Expanding opportunities for every child to learn well.
Can local experiences from the pandemic in India feed into global lessons?

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Pratham

असर ASER
Evidence for Action

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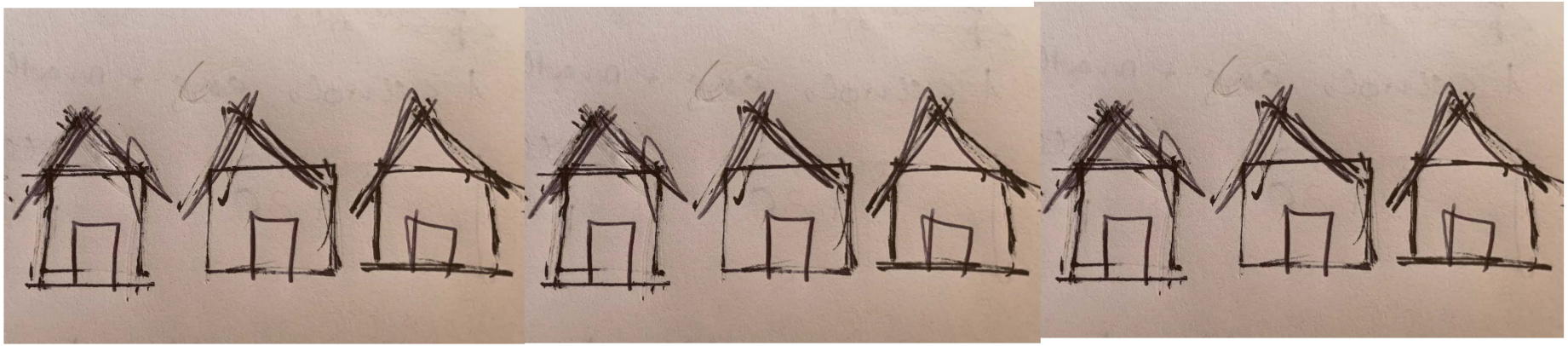
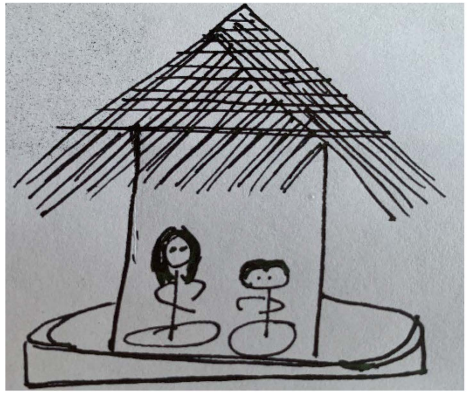
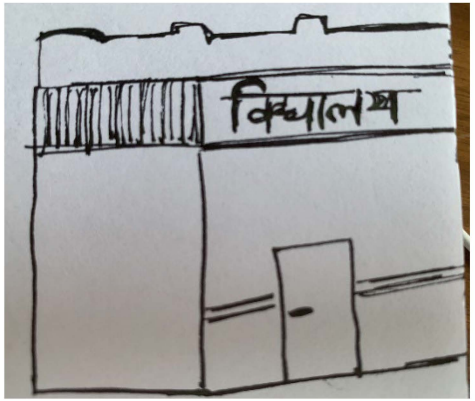
Pratham activities during lockdown






विद्यालय

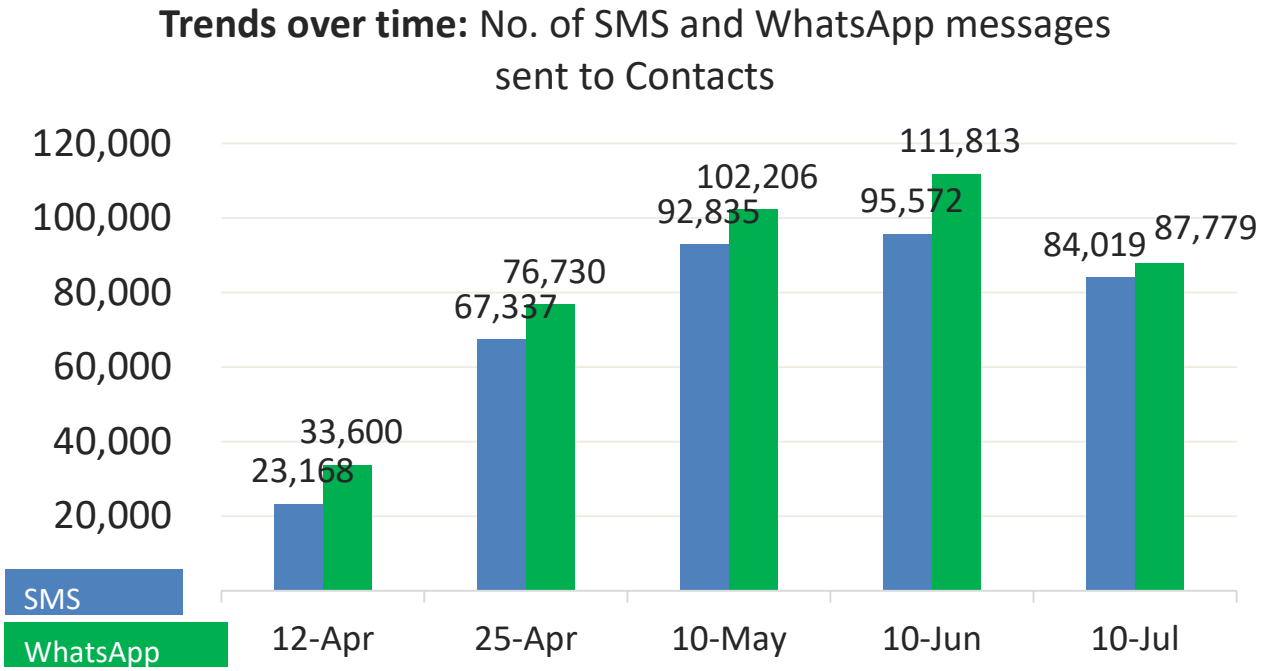
CONNECT: Reaching out to communities… once lockdown began

