



STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON CHILDREN IN FOUR STATES IN INDIA



Study entrusted by
TATA Trusts

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List of Abbreviations

APU	Azim Premji Foundation
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report.
ASS	Ahmed Seva Sansthan
BEO	Block Education Officer
CBGA	Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CInI	Collectives for Integrated Livelihoods Initiatives
CLCs	Community Learning Centres
CMF	Centre for Micro Finance
CSD	Council for Social Development
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DCPO	District Child Protection Officer
DIKSHA	Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FIR	First Information Report
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPI	Gender Parity Index
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ISRO	Indian Space Research Organisation
KGBV	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya
LEO	Labour Enforcement Officer
MDM	Mid-Day Meals
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NEP	National Education Policy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIPUN	National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy

NISHTHA	National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement
NROER	National Repository of Open Educational Resources
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMGKY	Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana
PMJDY	Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
POCSO	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences
PPT	PowerPoint Presentation
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PTMs	Parent Teacher Meetings
QR	Quick Response code
RTE	Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education
SCs	Scheduled Castes
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDMC	School Development and Management Committee
SKDRDT	Sri Kshetra Dharmashala Rural Development Trust
SMC	School Management Committee
SMILE	Social Media Interface for learning Engagement programme
STs	Scheduled Tribes
STARS	Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States
TCL	Trust Community Livelihoods
THR	Take-Home Ration
TLM	Teaching Learning Material
U DISE	Unified District Information System for Education
UEE	Universal Elementary Education
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

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Executive Summary

A. BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented challenges and crises and brought life to a standstill across the globe. Children have been particularly impacted and their very experience of childhood, life, well-being, and education has been threatened. The pandemic, thus, poses challenges in fulfilling the rights of children to life, protection, participation, and education, which have multiplier effects and enable the child to access other rights. It is in this context that the study conducted by the Council for Social Development (CSD) on behalf of Tata Trusts examines the impact of the pandemic on the lives and education of children in four states of Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

The study assesses the effect of the pandemic on the education of rural children and their lives; understands the perception of the key stakeholders on the disruption of school education due to school closure and the challenges faced after the graded reopening of schools, traces the experience of children attending government and private schools, reverse migrated children and those who were supposed to enter grade I in 2020–21, and identifies policy and implementation challenges and best practices that strengthen the public education system in rural areas for ensuring quality education.

A mixed method approach was used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data from the primary survey. The primary survey was conducted from mid-January 2022 to mid-March 2022 in three blocks across two selected districts in each of the states of Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. Instruments such as survey schedule, focus group discussion, and open-ended interviews were used to elicit information from 1200 parents, 1200 children, 120 teachers, 120 Anganwadi workers, 14 schools, and other stakeholders such as government officials, NGOs, SMC members, and elected representatives of panchayats in the four states.

B. KEY FINDINGS

1. Effect of the Pandemic on the Family and Children

Socio-Economic Impact: The study highlights that the pandemic has resulted in the loss of livelihood and a sharp rise in unemployment. The fall in income levels has pushed households down the income ladder. Despite the beneficial social assistance provided under

the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) in the form of cash and kind, people are yet to recoup from the indebtedness and associated vulnerabilities induced by the pandemic.

Increased Workload of Children: Adverse family situations forced some children to drop out of school and contribute to family income. Care work and household chores also led to a small number of children dropping out. Accompanying parents for work, helping in sibling care, and doing household chores increased the workload of those remaining in school. Gender differences could be noted in work undertaken by boys and girls including boys running errands while girls engaged in housekeeping.

Health and Nutrition of Children: Disturbance in the nutritional intake of children could be observed and some indulged in over-eating, while others did not have enough food. Take-home rations (THR) were provided by the Anganwadi centres and schools, only at a later stage, though it was neglected in the initial period of lockdown. However, irregular supply was reported by one-fourth of the children. Distribution of sanitary pads to adolescent girls, a regular phenomenon in the pre-pandemic times, was not resumed even after two years.

The well-being of Children: Curtailed physical activity of children, increased stress level and anxiety, and reduced social interaction was reported during school closure. A drop in wage levels, often led to an increase in domestic violence at home, impacting the mental well-being of children. Despite the negative impact on the well-being of children in the closure period, a positive factor that was highlighted was the better bonding between parents and children in the lockdown period.

Protection of Children: While the loss of livelihood forced the boys to enter the labour market, it forced the girls to get married at a young age. Cases of child labour, trafficking, child abuse, child marriage, etc. were highlighted in the surveyed states. However, there is hardly any data on child protection and the existing mechanism of child protection lacked effectiveness in addressing the challenges of children.

II. Effect of Pandemic on the Education of Children

1. Education during School Closure

Prolonged School Closure: Prolonged school closure for more than 18 months disrupted the education of children, and affected their everyday routine and discipline. Lack of schooling experience, thus, hurt children's development in all forms: emotional, mental, and physical. In Uttar Pradesh, parents desperately wanted the schools to open in a full-fledged manner, as some children were under the negative influence of alcohol and drugs.

Access: After the pandemic-induced school closure, a substantial proportion of children shifted to government schools and the major reason for such a shift was their inability to pay school fees.

Disruption in School Infrastructure: On average, one in five parents expressed concerns about the dilapidated condition of school toilets, boundary walls, and conditions of classrooms.

Teacher Shortage: Teacher shortage was a major issue that was highlighted in the surveyed government schools. To address this issue, contractual teachers are appointed in the schools and in some schools they are appointed and paid by the panchayats or the NGOs.

Capacity Building of Teachers: In Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, more than 50 per cent of the teachers reported receiving training during the phase of school closure. Only about 40 per cent of the teachers on average in Uttar Pradesh said that the training was on the use of digital devices, while in other states it was underreported.

2. Learning Experience of Children

Learning of Children with Access to Digital Education: Though digital education was promoted during the school closure period, only 27.5 per cent had access to digital devices. Among those who accessed digital education, only 15.8 per cent found the online learning experience to be good. Parents expressed concerns about the increased screen time and exposure to harmful content. Online education was not based on children's needs and was designed in a top-down manner, which did not benefit the children and the community.

Learning of Children with No Access to Digital Education: Three-fourth of the surveyed children did not have access to digital education and amongst them, nearly 10 per cent were not studying at all during the school closure period. About 70 per cent hardly studied for 1-2 hours and only about one-third of the children were able to give substantial time to studies. Open air classes, community learning centres of Tata Trusts, and tuitions by volunteers facilitated the learning of these children.

Overall Impact on Learning: Parents felt that their children's learning was severely hampered, as they had forgotten the basics and were not able to construct basic sentences. Their learning was not commensurate with their grades. Further, the learning pace has become poor and some children also lost interest in studies, as reported by 35 per cent of the parents.

III. COVID-19 Response Measures: Interventions of Key Stakeholders

Initiatives of the Government: The government initiatives mostly focused on digital solutions viz., web portals, mobile Apps, television, radio and YouTube channels, and WhatsApp to share educational content with the children. The most widely used digital solution was Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA). However, only 32 per cent of the children used digital devices for educational purposes, while more than 40 per cent used them for entertainment. Though the government undertook offline initiatives at a later stage, viz., home visits by teachers, *mohalla* classes, regular classroom teaching, etc. they lacked effective implementation.

Initiatives of the NGOs: Tata Trusts along with its associate organizations and other NGOs in the surveyed states engaged in providing a face-to-face learning experience to children, through community learning centres (CLCs). Other activities carried out by the NGOs included strengthening libraries of government schools, execution of learning activities for children such as book talk, read-aloud, storytelling, writing of poems, riddles, stories, puzzles, etc. Condensed workbooks for various subjects and activity sheets were prepared for the primary and upper primary classes. These initiatives were mostly based on local requirements and included non-ICT interventions that offered inclusive solutions and provided education for all.

Initiatives of Teachers: Though many teachers were not actively involved in taking action for bringing back children to school, there are exemplary examples of primary school teachers playing a significant role in bringing children back to school and without their intervention, many children might not have taken admission in upper primary classes and might have dropped out. On average, 60 per cent of the teachers reported constantly being engaged in making home visits to track the children.

Initiatives of Other Stakeholders: Other stakeholders such as elected representatives of panchayats, school management committees, and the community also played a key role in supporting the education of children in the post-pandemic times. They engaged in sanitizing schools, distributing masks and sanitizers, and also took care of the maintenance of school infrastructure. SMCs were majorly involved in the mobilization of funds for school development activities and brought back children to schools in some of the schools.

Readiness of Anganwadi Centres and Schools Post-Reopening: Anganwadi centres and schools by and large exhibited readiness in welcoming back children to schools in the post-

reopening phase. To ensure children's safety, centres and schools were sanitized, masks distributed, and sanitizers were arranged.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the insights that emerged from this study, the following actionable recommendations have been suggested to plan for short-term and long-term solutions to key stakeholders, so that the children can resume their schooling in the post-pandemic era with confidence and success.

I. FOR POLICYMAKERS

Social Protection of Marginalized Sections: Raise concerns to the policymakers on the need to offer social assistance to the marginalized sections and create additional jobs through MGNREGA, to relieve the people from the clutches of poverty and high indebtedness.

Protection of Children: The government should relax criteria for benefit packages where needed, increase more of residential facilities for girls more, and show zero tolerance for incidents of child abuse, child labour, trafficking, early marriage, etc.

Investment in Collection of Real-time Data on Child Vulnerabilities: In the post-pandemic times, cases of dropouts, abuse, trafficking, early marriage, child labour, etc. have been increasing. To address these vulnerabilities of children, the government should invest in the collection of accurate data on this issue.

Interventions for Children Should be Right based, Inclusive, and Sustainable: The state has to take the prime responsibility to protect and ensure that the Right to Education of children is not threatened or violated, even in an emergency.

Financial Allocation for Education: Raise concern to the policymakers on the inadequacy of funding for education and implementation of the norms and provisions of the Right to Education Act.

Strengthen Public Education: Highlight the requirement to strengthen the public education system on aspects related to teacher recruitment, training of teachers, and infrastructure and priority had to be laid on these aspects by the government.

Recognition of ICT as a Tool, Rather than a Replacement for Face-to-face Education: It is important to highlight with evidence that, in no circumstances, ICT can be a replacement for face-to-face education; it can be used as a tool to bridge the gap.

Wider Definition for Learning: The pandemic revealed the gaps in the learning levels of children. The concept of learning has to relate to the holistic development of children. Though attempts on this front were made in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and the Right to Education (RTE) Act, no full-fledged measure has been made and there is a need to revisit the NCF, to widen the perspective of learning, in light of what was revealed during the pandemic.

II. FOR FUNDING AGENCIES

Fund for Studies on Child Vulnerabilities: There is insufficient real-time data on the dropout of children in the post-pandemic times and cases related to child labour, trafficking, child abuse, child marriage, etc. Financial support to address issues related to child vulnerabilities has to be made.

Financial Support for COVID-19 Impact Research and Interventions: Donor organizations can also fund research and interventions that try to examine and address COVID-19-induced vulnerabilities in the education of children.

III.FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Promoting Community Ownership of Schools: Active role of the panchayats, school management committees and the community was visible in states such as Rajasthan and Karnataka, while it collapsed in most of the other states. The successful models should be replicated in other states.

Active Involvement of PRIs and SMCs: Panchayats and SMCs should be actively involved in school strengthening activities and incentivized for their positive contribution to school development.

IV. FOR TATA TRUSTS, FIELD STAFF, AND OTHER NGOS

On the various recommendations highlighted for policymakers, Tata Trusts, field staff and other NGOs can engage in the implementation of activities, advocacy, capacity building, etc. and make community resources available. In this regard, the specific recommendations that can be formulated in their activities are indicated below:

Specific Recommendations for Tata Trusts and NGOs

	Implementation (Service Provision)/ Awareness Generation	Advocacy	Capacity Building	As a Watchdog in Tracking Educational Interventions
Provision of additional social assistance to the marginalized sections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply of emergency kits, food supplements, dry rations, etc. during emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy on the need for social protection measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of ASHA, Anganwadi workers, SHGs, community, etc. on immediate response measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey on social protection of vulnerable people
Collection of real-time data on child vulnerabilities and addressing the concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection on child marriage, child trafficking, child labour, child abuse, etc. at the village/block/district/state level wherever possible • Awareness building and learning interventions for girl's education and children with special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy on the lack of updated data on child vulnerabilities • Advocacy on the exclusion of eligible children from accessing COVID-19 relief in the case of parental death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camps and counseling sessions for affected children and mainstreaming them in schools • Vocational training and remedial classes for children to pursue both education and work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing in the case of identification of cases of child marriage, trafficking, labour, abuse, etc. • Whistleblowing in the case of misconduct with children in residential schools, camps, houses, schools, etc. • Involving volunteers or community mobilizers to monitor and check child vulnerabilities
Strengthening the public education system on aspects of teacher recruitment, training, and infrastructure building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing the curriculum of training modules of the teacher training institutes • Handholding public schools in meeting their requirements post-reopening • Resource mobilization for interventions on infrastructure building of government schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy on teacher recruitment and quality of teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of trainers • Teacher training should include children's lived experiences in pedagogy • Training sessions for teachers on handling children post- COVID-19, psychological support for children, learning enhancement, child development, etc. • Training on teacher preparedness to handle future emergencies/school closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment study on teacher shortage • Policy brief on the inadequacy of funds to meet COVID-19 challenges
Recognition of ICT as a tool to cope with any emergency, rather than as a replacement for face-to-face education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging the gap in ICT wherever possible to facilitate children who do not have digital access • Continuation of community learning activities to ensure face-to-face learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy through policy brief on the advantages and disadvantages of digital education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of teachers on using ICT as a tool for education • Counseling sessions with children to deal with mobile addiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and dialogue with educational stakeholders on the prudent use of ICT

Ensuring that right of children to education is protected and inclusive measures are adopted	<p>Early Childhood Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A awareness drive with parents on the need to send their children to school and ensure regular attendance post-reopening • Ensure regular supply of nutritional meals and supplements to children in Anganwadi centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy when (nutritional meal) right to food and education are not ensured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of Anganwadi workers and teachers on handling children in the post- reopening phase • Handholding Anganwadi teachers with their requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the functioning of Anganwadi centres
	<p>School Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A awareness drive with parents on the need to send their children to school and ensure regular attendance post reopening • Ensure regular supply of MDM/dry ration to children in schools • Educational interventions for hard-to-reach residential pockets, children of migrant households, children who have dropped out, etc. (who were beyond the reach of the government) • Track the transition rate and completion rate of students till higher secondary levels and plan and execute interventions for dropped out or working students • Awareness campaigns with parents on the psychological impact of school closure on children • Lived experiences of children should be incorporated into the interventions of NGOs interventions – e.g. separate learning slots for working children; different learning strategies for children who lost interest in studies; critical dialogue, sessions and discussions with children facing violence or aggressive situation at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy on the inadequate funding to meet RTE norms and requirements • Advocacy when MDM/dry rations and education are not ensured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of teachers on handling children in the post-reopening phase • Handholding teachers with their requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the functioning of schools
Widening the definition of learning and planning and executing interventions for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing toolkits for teachers on holistic learning of children • Learning interventions to address the learning gap of children, especially in Classes III-V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate and dialogue with parliamentarians, NGOs, academicians, etc. on the concept of holistic learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher training on holistic learning of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through policy briefs and field surveys, highlight the narrow definition of learning

Note: Specific recommendations given are indicative. Based on the specialization of Tata Trusts, more specific activities can be planned.

1

Introduction

1.1 Context

The unprecedented crisis in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak suddenly altered a wide spectrum of human life. It ranged from confined social behaviour and public participation to the role of primary institutions such as family, school, and community, affecting the normal social and economic life of people. Beyond affecting life, it impacted systems including health, education, and the overall governance and posed challenges to the democratic functioning of the country (Hasan 2021). After the USA, India has been the most impacted country in the world but with far fewer recorded deaths (UNICEF 2021). India went into full lockdown on 22 March 2020, which had a severe impact on millions of low-income migrant workers and daily-wage earners. Within a month of the lockdown, the country's unemployment rate increased drastically, from 8.7 per cent in March to 23.5 per cent in April 2020, leading to the loss of jobs for nearly 140 million people, and an income drop for more than 45 per cent of the households (Goel et al. 2020).

In a socio-economically diverse country like India, the impacts were not the same across the vast population of the country. The pandemic had a devastating impact on informal workers employed in low-wage sectors. Amongst them, the hardest hit were the migrants who had to face several hardships while traversing back to their home state due to loss of jobs (Nanda 2020). The pandemic exposed the blatant disparities that existed in the socio-economic facilities in the country. Further, the major impact of COVID-19 was observed on health, loss of work/income, increased debt, and discontinuation of children's education (Save the Children 2020).

COVID-19 has affected children across caste, gender, and regions with schools being shut down and traditional classrooms being transformed into digital platforms. This has not only increased the learning inequalities but also pushed a large number of children out of school due to the digital divide (Kundu and Sonawane 2020).

The economic shock created by the pandemic is likely to have a greater impact on the education of children from marginalized communities (Alvi and Gupta 2020). Higher dropouts have led to an increase in the incidence of child marriages, child trafficking, child labour, domestic violence, and additional household responsibilities for girls (UNICEF 2021). Further, this transition has been drastic for children as it impacted their experience of 'childhood', social participation, and, most importantly, their education. This poses challenges in fulfilling the rights of the child to survival, protection, participation, and education, which has a multiplier effect and enables the child to access the other rights. School education has been hit the hardest, because it caters to children who, unlike adults, are not in full control of their own lives (Ghatak et al 2022).

Further, the pandemic has made a significant impact on the mental health, education, and daily routine of students (Chaturvedi et al 2021) and behavioural changes have been reported in studies by the likes of Mitra and Sharma (2021). Additional workload and financial burden in the pandemic led to frustration and burnout amongst the parents, which further culminated in stress among their children. Moreover, digital learning, being an unfamiliar terrain, led to depression, anxiety, and even suicidal attempts among children, triggered by academic stress and apprehensions regarding the future. For students with special needs, the challenges were obviously much higher (Mahapatra & Sharma, 2021; Phillip, 2021).

