Young Children: Enrollment and Learning Status – Odisha

Analysis based on data from households. 30 out of 30 districts were surveyed in ASER 2018.
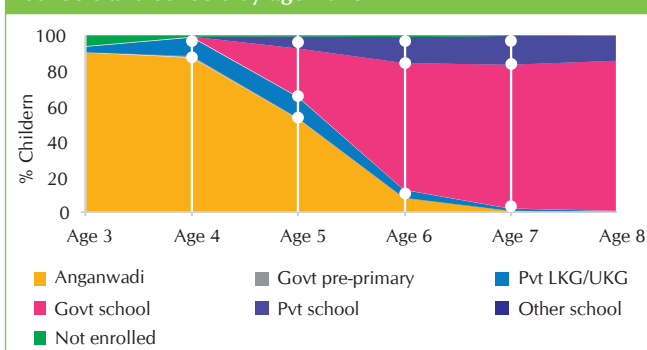
Early access to a supportive environment and exposure to developmentally appropriate activities can help children develop a solid foundation for future learning, both for school and for life. All major education policy and program documents in India now recognize this fact. However, recent ASER data shows major gaps between official norms and actual practice. These gaps are evident both when young children enter school and in what they are able to do in terms of foundational skills like reading and arithmetic. The gap between expectations and ground realities starts very early and needs to be addressed urgently. Once children fall behind, it is very difficult to catch up.

Age 3 to 8 years: Where are young children enrolled?

Table 1: % Children enrolled in different types of pre-schools and schools by age 2018

Age	Pre-school			School			Not enrolled	Total
	Anganwadi	Govt pre-primary	Pvt LKG/ UKG	Govt	Pvt	Other		
Age 3	90.3	0.2	3.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	6.3	100
Age 4	87.3	1.2	10.3	0.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	100
Age 5	52.8	0.6	11.8	27.2	6.8	0.0	0.9	100
Age 6	7.9	0.3	4.4	71.5	14.6	0.0	1.3	100
Age 7	0.7	0.2	1.2	81.1	16.2	0.0	0.7	100
Age 8	0.2	0.0	0.4	84.7	14.0	0.1	0.6	100

Chart 1: % Children enrolled in different types of pre-schools and schools by age 2018

Legend: Anganwadi, Govt pre-primary, Pvt LKG/UKG, Govt school, Pvt school, Other school, Not enrolled

This table shows the proportion of children enrolled in different types of pre-schools and schools by age. For example, at age 3, 90.3% children are enrolled in anganwadis, 0.2% in government pre-primary classes, 3.1% in private LKG/UKG, 0.1% in government schools, and 0% in private schools. 'Other' includes children going to any other type of institution. 6.3% children are not enrolled anywhere. Chart 1, a stacked area chart, is a visual representation of Table 1.

Key takeaways:

Children's pathways through pre-school and school do not always follow policy prescriptions or curriculum expectations.
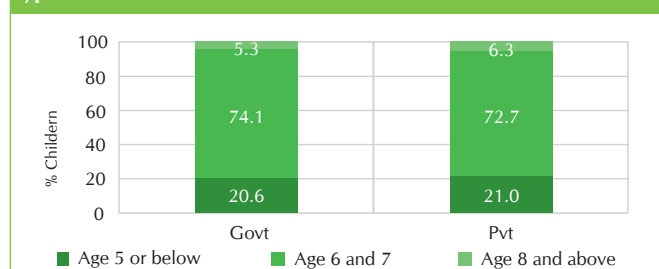
- **High enrollment in pre-school age group:** Even at age 3, in Odisha, around 90% children are enrolled in anganwadis. This continues to be the case at age 4 as well. By age 5, a movement into schools is visible with 34% children moving into schools. (Table 1)
- **Low enrollment in private institutions:** Whether in the pre-school age group or for older children, enrollment in private institutions is very low as compared to many other states. For example, of all children in Std I less than 20% are enrolled in private schools. (Table 2)
- **Most children in Std I are 6 or 7 years old:** Three quarters of children in Std I are either 6 or 7 years old. Around one-fifth are 5 year olds. A very small percentage is 8 or older. (Chart 2)
- **Age makes a difference:** Comparing children in the same type of school, it is clear that older children are able to do more. For example, among children in Std I in government schools, 42.1% of 5 year olds can read at least letters, as compared to 60% of 6 and 7 year olds. (Table 3)

Std I: Can young children read letters and recognize numbers?

