

Annexure 8: What insights can ASER data offer on government policies and programs?

Year on year, the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) has reported on the enrollment status and basic reading and arithmetic levels of children in rural India. While in the initial years following the implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 (RTE), the push of the education system was on enrollment and getting children to schools, in recent years, there has been a shift in focus towards the achievement of learning outcomes.

This shift is echoed in various schemes, policies and missions introduced by the Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSEL) since 2020. In 2020, DoSEL released the new National Education Policy (NEP 2020), acknowledging the need to close the gap in foundational learning among children, and defining a new 'foundational stage' for 3-8-year-olds in its pedagogical structure. This was followed by the establishment of National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat in 2021, a national mission focused on universal acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy. This mission is being implemented through different interventions across all states and Union Territories of India. In 2018, DoSEL also published draft guidelines for the Samagra Shiksha scheme, an integrated scheme for school education which spans all classes from pre-primary to senior secondary, and is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education'.

The following tables map the different domains and indicators covered in the ASER 2024 household and school survey onto guidelines mentioned in four key government documents on education in India, namely: the RTE Act 2009; NEP 2020; NIPUN Bharat 2021; and the Samagra Shiksha Framework 2022.



Table 1: Mapping - Household survey

Domain	What does ASER 2024 capture?	Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009		National Education Policy (NEP), 2020		National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat), 2021		Samagra Shiksha, An Integrated Scheme for School Education, 2022	
		Legislation that aims to provide every child between the ages of 6 and 14 the right to free and compulsory education		Policy that aims to transform India's education system, replacing the previous National Policy on Education 1986		Mission established under NEP 2020 that aims for universal foundational literacy and numeracy acquisition among young children		Integrated school education scheme that aims to improve the quality of school education from pre-primary to higher secondary levels	
		Section	What does RTE say?	Section	What does NEP say?	Section	What does NIPUN say?	Section	What does Samagra Shiksha say?
Schooling and enrollment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of children Status of enrollment in school 	3	Every child has the right to free and compulsory education till the completion of elementary education (for those aged 6-14 years)	3.1	Achieve 100% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for all schooling levels, from pre-school to secondary school by 2030	Executive summary	Ensure 100% enrollment of all children under a Panchayat at appropriate levels	4.3	Support states/UTs to make efforts towards reaching 100% GER target in school education by 2030 as envisaged in NEP 2020
		4	Children above age 6 who have not completed elementary education will be admitted to a grade appropriate for their age					4.4.11	100% retention from pre-school to senior secondary level
Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of entry to Std I Status of enrollment in ECCE institutions 	11	The government may make necessary arrangements to prepare children above the age of 3 years for elementary education and to provide ECCE for all children until they complete the age of 6 years	1.1	Universal provisioning of quality early childhood development, care, and education must be achieved as soon as possible, and no later than 2030, to ensure that all students entering Std I are school ready	1.4	Children prior to completing age 5 and before entering Std I will attend Balvatika in Anganwadis or primary schools having pre-primary sections	1.2.5	The major objectives of the scheme include a focus on ECCE
								2.1	Ensure that every child of appropriate age has access to, is enrolled, and is attending pre-school