The existing literature has captured extensively how educational inequality across the globe and within India has aggravated as a result of pandemic-induced school closure. Within India, every child of 6–14 years of age has a constitutionally guaranteed fundamental right to free and compulsory education. However, this fundamental entitlement of children along with other rights of health and nutrition, and development got impacted due to the pandemic. As children in India have a diverse socio-economic background, from poor and socially disadvantageous families, reverse migrated families, children with special needs, and girls, they faced various inequalities in terms of access to meaningful digital education or entitlements. However, this issue has been tangentially addressed so far.

Further, the views and voices of various stakeholders such as parents, children, teachers, and community members are extremely crucial. Although existing studies highlight some of their challenges, very few studies have elaborated on the views of various stakeholders, particularly that of children. Some reports (Hanushek and Woessmann 2020; UNICEF 2021; APF 2021) tried to assess the loss of learning among children but from the limited

perspective of learning mathematics and languages. Very few studies (UNICEF & UNESCO 2021; CSF 2021) focused on government and civil society interventions to reduce the negative impacts. The present study tried to fulfil some of the existing gaps in the existing body of knowledge about the impact of the pandemic on children.

1.2 Objectives

The present study commissioned by Tata Trusts to the Council for Social Development explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of children and their lives. The purpose is to plan for short-term and long-term solutions to help children cope with this difficult time and emerge with the ability to resume their schooling in the post-pandemic era with confidence and success. The study also aims to shed light on some of the innovative measures and practices adopted by state and non-state actors such as school teachers, SMC members, school authorities, administrators, civil societies, etc. to minimize the impact of COVID-19 by providing them support for their education, safety, health, nutrition, and their overall well-being. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Assess the effects of the pandemic on the education of rural children and their lives, particularly at the early critical education and elementary education stage.
2. Understand the perception of teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders (such as community leaders, and civil society organizations) on the disruption of school education (infrastructural and digital) during the ongoing pandemic because of school closures and challenges faced even after the graded reopening of schools.
3. Study whether the impacts and experiences have been different for children going to the government schools and those accessing the private schools in the same community.
4. Highlight the experiences of the children who were supposed to enter school in Grade I in the academic year 2020–21, and also the reverse migrated children.
5. Explore the policy and implementation challenges, and best practices in strengthening the public education system, particularly in rural areas for ensuring quality education.

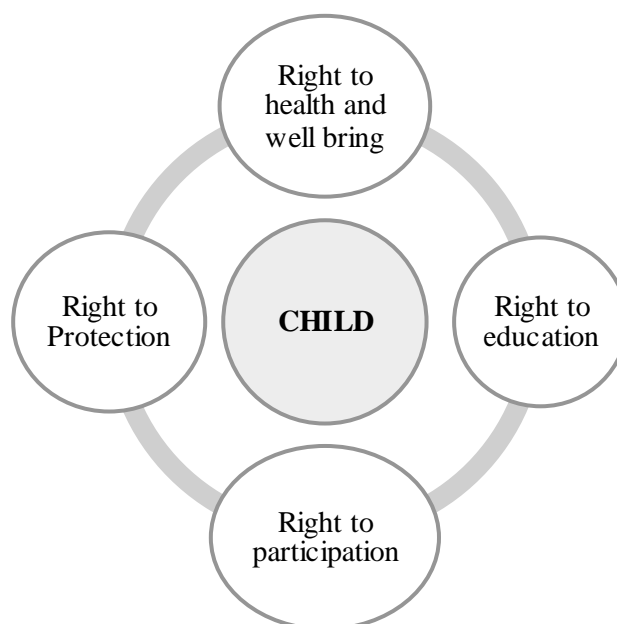
1.3 Approach and Methodology

1.3.1 Conceptual Framework

Based on the objectives of the research, the child rights-based approach and child-centred approach were used to study the impact of COVID-19 on the lives of children. These approaches are aligned to the legal conventions to which India is a signatory as the

Convention on the Rights of the Child; or political, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Figure 1.1: A child rights approach



Source: Prepared by the authors.

In research, a child rights-based approach is a conceptual framework for the process of human development that is normatively based on international children's rights standards and operationally directed to promoting, protecting, and fulfilling children's human rights. Apart from the international children's rights, in India, the enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, (2009) was a historic step after decade-long efforts made by civil society with regard to the universalization of elementary education for children of 6-14 years age groups. On the other hand, a child-centred approach is based on methods that enable researchers to engage with children as active participants and the most relevant source of information on their lives (Mayeza 2017). It also allows constant and active, friendly, and child-centred relationships with children and critical self-reflexivity of the researchers. To understand the impacts on learning, we have employed a social constructionist approach and the Delors framework (UNESCO 1996).

The social constructionist approach is based on the assumptions that knowledge is shared and evolving, and perceptions as well as knowledge, are developed in a social context. As mentioned earlier, family, school, and other social environments play important roles in children's life and education. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 and the RTE Act (2009) also viewed education and learning through a constructionist approach, where

knowledge is shared and co-constructed in the classroom by the teachers and the students. The constructionist approach enables to study of factors like the children's school experience (virtual or physical during the pandemic) vis-à-vis the child's engagement with family, society, etc. On the other hand, the Delors framework looks at learning from a holistic perspective which encapsulates four pillars of learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be.

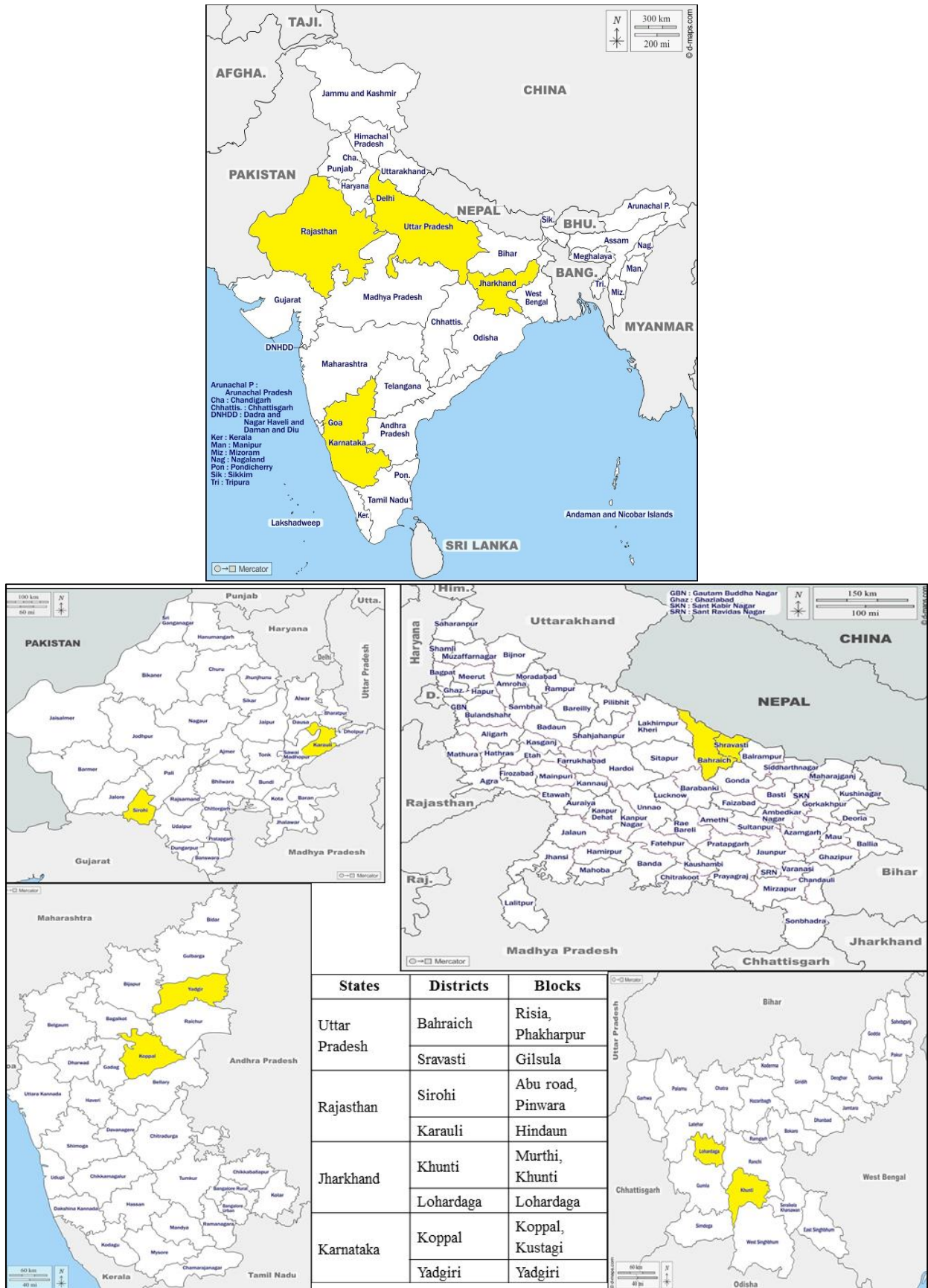
1.3.2 Research Design

The study derives its data from primary and secondary sources and a mixed method research design has been used for collecting qualitative and quantitative information. For collecting primary data in the study area, survey schedules, and focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted. Children were also engaged through drawing activities to capture their perspectives about school closure and its possible impacts. The fieldwork for the study was conducted between January and March 2022. The quantitative primary data were analysed in the statistical software package-SPSS, whereas the researchers manually did the thematic qualitative and narrative analysis. The details about the study area and the sample are presented in the following sub-sections.

1.3.3 Study Area

This study was conducted in three blocks across two selected districts in each of the states of Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2: Study area



Source: Prepared by authors based on blank maps from d-maps.com

1.3.4 Sample Size

The study was conducted in three blocks across two selected districts in each of the states.¹ Using a structured questionnaire, we surveyed 100 children and 100 parents in each of the 12 blocks. Ten teachers and Anganwadi workers were also interviewed in each block. We visited 10 government and 4 private schools across the study area. Although our study primarily focused on children attending rural government schools and Anganwadis, to have a comparative analysis we also included low-budget private schools in the rural areas. Headteachers, teachers, and Anganwadi workers were interviewed using structured and semi-structured questionnaires. In-depth interviews with government educational officers, child rights officials, and elected representatives of Panchayati Raj institutions (PRI) were also conducted. The data and information were complemented through focus group discussions (FGDs) with various stakeholders such as PRI members, school management committees (SMCs), Anganwadi workers, and parents. The detailed sample size of the respondents is presented in Table 1.1, whereas the tools designed for data collection have been attached as Annexures.

Table 1.1: Sample size and survey instruments canvassed for primary data collection

Sample	Unit	Total sample size	Survey Instruments
Blocks	3 blocks per state	12 blocks	-
Parents	100 per block	1200 parents	Structured Schedule
Children	100 per block	1200 children	Structured Schedule
Teachers	10 per block	120 teachers	Structured Schedule
Anganwadi workers	10 per block	120 workers	Structured Schedule
Government officials (including education, child rights, and PRI members)	At least 5 per state	20–25 government officials	Semi-structured Schedule
School visit	At least two government and one private school per state	14 elementary schools	Structured Schedule
FGDs (with children, parents, community members, CSOs, NGOs)	3-4 FGD per block	12–16 FGDs	Semi-structured Schedule

Source: Survey

Throughout the survey, a gender-balanced approach was followed to include views of fathers, mothers, and girls and boys. Table 1.2 presents the gender distribution of parents, children, and teachers.

¹ Tata Trusts is engaged in school, community, and system-level interventions in these states. The Trusts works in respective states through its associate organizations.

Table 1.2: Gender distribution of the interviewed parents, children, and teachers

States	District	Block	Parents		Children		Teachers	
			Female	Male	Girl	Boy	Female	Male
Jharkhand	Khunti	Khunti	50	50	57	43	1	9
		Murhu	50	50	41	59	5	5
	Lohardaga	Lohardaga	50	50	51	49	1	9
Karnataka	Koppal	Koppal	50	49	50	50	4	6
		Kustagi	50	50	50	50	1	9
	Yadgiri	Yadgiri	50	51	50	50	2	8
Rajasthan	Karauli	Hindaun	49	51	46	54	4	6
	Sirohi	Abu Road	55	45	51	49	2	8
		Pindwara	55	45	43	57	4	6
Uttar Pradesh	Bahraich	Phakharpur	50	50	53	47	3	7
		Risia	50	50	36	64	2	8
	Sharawasti	Gilaula	50	50	48	52	4	6

Source: Survey

1.3.5 Limitation of the Study

Despite having a well-thought research design and methodology, the study faced the following limitations:

1. As the fieldwork was conducted during the ongoing pandemic time, schools were not completely operational in all the states. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, some schools were not functioning properly, and children were coming on a rotational basis, whereas in Jharkhand, the schools had just reopened.
2. Despite making attempts, we could manage to meet the child protection officials only in two states, namely Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.
3. We mostly visited only those schools where the Tata Trusts team had its interventions. However, in the study area, other NGOs and CSOs like Azim Premji Foundation, Sri Kshetra Dharmasthala Rural Development Trust, Agha Khan Foundation, and Pratham among others are also working. Although we managed to interview some of them, still their interventions were not captured holistically.
4. In the study area, the incidents of child labour have been found to have increased. In fact, during the fieldwork, we found many such children working in the streets and roadside food stalls. However, given the sensitivity of the issue, we were not allowed to interview any such children by their employers.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The entire report consists of six chapters. The introductory chapter presents the context of the study, objectives, approach, and methodology. Chapter 2 presents the survey of literature on

the impact of COVID-19 on the education of children with a special focus on marginalized sections. Chapter 3 discusses the impact of the pandemic on children related to work, health and wellbeing, child protection, etc. whereas Chapter 4 explores the impact on education. Chapter 5 sheds light on the state and non-state interventions that had been undertaken during the closure and reopening phases and the resultant outcome of those measures. The concluding Chapter 6 summarizes the findings and provides recommendations separately for policymakers, NGOs, field staff of Tata Trust, funding agencies, and local communities.

2

Literature Review

This chapter provides a thematic presentation of the survey on the impact of COVID-19 on the education of children with a special focus on marginalized children in rural areas.

2.1 Pandemic-Induced Educational Inequalities Across the Globe

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only affected the lives and health of people but also caused learning crises, social and emotional repercussions among students across the globe (McKinsey & Company 2022, The World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF 2021, UNICEF 2020). The crisis brought the education systems across the world to a halt, with school closures affecting more than 1.6 billion learners (The World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF 2021). Across the globe, an increase in mental health issues, reports of violence against children, rising obesity, increase in teenage pregnancy, and rising levels of chronic absenteeism and dropouts have been observed. This is primarily because children in their crucial learning years have been deprived of the daily experience of schooling, bringing with it deprivations from related aspects of academic learning, social interactions, nutrition and health monitoring, and protection (McKinsey & Company 2022).

These reports also highlighted that the existing educational inequality among the rich and the poor countries has widened as a result. According to The World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF (2021), even before the pandemic more than 50 per cent of children in low-income and middle-income countries were living in learning poverty, which has increased to 70 per cent in the post-pandemic period. According to the report, ‘teachers in many low-and middle-income countries received limited professional development support to transition to remote learning, leaving them unprepared to engage with learners and caregivers. At home, the households’ ability to respond to the shock varied by income level. Children from disadvantaged households were less likely to benefit from remote learning than their peers, often due to a lack of access to electricity, connectivity, devices, and caregiver support. The youngest students and students with disabilities were largely left out of countries’ policy responses, with remote learning rarely designed in a way that met the learners’ learning needs. Girls faced compounding barriers to learning amidst school closures, as social norms, limited digital skills, and lack of access to devices constrained their ability to keep learning’.

This has serious future implications. According to McKinsey & Company (2022), the lower levels of learning will get translated into lower future earnings potential for students and lower economic productivity for nations. The report estimated that by 2040, the economic impact of the pandemic-related learning delays could lead to annual losses of US\$1.6 trillion worldwide or 0.9 per cent of the total global GDP. This implies that inequality might further widen in the future.

Globally, McKinsey & Company (2022) evaluated the potential effect of the pandemic on students' learning by multiplying the number of times schools were disrupted in each country by the estimated effectiveness of the schooling students received during disruptions. According to the study, in the global south, the loss was higher because the schools were fully or partially closed for 75 weeks or more, compared to the developed world where schools were fully or partially closed for an average of 30 weeks. Their model suggested that students around the world might have lost about eight months of learning, on average, with substantial disparities across and within regions and countries. For example, students in South Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean may be more than a year behind.

2.2 The Particular Case of India

India, unlike any other country (except Uganda), has refrained from allowing physical access of children to schools (Ghatak et al. 2022). The country has seen one of the longest periods of school closure, except for the respite of a few months in between the second and the third waves, where schools were momentarily open for a few grades. Even these open periods were with severe restrictions such as alternate days of schooling and other guidelines. Ghatak et al. (2022) emphasized that it is indeed agonizing to note that schools have been the first to close and the last to open in India when it should have been the opposite.

Existing literature started exploring the impact of COVID-19 on children since 2020 only. Based on a systematic literature review, Bahl et al. (2021) documented various impacts on Indian children's health and well-being, their learning, and the economic security of their families. It has been well established in the existing literature that the socio-economic inequalities in India influenced the effectiveness of virtual learning mainly due to the unavailability of smartphones and computers, unreliable Internet connection, lack of technology skills, and lack of electricity. Teachers also faced challenges due to their low level of digital literacy. The pandemic situation increased malnutrition, domestic workload

(particularly among adolescent girls), incidents of child marriage, child labour, domestic violence, and other crimes including cybercrimes against children. Children were more vulnerable to mental health issues because they were neither able to comprehend the entirety of a situation nor fully communicate their feelings to adults. This vulnerability was heightened as the pandemic disrupted their normal lives, deprived them of schooling, and, concomitantly, opportunities for socialization and physical activities.

However, besides the negative impacts of COVID-19 on Indian children extensively highlighted in the literature, Gupta and Jawanda (2020) observed some positive impacts such as families coming closer and forming a stronger bond of love and affection, the valuing and caring nature of the environment, and accessing greater awareness about health issues and developing the inner strength to face such challenges in future.

2.3 COVID-19 Impacted Various Rights of Children in India

2.3.1 Right to Health and Nutrition

As per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), one of the most important rights of the child is the right to health and nutrition, which contribute to the well-being of the child. The pandemic impacted this basic right to health, which enables the child to take an active part in other activities of life. More than falling sick, due to the income losses incurred by the families, children's nutritional intake is reduced significantly. Besides income losses, the food received through government schemes such as Anganwadi and mid-day meals (MDM) was also found to be staggered across the states (Ghatak et al. 2020). Lack of nutrition and the additional anxiety, that a child faced during the pandemic, severely affected the child.