Understanding implications of Lockdown

Understanding contexts, communities and connections: What can we do from remote

- Pratham's measurement thrust shifted from outcome to reach and process
- A standardized process was set-up across all states to track roll-out of phone messages and content and, collect feedback.
- Special "deep dive" studies were also put in place to study specific facets of the work on the ground

REACH: Aggregate trends over time: Direct connect Pratham communities - April to July 2020



Date	April 12	April 25	May 10	June 10	July 10
Communities Reached*	**8,044**	**11,773**	**12,827**	**12,663**	**10,126**

*In some cases, the same phone number got both SMS and WhatsApp messages

- From early April onwards, Pratham teams focused on establishing a remote connect with contact numbers (children/families) in villages.
- The numbers/contacts reached grew over time as Pratham teams targeted to reach a contact in every hamlet of the village they visited before the lockdown.
- The drop in numbers in July due to several states, government also sending out messages. In such cases, Pratham did not duplicate effort.

CONTENT: via phones - Learning and Fun activities through WhatsApp messages .. Example: Leaf Art

Here is an example of a WhatsApp message

https://youtu.be/Jx41JPM3yGI Stay home and stay safe.

Download PraDigi App for more masti and padhai https://bit.ly/2xZZKf1 03072020
Pratham

Fri, 3 Jul

Karona Thodi Masti, Thodi Padhai

Leaf Art!
Collect leaves of different shapes, sizes and colours and make beautiful drawings.

Watch this video to know about leaf art. Share photos of your leaf art with us.
https://youtu.be/Jx41JPM3yGI

Stay home and stay safe.
Download PraDigi App for more masti and padhai
https://bit.ly/2xZZKf1
By PraDigi - Pratham Education Foundation
03072020

9:06 AM

Children sent back photos and videos of their activity

CONTENT: via phone - Language & Math activities through SMS messages

A word game sent via SMS

Group message

एक खेल खेलिए। यह खेल 30 मिनट का होगा।
घर के सब लोग खेल सकते हैं।
एक शब्द बनाइए जैसे कि घर। अब अगला शब्द र से शुरू होगा जैसे रेल।
अगला शब्द ल से होगा, खेलते रहिए।

Here is a 30 minute game. Everyone at home can play. Make a word – like home. Next word must start with "e". Example elephant. Now make a word with "t" and so on.

Math SMS Activity

एक खेत में कुछ बकरियाँ और मुर्गीयाँ हैं।
कुल पैरों की संख्या 180 और आँखों की संख्या 120 हैं।
बताएँ कितनी मुर्गियाँ और बकरियाँ होंगी?"

In the field, there are some goats and some chickens. Total number of legs are 180. Total number of eyes = 120. Tell me, how many goats and how many chickens are there in the field?

- As the reaching out process started, we realized that access to smartphones and internet was available only to less than half of the community members, Pratham started sharing simple activities through SMS for children everyday. SMS messages were shared by Pratham field team members with children through a regular phone of a parent, elder sibling or a volunteer.
- SMS based activities are based on weekly themes for either Reading or Math and new content is shared with children every day. A person from Pratham known to the children phones at least once a week to follow up.

Adapting during Covid Time

STRATEGIES DURING SCHOOL CLOSURE

Home

1

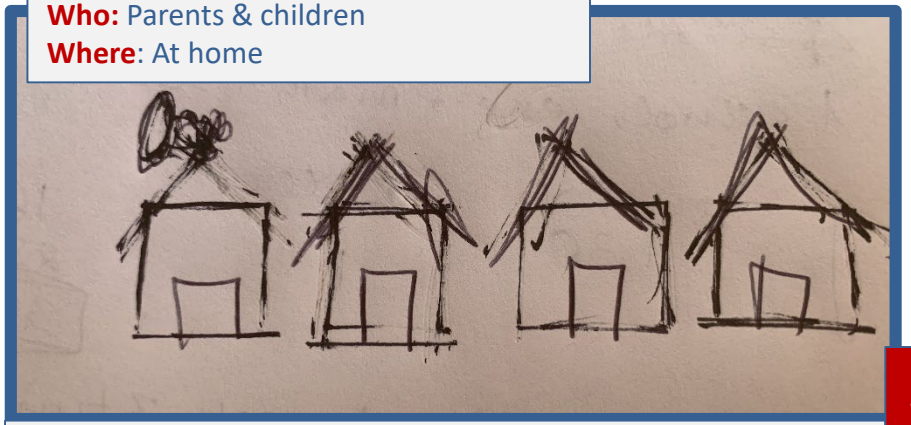
When: Daily activity
Who: Parents & children
Where: At home

