

## About ASER

Every year from 2005 to 2014, and then every alternate year till 2018, ASER has reported on children's schooling and learning status across rural India. In 2020, COVID-19 interrupted this trajectory. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in school closures across the world, causing massive disruption to children's learning.

Almost two academic years have passed without any face-to-face learning in schools in West Bengal, leading to a growing concern over 'learning loss' in children. Global estimates suggest that children's foundational skills suffer due to prolonged school closures and inequitable access to different forms of technology-based educational inputs.

Evidence on the status of children's schooling and foundational learning can help us understand how best to support them going forward, especially during these uncertain times. In December 2021, taking advantage of the opportunity to resume field activities in West Bengal, ASER returned to villages and communities to meet children and gauge how their learning had been impacted during the pandemic.

This ASER survey was conducted in all districts of West Bengal (except Darjeeling) in December 2021, when children were in the 2021-22 school year. The survey is representative at the state level. In each district, 30 villages were sampled using Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) from the 2011 Census village directory. In each sampled village, 20 randomly selected households were surveyed. Schooling information was collected for all children aged 3-16 in each surveyed household, and all children aged 5-16 were assessed on their ability to read simple text and do basic arithmetic.

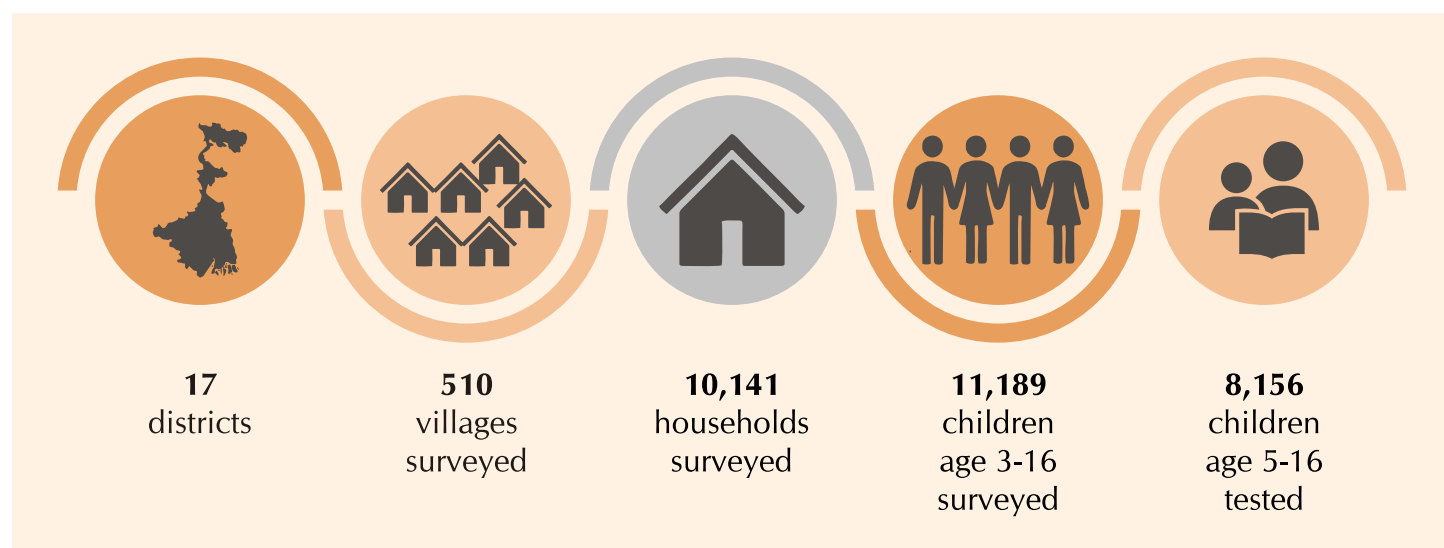
In addition to children's schooling and learning status, ASER West Bengal 2021 explored the following domains:

Tuition classes: Explored whether children were taking paid tuition classes

Learning support at home: Examined whether and how families support children at home during school closures

Additional areas such as parents' contact with the school and children's engagement with learning materials were also explored.