2.3.2 Education: Fundamental Rights of Children

Elementary education for children of 6-14 years became a fundamental right in 2009 with the passing of the 'Right of children to free and compulsory education Act 2009'. It is so important that the Supreme Court judgment made RTE (Article 21(A)) indispensable to the right to life of a child/individual. After the pandemic broke out and schools were closed with the announcement of a nationwide lockdown, many children's right to education got disrupted. Despite unlocking of all other services, schools remained closed for the longest period. The prolonged closure of schools threw open multiple challenges, which raised

questions on the very meaning of education and the legal entitlement of education in the country.

- **Access**

The provision of a primary school in every village and access for all children to school became a reality, with the implementation of programmes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the enactment of the Right to Education Act. Despite a primary school within a radius of one kilometre in the village, most children in rural areas were unable to access education, the fundamental right of every child, during the pandemic times. The prolonged online mode of education normalized during the pandemic as a policy of the government when schools across the globe had reopened, impacted access to the school education system in India as pointed out in many surveys including the survey undertaken by the Ministry of Education (MoE 2021). The survey found that a significant number of children in each of the states were without a digital device with Bihar having the largest number at 143 lakh approximately. Despite electricity being a basic requirement for use of digital devices, according to the Ministry of Rural Development survey (2017–18), only 47 per cent of Indian households receive more than 12 hours of electricity a day, and more than 36 per cent of schools in India function without electricity at all (Modi and Postaria 2020). According to the latest national sample survey, nearly 4.4 per cent of the rural households and 23.4 per cent of the urban households had a computer (desktop or laptop, notebook, palmtop, tablet, iPad, or smartphone) (Tilak 2021). Therefore, despite being enrolled in a school, many children were not being able to access school during the pandemic due to this digital divide.

- **Equity**

Besides access, technology also posed challenges to equity in education. Due to the shift in the mode of education, several ed-tech start-ups, some called ‘Academies’ and ‘Unacademies’ have come up in a short time; these include BYJU’s, Vedantu, Shaw Academy, Udemy, My Private Tutor, EduWizard, Vibrant Academy, Gradeup, Great Learning, Toppr, Board Infinity, and Whitehat Jr. Many offer online coaching and programmes in education and skill development to students. This came with a huge cost as it caters to a select social group of children belonging to a particular class who were able to afford these opportunities. UNICEF (2021) found that the use of textbooks and low-technology tools such as TV is higher among government school students. By contrast, the use of tech-enabled tools is lower in government schools compared to private schools.

According to TST (2021), in the country as a whole, 26 per cent of children migrated from private to government schools. As highlighted by Oxfam (2020), many schools, particularly ‘low budget’ private schools, have been closed. Even teachers were not able to continue as they were not given salaries for months. The ASER (2020) report also revealed a clear shift of children from private to government schools between 2018 and 2020.

According to TST (2021), during the pandemic situation 37 per cent of the children in rural areas did not study at all. These were majorly girls and socially disadvantaged children. The report also uncovered some eye-opening cases of discrimination against Dalits and Adivasis in the schooling system. To illustrate, in the Kutmu village of the Latehar district (Jharkhand), most of the households were Dalits and Adivasis, but the teacher belonged to one of the few upper-caste families in the village. Some members of these families openly asked the survey team, ‘If these [SC/ST] children get educated, who will work in our fields?’

- **Quality**

Due to the closure of schools, lack of access to adequate infrastructure, overload of work of teachers, and lack of access to teaching/learning materials (TLM), learning and quality of education suffered tremendously. According to TST (2021), the teacher’s role changed significantly in this new mode of education. The teacher was found busy with non-academic work and, thus, was hardly available for academic work and the child’s learning needs. Despite the already existing overload of non-academic work, during the pandemic teachers were given an endless number of other non-academic work including distribution of rations, managing and monitoring quarantine centres both at schools and at other places including home quarantines, monitoring the strength of marriage gatherings, vaccination duty, panchayat elections, and so on.

The COVID-19 crisis impacted children in not only educational aspects but also other aspects such as socialization. Quality in education encompasses factors such social, emotional, mental, physical, and cognitive development of each student. The social skills that school campuses automatically promote are essential for the holistic growth and development of children. Children learn a lot from engaging with peers. Holistic development of children and socialization, which has been considered for centuries as an important function of education, gets lost as online programmes do not give space for conversations and dialogue. As it is widely understood, a ‘student’s overall psycho-social development takes place in school. The

overall development becomes possible when children encounter social and challenging environments in schools, engage with peers, learn to communicate and be a part of group work, undergo value education, and spend play and relaxation time with peers. They learn and grow through the cycle of fun, play, art, music, sports and knowledge’ (Tilak 2021).

This transition to online mode primarily with support from offline modes like TV/Radio broadcasts gave very less opportunity to initiate a dialogue on the textbook content and relate it to the lived experiences of the children. Without dialogue and discussion on the content, the role of the teacher and her autonomy were challenged. ‘Fundamentally, the physical and mental connection with children directly is extremely important. Playfulness, creativity, and many other aspects can never be transferred through online learning’, as highlighted by K Kasturirangan, the chairperson of the drafting committee of the National Education Policy.

2.3.3 Right to Development of Children

Considering the trade-off related to health and education, the overall lived experiences of children changed after the outbreak of the pandemic. Therefore, the loss of even one year of schooling may mean ‘just a completely wasted cohort’ (Duflo and Banerjee 2021) as the learning trajectory gets drastically derailed. Though the statement of Duflo and Banerjee was in the context of human capital, it equally holds for the learning level of children. According to Save the Children (2020), a large number of children reported that their routine had changed a lot since the lockdown and a small percentage of participants even reported poor quality of sleep and eating.

Based on a survey of more than 1500 children and parents and 127 teachers in 20 backward districts in 10 states, Mitra and Sharma (2021) found that children have had socio-emotional impacts during their long absence from school. More than 50 per cent of parents witnessed behavioural change among their children. Around 64 per cent of the parents noticed their children to be angrier as compared to pre-pandemic days. Lack of concentration was also found among the children. Nearly 60 per cent of the children mentioned feeling more irritated than in pre-COVID-19 times, whereas 32 per cent of children felt that they fought more often with siblings/parents than before. The majority of the children (74 per cent) were sad, particularly because they were missing friends, teachers, and enjoyment in the classroom. Some children were anxious or afraid, and online teaching was a major reason for this. The children were also anxious because many of them thought that the schools might not open at all. There was a gender difference, as happy students were mostly boys, and anxious students

were mostly girls. Nearly 50 per cent of teachers were concerned that delay in the opening of schools might increase dropout rates of children, especially girls.

UNICEF and UNESCO (2021) highlighted that across India nearly 120 million children are enrolled in the MDM scheme in over 1.26 million schools, for whom this meal is a huge incentive to attend school. Schools also regularly offer provisions such as sanitary products, essential for adolescent girls for maintaining basic menstrual hygiene.

2.4 Differential Impacts on Children from Different Socio-economic Backgrounds

The COVID-19 crisis has meant limited or no education or falling further behind their peers, for many who already experienced barriers in accessing education, e.g. children with disabilities, students in remote locations, children of migrant workers, refugees, and asylum seekers, or those whose families have lost their source of livelihood and incomes (UNICEF & UNESCO 2021). In India, the educational situation is different for children who are marginalized, as they face historical and infrastructural deprivation along with a social one. Moreover, girls face another level of discrimination. Girls end up dropping out of school to care for their younger siblings and get involved in household chores. Pieces of evidence suggest that due to the uncertainties and hardships brought about by the pandemic, child marriages have increased in India (Jejeebhoy 2021). Ghatak *et al.* (2022) found that, in Bihar, reverse migration during the first lockdown further pushed up the rate of child marriages in the state.

According to UNICEF (2021), during the pandemic situation in India, 40 per cent of students did not use any remote learning resources, and these children were mostly from migrant and ST families. The report further highlighted that the use of digital devices was low among girls, younger students, rural students, and government school students.

2.5 Issues of Learning Loss

For India, the report by Azim Premji University (2021) captured the overall loss of learning, i.e. loss (regression or forgetting) of what children had learned in the previous class as well as what they did not get an opportunity to learn in the present class. Their sample consisted of 16,067 children in 1137 public schools in 44 districts across 5 states. It focused on the assessment of four specific abilities, each in language and mathematics, across Classes II to

VI. Their baseline situation was captured based on a comprehensive analysis by the relevant teachers in March 2020 with the help of appropriate assessment tools. These were compared with an 'End-line' assessment of the same children's proficiency in these very same abilities in January 2021, through oral and written tests. The report found significant learning loss in both language and mathematics. Therefore, the report suggested supplemental support, whether in the form of bridge courses, extended hours, community-based engagements, and appropriate curricular materials, which will be needed to help the children gain foundational abilities when they return to school.

However, learning is a broader concept than just reading or writing in different languages and doing basic mathematics. The child grows and learns from its immediate milieu and cultural context. Moreover, early educational developments through the use of touch, play, and work help the child make meaning of the world. Children's experiences in the family, school, and community are extremely important for their learning. Such learning will ensure that the child participates and enables dialogue for transformation through a social experience. Besides the basic learning needs and skills, the school also provides opportunities for a social experience. The Delors Commission also emphasized that education has a fundamental role to play in personal and social development. It laid down principles of learning, which will ensure peace, social justice, and sustainability viz. learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be (UNESCO 1996). The pandemic and the 'New Normal' imagined education rather than learning of children without children's use of words and actions, which constitute the child's experiences. The prolonged closure of school imagined learning and education of the child in a manner that reduced the very meaning of 'learning to learn'. Dependence on the online mode of education did not provide the child the opportunity to learn and relate to his/her experiences. According to TST (2021), confinement and closure reduced the idea of education for a child, and it was found that in rural areas 42 per cent of children cannot read even a single word.

Teachers play a major role in children's learning. Jain et al (2021) captured the ground realities that the teachers have been facing while taking online classes. The study highlights that the main hindrance for teachers was poor Internet connection. The authors classified the issues faced by teachers under the three categories of the digital gap: 1) Access gap (socio-economic status of the school, geography, household income); 2) Pedagogical skills and digital literacy gap; and 3) Usage gap (opportunities to use technology actively for both teachers and students). Their findings brought to the fore the multi-layered and

multidimensional issues encompassing the infrastructural impediments; the digital divide in terms of access, usage, and skill gaps of both the government and the private school teachers; and the role of Ed-Tech companies that are trying to replace the teachers rather than assisting them in their work. UNICEF & UNESCO (2021) highlighted the poor systemic support received by the teachers from the government: ‘They were not provided with the digital tools (mobile phones, laptops, reliable internet connectivity, etc.) they needed to continue teaching from a distance, they received no guidance on how to navigate the overwhelming content on e-learning platforms such as Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing and Holistic Advancement (DIKSHA), and there was limited guidance on how to reach all children. In some states, teachers did not even receive their salaries. Inability to reach all students – with limited capacity and access to good technology—teachers struggled to reach all their children, especially learners in remote areas or at risk of dropping out.’

2.6 Interventions to Reduce the Negative Impacts

Very few studies focused on government and civil society interventions to reduce the negative impacts of the pandemic on the education of children. UNICEF & UNESCO (2021) documented the several steps the Indian Government took to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 on the education sector. ‘They included core remote-learning solutions (traditional tools such as textbooks and home visits, tech-enabled and mass communication solutions such as WhatsApp, YouTube, TV, and radio, and blended solutions that combine face-to-face with e-learning) and learning-enabling solutions (such as midday meals, sanitation kits, and monetary support). The Ministry of Education has also made a strong effort to create a repository of learning content and implemented EdTech interventions (in partnership with NGOs) to increase access to digital learning. Notable government e-learning platforms include Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA), e-Pathshala, Swayam, and the National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER). State governments have the responsibility of implementing the policies and guidelines developed by central government’. According to the report, responses varied from state to state tailored to local needs. For example, Gujarat focused on distributing QR-coded textbooks, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh focused on learning programmes on TV, Assam distributed worksheets along with midday meals, Kerala focused on textbook distribution and WhatsApp groups, and Odisha turned to radio as online classes failed to reach all students due to poor mobile connectivity.

UNICEF & UNESCO (2021) also identified various initiatives by NGOs and CSOs of different levels, which were adopted widely to reduce the learning inequalities among younger children resulting from distance learning. These included providing helpline, counselling, and assisting in digital learning among others.

TST (2021) highlighted that despite various challenges, some teachers did go out of their way to help offline children such as teaching small group classes in the open, at someone's home, or even at their home.

Most of the existing studies on the impact of COVID-19 on the education of children highlight the gaps and barriers faced by the school children during the closure, which include lack of socio-economic impact on family, lack of access to new modes of learning, etc. Some also focused on the lived experiences of children, wherein lack of nutrition and safety concerns were highlighted. The literature also flagged issues related to challenges that have come up in the reopening phase, such as lack of infrastructure, safety concerns in schools, and cases of dropout (UNICEF 2021, Oxfam 2020; Action Aid 2021, TST 2021, ASER 2021, Save The Children 2020). The forthcoming chapters of this study add to the existing literature, by tracing the impact of the pandemic on the children in the four states of Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

3

Impact of Pandemic on Children: A Rural Landscape

The pandemic has an adverse effect on the lives and well-being of people. It has caused a major setback in the social and economic life of the people. COVID-19-induced lockdown and the subsequent period of chaos and crisis in the society affected people, both economically and socially. During this period, the unemployment rate also surged. The children too have been impacted by the pandemic and the lockdown. It increased their vulnerability, affecting their childhood, health, and well-being. This chapter gives a brief overview of the parental profile and the educational status of the children. It then presents a snapshot of the basic profile of surveyed children. It makes an analysis of the socio-economic condition of the sample household and throws light on the varied impact the pandemic had on children.

3.1 Basic Profile of the Surveyed Parents and Children

3.1.1 Profile of Surveyed Parents

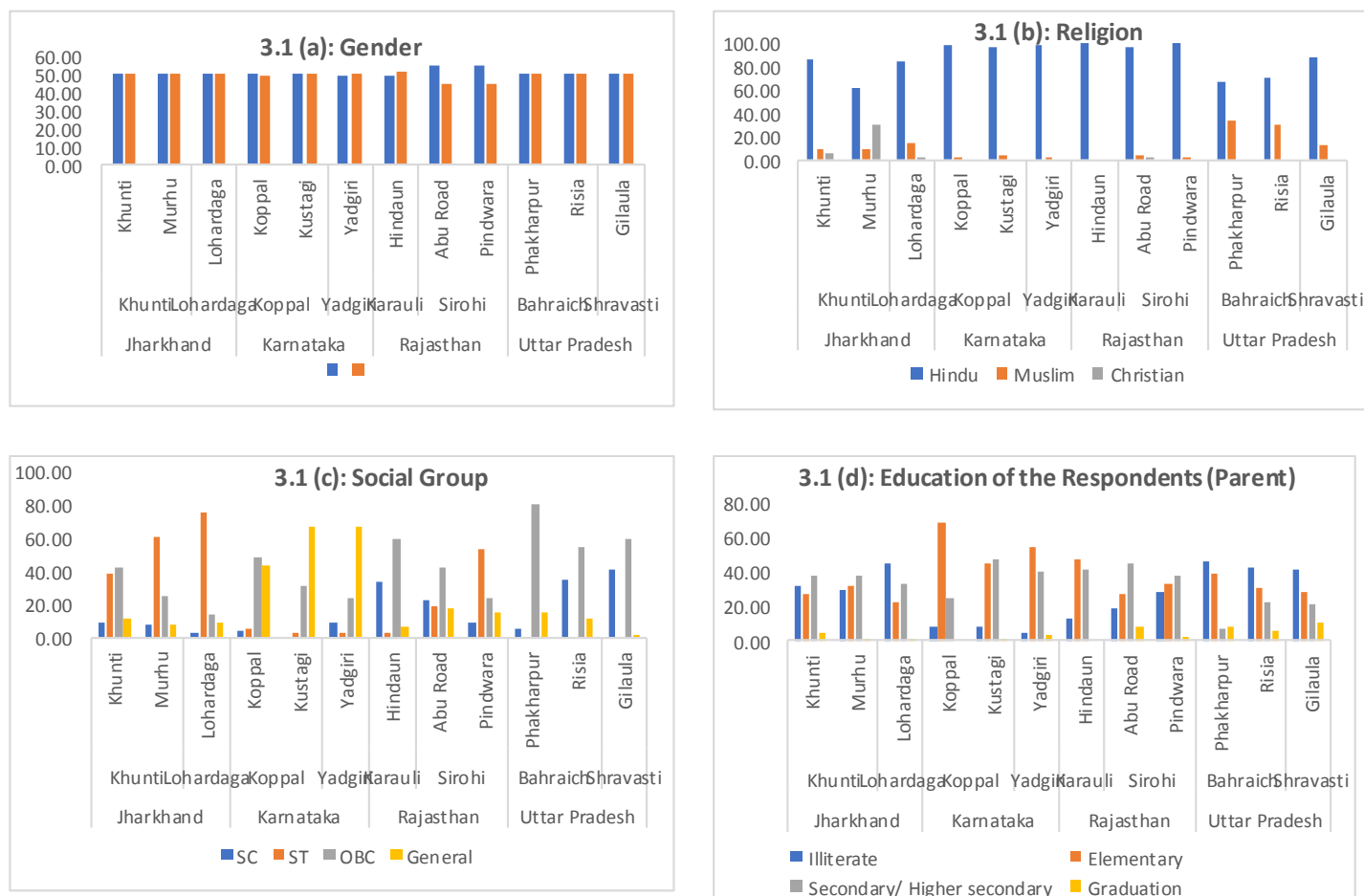
In total, 1200 parents were surveyed, covering 300 parents in Jharkhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. Almost an equal number of the surveyed respondents were male and female, as per the methodology adopted for this study. In the Sirohi district of Rajasthan, more number of female respondents was surveyed in comparison to male.