Neighbourhood/hamlet

2

When: Daily or frequently
Who: Volunteer + small group of children
Where: In mohalla

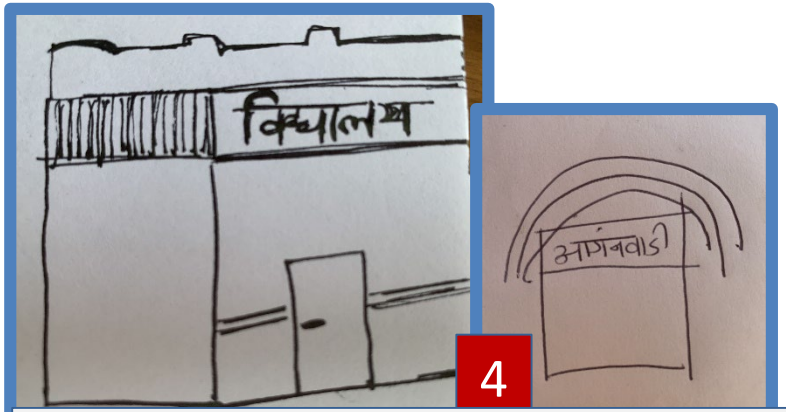
Village/ community



3

In village or community:
Weekly activities to create "environment"
like stories via loudspeakers, black board writing

Pre-school & School



4

Support re-opening and connecting to families & hamlets

What have the learnings been since last year in COVID-19 times?

Some learnings

- Continuous two way communication is a must. Only sending content or input is insufficient. We learned a lot from feedback. Continuous staying in touch improves participation and retention on part of the household.

- Low tech (SMS and regular phones) + systematic communication can yield results for learning outcomes that are similar to those families where smartphones are available.

- Young volunteers and young mothers often do not have their own devices (variations across states and contexts). But when families and communities understand the purpose then access increases.

- Groups can compensate for lack of access to devices. Mothers groups are a good example.

- Combination of mechanisms (SMS campaign and radio program) when aligned can be a helpful support mechanism.

- Much more experimentation, evaluation and analysis needed for improving remote learning.

What does evidence tell us?

असर ASER
Evidence for Action

ASER – Annual Status of Education Reports: Activity in 2018-2022

ASER 2018

Usual nation wide effort
Field survey

Districts reached	Children surveyed
596	550,000

Focus on school enrollment & basic learning levels in reading and arithmetic

ASER 2020 ASER 2021

Phone survey based on ASER 2018 sampling frame

ASER Survey	Districts reached	Children surveyed
ASER 2020	584	59,251
ASER 2021	581	75,234

Focus on enrollment, access to remote education mechanisms such as smartphones and learning material, learning support at home and in the community

ASER 2021

3 states
Field survey

Districts reached	Children surveyed
KAR : 24	18,385
CHH: 28	46,000
WB: 17	11,189

ASER 2022

Usual nation wide effort
Field survey

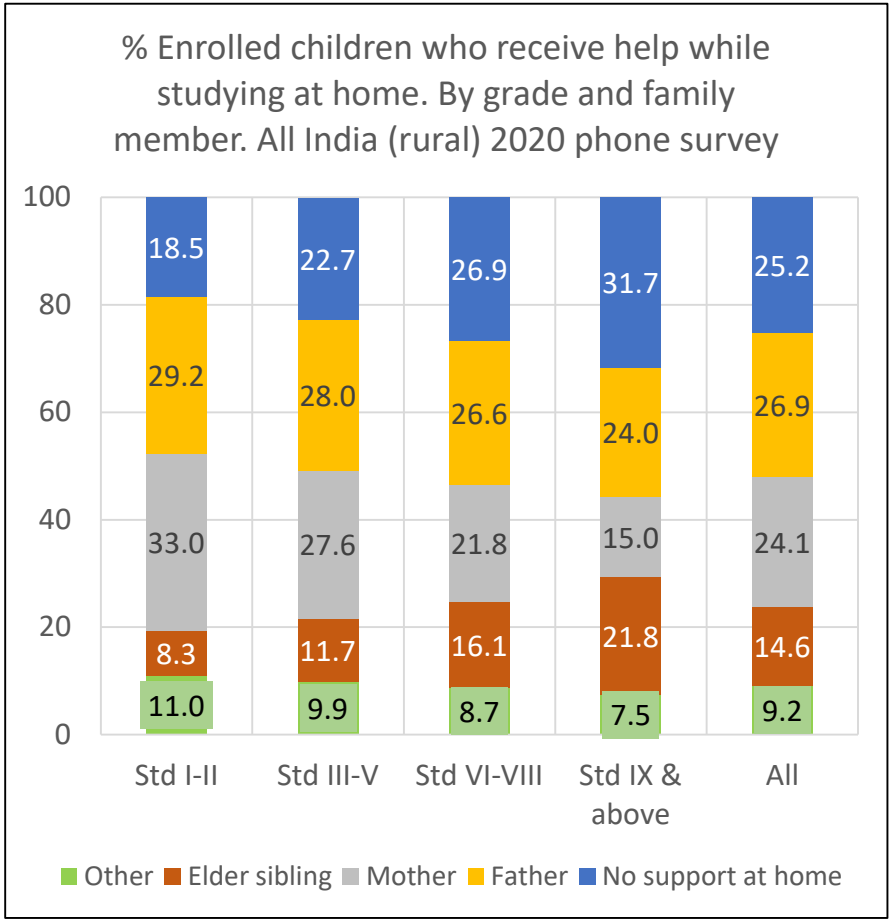
Districts reached	Children surveyed
616	700,000

