	10	41.7
There is at least one blackboard/whiteboard that is easy to write on	21	87.5
<b>If yes</b> , all the students can easily see what is written on the blackboard/whiteboard	21	100.0
There is at least one open window or more than one open door in the classroom	22	91.7
There is TLM on the walls of the classroom	17	70.8
<b>If yes</b> , at least one of these is at the eye-level of the students	14	82.4

\*To ascertain whether students were sitting 'comfortably', observers checked whether there is space to open books, write in notebooks, stand and move their arms in case of an activity, etc.

**Table 4: Availability of TLM**

Type of TLM	Observed in the classroom	Observed in the school (not classroom)	Not observed	Total	
<b>Reading</b>	Wallpapers/charts/posters/painted material	17	6	1	24
	Storybooks/story cards/children's magazines	8	10	6	24
	Number or letter cards	8	8	8	24
<b>Writing/drawing</b>	Colour pens/sketch pens/crayons/colour pencils	0	7	17	24
	Drawing/colouring sheets	6	2	16	24
<b>Playing/doing</b>	Puzzles/games/blocks/other manipulables	4	7	13	24
<b>Any other material</b>		2	1	21	24

### Key findings

- Of the 24 classrooms, most had blackboards/whiteboards, proper ventilation, and adequate space for children to sit comfortably and for teachers to move around (Table 3).
- TLM was observed on the walls in 17 out of the 24 classrooms. Of these classrooms, most had TLM at the eye-level of the students (Table 3).
- Other hand-held or manipulable TLM (such as letter or number cards, colouring material, and blocks/games) was available in only a few classrooms. More often, TLM was kept elsewhere in the school rather than in the observed classroom (Table 4).
- While various kinds of reading materials were more often available, very few schools had materials available for writing or drawing activities, either in the school or the classroom (Table 4).

## Teacher activity

**Table 5: Type of teacher interaction with students. By snapshot (n=215)**

During the snapshot, the teacher was:		All students	Most students	Some students	One student	Total no. of snapshots	
						n	%
<b>Engaging with Std II students</b>	One-way communication with students	27	5	6	16	54	25.1
	Two-way communication with students	38	5	13	20	76	35.3
	Observing or listening to students	19	0	3	6	28	13.0
<b>Not engaging with Std II students</b>	Interacting with students of another grade(s)					15	7.0
	Preparing for the next learning activity					10	4.7
	Not observing or listening to any students					32	14.9
<b>Total</b>		84	10	22	42	215	100

**Table 6: Type of classrooms (n=24)**

Type of classroom	No. of classrooms	%	
Single grade	10	41.7	
Multigrade	2 grades	8	33.3
	3 or more grades	6	25.0
<b>Total</b>	24	100	



**Table 7: Teacher attitude in the classroom (n=45)**

Type of behaviour	During the lesson, the teacher was:	No. of lessons	%
<b>Encouraging</b>	Called at least 3 students by their name	39	86.7
	Made sure that most students had a chance to participate	32	71.1
	Praised or encouraged one or more students	30	66.7
	Smiled, laughed, or joked with one or more students	24	53.3
<b>Discouraging</b>	Used negative language or verbally abused students	10	22.2
	Gave corporal punishment	6	13.3
	Carried a cane or stick	4	8.9
	Punished a student	0	0

**Key findings**

- In about three-fourths of the classroom snapshots, teachers were observed to be engaging with Std II students in some way.
  - The most common type of teacher engagement with students involved teachers saying/asking something to the students and students responding, coded as "two-way communication" (35.3% of snapshots). This occurred most often with the whole group ("All students") rather than with a subset of one or a few students, meaning that the entire class was repeating after the teacher (Table 5).
  - Teachers also frequently spoke to students without eliciting any response from them, coded as "one-way communication" (25.1% of snapshots). Most often, this interaction was with all the students of Std II – such as when she was explaining a topic or giving instructions, and the entire class was listening (Table 5).
- In the majority of the lessons observed, teachers encouraged the observed students in a variety of ways like addressing them by name, trying to ensure participation, smiling/laughing/joking, or praising them. However, some discouraging behaviours like use of negative language or corporal punishment were also observed during a few lessons (Table 7).

**Student activity**

**Table 8: Std II students' activity (n=215)**

Student activity	During the snapshot, most students were:*	No. of snapshots	%
<b>Watching/ listening</b>	To the teacher	85	39.5
	To other student(s)	29	13.5
	Other	1	0.5
<b>Reading</b>	Textbook	9	4.2
	Storybook/story card	0	0
	Other	1	0.5
<b>Doing/making</b>	Playing (games/puzzles/activities)	2	0.9
	Acting/singing/dancing	0	0
	Arts or Crafts activity	2	0.9
<b>Saying</b>	To the teacher (recitation/repetition/responding)	38	17.7
	To each other	17	7.9
<b>Writing</b>	Copying/dictation	45	20.9
	Answers to questions	17	7.9
	Creative (free) writing	0	0
	Other	2	0.9
Preparing for a learning activity		4	1.9
Waiting for teacher's instruction		22	10.2
Not doing the assigned learning activity		2	0.9
No organised learning activity happening		26	12.1

\*This was a multi-select question where observers recorded all the applicable activity options that they observed students doing during a snapshot.

**Table 9: TLM used by most students during snapshots (n=215)**

During the snapshot, most Std II students were using:*	No. of snapshots	%
Textbook	57	26.5
Storybook/story card	2	0.9
Notebook and pencil/slate and chalk	60	27.9
Other things to write with (colours, crayons, etc.)	1	0.5
Other things to write on (blackboard, chart paper, etc.)	0	0
Craft materials	2	0.9
Puzzles/games/shapes/other manipulables	1	0.5
Not using any materials	108	50.2

\*This was a multi-select question where observers recorded all the applicable TLM being used during a snapshot.

**Key findings**

- By far the most commonly observed student activity was listening to and/or watching the teacher or another student (53.5% or 114 of 215 snapshots). While doing so, in 38 snapshots students were also simultaneously saying something to the teacher or to other student(s) (usually responding to the teacher/ repeating in chorus), in 7 they were reading the textbook, and in 4 they were writing (Table 8).
- In one-third of the snapshots, students were doing a writing activity, consisting of either copying or writing answers to a question. Students were not observed doing any creative/free writing in any of the snapshots (Table 8).
- Students were rarely observed reading (less than 5%) or doing play-based learning activities (less than 2%) (Table 8).
- In half of the snapshots, students were not using any TLM. When they were observed using TLM, this usually comprised textbooks and/or notebooks. Students were almost never observed using handheld/ manipulable TLM (Table 9).