In terms of religious category, in all the four states majority of the parents surveyed were Hindus, followed by Muslims and Christians. In Uttar Pradesh, 30 per cent of the parents were Muslims while in Jharkhand, it was around 10 per cent. In Karnataka and Rajasthan, the percentage of Muslims was quite low. In Murhu block, Khunti district of Jharkhand, most of the parents surveyed were Christians (30 per cent).

In terms of social category, more than 30 per cent of the parents belonged to scheduled castes (SCs) in the Karauli district of Rajasthan and Risia block of Bahraich district and Gilaula block of Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh. The percentage of scheduled tribes (STs) was high in Jharkhand, followed by Rajasthan. In particular, their share was 75 per cent in Lohardaga district and 60 per cent in Murhu block, Khunti district, and 53 per cent in Pindwara of Sirohi district, Rajasthan. The share of other backward caste (OBC) was more than 50 per cent in

Uttar Pradesh. It was 70 per cent in Phakarpur, Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh. Parents belonging to the general category were 66 per cent in Yadgiri block of Yadgiri district and Kustagi block of Koppal district, Karnataka, and the corresponding percentage was less than 10 per cent in Murhu and Lohardaga blocks of Jharkhand, Hindaun block of Karauli district, Rajasthan, and Gilaula block of Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh.

Figure 3.1: Basic profile of the surveyed parents (%)



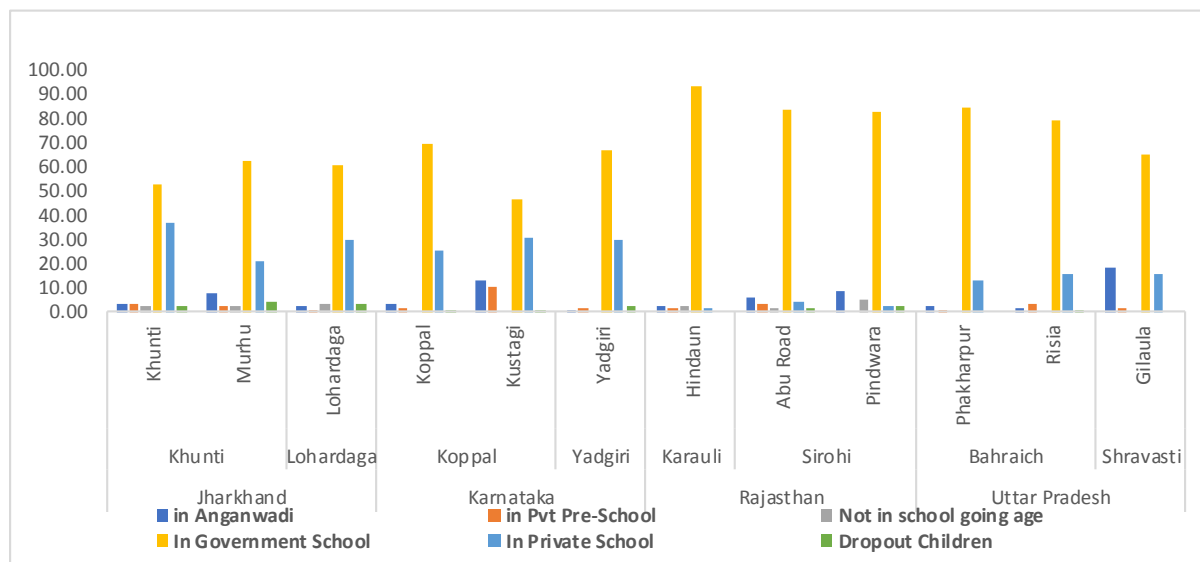
Source: CSD Survey 2022

As far as the educational background of parents is concerned, most of the parents had cleared either elementary or higher secondary levels across all four states. Only in Uttar Pradesh, 8 per cent of the parents were graduates, while in other states, it was less than 3 per cent. In Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Rajasthan, 43 per cent, 34.7 per cent, and 20 per cent of the parents interviewed were illiterate.

Educational Status of the Children of the Surveyed Household

Information related to the educational status of the children below 18 years was collected from the surveyed parents and, thus, the information on the same was obtained for about 2266 children.

Figure 3.2: Educational status of children below 18 years of the surveyed parents in the four states (%)



Source: CSD Survey 2022

N = 2266 children

Out of the total children surveyed, a majority of them (70.3 per cent) attended government schools, followed by 18.8 per cent enrolled in private schools, and about 1.5 per cent were dropouts. Nearly, 10 per cent of the total children were below 6 years of age, out of which 5.7 per cent were in Anganwadi, 2.3 per cent were in private pre-schools, and about 1.5 per cent were small kids, who were yet to reach school-going age.

3.1.2 Profile of the Surveyed Children

In total, about 1200 children between 9–14 years were surveyed across all four states. In terms of gender, more or less an equal percentage of boys and girls were surveyed. With respect to social groups of children, the same kind of trend as reported in the case of parents was seen, wherein, the percentage of SCs was found to be high in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, while that of STs was high in Jharkhand. More than 60 per cent of the children in Uttar Pradesh belonged to OBC, while around 70 per cent of the children in Karnataka belonged to the general category. Nearly 10 per cent of the children also reported of not knowing about their social group.

Figure 3.3: Basic profile of the surveyed children (%)



Source: CSD Survey 2022

N = 1200 Children

As far as the educational background of the father of the child is concerned, a high percentage of the fathers in Karnataka and Rajasthan were secondary or higher secondary school pass-outs. On average, nearly one-fourth of the fathers had done their schooling till Class VIII. Almost, one-third of the fathers were illiterates in Uttar Pradesh, while about 8 per cent were graduates in Rajasthan. On the other hand, nearly 70 per cent of the mothers in Uttar Pradesh were illiterates and about 60 per cent were illiterates in Lohardaga district, Jharkhand. In Karnataka, about 60 per cent of the mothers were educated till Class VIII and

the remaining 40 per cent were educated till secondary or higher secondary level. Mothers who were graduates was hardly reported; only 3 per cent were graduates in Jharkhand and in the remaining states it was as low as 1 per cent.

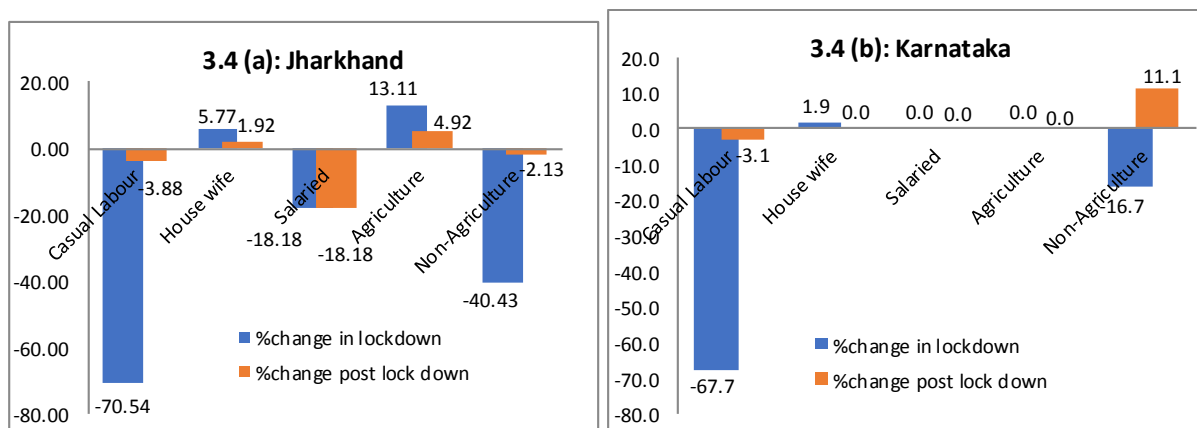
Regarding the occupational background of fathers, the majority of them were casual labourers in all four states and a high percentage of them were self-employed in agriculture in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. With respect to the occupational status of mothers, almost all of them in Karnataka were engaged as casual labourers. Though the mothers in Karnataka managed the agricultural activities of their field, they were not regarded as working, and more or less the scenario was the same in the other states as well. Even the children regarded their mothers as housewives despite being engaged in agricultural activities. Amongst others, some managed petty businesses such as grocery stores, flour mills, and fruit/vegetable/flower vending.

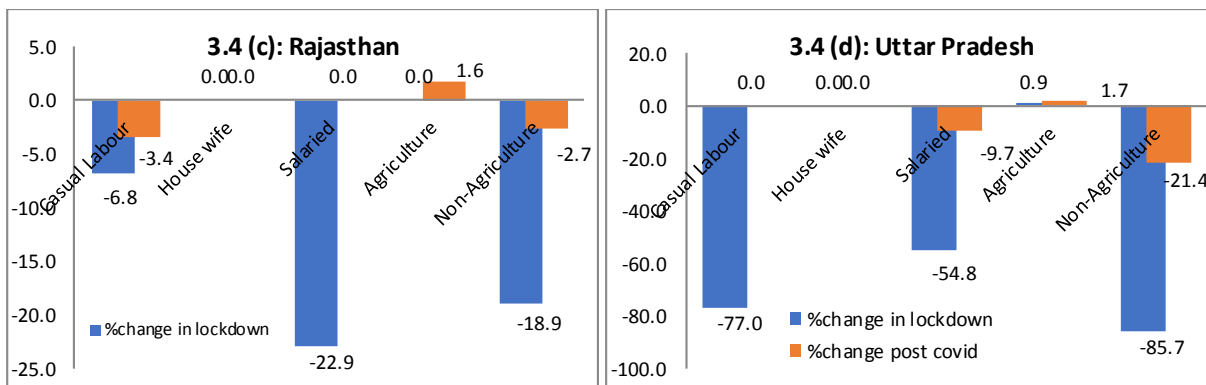
3.2 Socio-Economic Impact on the Household

3.2.1 Occupation of Parents

With respect to the occupation of parents, in comparison to the pre-COVID-19 period and during the lockdown and post-lockdown periods, the impact of the pandemic seems quite stark.

Figure 3.4: Effect of the pandemic on the occupation of parents in the pre and post-pandemic times (%)





Source: CSD Survey 2022

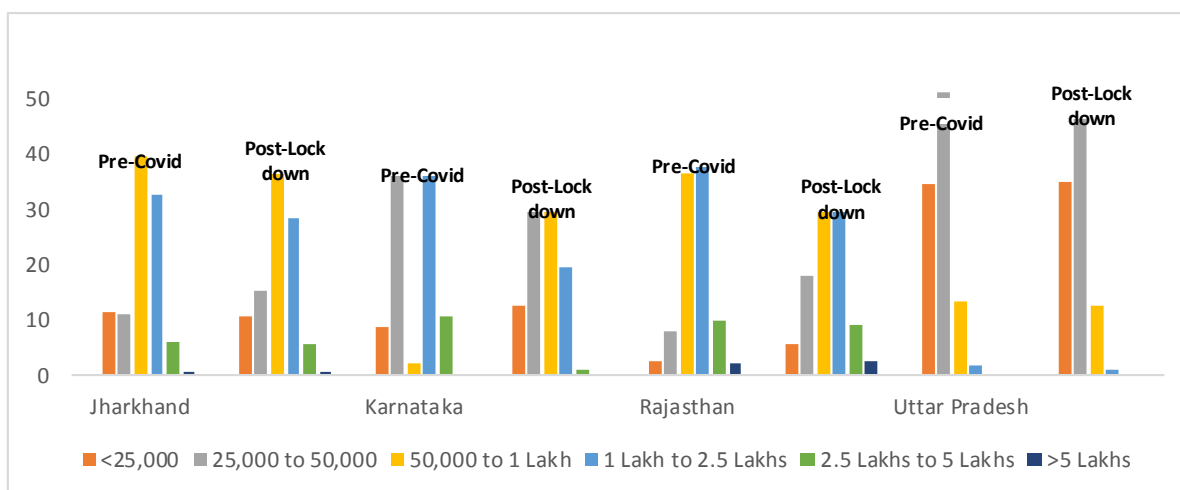
With respect to the occupational background of parents, almost in all the states, most of the parents were self-employed in agriculture, and during off-seasons, they migrated to other cities and engaged in construction work, domestic work, tailoring, etc. In Jharkhand, the parents said they migrated to Ranchi and Kanke for work, while in Karnataka, they migrated to Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Mumbai, etc. In Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, parents reported of migrating to Delhi, Mumbai, and Pune. Parents were also engaged in managing livestock and handled petty businesses such as flour mills, grocery stores, etc. On average, the unemployment rate in the period immediately after the lockdown rose to 20 per cent.

In comparison to the pre-COVID-19 times, a sharp difference in the occupational pattern of households during lockdown could be noted in all four states. During the lockdown period, a negative trend could be noted for those engaged in casual labour and self-employed in non-agriculture. The decline was sharp in Jharkhand, Karnataka, and Uttar Pradesh in the case of casual labour. Among the self-employed in non-agriculture, the decline was sharp in Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. The decline among the salaried was sharp in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. In Karnataka, those self-employed in agriculture or who had salaried jobs were not affected and in Jharkhand, the trend was positive among those engaged in agriculture. The chief reason was these professions remained unaffected during the lockdown period and, hence, could absorb the shock. This was even affirmed by parents during FGD in Bardehra village of Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh. They said, 'Farmers did not face much problem due to the pandemic, as their income depended upon the yield; but agricultural labourers faced a lot of issue in terms of loss of livelihood and income'. In the post-lockdown period, a slow change in occupational pattern became visible, which signifies that the people were recovering from the initial setback, though at a slow pace.

3.2.2 Annual Income of Parents

With respect to the annual income of the family, a variation in the income slab is found across all four states because of the drop in income or loss of livelihood. In Jharkhand, in the pre-COVID-19 situation, about 10.7 per cent were in the income slab of Rs 25,000–Rs 50,000, and post-COVID-19, this had increased to 15 per cent. Those who were in the income slab of Rs 1 lakh to Rs 2.5 lakh, had slipped to the slab of Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh, and this percentage was high in Karnataka and Rajasthan, where the slippage was about 20 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively. Due to a decrease in income, the families could not afford private school education and, hence, shifted their children to government schools. Moreover, to support family income, the children had to accompany their parents to work or take care of household chores.

Figure 3.5: Annual income of the family before and after the pandemic (%)



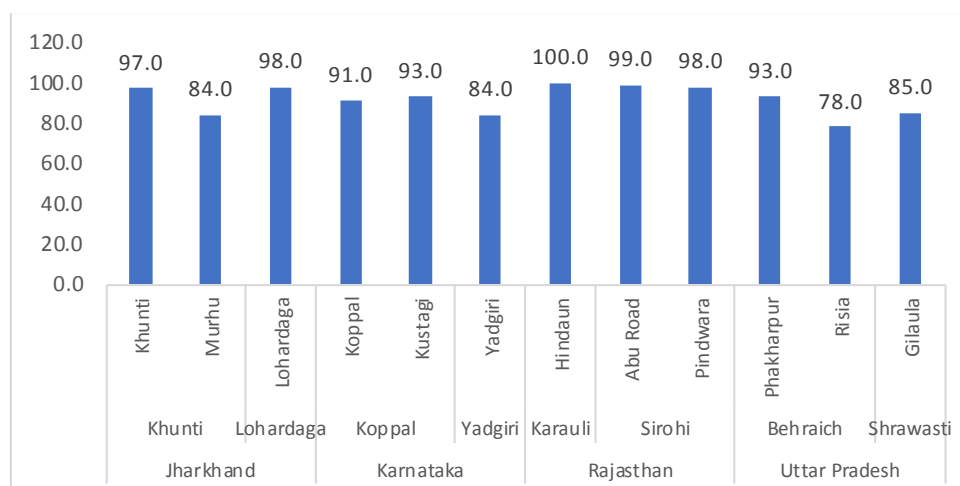
Source: CSD Survey 2022

In Rajasthan, the share of households having an annual income of ‘less than Rs 1 lakh’ was 44.3 per cent in the pre-COVID-19 situation, which increased to 53 per cent in March 2022. In Uttar Pradesh, no major difference in the income level of people could be noticed in the pre- and post-COVID-19 scenario, as already most of the parents were in the income bracket of less than Rs 1 lakh.

3.2.3 Loss of Livelihood

The livelihood of the household got severely affected during the initial COVID-19-induced lockdown and 9 in 10 parents mentioned losing their livelihood in almost all the states in the post-pandemic times.

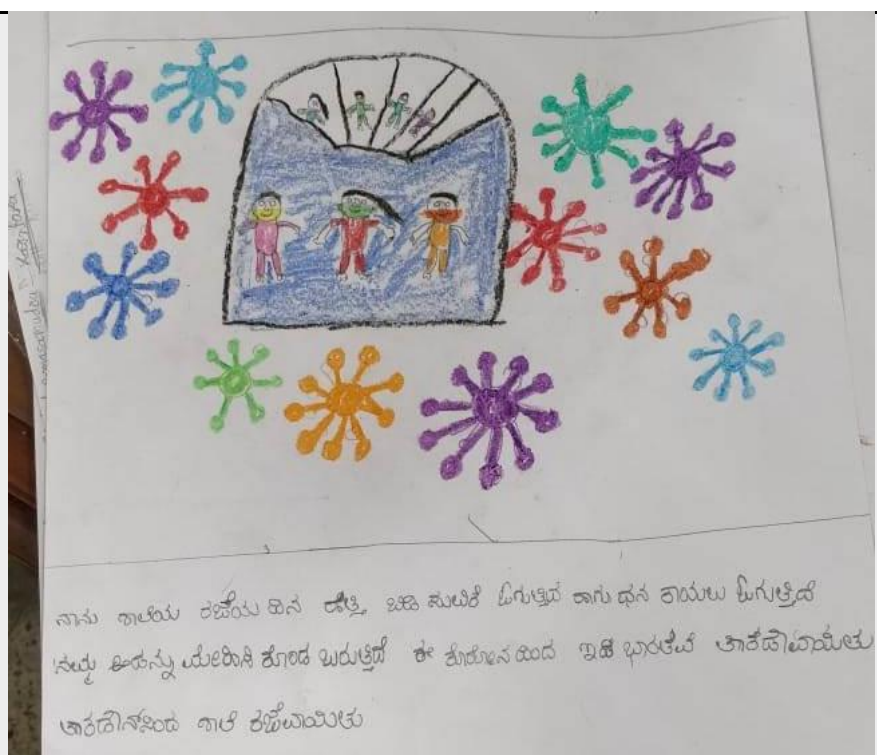
Figure 3.6: Percentage of parents who reported loss of livelihood (%)



Source: CSD Survey 2022

Box 3.1: Drawings of a Class V child in Karnataka

A child in Karnataka drew and interpreted the drawing as being separated from her parents as if they were in jail, as they were stuck in other states for work.