Focus on school enrollment & basic learning levels in reading and arithmetic

Availability of smartphones doubled during the pandemic

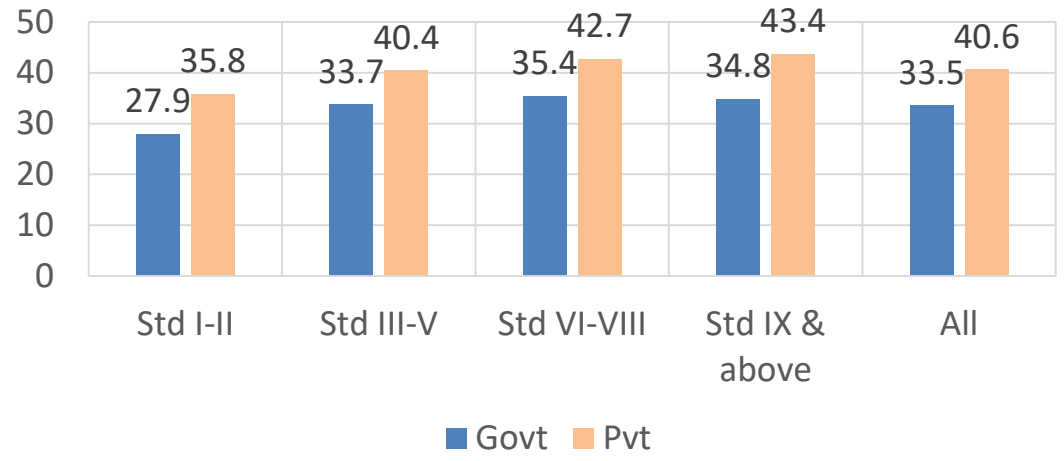
% Enrolled children who have a smartphone available at home. By school type. All India (Rural) ASER 2018-2021 Phone Survey			
School type	2018	2020	2021
Govt	29.6	56.4	63.7
Pvt	49.9	74.2	79.0
Govt & Pvt	36.5	61.8	67.6

- **Smartphone availability had almost doubled since 2018**, reaching 67.6% in 2021. By 2022, 74.8% of all surveyed households owned a smartphone.
- In 2021, across all grades, 67.6% of all enrolled children have at least one smartphone available at home. But 26% of them have no access to it at all. 40-50% depending on grade had access sometimes.



Few children received material other than textbooks during lockdown

% Enrolled children who received learning materials/activities in the reference week. By grade and school type. ASER 2020 Phone Survey



% Enrolled children who have textbooks for their current grade. By school type. ASER 2020 Phone Survey

Year	Govt	Pvt	Govt & Pvt
2020	84.1	72.2	80.5
2021	92.3	90.7	91.9

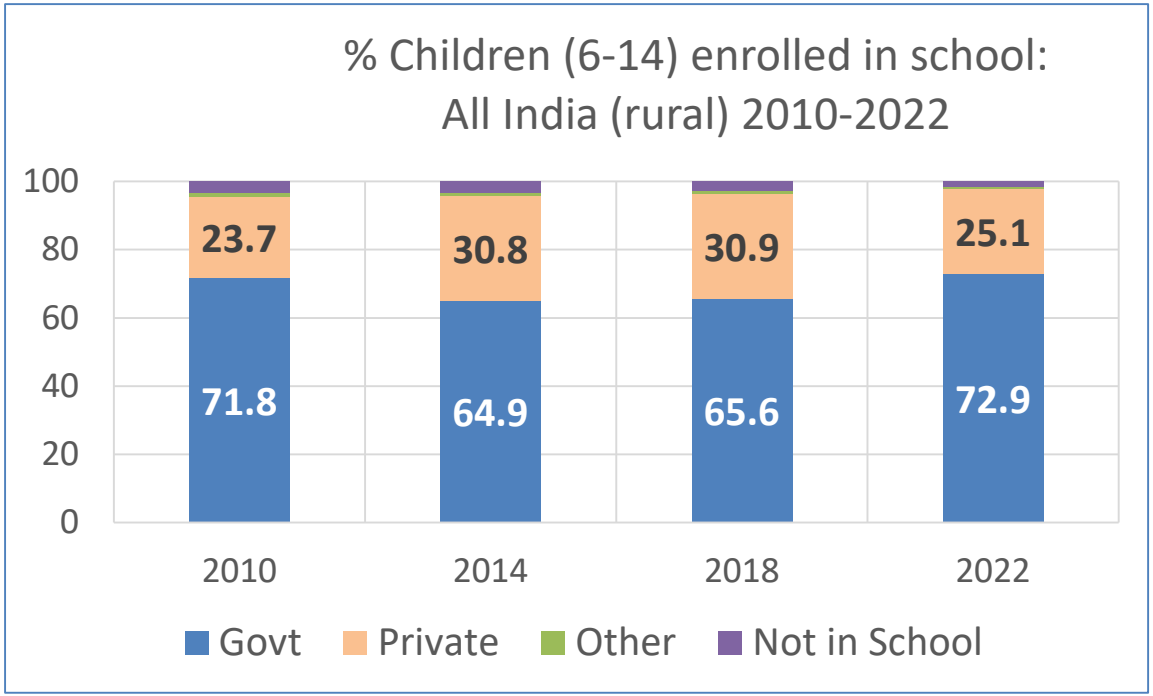
% Enrolled children who take paid tuition, Govt & Pvt schools. ASER 2018-2021 Phone Survey