## Survey coverage





## Enrollment

**Table 1: % Children enrolled in different types of schools. By age group and sex. 2021**

Age group	Govt	Pvt	Other	Not in School	Total
Age: 6-14 All	91.5	6.5	1.0	1.0	100
Age: 7-16 All	92.0	5.7	1.0	1.3	100
Age: 7-10 All	89.0	9.7	0.8	0.6	100
Age: 7-10 Boys	88.8	9.7	0.8	0.7	100
Age: 7-10 Girls	89.2	9.6	0.8	0.4	100
Age: 11-14 All	94.6	3.1	1.3	1.1	100
Age: 11-14 Boys	94.2	3.0	1.2	1.6	100
Age: 11-14 Girls	94.9	3.2	1.4	0.6	100
Age: 15-16 All	93.0	2.5	0.9	3.5	100
Age: 15-16 Boys	90.5	2.8	1.3	5.4	100
Age: 15-16 Girls	95.2	2.3	0.6	1.9	100

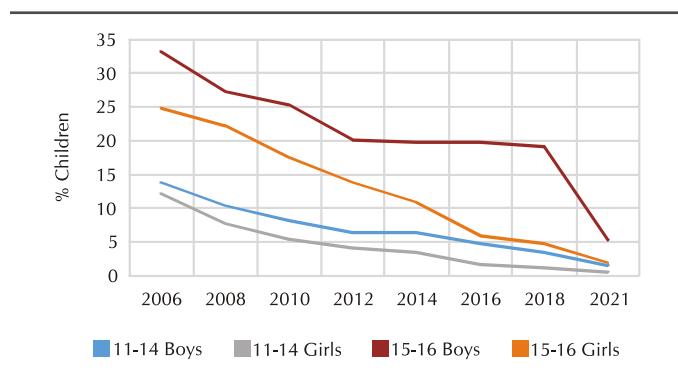
'Other' includes children going to Madarsa and EGS.

'Not in school' includes children who never enrolled or have dropped out.

**Table 2: % Children enrolled in different types of schools. By age group and sex. 2018**

Age group	Govt	Pvt	Other	Not in School	Total
Age: 6-14 All	88.1	7.9	1.9	2.0	100
Age: 7-16 All	87.8	6.5	2.1	3.6	100
Age: 7-10 All	85.5	12.5	1.0	1.1	100
Age: 7-10 Boys	84.4	12.9	1.2	1.5	100
Age: 7-10 Girls	86.4	12.2	0.7	0.7	100
Age: 11-14 All	91.8	2.8	3.1	2.4	100
Age: 11-14 Boys	90.7	3.1	2.7	3.5	100
Age: 11-14 Girls	92.8	2.5	3.4	1.3	100
Age: 15-16 All	84.1	1.9	2.4	11.7	100
Age: 15-16 Boys	76.8	2.8	1.3	19.2	100
Age: 15-16 Girls	90.9	1.1	3.3	4.8	100

**Chart 1: % Children not enrolled in school. By age group and sex. 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021**



**Table 3: Age-grade distribution  
% Children in each grade by age. 2021**

Age Std	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total
I	13.0	36.5	36.1	11.9					2.6				100
II	0.8	6.7	24.4	44.3	19.6				4.2				100
III		4.4		22.0	43.9	25.9			3.7				100
IV			4.9		15.4	54.9	20.5		4.4				100
V			2.4			22.5	48.2	22.0		5.0			100
VI				4.4			16.0	49.2	25.2		5.3		100
VII				4.1				17.2	50.3	24.3	4.1		100
VIII					4.7				17.6	51.6	21.7	4.5	100

**Table 4: % Children age 3-8 enrolled in different types of pre-schools and schools. 2021**

Age	Pre-school			School			Not in pre-school or school	Total
	Angan-wadi	Govt LKG/ UKG	Pvt LKG/ UKG	Govt	Pvt	Other		
Age 3	89.4	0.1	2.6	0.4	0.5	0.0	7.1	100
Age 4	87.7	0.4	6.5	1.2	0.8	0.0	3.5	100
Age 5	56.2	2.0	14.3	21.4	2.1	0.1	4.0	100
Age 6	15.6	2.9	13.5	60.1	5.4	0.1	2.3	100
Age 7	1.8	1.7	6.7	79.7	8.8	0.7	0.6	100
Age 8	0.1	0.0	1.8	86.7	10.5	0.6	0.3	100
All	38.7	1.3	7.7	44.3	5.0	0.3	2.8	100

**Table 5: % Children age 3-8 enrolled in different types of pre-schools and schools. 2018**

Age	Pre-school			School			Not in pre-school or school	Total
	Angan-wadi	Govt LKG/ UKG	Pvt LKG/ UKG	Govt	Pvt	Other		
Age 3	72.6	0.8	5.1	2.0	0.7	0.0	18.8	100
Age 4	69.6	1.5	14.1	3.7	1.0	0.3	9.9	100
Age 5	44.0	9.6	21.5	16.8	3.0	0.0	5.1	100
Age 6	14.2	14.0	16.5	44.8	7.0	0.5	3.1	100
Age 7	2.8	2.8	5.4	77.2	10.3	0.5	1.0	100
Age 8	0.6	1.2	4.0	79.0	13.8	0.4	1.0	100
All	31.9	5.1	11.2	39.2	6.3	0.3	6.0	100



## Reading

ASER learning assessments are conducted in the household. Children in the age group 5-16 are assessed. The type of school in which children are enrolled (government or private) is also recorded. The assessment was conducted in Bengali.