Source: Drawings of a Class-V child in Karnataka on their ‘lives during COVID-19 pandemic’

In Karnataka, when the first lockdown was announced parents reported that they got stranded in their place of work and had no means to pay rent and buy food in the initial period. During FGD people affirmed that though their lives were slowly returning back to normalcy, the situation was still grim. It had become difficult to get employment owing to the closure of some of the factories and industrial units. Even when they did get employment, there was a drop in the wage level. As reported by a parent in Karnataka, ‘the per-day labour payment had declined from Rs 200 to Rs 100–120, whereas expenses on transportation, cooking gas, ration rate, vegetable increased during that time’. In Gurchayi village, Risia block, Bahraich

district, Uttar Pradesh, a parent stated that ‘even after giving a commission of Rs 1000 or Rs 2000 to secure work, we are not able to get work. We regularly visit the market in search of work, but come back empty-handed most of the days’.

Some parents in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan reported that Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) had come as a relief, as they were able to get work for a wage of Rs 130 per day. Similarly, across the four states, during FGD parents confirmed receiving financial assistance of Rs 1500 from the government, which had been deposited into their account. In Karnataka, parents reported that those with labour cards were provided financial assistance of Rs 3000. Social assistance that was provided under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) in the form of cash and the in-kind transfer was beneficial for the households. However, people reported that they could not recoup from the indebtedness and associated vulnerabilities induced by the pandemic. A parent of Bardehra village, Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh, said ‘I was working as a fashion designer in a textile unit in Mumbai. Now, after lockdown, for a long period, I was not able to get any job and lost my monthly income of about Rs 25,000. My borrowings have increased’.

State	Districts	Blocks	How did you survive this challenging period (Multiple answers)						
			Did not face any problem	Borrowed money	Used past savings	Sold land	Sold cattle	Mortgaged gold	Others
Jharkhand	Khunti	Khunti	2.0	58.0	70.0	5.0	17.0	0.0	5.0
		Murhu	7.0	64.0	70.0	5.0	16.0	0.0	3.0
	Lohardaga	Lohardaga	0.0	81.0	83.0	1.0	6.0	0.0	0.0
Karnataka	Koppal	Koppal	7.0	67.0	46.0	11.0	2.0	0.0	0.0
		Kustagi	4.0	94.0	68.0	6.0	16.0	0.0	1.0
	Yadgiri	Yadgiri	1.0	98.0	82.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rajasthan	Karauli	Hindaun	26.0	75.0	44.0	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0
	Sirohi	Abu Road	28.0	63.0	44.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
		Pindwara	23.0	82.0	57.0	2.0	3.0	0.0	1.0
Uttar Pradesh	Bahraich	Phakharpur	2.0	28.0	78.0	2.0	2.0	1.0	0.0
		Risia	13.0	36.0	56.0	3.0	9.0	1.0	1.0
	Shravasti	Gilaula	6.0	45.0	72.0	1.0	7.0	0.0	0.0

Source: CSD Survey 2022

From Table 3.1, it is evident that during the pandemic period, most of the households in the study area either borrowed money or used their savings to cope with the challenging time period. People mostly borrowed from local money lenders, relatives, and friends. The money lenders charged exorbitant interest rates. Across the four states, a major percentage of the parents said that they used their past savings. A member of the School Management

Committee (SMC) in Gurchayi village, Risia block, Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh, stated that ‘during lockdown we had money, but then the flow of support was from everywhere. Today we don’t have support or work and we have exhausted all our savings too. Our children are also affected because of this situation.’ To manage the crisis situation, a small percentage had sold their land or cattle. The findings on the impact of the pandemic on the households corroborate with the existing literature, wherein the vulnerability faced by the parents is multitude and affected the children too. The forthcoming section discusses the varied impact of the pandemic on the lives of children.

3.3 Impact of the Pandemic on Children

The adverse situation of the family in the aftermath of the pandemic impacted children negatively and threatened their childhood and education. In the surveyed states, the effect of the pandemic was evident in children. Their workload, education, health and nutrition, well-being and aspects related to their protection had all been affected. While concerns related to education have been discussed in detail in the next chapter, other aspects will be discussed in the following sections.

3.3.1 Increased Workload of Children

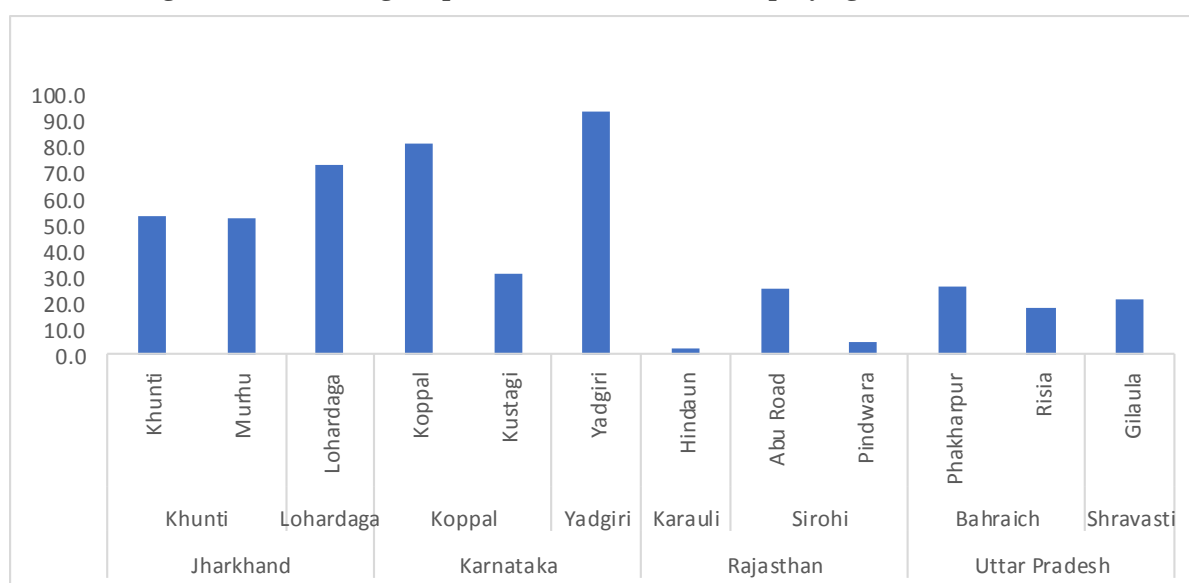
A very clear correlation between the loss of livelihood of parents and the issues of dropout and workload of children was found in the surveyed states. As can be noted from Table 3.2, about 33 cases of dropouts were reported in the surveyed states, out of which 32 children had dropped out in families that had lost livelihood. Only one case of dropout was reported in a family whose livelihood was not lost. The number of dropouts had been high in Jharkhand (18), while there were 6 and 7 cases in Karnataka and Rajasthan, and only 1 case in Uttar Pradesh. On the whole, 21 children had dropped out to contribute to the family income, while 12 and 8 children had dropped out to take care of siblings and household chores, respectively.

Table 3.2: Parents who reported that their children dropped out due to loss of livelihood and reasons for dropout (in numbers) (multiple responses)												
Particulars	Jharkhand			Karnataka			Rajasthan			Uttar Pradesh		
	Khunti	Murhu	Lohardaga	Koppal	Kustagi	Yadgiri	Hindaun	Abu Road	Pindwara	Phakharpur	Risia	Gilaula
	Households that reported loss of livelihood											
No. of children who dropped out	4	8	6	1	1	4	0	3	4	0	1	0
Reason for dropping out												
To earn	3	5	3			2	0	2	4	0	1	0
To take care of siblings	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	4	0	0	0
To do household work	0	2	2	1		0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Households that reported no loss of livelihood												
No. of children who dropped out	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reason for dropping out												
To earn	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
To take care of siblings	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
To do household work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: CSD Survey 2022

Apart from the children who had dropped out, during the school closure period children who were part of the mainstream schooling system too accompanied their parents to work and this was highly reported in Karnataka and Jharkhand. In Karnataka, children were engaged in cotton plucking, weeding, watering the field, etc., while some also managed vegetable and fruit vending stalls, grocery stores, etc.

Figure 3.7: Percentage of parents with children accompanying them for work (%)



Source: CSD Survey 2022

In Jharkhand, the children were engaged in potato cultivation, cattle rearing, poultry care, etc. In Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh too, children's engagement was mostly in agricultural

activities, cattle rearing, etc. Parents who migrated to other states and cities made the children accompany them for the chief reason that they would contribute to income-generating activities. The other reasons were to ensure the children's safety, reduce grandparents' burden as they had difficulty in managing the children on a full-time basis during the closure, and reduce the workload of children who had to carry out the tasks given by relatives. Due to their engagement in multiple activities, children got distracted and were not able to focus on their studies.

Gender Differences in the Activities Carried out by Children

The workload of both the boys and the girls had increased during the school closure period. However, gender differences could be noted in the kind of activities undertaken by the boys and the girls. In comparison to boys, a high number of girls (61.8 per cent) were engaged in cooking activities, followed by domestic chores (60 per cent), sibling care (32.7 per cent), and contribution to income-generating activities (10.2 per cent). Among the boys, the major engagement of the boys was in domestic chores (72.5 per cent) and their basic task was to run errands, while the chores of girls were mostly confined to housekeeping.

Table 3.3: Gender differences in the activities carried out by children (multiple responses in %)												
Activities undertaken	Jharkhand			Karnataka			Rajasthan			Uttar Pradesh		
	Khunti		Lohardaga	Koppal		Yadgiri	Karauli	Sirohi		Bahraich		Shravasti
	Khunti	Murhu	Lohardaga	Koppal	Kustagi	Yadgiri	Hindaun	Abu Road	Pindwara	Phakharpur	Risia	Gilaula
Girls												
Cooking	66.7	41.5	70.6	38.0	42.0	52.0	60.9	49.0	67.4	81.1	72.2	100.0
Sibling care	45.6	26.8	21.6	26.0	26.0	28.0	0.0	3.9	0.0	37.7	61.1	50.0
Earning money	22.8	14.6	7.8	6.0	8.0	12.0	10.9	3.9	4.7	7.5	19.4	4.2
Domestic chores	50.9	70.7	72.5	56.0	66.0	60.0	45.7	45.1	44.2	58.5	66.7	81.3
Boys												
Cooking	4.7	1.7	4.1	2.0	2.0	4.0	16.7	10.2	21.1	12.8	10.9	7.7
Sibling care	30.2	42.4	10.2	22.0	26.0	20.0	0.0	6.1	1.8	44.7	40.6	50.0
Earning money	32.6	32.2	4.1	18.0	14.0	26.0	16.7	22.4	22.8	36.2	31.3	46.2
Domestic chores	81.4	86.4	100.0	58.0	58.0	50.0	63.0	55.1	56.1	93.6	81.3	86.5

Source: CSD Survey 2022

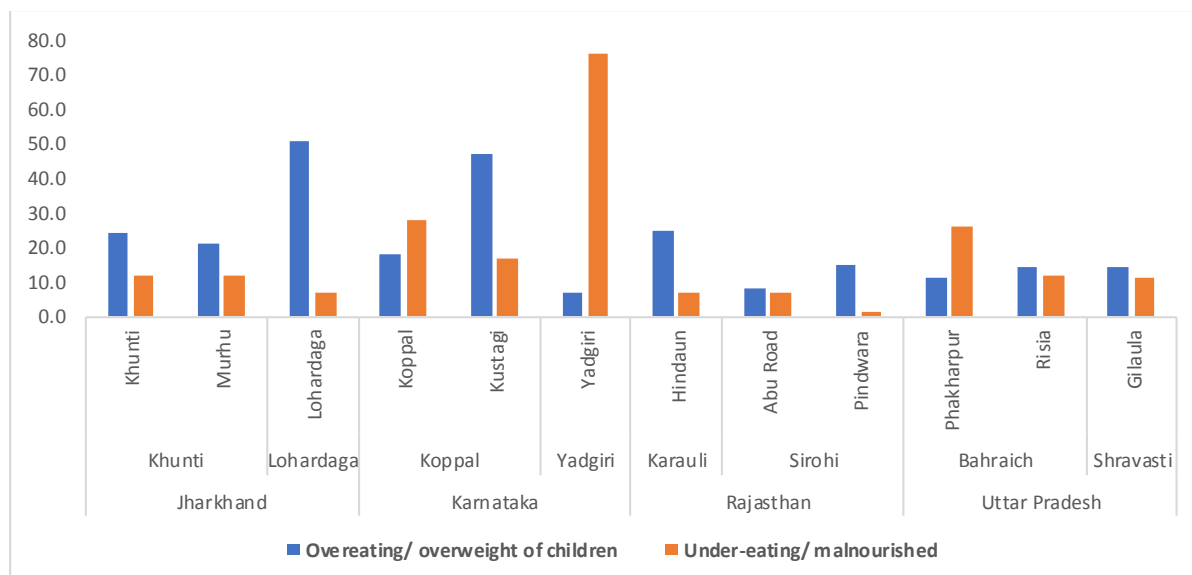
Almost all the girls surveyed in Gilaula block, Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh reported engaging in cooking. This was not the case in Koppal, Karnataka where only a small percentage was involved in cooking. In Risia block, Bahraich district, and Gilaula block of Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh, a high percentage of girls were engaged in sibling care. More than 80 per cent

of the girls in Gilaula, Uttar Pradesh, and 70 per cent in Murhu and Lohardaga of Jharkhand were engaged in domestic chores. About 20 per cent of the girls in Khunti, Jharkhand and Risia, Uttar Pradesh were engaged in income-generating activities and the corresponding percentage among the boys was more than 30 per cent in these two states. In Katar village, Gilaula block of Shravasti, gender differences could be noted in the everyday lived experience of children, as reported by them during FGD. While boys were engaged in cattle rearing, feeding the cattle, watering the farmland, girls of Classes V, VI, and VII engaged in collecting fuel woods, buying fruits from the market, and plucking vegetables from the field. Only two boys said they knew how to cook, while almost all seven girls, in the FGD, stated that they knew how to cook rice, dal, puri, and sabzi. A girl child from Ramsamudhra village, Yadgiri district said that she sold fruits every evening and studied while selling the fruits at the vending stall. In a private school in Bardehra village, Uttar Pradesh, most of the children stated that the girls did household work, while the boys tended to farming. However, a girl stated, 'My mummy says that I should study properly and it is fine, even if you are not able to do household work'. Only a few parents showed importance for girls' education and prevented them from taking part in household work. The common trend was to engage boys in outside work and girls in household chores.

3.3.2 Health and Nutrition of Children

A substantial percentage of parents in all four states felt that the lockdown had impacted the health and nutrition level of their children. On average, 21 per cent of the parents stated that their children indulged in over-eating while 18 per cent reported under-eating by the children. This change in the eating pattern of the children was mainly due to the change in their everyday routine. Concerns related to over-eating were highly reported in Lohardaga (51 per cent), Jharkhand and under-eating were less reported, as most of the parents were engaged in cultivation and availability of food was not an issue. On the other hand, under-eating was highly reported in Yadgiri (76 per cent), Karnataka. In Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh, during FGD some parents reported that school closure had adversely affected the nutritional intake of children and the parents were unable to compensate for it from their meagre incomes. However, in Gurchayi village, Risia block of Bahraich, some parents highlighted that even during the lockdown period, some teachers took the initiative to provide midday meals (MDM) to the children.

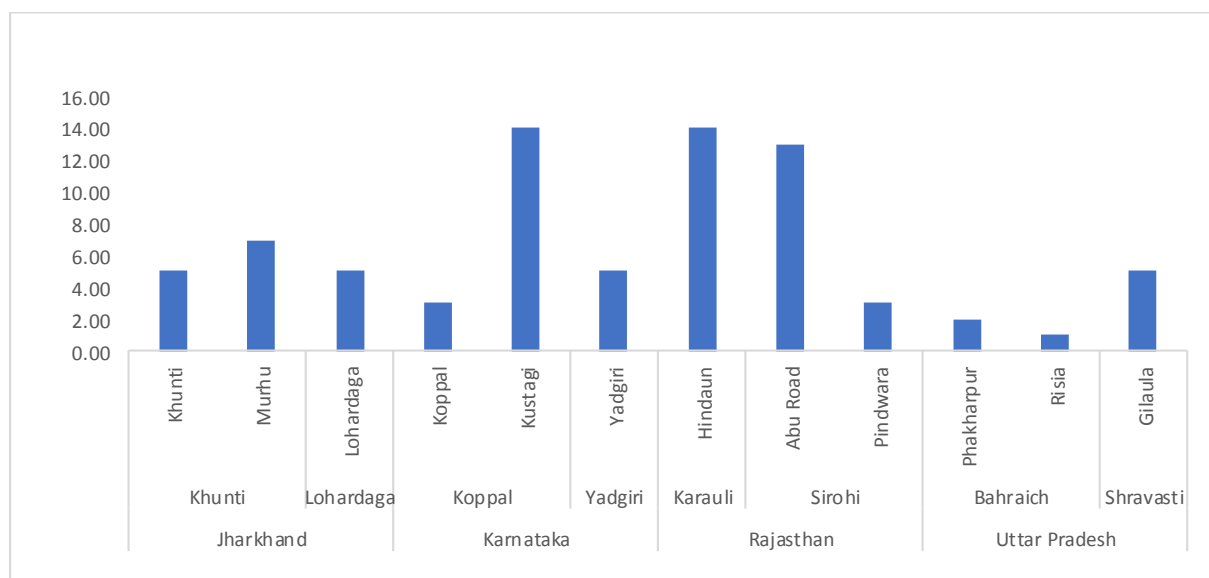
Figure 3.8: Percentage of parents who reported under-eating and over-eating by children



Source: CSD Survey 2022

Though in the initial period of the nationwide lockdown, the nutritional requirement of children was not recognized, later the government laid emphasis on it and take-home rations (THR) was provided both by the Anganwadi centres (AWCs) and by the schools.