2018	2020	2021
28.6	32.5	39.2

- ASER 2020 Phone Survey was done in Sept-Oct 2020, six months into school closures. In the week prior to the survey, **only one out of three children in govt schools had received any learning materials/activities** other than textbooks; those who received it often did so via WhatsApp
- Most children had textbooks for their current grade, more so in govt schools.
- The proportion of enrolled children taking paid tuition has been steadily increasing across school types.

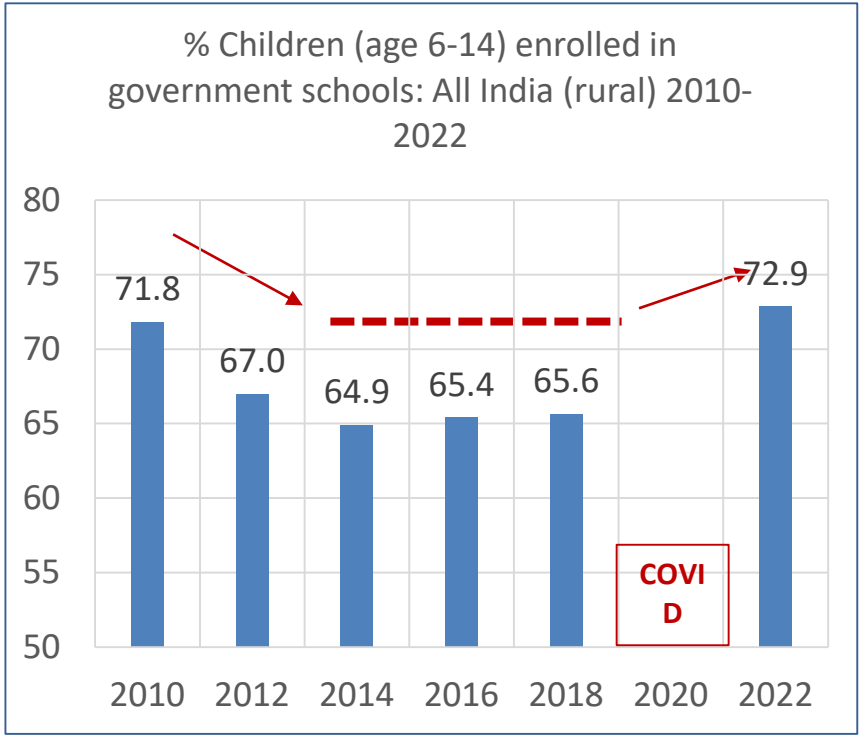
Enrolment: Almost all children (age 6-14) enrolled in school

- For children age 6-14, enrolment levels in rural India have been very high for more than a decade.
- By 2008, school enrolment levels had reached above 95%.
- Enrolment levels have gone from 96.6% in 2010 to 96.7% in 2014. **97.2% in 2018 to 98.4% in 2022**.



Govt school enrollment has increased between 2018 and 2022

Enrolment levels have gone from 96.6% in 2010 to 96.7% in 2014. **97.2% in 2018 to 98.4% in 2022**
There is an **increase of 7.3 percentage points in govt school enrolment** in the period 2018 to 2022.