**Table 6: % Children by grade and reading level.**  
**All children. 2021**

Std	Not even letter	Letter	Word	Std I level text	Std II level text	Total
I	32.1	34.4	17.2	9.8	6.6	100
II	16.1	27.2	21.6	16.4	18.8	100
III	12.6	20.7	17.5	19.8	29.5	100
IV	8.0	14.0	17.5	21.3	39.2	100
V	6.5	10.6	16.1	18.4	48.5	100
VI	5.5	9.6	11.7	14.8	58.4	100
VII	3.8	7.9	13.0	14.8	60.4	100
VIII	3.0	5.5	9.8	13.0	68.7	100

The reading tool is a progressive tool. Each row shows the variation in children's reading levels within a given grade. For example in Table 6, among children in Std III, 12.6% cannot even read letters, 20.7% can read letters but not words or higher, 17.5% can read words but not Std I level text or higher, 19.8% can read Std I level text but not Std II level text, and 29.5% can read Std II level text. For each grade, the total of these exclusive categories is 100%.

**Table 8: Trends over time**  
**Reading in Std I and II in govt schools.**  
**2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021**

Year	% Children in govt schools who can read at least letters	% Children in govt schools who can read at least words
	Std I	Std II
2014	72.4	54.8
2016	70.6	65.1
2018	73.2	66.2
2021	66.3	53.0

**Table 10: Reading in different grades in govt schools.**  
**By division. 2018 and 2021**

Division	Std I-II		Std III-V		Std VI-VIII	
	% Children who can read at least letters		% Children who can read Std II level text		% Children who can read Std II level text	
	2018	2021	2018	2021	2018	2021
Burdwan	88.1	77.7	47.8	35.2	66.4	61.7
Jalpaiguri*	73.0	63.4	35.1	31.8	53.4	55.1
Maldah	63.5	57.1	29.9	27.8	44.9	50.4
Medinipur	83.8	78.2	48.5	44.5	62.5	68.8
Presidency	88.2	80.7	44.8	44.5	63.7	67.7
West Bengal	79.9	72.8	42.6	38.0	59.0	61.9

The following districts come under each division:

\*Burdwan' includes Birbhum, Bardhaman, Hooghly; 'Jalpaiguri' includes Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar; 'Maldah' includes Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad; 'Medinipur' includes Bankura, Purulia, Paschim Medinipur, Purba Medinipur; 'Presidency' includes Nadia, North Twenty Four Parganas, Haora, South Twenty Four Parganas.

\*Estimates do not include Darjeeling since it was not surveyed due to logistical constraints.

**Table 7: % Children by grade and reading level.**  
**All children. 2018**

Std	Not even letter	Letter	Word	Std I level text	Std II level text	Total
I	24.9	33.3	22.7	10.9	8.2	100
II	10.3	20.6	24.6	21.0	23.5	100
III	8.3	15.8	16.7	19.4	39.9	100
IV	7.4	13.0	16.1	21.5	42.0	100
V	5.1	9.8	13.2	21.2	50.7	100
VI	5.3	8.7	14.7	16.8	54.6	100
VII	2.3	8.8	10.6	19.6	58.7	100
VIII	3.0	6.1	10.9	18.3	61.8	100

**Table 9: Trends over time**  
**Reading in Std III, V and VIII in govt schools.**  
**2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021**

Year	% Children in govt schools who can read Std II level text		
	Std III	Std V	Std VIII
2014	32.9	51.8	76.3
2016	34.0	50.2	72.3
2018	36.6	50.5	63.0
2021	27.7	48.0	68.3