Figure 3.9: Percentage of parents who reported receiving supplementary nutrition from Anganwadi centres



Source: CSD Survey 2022

In the surveyed states, almost all the AWCs reported providing dry rations to children below 6 years of age, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. However, less than 15 per cent of the parents reported receiving the same from the AWCs. More than 10 per cent of the parents in Kustagi block of Koppal district, Karnataka and Hindaun block of Karauli district and Abu

road of Sirohi district, Rajasthan reported receiving the same, while the corresponding percentage was lower in the other states. Low response on the receipt of dry rations from AWCs may be due to fewer children attending Anganwadis.

State	District	Block	Received regular MDM during school closure	If yes, in which form		If yes, how you received		
				Cooked	Dry	Had to go to school to collect it	Cash transfer	Delivered at home
Jharkhand	Khunti	Khunti	63.0	6.0	57.0	62.0	0.0	1.0
		Murhu	63.0	8.0	55.0	59.0	3.0	1.0
	Lohardaga	Lohardaga	71.0	12.0	58.0	70.0	1.0	0.0
Karnataka	Koppal	Koppal	70.0	0.0	70.0	70.0	0.0	0.0
		Kustagi	70.0	0.0	70.0	70.0	0.0	0.0
	Yadgiri	Yadgiri	76.0	2.0	74.0	76.0	0.0	0.0
Rajasthan	Karauli	Hindaun	97.0	1.0	96.0	95.0	0.0	0.0
	Sirohi	Abu Road	71.0	1.0	71.0	72.0	0.0	0.0
		Pindwara	89.0	0.0	89.0	89.0	0.0	0.0
Uttar Pradesh	Bahraich	Phakharpur	66.0	0.0	66.0	54.0	4.0	8.0
		Risia	49.0	0.0	48.0	43.0	2.0	4.0
	Shravasti	Gilaula	56.0	0.0	56.0	44.0	2.0	10.0

Source: CSD Survey 2022

Across the four states, most of the surveyed children acknowledged that they received dry rations from the schools during the closure period. The supply included essential items such as wheat, rice, pulses, oil, salt, and other spices. More than 70 per cent of the students received MDM in dry form and this was as high as 97 per cent in Hindaun block, Karauli district, Rajasthan, and as low as 49 per cent in Risia block of Bahraich district, Uttar Pradesh. A large number of children across the states collected dry rations from schools. In Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, less than 3 per cent of the children received cash transfers in their accounts in lieu of MDM and less than 8 per cent in Uttar Pradesh said that the teachers delivered THRs at their homes. At the same time, there were instances where parents did not get the dry ration on a regular basis during the school closure period. An NGO staff in the Karauli district of Rajasthan stated that ‘*Pehle bacche 6 ghante baith jate the, abhi bacche ki attention span kam ho gaya. Midday meal bhi nahi hai, bacche bhukhe pet zyada der nahi padh paate*’ (Earlier children used to sit for 6 hours in school, now their attention span has reduced. There is no midday meal, and children cannot study for long in empty stomach). When the survey team visited a school in Rajasthan in March 2022, cooked MDM was yet to start. This was despite the functioning of upper primary schools from December 2020 and primary schools from September 2021. Based on the insights from the qualitative survey, it

can be stated that the learning levels of children were affected because of the lack of nutritional support, as children could not focus their attention on studies on empty stomach.

3.3.3 Well-being of Children

On average, about 28 per cent of the parents reported the impact on the well-being of children, and the intensity of the concerns varied in different states. Half of the parents in Jharkhand and Rajasthan complained about the increased stress level and anxiety in children, and the corresponding figure was 70 per cent in Yadgiri block, Karnataka, while it was 37 per cent in Uttar Pradesh. Nearly, one-third of the parents in Jharkhand were worried that their children were not getting enough physical activity and the same concern was voiced by 57 per cent of the parents in Koppal, Karnataka. Limited social interaction among children was reported by 48 per cent of parents in the Koppal district, while it was 17 per cent in Khunti and 16 per cent in Murhu who said that their children suffered from disturbed sleeping patterns.

Table 3.5: Percentage of parents who reported positive and negative impacts on children												
	Jharkhand			Karnataka			Rajasthan			Uttar Pradesh		
	Khunti		Lohardaga	Koppal		Yadgiri	Karauli	Sirohi		Bahraich		Shravasti
	Khunti	Murhu	Lohardaga	Koppal	Kustagi	Yadgiri	Hindaun	Abu Road	Pindwara	Phakharpur	Risia	Gilaula
Negative Impact												
No/curtailed physical activity of children	28.0	28.0	42.0	21.0	57.0	4.0	17.0	9.0	16.0	22.0	27.0	16.0
Children under anxiety and stress	53.0	43.0	53.0	30.0	19.0	70.0	57.0	48.0	43.0	37.0	35.0	32.0
Sleep disorder of child	7.0	16.0	7.0	10.0	7.0	0.0	7.0	4.0	0.0	23.0	21.0	16.0
Reduced social interaction	17.0	6.0	4.0	48.0	39.0	51.0	32.0	49.0	24.0	31.0	37.0	13.0
Positive Impact												
Better bonding between parents and children	70.0	62.0	78.0	10.0	17.0	13.0	47.0	51.0	44.0	50.0	57.0	19.0

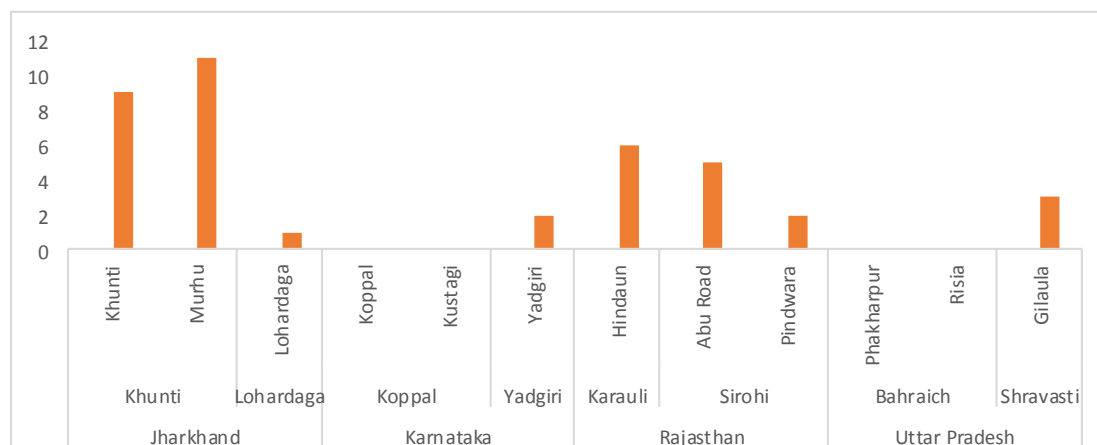
Source: CSD Survey 2022

Despite such a negative impact on the well-being, 70 per cent in Jharkhand and 40 per cent in Uttar Pradesh affirmed that the closure period had led to better bonding between the parents and their children.

3.3.4 Protection of Children

Protection of children emerged as a major cause of concern in the post-pandemic times. Problems related to child marriage, loss of parents due to COVID-19 deaths, violence against children, sexual abuse and trafficking, etc. were reported by child protection officers in the surveyed states.

Figure 3.10: Children who reported their friend/classmates were married off (%)



Source: CSD Survey 2022

A substantial percentage of the children in Jharkhand and Rajasthan, in comparison to Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, informed that some of their friends in schools or locality or students in schools had been married off during the lockdown period. Though the schools and the surveyed teachers were not vocal about the incidents of child marriage in their locality, parents highlighted that such marriages had increased after the outbreak of COVID-19. Some of the families opted to get their school-going girls married during the lockdown, because of the increasing uncertainty. In Rajasthan, a panchayat president said that poverty was the major reason behind child marriages. In the Gilaula block of Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh, children revealed that some of the young children in their locality had been married off. A Class VIII girl had been married whose husband was also a young boy. In Karnataka, it was reported that incidents of child marriages had increased but people were not vocal about the same due to the effects on the family's reputation. The safety of girls and the financial burden on families were cited as the major reasons for child marriages. A few of the children had even eloped and married while, in some cases, in order to prevent love affairs and unwanted pregnancy, parents married their young girls to the grooms of their choice.

Apart from issues of child marriage, the safety of children was also highlighted as a major concern. In the Karauli district of Rajasthan, girls and women do not step out of their houses at night, as drunkards and drug addicts loiter on the streets and can be a threat to the girls'

safety. The child protection officers in one of the states mentioned that the major problem faced by children was child labour and sexual abuse. Although sexual abuses had occurred but was not much reported. In Uttar Pradesh, a case of child abuse of a 12-year-old girl by her grandfather came to light in 2021.

In the Karauli district, Rajasthan, domestic violence was a major challenge that affected children and had exacerbated during the pandemic times. In Abu Road, Rajasthan, cases of rape, child marriage, girl trafficking, etc. were also reported by the parents and elected representatives of panchayats. However, despite the increase in the cases of child marriage, child labour, child abuse, and child trafficking in the post-pandemic times, no data from government officials is available to substantiate it.

In Karnataka, in the case of both parents' death due to COVID-19, children were given financial assistance of Rs 3500 per month. However, rigid criteria to avail the scheme benefit limit the access of needy children. In addition, due to the loss of parents, many of the children's mental health was affected. However, these children were unable to get immediate psychological support.

From the above discussions, it is clearly evident that the pandemic has severely impacted children in multiple ways. To address these unprecedented challenges, both short-term and long-term solutions are needed to help children attain a stage of resilience.

4

Effect of Pandemic on the Education of Children

This chapter highlights the key aspects related to children's education during school closure. It examines the activities undertaken by teachers, the condition of school infrastructure, and the capacity building of the teachers to prepare them for the new mode of teaching. During the pandemic, multiple efforts were undertaken by various stakeholders to deal with learning and mostly digital options were explored and offered as solutions during school closure. Later offline measures were also undertaken to deal with foundational literacy and numeracy of children. This chapter examines the usefulness of the various modes of learning, which were adopted to enhance children's learning. It captures the views of the children, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders about these various modes of learning options introduced during the pandemic period and the children's learning experiences.

4.1 Education during School Closure

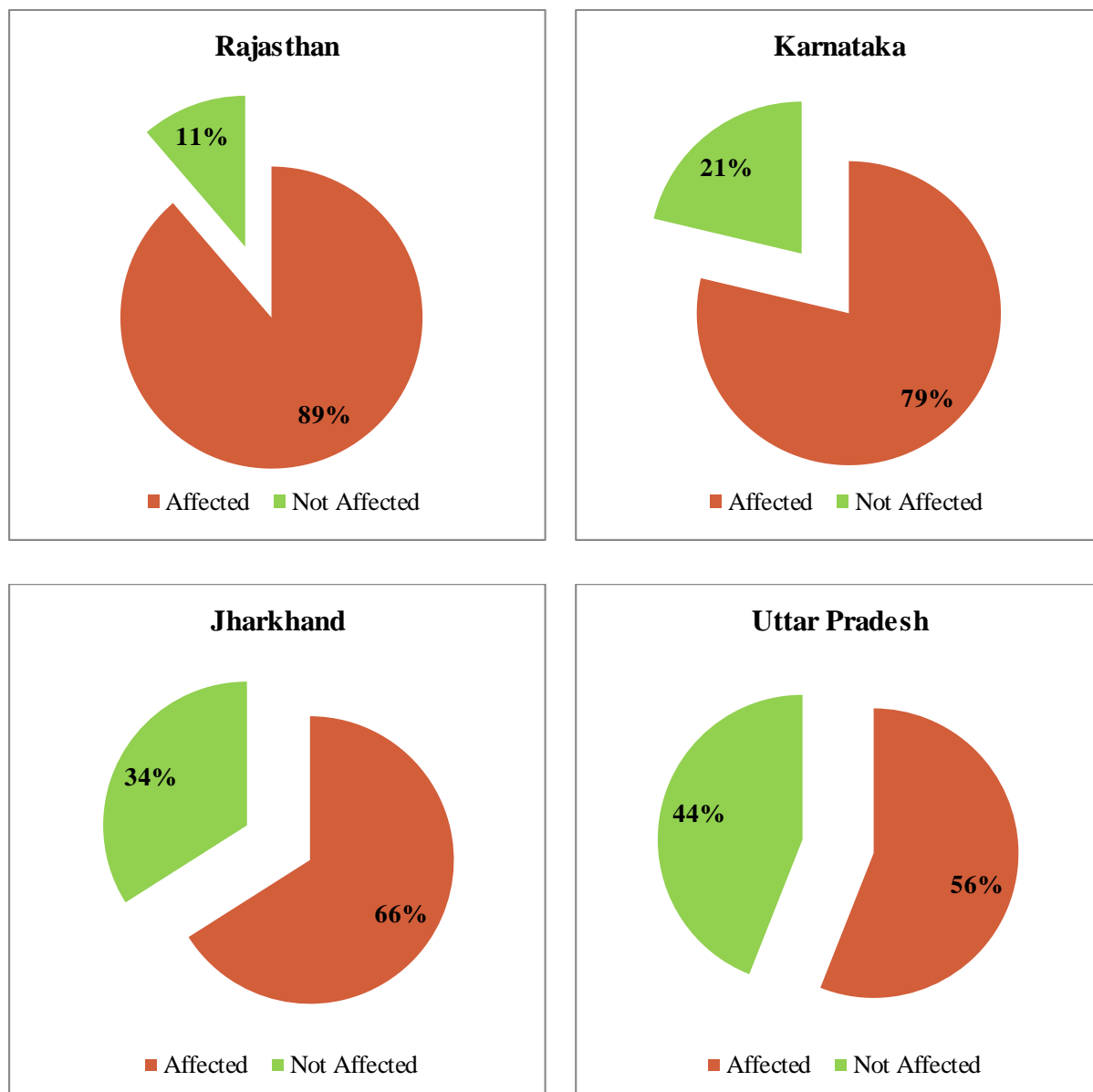
4.1.1 Prolonged School Closure Affected Children's Right to Education and Development

The everyday routine of children had got affected as a result of school closure (more than 18 months from March 2020 to September 2021), which caused disruption in their education. The lack of schooling experience adversely impacted their development—emotional, mental, and physical. In Uttar Pradesh, parents desperately wanted the schools to open in a full-fledged manner, as children got into substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) due to the influence of friends and parents were not able to monitor them all the time.

Children studying in government schools were more negatively impacted because of school closure in comparison to students of private schools. As highlighted by the Education Officers interviewed in one of the states, the government school students had been more affected primarily because their parents could not help or support them. Out of a total of 1200 surveyed children, 78 per cent studied in government schools, while 11 per cent each studied in government-aided and unaided private schools, respectively. Nearly three-fourths of the parents of government school children felt that their children's education had been affected as a result of school closure. However, this varied from state to state, with the highest response being in Rajasthan, followed by Karnataka, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh. Nearly 45 per cent

of the parents in Uttar Pradesh felt that their children’s education had not been affected because of school closure. For these parents, their children’s education was of least priority because they were facing a multitude of other challenges, including poverty (Figure 4.1). A detailed block-wise table is presented in Annexure 4.1A.

Figure 4.1: Parental perception of the effect of school closure on children's education



Source: CSD Survey 2022

4.1.2 Effect of School Closure

As reported by a government school teacher in one of the surveyed schools in Uttar Pradesh, many children had not enrolled in Class VI after completing Class V in the local primary school. From the FGD with parents, it became clear that they wanted their children to support

them in work because anyway classes were not being held regularly during the closure period. Moreover, the upper primary school was located at a distance, which became an inhibiting factor for the parents to enrol their children in school. To change the mindset of such parents, the teachers had to make several home visits to council the parents and make them admit the children in school. If the teachers had not taken such an initiative, many children would have remained out of school.

In Rajasthan, the officials in one of the districts highlighted that because of the seasonal migration of entire families, the children from these families often could not make up for the loss of time and ended up dropping out of school. Earlier in government schools, if a Class IX student was absent for a stretch of 15 days or more, his/her name would be struck out from the records. But this practice had been discarded at present. Till Class VIII, the names of absentee students cannot be removed. So, many children in reality are not attending school, but their names are still enrolled. Many families have migrated permanently to other cities and no data is available on their destination location. Therefore these children are mostly dropouts but no data is available on them to corroborate this.

After the pandemic-induced school closure, a substantial proportion of children (nearly 15 per cent of the total surveyed children) have been shifted to government schools. The chief reason for nearly 50 per cent of these students was their inability to pay the fees levied by private schools. In Karauli, Rajasthan nearly eight private schools in the Hindaun block had closed, due to the smaller number of enrolment of children and non-payment of school fees. The actual scenario will become clearer when the next round of U-DISE data will be made public. Thus, it has become evident that the government schools' existing infrastructure and teachers have to face additional pressure, which calls for some special attention.

4.1.3 Disruption in School Infrastructure

On average, one out of every five parents expressed concerns about the dilapidated condition of school infrastructure in the post-pandemic phase (Table 4.1). Multiple responses were captured, and the major three responses were regarding the condition of school toilets that lacked water facilities, and the condition of the school buildings and classrooms. A few parents also mentioned broken walls as well.

States			Dilapidated toilet with lack of water facilities	Poor condition of school building	Poor condition of classroom	Broken boundary walls
Jharkhand	Khunti	Khunti	37.0	36.0	36.0	0.0
		Murhu	33.0	33.0	33.0	1.0
	Lohardaga	Lohardaga	32.0	32.0	32.0	0.0
Karnataka	Koppal	Koppal	18.0	2.0	9.0	5.0
		Kustagi	15.0	7.0	7.0	6.0
	Yadgiri	Yadgiri	21.0	3.0	4.0	6.0
Rajasthan	Karauli	Hindaun	12.0	6.0	7.0	2.0
	Sirohi	Abu Road	5.0	29.0	29.0	3.0
		Pindwara	5.0	3.0	2.0	2.0
Uttar Pradesh	Bahraich	Phakharpur	12.0	11.0	14.0	0.0
		Risia	27.0	27.0	23.0	4.0
	Shravasti	Gilaula	21.0	21.0	21.0	1.0

Source: CSD Survey 2022

In Uttar Pradesh, in one of the schools surveyed, out of three school buildings, one was not functional and was marked unsafe by the disaster management authority as it could collapse anytime. In one of the surveyed schools in Karnataka, during the lockdown phase, trespassers tried to exploit the closed school premises for consuming alcohol. However, vigilant community members were able to thwart such activity during the entire closure period.