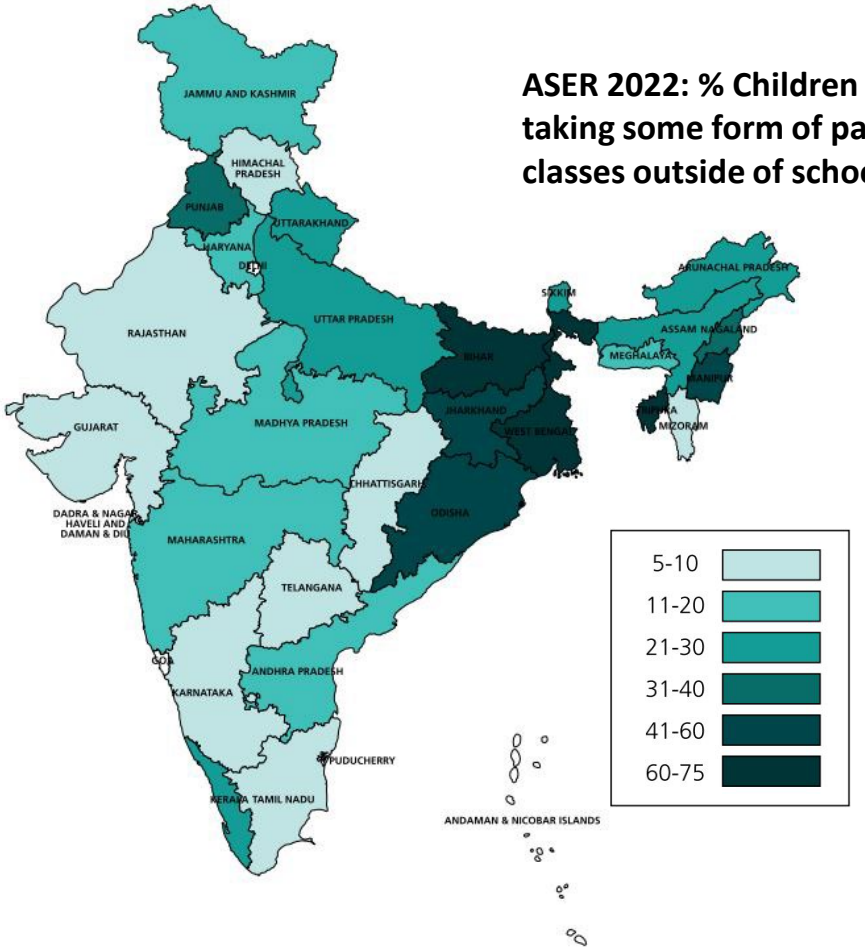
“Tuition” has gone up in most states since 2018

Between 2018 & 2022, in all states, there is an increase in the proportion of children who attend tuition classes (paid classes outside of school). The exceptions are Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Tripura.

% Children attending “tuition” classes in government and private schools.
Selected states where change is more than 5 percentage points since 2018 and All India

State	2018	2022	Pc pt change
Assam	18.8	25.3	6.5
Uttar Pradesh	15.9	23.7	7.9
Nagaland	25.4	34.9	9.4
Jharkhand	36.9	45.3	8.4
Manipur	45.1	53.4	8.3
Bihar	62.2	71.7	9.6
All India	**26.4**	**30.5**	**4.2**

ASER 2022: % Children taking some form of paid classes outside of school



Quick glimpse of ASER tasks : Reading and Arithmetic

READING TASKS

Std II level text

राजू नाम का एक लड़का था। उसकी एक बड़ी बहन व एक छोटा भाई था। उसका भाई गाँव के पास के विद्यालय में पढ़ने जाता। वह खूब मेहनत करता था। उसकी बहन बहुत अच्छी खिलाड़ी थी। उसे लंबी दौड़ लगाना अच्छा लगता था। वे तीनों रोज़ साथ-साथ मौज-मस्ती करते थे।

Std I level text

रानी नदी किनारे रहती है।
नदी में बहुत मछलियाँ हैं।
रानी उनको दाना देती है।
वे सब मज़े से दाना खाती हैं।

Letters

म र ड
ह च
ल ब न
क य

Words

गाना खुश
मौसी
पैर झोला
किला
आग मोर

ASER is a household survey. Each child assessed one on one.
S/he is marked at the highest level that s/he is able to do.
Reading tasks are available in all regional languages.

ARITHMETIC TASKS

Number Recognition/ अंक पहचान 1-9		Number Recognition/ संख्या पहचान 11-99	
3	7	65	38
1	4	92	23

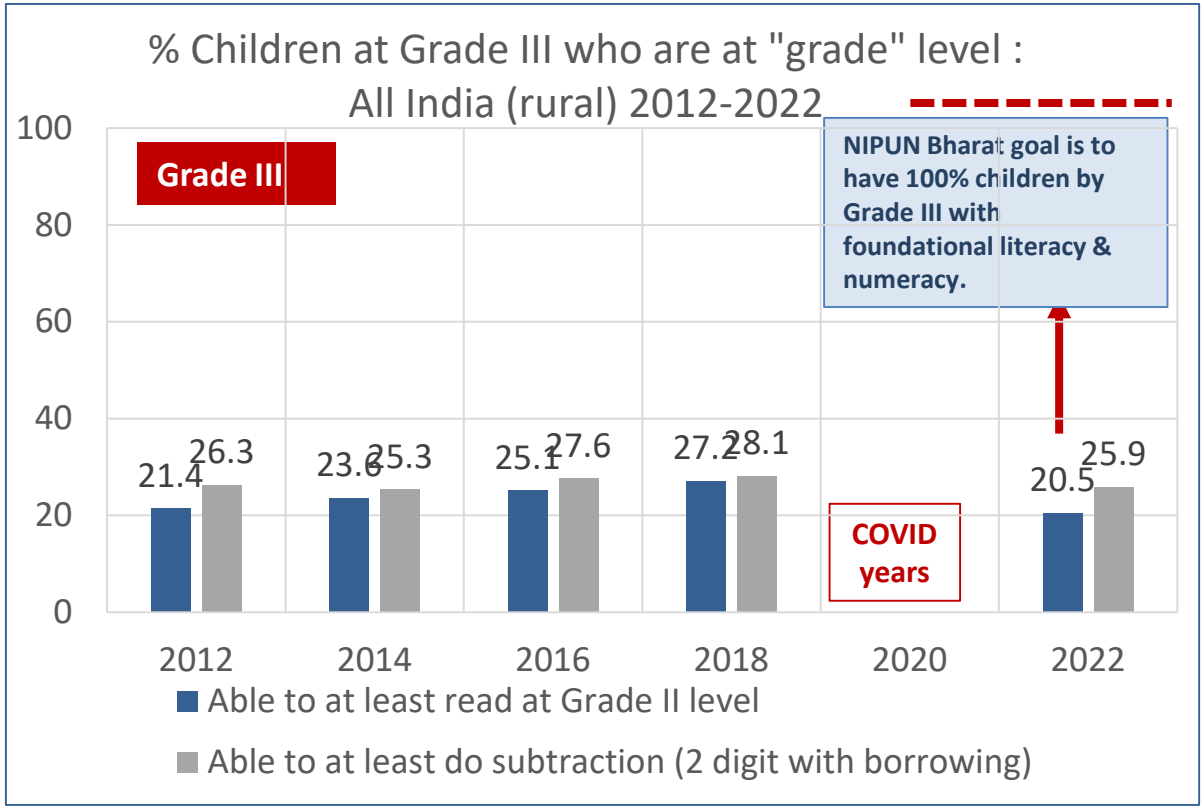
Subtraction/घटाव
(2 digit with carry over)