## Reading tool

Std II level text

কাহিনী

আমার বাড়ির সামনে একটা ডাকঘর আছে। অনেক লোকের ভিড় হয় সেখানে। নানা দেশের চিঠি আসে। সেখানে টাকাও জমা রাখা যায়। আমার মা ডাকঘরে টাকা জমিয়ে রাখেন। আমি তিনবার ডাকঘরে গিয়েছি। বাবাকে দিনাজপুরে চিঠি লিখেছি। ঘাটালের পিসিকেও একটা বড়ো চিঠি লিখেছি। আর আজ দাদাকে লিখবো। আমি ডাকঘরে গিয়ে একটা ডাকটিকিট কিনবো। সেটা খামে লাগিয়ে ঠিকানা লিখবো। খামটা আমি দাদাকে পাঠাব।

Std I level text

অনুচ্ছেদ

গরমে আম পাওয়া যায়।  
 মণির মা আমের আচার বানান।  
 শীতকালে আপেল পাওয়া যায়।  
 মণি আপেল খেতে ভালোবাসে।

Letters

ল প স  
ক গ  
ড ব ম  
ট ঝ

Words

লাল দুধ  
গোল টিয়া  
তেল বৃষা  
ভোর কুল  
পাখি মোটা



## Arithmetic

ASER learning assessments are conducted in the household. Children in the age group 5-16 are assessed. The type of school in which children are enrolled (government or private) is also recorded.

**Table 11: % Children by grade and arithmetic level. All children. 2021**

Std	Not even 1-9	Recognise numbers		Subtract	Divide	Total
		1-9	10-99			
I	30.0	40.4	20.1	6.8	2.6	100
II	12.6	34.3	30.0	14.0	9.1	100
III	9.2	28.8	32.7	15.5	13.9	100
IV	6.7	18.4	34.9	19.7	20.2	100
V	5.2	13.6	31.8	23.2	26.2	100
VI	5.3	11.2	31.6	18.8	33.2	100
VII	2.5	8.5	39.0	16.8	33.2	100
VIII	1.7	6.4	37.6	17.3	36.9	100

The arithmetic tool is a progressive tool. Each row shows the variation in children's arithmetic levels within a given grade. For example, in Table 11, among children in Std III, 9.2% cannot yet recognise numbers 1-9, 28.8% can recognise numbers up to 9 but cannot recognise numbers up to 99 or higher, 32.7% can recognise numbers up to 99 but cannot do subtraction, 15.5% can do subtraction but cannot do division, and 13.9% can do division. For each grade, the total of these exclusive categories is 100%.

**Table 13: Trends over time Arithmetic in Std I and II in govt schools. 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021**

Year	% Children in govt schools who can recognise at least single-digit numbers	
	Std I	Std II
2014	74.0	84.7
2016	73.5	91.0
2018	77.8	92.6
2021	68.5	86.4

**Table 15: Arithmetic in different grades in govt schools. By division. 2018 and 2021**

Division	Std I-II		Std III-V		Std VI-VIII	
	% Children who can recognise at least single-digit numbers		% Children who can do at least subtraction		% Children who can do division	
	2018	2021	2018	2021	2018	2021
Burdwan	90.9	80.3	38.2	33.6	37.2	33.9
Jalpaiguri*	80.7	70.4	36.9	31.0	22.6	19.9
Maldah	70.7	63.0	29.0	25.5	20.2	21.5
Medinipur	88.1	80.5	50.4	54.5	37.6	49.6
Presidency	89.7	80.5	45.3	36.8	28.4	33.8
West Bengal	84.3	75.7	41.6	38.0	30.3	34.2

The following districts come under each division:

'Burdwan' includes Birbhum, Bardhaman, Hooghly; 'Jalpaiguri' includes Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Koch Bihar; 'Malda' includes Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad; 'Medinipur' includes Bankura, Purulia, Paschim Medinipur, Purba Medinipur; 'Presidency' includes Nadia, North Twenty Four Parganas, Haora, South Twenty Four Parganas.

\*Estimates do not include Darjeeling since it was not surveyed due to logistical constraints.

**Table 12: % Children by grade and arithmetic level. All children. 2018**

Std	Not even 1-9	Recognise numbers		Subtract	Divide	Total
		1-9	10-99			
I	20.4	43.0	25.8	8.1	2.7	100
II	6.7	33.2	33.3	18.0	8.9	100
III	4.2	24.5	32.8	20.2	18.3	100
IV	4.1	19.6	33.6	21.7	21.1	100
V	2.8	13.6	34.5	19.4	29.7	100
VI	2.8	10.3	38.5	17.0	31.4	100
VII	1.0	10.0	40.2	16.9	31.8	100
VIII	1.7	7.4	46.8	15.5	28.7	100

**Table 14: Trends over time Arithmetic in Std III, V and VIII in govt schools. 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2021**

