



School enrolment fell during pandemic: ASER

Context:

According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2021 the percentage of rural children who were not enrolled in school doubled during the pandemic.

Relevance:

GS-II: Social Justice and Governance (Issues related to education, Government Initiatives and Policies)

Dimensions of the Article:

1. Highlights of the 2021 ASER report
2. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)

Highlights of the 2021 ASER report

- As per report, there was an overall increase in proportion of children enrolled in govt schools in between 2018 and 2020. Enrolment increased from 64.3% to 65.8%. But in 2021, enrolment suddenly increased to 70.3%.
- Enrolment rate in private schools has decreased as compared to last year. In 2020, enrolment rate was 28.8% which decreased to 24.4% in 2021.
- In 2021, 73.1% school respondents received training to implement Covid-19 prevention measures.
- Even though availability of smartphones increased to 67.6% in 2021 as compared to 36.5% in 2018, around 79% of children in private schools had smartphone at home as

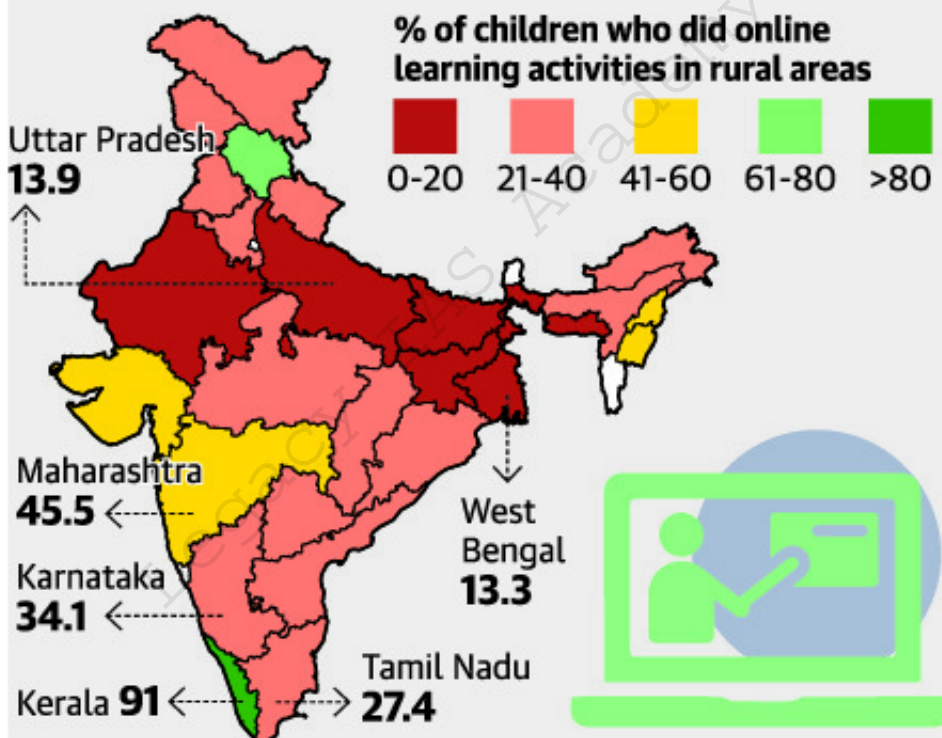


opposed to 63.7% children in government school.

- Number of school-going children taking tuition increased by 40% during closure of their schools.
- 52% of the respondents cited financial distress caused by Covid-19 pandemic as the reason of increase in enrolments in government school.

Wide gap

In only five out of 26 States, more than half of the enrolled children did online learning activities at home in 2021 in rural areas. The share was less than 20% in five States



Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)

- ASER report is a nationwide survey of rural education and learning outcomes in terms of reading and arithmetic skills that has been conducted by the NGO Pratham for the last 15 years.
- It uses Census 2011 as the sampling frame and continues to be an important national source of information about children's foundational skills across the country.
- ASER 2018 surveyed children in the age group of 3 to 16 years and included almost all rural districts in India and generated estimates of foundational reading and arithmetic abilities of children in the age group 5 to 16 years.
- ASER 2019 reported on the pre-schooling or schooling status of children in the age



group 4 to 8 years in 26 rural districts, focused on the “early years” and laid emphasis on “developing problem-solving faculties and building a memory of children, and not content knowledge”.

- ASER 2020 is the first ever phone-based ASER survey and it was conducted in September 2020, the sixth month of national school closures.
- In 2021 due to the pandemic, ASER’s 16th annual report was based on a phone survey assessing enrolment in schools and tuition classes, and access to devices and learning resources, rather than the organisation’s usual face-to-face survey which assesses learning outcomes and children’s competencies in reading and arithmetic skills.
- The survey aimed to find out how children in aged between 5-16 studied at home since the onset of Covid-19 pandemic as well as challenges that schools & households now face in the backdrop of opening up of schools.

-Source: The Hindu

Legacy IAS Academy