52	76
- 24	- 47

Division/भाग
(3 digit by 1 digit)

6) 919 (

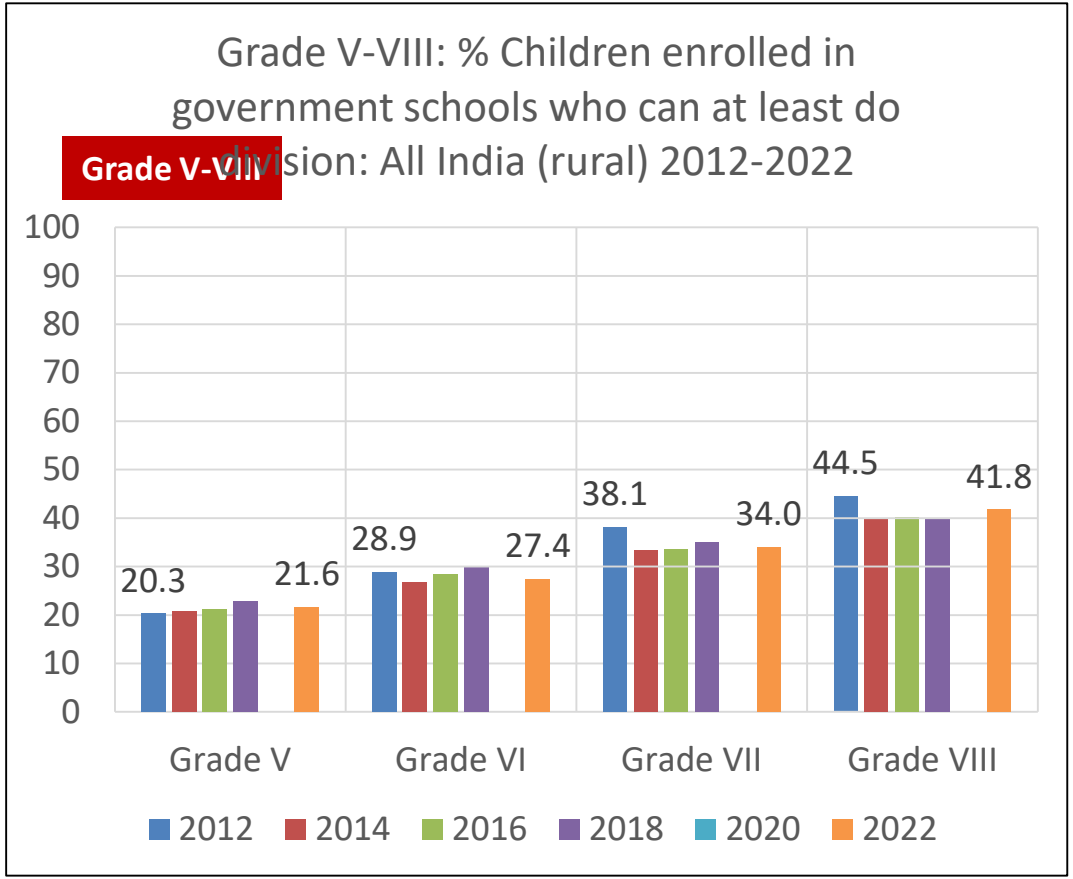
Big push needed to reach foundational literacy-numeracy goals



By the end of Std II in India, children are expected to be able to read a simple text fluently and also be able to do basic operations like subtraction. Hence, it is possible to use ASER data as a 'proxy' for the proportion of children who are at 'grade level' by the time they have reached the middle of the school year in Std III.

- All India figures suggest that from 2014 to 2018, there had been a gradual improvement in both basic reading and math. However this was interrupted by the pandemic years.
- **Greater "recovery" is needed in reading as compared to arithmetic**.
- In 2022, only 1/4th of all children in Grade III were at 'grade level' in math & about 20% in reading. This means that most children:
  - need urgent help in acquiring foundational skills in literacy and numeracy

Upper primary grades: Maths trends over time



Data from the 10 year period from 2012 to 2022 show the following trends:

- **Learning trajectories over these grades are relatively flat** (For example, the difference between learning levels in Grade VII vs that in Grade VI or V is not very much).
- Levels of basic learning in grades V-VIII have not seen much improvement in the last decade.
- As far as basic maths is concerned, a comprehensive strategy for learning improvement, starting with basic skills, is urgently needed for the upper primary grades.