Domain	What does ASER 2024 capture?	RTE 2009		NEP 2020		NIPUN Bharat 2021		Samagra Shiksha 2022	
		Section	What does RTE say?	Section	What does NEP say?	Section	What does NIPUN say?	Section	What does Samagra Shiksha say?
Equitable and inclusive education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment status data disaggregated by sex Learning levels data disaggregated by sex 	8	Ensure that children belonging to disadvantaged groups are not discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing elementary education on any grounds	6.8	Eliminate any remaining disparity in access to education for children of any gender	5.3	Demonstrate equal and appropriate expectations from boys and girls by providing equal attention, respect, and equitable learning opportunities in an inclusive environment	1.4	Provide equitable and inclusive quality education which would be guided by principles including gender concerns, ensuring that girls and boys progress equally; using education as an intervention to bring about change in the status of women
				3.4	Ensure quality to retain students, so that disadvantaged groups do not lose interest in attending school				
Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to read letters, words, Std I level and Std II level text Ability to recognise single-digit numbers, double-digit numbers, subtract and divide 	Rule 23 (2) (c) ¹	Prepare class-wise, subject-wise learning outcomes for all elementary classes	2.2	The highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal FLN in primary school by 2025	1.1	Ensure that every child in the country attains FLN in Std III by 2026-27	1.2.5	Emphasis on FLN; provide quality education and enhance learning outcomes of students
Digital literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access, ownership, and usage of smartphones Ability to perform basic digital tasks 			24.2	Eliminate the digital divide through concerted efforts such as the Digital India campaign and the availability of affordable computing devices	13.3	Access to technology will contribute to equity and will help standardise the learning levels of the nation; for learners, high quality content will be prepared and uploaded on DIKSHA ²	6.9.3	Minimise rote learning and encourage holistic development and 21st century skills such as digital literacy

¹ Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules (Amendment), 2017

² DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) is a national digital platform for teachers, students, and parents in India. Launched by the Ministry of Education, it offers a wide range of e-learning content.

Table 2: Mapping - School observation

Domain	What does ASER 2024 capture?	Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (RTE), 2009		National Education Policy (NEP), 2020		National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat), 2021		Samagra Shiksha, An Integrated Scheme for School Education, 2022	
		Legislation that aims to provide every child between the ages of 6 and 14 the right to free and compulsory education		Policy that aims to transform India's education system, replacing the previous National Policy on Education, 1986		Mission established under NEP 2020 that aims for universal foundational literacy and numeracy acquisition among young children		Integrated school education scheme that aims to improve the quality of school education from pre-primary to higher secondary levels	
		Section	What does RTE say?	Section	What does NEP say?	Section	What does NIPUN say?	Section	What does Samagra Shiksha say?
Attendance of students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's enrollment and attendance on the day of visit (pre-primary to Std VIII) 	2.8	Ensure compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by every child aged 6 to 14	3.1	One of the primary goals of the schooling system must be to ensure that children are enrolled in and are attending school			1.3, 4.4.3, 4.4.8	Samagra Shiksha endorses provisions of the RTE Act and NEP 2020 related to attendance
Teacher appointment and attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of teachers appointed and observed to be present on the day of visit 	25; The Schedule	The appropriate government shall ensure that the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR), as specified in the Schedule, is maintained in each school	2.3	A PTR of under 30:1 will be ensured; areas having large numbers of socio-economically disadvantaged students will aim for a PTR of under 25:1	10.2.2	Regular teacher attendance, and reduction in their administrative burden and deployment in non-teaching activities is a critical enabler of the mission	4.6	Samagra Shiksha endorses provisions of the RTE Act related to PTR
Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether school received govt directives to implement FLN activities 			2.2	National Mission on FLN will be set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) on priority	11.2	The first step to achieve the goal of FLN by 2026-27 would be for states to create multi-year action plans	3.2	NIPUN Bharat has been established under the aegis of Samagra Shiksha
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether teachers trained on FLN 			2.3	Teachers will be trained, encouraged, and supported to impart FLN	11.10	An important step to achieve FLN for all children will be capacity building of teachers	3.3	Regular professional development of teachers focusing on and FLN