4.1.4 Issue of Teacher Shortage

Headteachers of the surveyed government schools complained of a shortage of teachers. In order to deal with teacher shortage, contractual teachers have been appointed. Contractual teachers in some schools were appointed and paid by the panchayats and in others by the NGOs, as reported in Rajasthan and Karnataka.

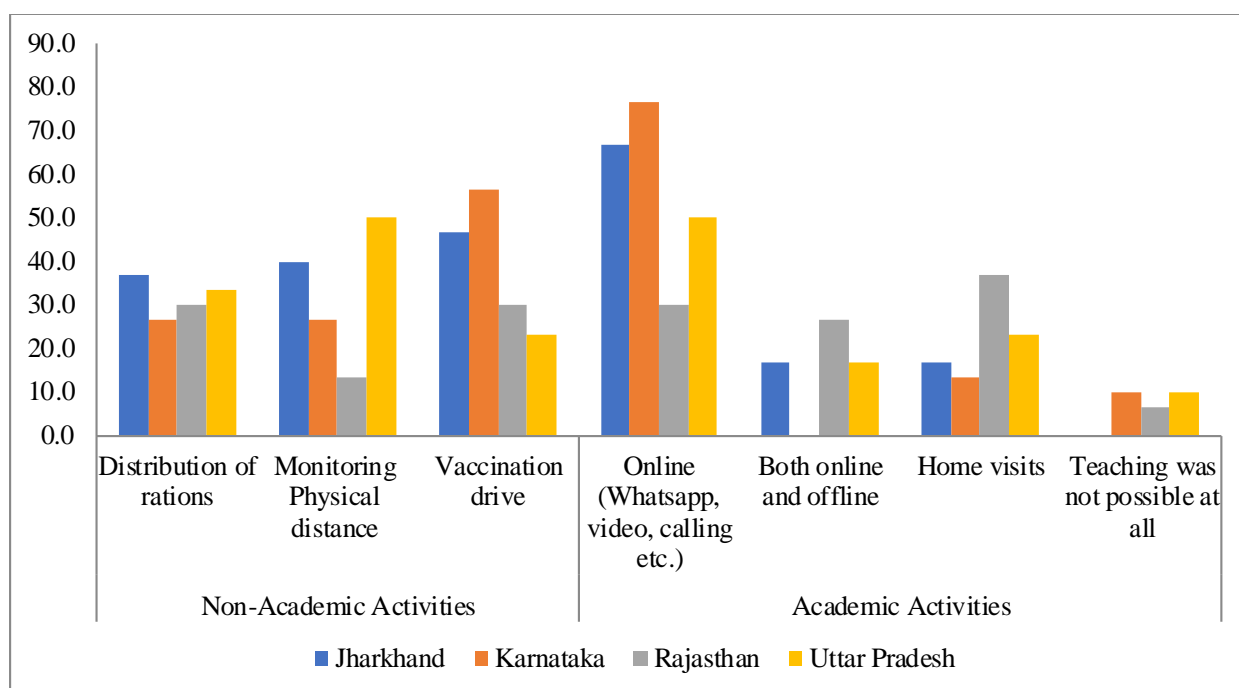
4.1.5 Activities Undertaken by Teachers

During the pandemic when the schools were closed, teachers engaged in both non-academic and academic activities. About one-third of the teachers out of 120 surveyed said that they had been engaged in COVID-19 vaccination drives, in activities related to distribution of rations, and in ensuring physical distancing during the peak pandemic period. Teachers were also engaged in various academic activities during the school closure. About 60 per cent of the teachers said they shared online content with their students through WhatsApp and YouTube links. They also made video calls to the students so that the latter could continue learning without coming to the school. More than 20 per cent of teachers also made home visits to find out about the educational status of their students. Around 15 per cent of teachers

made efforts to continue children’s learning in both online and offline methods, whichever was convenient. However, a few teachers across all the states said that they could not engage in teaching during the school closure period, as the pandemic-induced school closure was so sudden that they were neither able to keep a track of their students nor get their mobile numbers.

Figure 4.2 provides state-wise teachers’ engagement in various academic and non-academic activities while Annexure 4.2A shows the block-wise distribution.

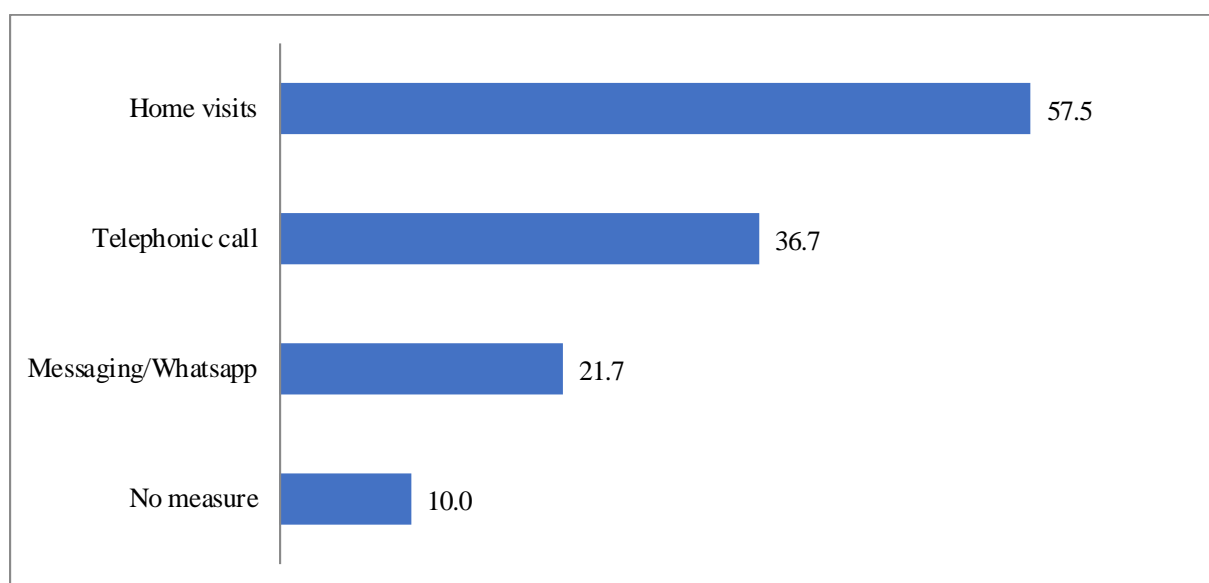
Figure 4.2: Teachers’ engagement in various activities during school closure (multiple responses in %)



Source: CSD Survey 2022

Teachers reported that they took various initiatives to track children after the schools reopened as many did not come back to school. Nearly 60 per cent of the surveyed teachers said that they were constantly engaged in home visits to bring the children back to school. Nearly 40 per cent of the teachers mentioned making telephonic calls to children, in order to ensure their regular attendance. A few teachers used WhatsApp to bring the children back to school. However, some teachers also mentioned taking no measures (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Percentage of teachers reporting taking initiative to track children post-reopening of schools



Source: CSD Survey 2022

Less than 50 per cent of the surveyed teachers reported receiving training during the school closure period. Some teachers mentioned that the training was on the use of digital devices, while a few others said that they received training on how to handle the COVID-19 phase and contact the children during the pandemic, so that that the gap in learning could be reduced. Only about 40 per cent of the teachers on average in Uttar Pradesh stated that the training was on the use of the digital device, while in other states it was underreported.

During FGDs with parents, almost all of them expressed that schools should function on a regular basis and they were willing to send the children to school. However, some parents reported that some children were reluctant to attend school as they had got used to school closure for a long time. During FGD, parents in Ramsamudhra stated that most of the children had forgotten the basics and regular practices were needed to address the learning gaps.

According to a School Facilitator, Centre for Micro Finance (CMF), Karauli, Rajasthan, ‘If children feel that they have learnt something from school today, then they will definitely come tomorrow’.

4.2 Learning Experience of Children

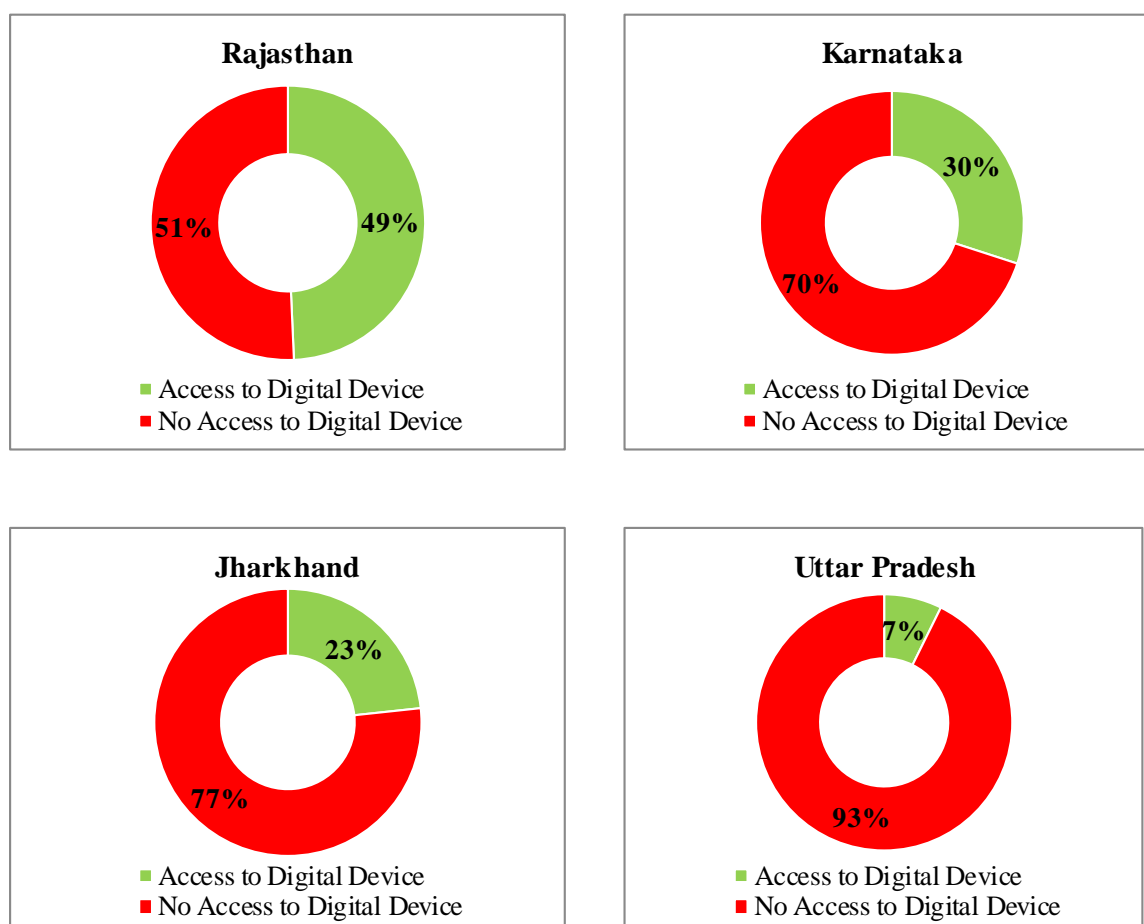
Learning begins with engagement with the world; including forming world views and ideas for transformation. The interface of engagement during the pandemic was through inanimate

objects, viz. screens and paper. Engagement with people and processes in the community was minimal. Though the planning of learning during the pandemic was mostly ineffective, it will still be wrong to say that no planning was initiated. Multiple efforts were undertaken during the pandemic to deal with learning.

4.2.1 Access to Digital Device

Educational landscape has seen a vast change during the pandemic. When the schools were closed, online education was aggressively promoted. Even when the schools had reopened, emphasis was being put on a hybrid model of learning. However, to impart education through digital mode, teachers were not provided with the needed training and many of the teachers did not have the required IT skill. Moreover, 70 per cent of the total surveyed children did not have access to digital education. A state-level variation existed with Rajasthan and Karnataka fairing a little better than Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4: Children's access to digital devices

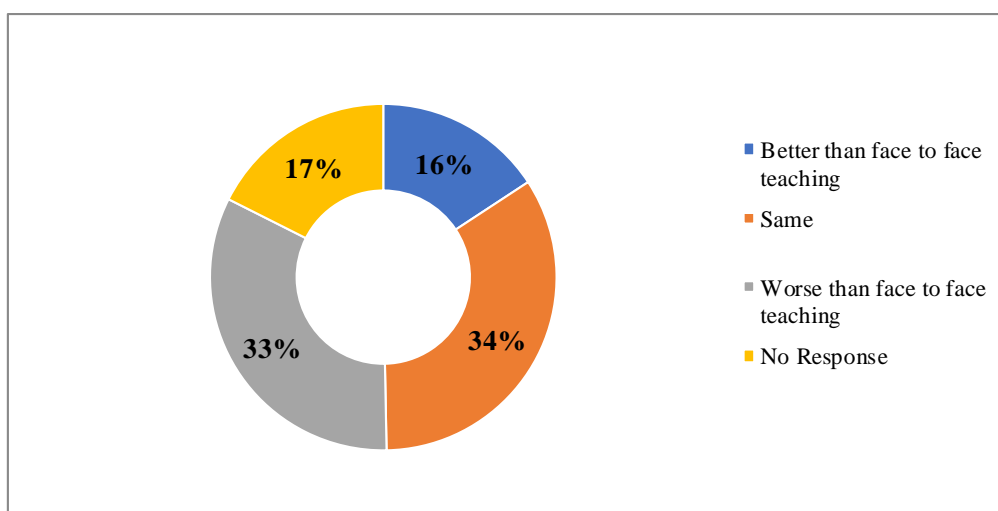


Source: CSD Survey 2022

4.2.2 Learning of Children with Access to Digital Education

Nearly one-third of the children who had access to online education reported that the experience was worse than face-to-face teaching (Figure 4.5). Some children also expressed their discontentment with digital education and others expressed mixed views. In Kyarda Kalan, Karauli district, children stated that, ‘Online classes were utterly useless’ and unanimously expressed their preference for offline classes.

Figure 4.5: Parental perception of the effect of school closure on children's education



Source: CSD Survey 2022

N = 330 children

In a private school in Bardehra village, Shravasti block, Uttar Pradesh, children stated that their school did not organize online classes because the students did not have phones and their parents' phones were not smartphones. The education officer interviewed in Rajasthan also highlighted that the worksheets for online assessments were filled often by elder siblings or parents and not by the children themselves. Children in Rajasthan stated that they did not have access to smartphones, and mostly their fathers took the phone with them while they went for work.

The interaction among students and teachers, which is a precondition for quality education, had decreased during the pandemic period across the four states. Physical interactions had been replaced with digital addiction in many cases. Parents reported that their children extensively used smartphones but not for studies. Even young children of Classes II and III took the smartphones from their parents on the pretext of using it for studies, but in reality, played games and videos. In Karauli district, it was highlighted that some of the children who initially accessed smartphones for online classes got addicted to them. Parents of Yelleri,

Yadgiri district, Karnataka, complained that children wanted the smartphone all the time, irrespective of whether they had online classes. A parent in Yelleri stated, 'Children these days don't want parents, but they want mobile phones'. A sarpanch in Rajasthan stated, 'Though the government of Rajasthan has promoted online education and parents get smartphones for their children, children are mostly playing on the phones, while the parents think they are studying'.

Parents also expressed other concerns regarding online education. Nearly 15 per cent of the parents regretted the increased screen time, whereas 25 per cent of the parents feared that their children were exposed to harmful content. The major challenge reported by the parents in supporting online education was the increased expenditure on digital devices and the lack of digital skills to handle online classes. One-third of the total surveyed parents highlighted both these concerns and stated that even if the government promotes online education, they will not be in a position to adopt it because of financial and technological barriers.

Teachers too expressed their concern about digital measures and highlighted the problems they faced apart from the challenges faced by the children. Teachers expressed that the lack of access to digital devices and digital skills among both teachers and children was a major challenge that affected online education. Nearly half of the teachers recognized the lack of digital devices among students as a major challenge. About one-third of the teachers reported that the major challenge was teachers not owning digital devices. Even those who had digital devices were not in favour of using the phones as an instrument of teaching and 20 per cent of them admitted that they do not have the required digital skills to conduct online classes. More than 10 per cent of the teachers also mentioned that it was difficult for children to follow online classes. Government school teachers in Jharkhand reported facing problems while conducting online classes. Several teachers indicated the non-availability of smartphones for students, network issues, data pack problems, fewer students attending classes, etc. as major problems faced during online classes. Though the teachers tried to adapt themselves to the new online teaching system, a lack of proper training affected their enthusiasm. According to the teachers, economically sound and educated parents were able to support their children throughout the pandemic; but most of the illiterate parents and lower-income category families could not do so and felt helpless.

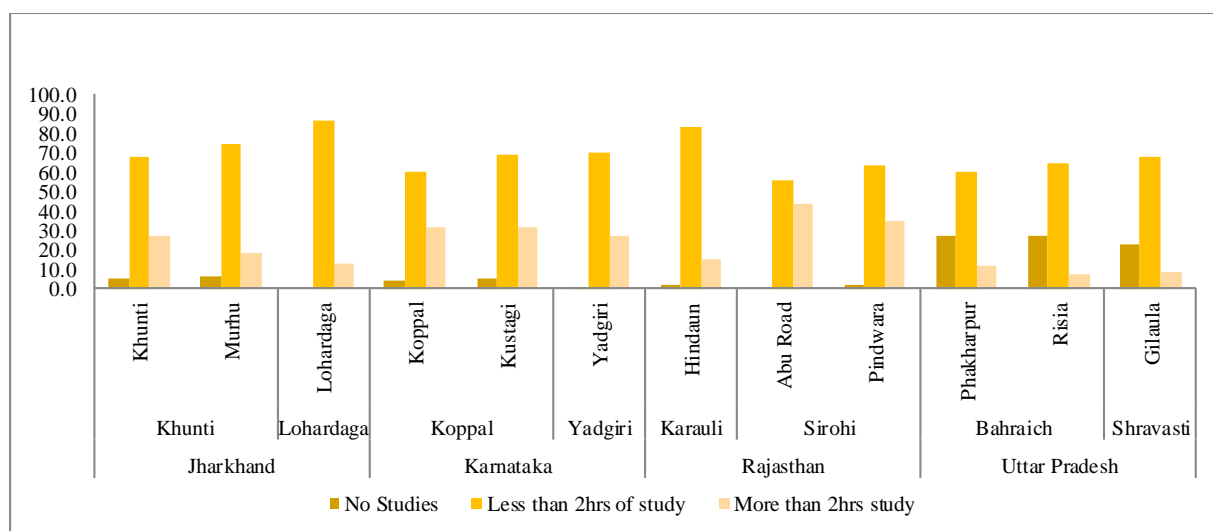
Regarding online education, one of the Sarpanch in Karauli district of Rajasthan felt that it cannot be a method of teaching for small kids and can never replace a school. He said a

school is a place for discipline, routine, intermingling with other kids, etc. More or less, similar concerns were vocalized by children who were in favour of face-to-face teaching that is followed in schools. All the children stated that studying in school is what they enjoyed the most, as they could interact with teachers and friends and get clarification and mingle and play with friends. In Katar village, Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh, children in an FGD said that they enjoyed the peer learning mechanism that was followed in schools. They said that when they spent time with their friends, they are able to understand and learn better. In a private school in Bardehra village, Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh, children reported that they enjoyed reading books with friends in the school, which gave them the opportunity to play and learn.