Pratham’s current activities

What needs to be done to get India's kids back on the learning track?

Clear goals: Every student will attain foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3

Clear timelines: Highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2025/2027

	Foundational					Preparatory			Middle		
Age	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
Grade	Pre-primary years			Std I	Std II	Std III	Std IV	Std V	Std VI	Std VII	Std VIII

Leap Forward:

- Readiness activities for the year
- Involve parents and communities
- Foundational stage children are about 150 million. In 15 years time they will be in the labour force. What we do with them in the next 5 years will settle India's destiny for the rest of this century.

Catch up and beyond:

Children in Std III and above who still do not have foundational reading and arithmetic skills need these skills immediately and then helped to go beyond.

Learning for "life" and Preparation for "work"

Before completing Std VIII, everyday skills and learning for "life" and preparation for work also needed.

Pratham's current approach

Pratham works in two ways:

- "Direct" education programs where a Pratham team member works directly with schools, communities and families
- Partnership programs where Pratham partners with government at city, district or state level to implement learning improvement programs together.

"Direct" education programs

- Focus on school readiness for younger children
- Efforts for "catch up" for older children

In both cases: in addition to work in school

- Involvement of families in learning activities
- Encouraging youth to help younger children
- Reliance on group work in the neighbourhood
- Use of technology to assist the human interaction

Pratham-govt partnership programs

- Focus on school readiness for younger children
- Efforts for "catch up" for older children

Building in a parent-community component into school programs

Example of Pratham-govt partnership work: Learning loss

EVIDENCE

Karnataka: % Children enrolled in government schools who can at least read a Std II level text – ASER data over time

Std	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
II	6.8		7.4		3.0
III	18.9		19.4		9.8
IV	29.8		35.2		17.8
V	41.9		47.6		32.8

Interpreting ASER data over time

Example: Cohorts moving from Std II to Std IV

See red cohort:

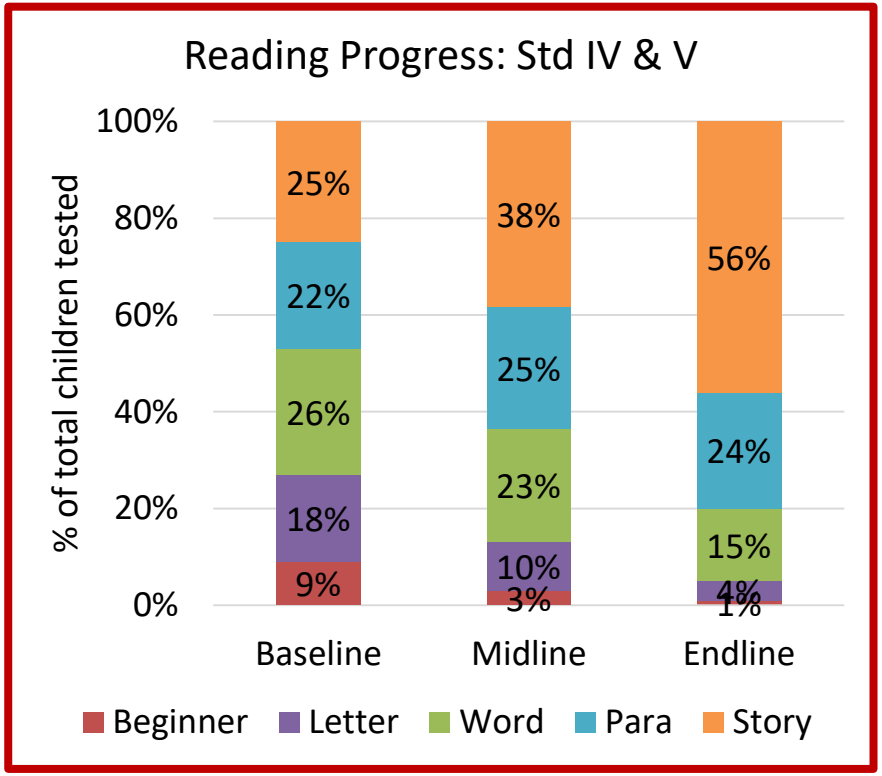
- Children in Std 2 in 2016 moved to Std 4 in 2018.
- In this 2-year period, the ability of the cohort to read Std 2 level text increased from 6.8% to 35.2% (28.4 percentage points or 14.2 percentage points annually).

BUT… see purple cohort:

- 2 years later, for children who were in Std 2 in 2018 and in Std 4 in 2020, the corresponding increase was from 7.4% to 17.8% (only 10.4 percentage points or 5.2 percentage points annually).

Example: Pratham-government partnership work

"Catch up" is possible. Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) is one solution



Odu Karnataka 2021-22:
TaRL (Teaching-at-the-Right level) program – Pratham & Govt. of Karnataka

Program started Jan 2022 first week
Program ended April 2022 first week.

37,680 government primary schools
884,936 children Grade IV & V
All 34 districts of Karnataka.

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All ASER reports can be found on:
www.asercentre.org

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