Table 2: % Children enrolled in Std I by school type 2018

% Children in Std I enrolled in	Govt	Pvt	Total
	82.7	17.3	100

Chart 2: % Children enrolled in Std I by age and school type 2018

Legend: Age 5 or below, Age 6 and 7, Age 8 and above

This chart shows the distribution of Std I children enrolled in different types of schools by age.

Table 3: Reading and arithmetic levels for Std I children by age and school type 2018

Age	% Children who	
	Can read at least letters	Can recognize at least numbers (1-9)
Government schools		
Age 5	42.1	42.0
Age 6 and 7	60.0	59.7
Age 8 and above	Data insufficient	
All	57.9	57.8
Private schools		
Age 5	Data insufficient	
Age 6 and 7	88.8	89.5
Age 8 and above	Data insufficient	
All	85.7	85.8

This table shows the proportion of children in Std I who can read at least letters and recognize at least numbers up to 9.

Young Children: Enrollment and Learning Status by Sex – Odisha

Analysis based on data from households. 30 out of 30 districts were surveyed in ASER 2018.

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Age 4 to 8 years: Where are young boys and girls enrolled?

Table 4: % Children age 4-8 enrolled in Govt pre-schools/schools by sex 2018

Age	Enrolled in govt pre-schools/schools		Sex-wise difference in enrollment in percentage points
	Boys	Girls	
Age 4	86.4	91.0	4.5
Age 5	77.5	83.9	6.5
Age 6	78.6	80.9	2.3
Age 7	78.6	85.2	6.6
Age 8	83.6	86.4	2.8

Note: Government pre-schools/schools include anganwadis, government pre-primary classes and government primary schools.
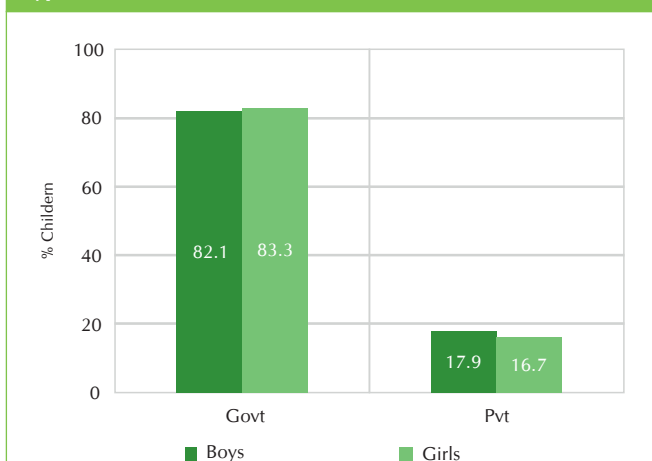
Key takeaways:

- **Sex-wise difference in enrollment:** In Odisha, around 80% of boys and girls attend government institutions in the age group of 4 to 8. (Table 1) For every age group between 4 and 8 years, a higher percentage of girls are enrolled in anganwadis and government schools as compared to boys. (Table 4)

- **In government schools among Std I children, there is no clear pattern for sex-wise differences in learning levels:** There is, however, an advantage of age. The learning levels of older children are better than that of younger children. 39.8% of boys can read at least letters as compared to 44.6% of girls at age 5. At age 6-7, there are significant increases in learning levels of both boys and girls, with boys performing marginally better. (Table 5)

Std I: Can young boys and girls read letters and recognize numbers?

Chart 3: % Children enrolled in Std I by sex and school type 2018

% Children (y-axis: 0 to 100)

- Govt: Boys 82.1, Girls 83.3
- Pvt: Boys 17.9, Girls 16.7

Legend: ■ Boys ■ Girls

The chart shows the distribution of Std I children enrolled in different types of schools by sex. For example, of all boys enrolled in Std I, 82.1% of boys are enrolled in government schools and 17.9% of boys are enrolled in private schools. Of all girls enrolled in Std I, 83.3% of girls are enrolled in government schools and 16.7% of girls are enrolled in private schools.

Table 5: Reading and arithmetic levels for Std I children by age, sex, and school type 2018

Age	% Children who			
	Can read at least letters		Can recognize at least numbers (1-9)	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Government schools				
Age 5	39.8	44.6	43.3	40.7
Age 6 and 7	61.8	58.3	60.4	59.0
Age 8 and above	87.8	89.1	90.1	92.4
All	59.0	56.7	58.8	56.7
Private schools				
Age 5	Data insufficient			
Age 6 and 7	88.9	88.7	86.8	92.3
Age 8 and above	Data insufficient			
All	88.3	82.6	85.3	86.3

This table shows the proportion of children in Std I who can read at least letters and recognize at least numbers up to 9. The data shows patterns by age and sex.

Data is not presented where sample size is insufficient.