Year	% Children in govt schools who can do at least subtraction	% Children in govt schools who can do division	
	Std III	Std V	Std VIII
2014	33.0	31.3	40.4
2016	35.5	28.6	32.5
2018	35.5	29.2	28.9
2021	27.3	25.9	36.8

## Arithmetic tool

সংখ্যা পরিচয় ১-৯	সংখ্যা পরিচয় ১০-৯৯	বিয়োগ	ভাগ
১ ৪	৫১ ৮৩	৪৬ ৬৩ - ২৯ - ৩৯	৭)৮৭৯(
৭ ৩	৩৭ ৬৫	৪৭ ৪৫ - ২৮ - ১৭	৬)৮২৪(
৬ ৯	৫৫ ২৬	৯২ ৮৪ - ৭৬ - ৫৭	৪)৯৮৫(
৫ ২	৯১ ৪৩	৫২ ৬৬ - ১৪ - ৪৮	৪)৫১৭(
পাঁচটি জিজ্ঞাসা করুন, এটি সঠিক বলতে হবে।		পাঁচটি জিজ্ঞাসা করুন, এটি সঠিক বলতে হবে।	
যে কোন দুটি করতে বলা, দুটিই সঠিক হতে হবে।		যে কোন একটি করতে বলা, একটিই সঠিক হতে হবে।	



## Support for learning

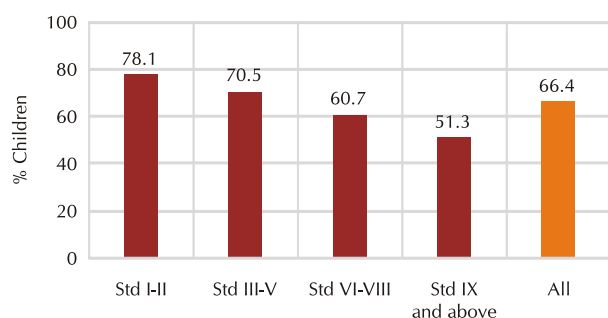
### Availability of learning resources

**Table 16: % Children with learning resources available at home. By school type. 2021**

School type	Smartphone	Radio	Television	Reading material (apart from textbooks)
Govt	64.5	10.8	55.4	2.8
Pvt	81.4	19.2	72.4	6.9
Govt & Pvt	65.5	11.3	56.4	3.1

### Support at home

**Chart 3: % Children in govt schools who receive help from family members while studying at home. By grade. 2021**



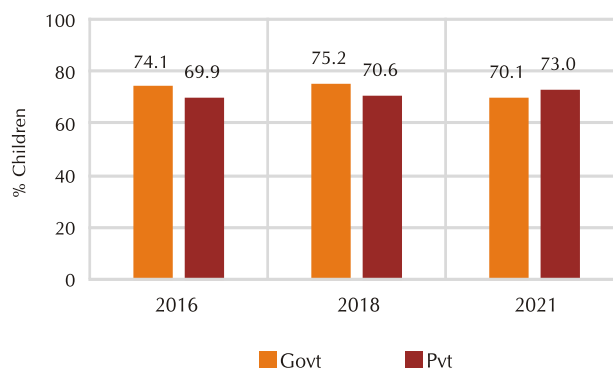
### Contact with school teacher

**Table 18: % Children in govt schools whose parents had different kinds of contact with a school teacher in the reference week. By grade. 2021**

Std	Received learning materials/activities	Called/visited each other to discuss learning materials /child's progress	Called/visited each other to discuss COVID prevention guidelines
Std I-II	12.7	19.2	13.9
Std III-V	14.8	19.8	15.2
Std VI-VIII	19.2	18.9	16.5
Std IX & above	29.7	24.8	22.4
All	18.0	20.2	16.4

### Tuition

**Chart 2: % Children who take tuition. By school type. 2016, 2018 and 2021**



### Learning activities at home

**Table 17: % Children in govt schools who did learning activities at home during the reference week. By grade and type of material. 2021**

Std	Traditional	Broadcast	Online
Std I-II	53.0	5.5	5.6
Std III-V	57.5	7.1	7.9
Std VI-VIII	59.4	8.8	12.7
Std IX & above	62.2	15.3	24.4
All	57.7	8.5	11.4

Respondents were asked about a variety of activities done using materials received from any source, including traditional materials like textbooks and worksheets (in print or virtual format), lessons that were broadcast on television or radio, and online activities such as pre-recorded videos or live classes.

### Mid-day meal

**Chart 4: % Children in govt schools who received mid-day ration at least once in the three months prior to the survey. By grade. 2021**