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Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether school readiness program implemented in 2024-25 and 2023-24 			2.5	An interim 3-month play-based 'school preparation module' will be developed for Std I	8.2	NIPUN Bharat endorses NEP 2020 guidelines related to school preparation module	3.3	A 3-month play-based 'school preparation module' for Std I called Vidya Pravesh has been developed to ensure children are school ready
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether school received FLN-related Teaching Learning Material (TLM) and/or funds for TLM 					9.3	Ensure availability and usage of high-quality and culturally responsive TLM in children's familiar language(s)	3.3	States and UTs to develop engaging, joyful, and innovative additional learning resources in local language; provision of up to Rs. 500 per child per annum until the primary level
					10.2.2	Provide adequate budget for TLM and children's books and libraries			
Entitlements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether free uniforms and textbooks were provided 	2.3	No child shall be liable to pay any kind of fee which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education			10.2.2	Textbooks and uniforms to be delivered to students before the start of the academic session	6.8.1.2	Provide textbooks to all children at primary and upper primary level
Physical Education (PE)	Availability of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated time for PE Separate PE teacher Sports equipment and funds Playground 	The Schedule	For upper primary schools with above 100 children, appoint part-time instructors for PE	4.8	Promote sports-integration in the curriculum to help students in developing skills like self-discipline, teamwork, responsibility, etc.	Annexure I	Participation in individual and team sports is a key competency to achieve developmental goal 1: Children maintain good health and well being	7 ³	PE teacher may be appointed at every school
			Provide sports equipment to each class as required; schools must have a playground					1 ⁴	Provision for procurement of sports equipment, or expenditure for meeting expenses on procurement

^{3,4} Revised Guidelines for Sports Grant under Samagra Shiksha, 2023

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Pre-primary provisions in school	Provision of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anganwadi in school Pre-primary class in school 	11	The government may make necessary arrangements to prepare children above the age of 3 years for elementary education and to provide ECCE for all children until they complete the age of 6 years	1.4	ECCE shall be delivered through: (a) stand-alone Anganwadis; (b) Anganwadis co-located with primary schools; (c) pre-primary sections covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with primary schools; and (d) stand-alone pre-schools	8.1	DoSE&L and MoWCD have jointly stressed upon co-location of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) within the primary school premises for ensuring continuity from one to the other	2.4	Examine the possibility of co-locating AWCs in the nearby primary schools' campus with a view to improve child preparedness for going to school and to ensure smooth transition, or to start pre-school sections in primary schools
	Whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A separate pre-primary teacher was appointed Teachers trained on ECCE 			1.4	Pre-primary institutions to recruit workers/ teachers trained in ECCE	7.5	Provide in-service training for pre-school education through face-to-face/online/ blended mode	2.1	All teachers are qualified to deliver quality ECCE as per National Curriculum Framework/State Curriculum Framework
				1.6	Prior to age 5, every child will move to a "Preparatory Class" or "Balvatika" (before Std I), which has an ECCE-qualified teacher			2.6.1	In-service teacher training would include training for ECCE teachers as per existing norms
Mid-Day Meal (MDM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whether MDM was provided in the school 	The Schedule	A kitchen where MDM is cooked should be present in the school	26.4	Provision of food and nutrition (breakfast and MDM) in all schools			14.13.1	PM POSHAN scheme for providing one hot cooked meal to children upto elementary stage
Classroom organisation	Whether: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Std I and Std II children were sitting with other grades TLM was present and students' works were displayed in classrooms 	The Schedule	Provide teaching learning equipment to each class as required	1.2, 4.2	The Foundational Stage will consist of five years of flexible, multilevel, play/activity-based learning; comprising of alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, puzzles, drawing, painting, and other visual art, craft, drama, and puppetry	5.1.2	A classroom should have a print rich environment and math/ manipulative objects, puzzles, toys, etc.; classroom should provide children with opportunities to engage in meaningful written expression	6.8.3	Make high quality and diversified student and teacher resources/ learning materials available for a joyful learning environment

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School facilities	Availability of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Usable toilets ■ Pucca rooms ■ Office/store ■ Boundary wall ■ Playground ■ Electricity connection and electricity on the day of the survey 	8 (d)	Provide infrastructure including school building, teaching staff, and learning equipment	Introduction	A good education institution is one where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, and where good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available	10.2.2	All primary schools must have the following basic facilities: Separate functional toilets for boys and girls, potable drinking water, hygienic and clean environs, safe school infrastructure, spacious classrooms, etc.	4.1	Effective and sufficient infrastructure must be provided so that all students have access to safe and engaging school education at all levels from pre-primary to Std XII
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Library books and whether children were using them ■ Computers and whether children were using them ■ Drinking water 	The Schedule	The RTE mandates norms and standards for school infrastructure	3.2	To prevent dropout, provide effective and sufficient infrastructure				