4.2.3 Learning of Children with No Access to Digital Education

Of the total children surveyed, three-fourths of them did not have access to digital education. Of those children without digital access, nearly 10 per cent did not study at all during the school closure period and about 70 per cent hardly studied for 1–2 hours. Only about one-third of the children were able to give substantial time to their studies (Figure 4.6). The learning of these children was facilitated by open-air classes, community learning centres of Tata Trusts, and tuition by volunteers.

Figure 4.6: Duration of studies of children with no access to digital education (%)



Source: CSD Survey 2022

In the surveyed states, community classes were operational; *mohalla* classes were held in Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh and *Vidyagama* in Karnataka. Such measures enabled taking education to the doorstep, where children were taught in small open spaces

such as temples, open grounds, panchayat bhavans, etc. In Karnataka, Vidyagama was quite active in the initial days of the pandemic. Children in Kalkeri village, Karnataka stated that during the lockdown, when the Vidyagama scheme was initiated by the government, most of the students from their locality attended the classes and subjects such as Maths, Kannada, etc. were taught well in the face-to-face mode.

Apart from such offline measures implemented by the state, Tata Trusts along with their associate organizations (and some other NGOs in the surveyed states) also undertook various initiatives to enhance the learning levels of children. In Bardehra village, Shravasti district, Uttar Pradesh, parents stated that when the schools were closed the learning levels of the children got hampered, as they did not even pick up their books during the lockdown. However, they felt relieved when Tata Trusts-led community centres became operational, wherein children were able to study on a regular basis and learn something. Another person said ‘The centre is running properly and my grandson listens to the stories and narrates them to me. He has also learnt to write by attending the community centre’.

Box 4.1: Learning made joyful in Karnataka: Community Learning Centre of Kallike–Tata Trusts

A need was felt to focus on the children at the individual level so that learning issues faced by them could be addressed at the individual level in the community learning centres. To address the learning gap faced by children in the last 2 years, a common workbook was prepared for Classes III to V and Classes VI to VIII, covering Mathematics, English, and Kannada. There are about 24 sets of activities for writing, reading, and speaking. Library sessions were also held in the centres where children engaged in the practice of reading aloud, story-telling, voice modulation exercises, and learning grammar and punctuations. They also played treasure hunt. Book talks were also conducted, where children were asked to introduce a book that they had recently read. Books were displayed in the centre and given to the children for reading. Children were also made to review a book and its illustration, if any. Based on the interest promoted in reading, children also created stories in their local language and some also came up with their own storybooks, where they wrote their own stories.

Source: Based on survey with programme lead, Karnataka.

In Khunti district of Jharkhand, CInI, the associate organization of Tata Trusts, encouraged children to write poems, stories, puzzles, riddles, and make drawings on their own, which were then published in the school’s half-yearly magazine. In Karnataka, the Tata Trusts-Kallike implemented various interventions such as community learning centres (CLCs), tuition centres in the villages, libraries within schools, etc.

Tuitions, with additional out-of-pocket expenditure, were also a chief mode of learning, which was found to be active in the surveyed states. As some of the parents could not ensure the learning levels of children at home, they preferred sending them to tuition classes so that they learned something.

4.2.4 Overall Impact on Learning

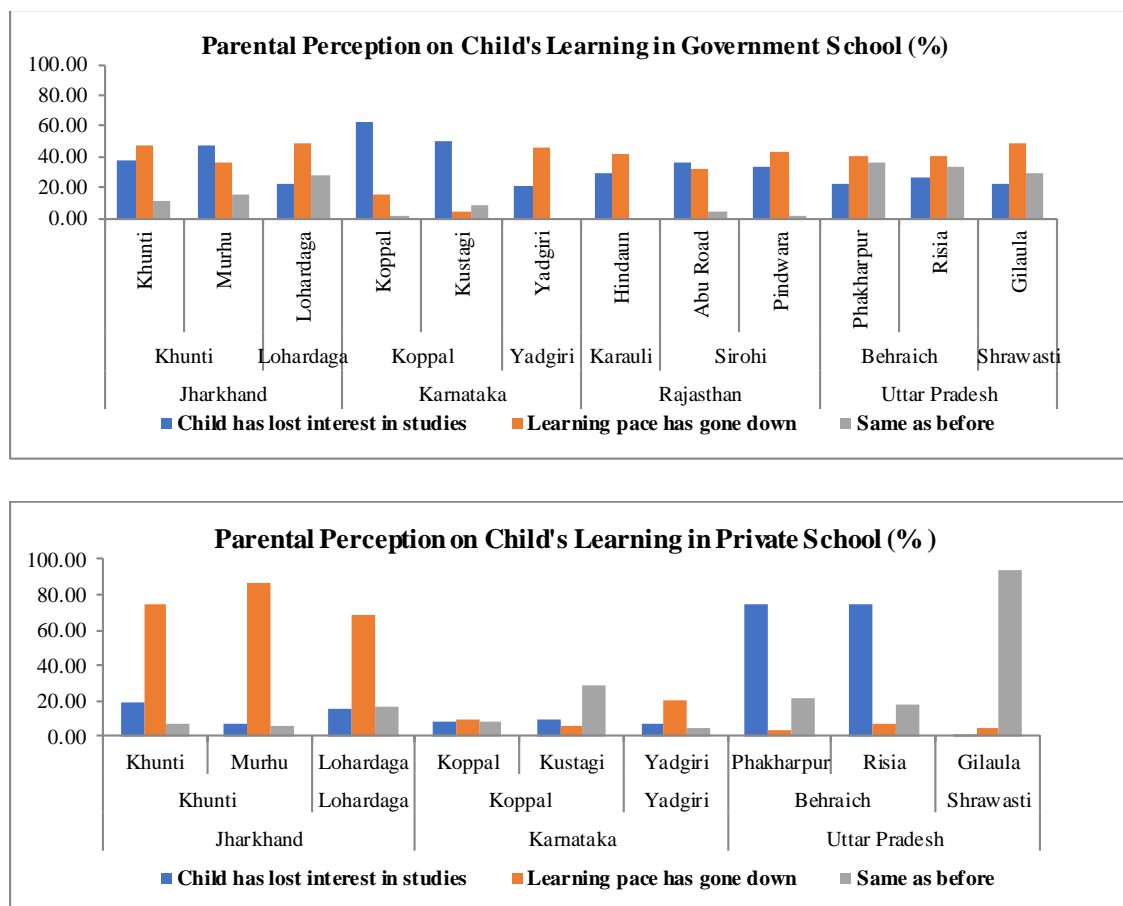
Parents felt that their children's learning was severely hampered, as they had forgotten the basics and were not able to construct elementary sentences and perform additions and subtractions (Table 4.2). The children's learning was not commensurate with their grades. Further, the learning pace of children had deteriorated and some children had also lost interest in studies, as reported by the parents. Almost one-third of the parents expressed concerns about the decreased ability of their children in foundational literacy, numeracy, reading, and writing ability during two years of the school closure period.

States			Basic alphabets	Basic reading	Basic writing	Basic numeracy
Jharkhand	Khunti	Khunti	23.00	29.00	23.00	21.00
		Murhu	36.00	35.00	36.00	33.00
	Lohardaga	Lohardaga	28.00	30.00	29.00	27.00
Karnataka	Koppal	Koppal	8.08	5.05	20.20	13.13
		Kustagi	8.00	13.00	26.00	23.00
	Yadgiri	Yadgiri	0.99	1.98	1.98	2.97
Rajasthan	Karauli	Hindaun	58.00	50.00	36.00	31.00
	Sirohi	Abu Road	57.00	43.00	40.00	28.00
		Pindwara	42.00	39.00	37.00	36.00
Uttar Pradesh	Bahraich	Phakharpur	52.00	53.00	55.00	58.00
		Risia	43.00	47.00	42.00	49.00
	Shravasti	Gilaula	44.00	54.00	52.00	50.00

Source: CSD Survey 2022

Figure 4.7 shows the perception of parents on the learning levels of government school children and private government school children.

Figure 4.7: Parents' perception of government and private school children's learning



Source: CSD Survey 2022

In Karnataka, the panchayat members said ‘The major challenge faced by the children of their locality is the gap in learning levels. After a break in education for about 1 ½ years, they have mostly forgotten what was taught and post-opening, even if they write it down in their notebooks, they write it without proper understanding. In addition, the memory power of children has gone down.’

A parent from Bardehra village, Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh said, ‘My child who attended Class I is in Class III now and she does not even remember what she had learnt in Class I. It is important for the schools to function continuously and understand that improvement is possible only from the second year and one year is completely needed to just make the children familiar with the basics’. During FGD, parents in Ramsamudhra stated that most of the children had forgotten the basics and regular practices are needed to address the learning gaps.

A CMF staff in the Karauli district, Rajasthan said, ‘For two years children got promoted without learning. The government is suggesting 3 months of remedial classes for students,

but how far it will for cater the issue is yet to be seen. Teachers are also about confused on how the huge learning gap can be covered in a short duration. While economic loss can be measured, how to measure the learning loss? Both the parents and the teachers are not able to measure the learning loss and finally, the children are suffering’.

From the above narratives, it can be noted that the parents, officials, NGO staff, and the elected representatives of panchayats were worried about the learning levels of children and it was felt that staunch measures are needed to address this issue.

In the Hindaun block of Karauli district, Rajasthan, the common problem noticed was children’s irregular attendance and lack of continuity in schools, which had a major impact on the learning levels of children. In Hindaun block, it was observed that parents did not pay much attention to their children’s education, as their focus was on everyday survival and livelihood. Moreover, no one was at home to supervise that the children went to school, once it reopened. Hence their attendance was irregular, which had a direct impact on their learning levels. Children faced the vicious cycle of humiliation because of the learning gap in the class and, thus, avoided the situation by not attending the class, which further aggravated the problem.

Though various stakeholders expressed different perceptions and dissatisfaction with the learning levels of children, the survey revealed that what was mostly missed out on was foundational literacy and numeracy. This was because of the discontinuity in the educational routine of children. Apart from that, children had learned many new things since the outbreak of COVID-19. They had been exposed to many new things in life and some of the children affirmed learning new things during the school closure period. But not all of the children responded to this question because for many of them activities related to agriculture, cotton plucking, cooking, etc. were not new as they had been engaged in these activities even before pandemic times. For instance, during the qualitative survey, many children in Kustagi reported being engaged in agricultural activities but did not consider it a new learning.



Table 4.3: New learnings of children in the school closure period (in number) (multiple responses)

	Jharkhand			Karnataka			Rajasthan			Uttar Pradesh		
	Khunti		Lohardaga	Koppal		Yadgiri	Karauli	Sirohi		Bahraich		Shravasti
	Khunti	Murhu	Lohardaga	Koppal	Kustagi	Yadgiri	Hindaun	Abu Road	Pindwara	Phakharpur	Risia	Gilaula
Agricultural activities	25	48	38	33	6	41	34	32	43	40	60	44
Carpentry	3	12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pottery	2	9	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Poultry	7	3	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	2	0
Cooking	40	18	52	34	31	42	46	38	50	42	38	51
Walking alone	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Bakery	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Cleaning	0	0	0	13	24	19	4	0	7	0	0	0
Collecting wood from forest	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Craft with rope, papers	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
Goat Rearing	0	1	0	12	7	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
Help Parents	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Home care	0	0	0	11	0	9	4	20	6	0	0	0
Learnt to make leaf plates	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Learnt to ride bicycle/ two wheeler	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Respecting elders	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Service a motorcycle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
learnt to run Shop	0	0	0	9	0	11	0	1	0	0	2	0
Tailoring	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Washing clothes	0	0	0	3	3	5	1	1	0	0	0	0
Mehndi designing	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Planting	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total Response	70	72	78	73	71	61	66	66	76	79	84	81
No Response	30	28	22	27	29	39	34	34	24	21	16	19

Source: CSD Survey 2022

Out of 1200 children, 322 children did not respond to this question, as they felt that they did not learn anything new during the lockdown. The remaining 878 children reported learning various new things. About 482 children learned cooking during the lockdown period, and 444 children said they learned agricultural activities such as plucking cotton, watering and weeding the fields, sowing, and cutting crops (Table 4.3). Other skills learned during the period included paper craft, making leaves-plates, home care, cattle rearing, running a shop, etc.

While parents and other educational stakeholders have been worried about the learning poverty and learning losses among children, the children were not worried about it. Their world of schooling and learning process was different and they yearned to have school life back. Across the states, almost all the children stated that studying in school is what they enjoyed the most, as there is scope for interacting with teachers and friends and getting clarification, talking, and playing with friends. Nearly 85 per cent of children mentioned that they were able to learn more when the schools were open compared to when the schools were closed. Almost all the children (98 per cent) said that given a choice they preferred regular schooling compared to the online mode of teaching (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Preference of children for a better learning experience (%)								
States			When do you think you were able to study more			Given a choice which mode of learning you would choose		
			When school was closed	When school was open	Same in both situation	Regular schooling	Online mode	Tuitions only
Jharkhand	Khunti	Khunti	6.00	88.00	6.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
		Murhu	6.00	87.00	7.00	99.00	0.00	1.00
	Lohardaga	Lohardaga	0.00	95.00	5.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Karnataka	Koppal	Koppal	0.00	63.00	37.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
		Kustagi	0.00	60.00	40.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
	Yadgiri	Yadgiri	0.00	65.00	35.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Rajasthan	Karauli	Hindaun	0.00	98.00	2.00	99.00	0.00	0.00
	Sirohi	Abu Road	3.00	91.00	4.00	98.00	1.00	0.00
		Pindwara	1.00	96.00	2.00	98.00	1.00	0.00
Uttar Pradesh	Bahraich	Phakharpur	6.00	92.00	2.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
		Risia	5.00	84.00	11.00	96.00	0.00	4.00
	Shravasti	Gilaula	2.00	93.00	5.00	94.00	3.00	3.00

Source: CSD Survey 2022

These findings reveal that children's lived experiences were not made part of the learning process. Their day-to-day life during the pandemic (which children powerfully depicted in the drawings) was not made part of the learning process. Experiences were different for

different children; some were engaged in the world of work, while others lost interest in studies; still others had to face aggressive situations at home including violence and abuse. Some children, despite their engagement in various works, also were engaged in learning. A few were separated from their parents, as they migrated for work and some migrated along with their parents for work. However, rather than encompassing the lived experiences of children in studies, an attempt was made to substitute schooling experience through words and worksheets, which was devoid of children's world and their world views. The children's routine had changed during the pandemic even without a single case of COVID-19 positive patient, as reported by parents in Gurchayi village, Uttar Pradesh. Children understood the interconnectedness between home, community, and society at large. Their drawings depicted their confinement at home. These experiences were important for them during the period. The closing of schools and empty parks, which they drew, reflected they were learning many things through the pandemic. However, according to different stakeholders, children's learning was not satisfactory. One of the parents in an SMC meeting in Gurchayi village, Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh, said, 'Children lost 2 years of education. The headteacher did make a lot of effort to bring all children to school, however, children were not learning as much as they should'. The Sarpanch of Bardehra village, Shravasti block, Uttar Pradesh said, 'Schools were closed during the pandemic. The idea of physical closure and learning through other media didn't work in the village'. Even the education officers interviewed in one of the districts of Uttar Pradesh said, 'The system didn't work for the last 2 years, how children will learn? However, a lot of content has been made which is not accessible to children. The content should be made available to children'.

The framework used for online learning during the pandemic by the government was not based on the needs of the children and was designed in a top-down manner, which did not benefit the children and the community. Lack of contact was compensated through physical meetings in the rural areas by the school teachers, Tata Trusts' field workers, and other NGOs; but the framework of learning hardly included community, society, culture, and the family of which the child is an inseparable part and also their learning.

Othering processes were institutionalized and media played a critical role in disseminating such information. The stigma of COVID-19 infections reinforced indifference to other's realities, and policing was normalized where citizens were transformed from active citizens

to following centralized guidelines. The social, political, and cultural environment faced tremendous changes, however, learning remained divorced from such realities.

5

COVID-19 Response Measures: State and Non-State Interventions

5.1 Introduction

COVID-19 has brought both short-term and long-term effects on children's education. As a result, the state's and non-state actors' response measures should focus on both these effects and find solutions for them. In this chapter, an attempt had been made to capture the response measures that the state and non-state actors, community, elected representatives of panchayats, School Management Committees (SMCs), etc. undertook to address the different impacts COVID-19 had on the children. The chapter lists the emergency response measures that were undertaken in the initial phase when schools were closed and, thereafter, when they reopened. It also identifies the interventions that were taken to reach out to the children and address the impact they faced in post-pandemic times. Both the state and non-state actors came up with certain measures towards promoting students' learning during school closure and bringing them back when the schools reopened. The study in this chapter has identified these measures along with the current steps that address the learning gap that rose because of the school closure during the pandemic.

5.2 Response Measures Since the Pandemic Outbreak

During the initial phase of the pandemic, when school closure was announced, the state and non-state actors were caught unprepared as everyone lacked clarity on the intensity or magnitude of the pandemic. From March 2020 to May 2020, the education system across the country was in complete chaos due to the indefinite school closure. The officials and various other stakeholders of education were clueless about how to tackle the issue. Measures taken to tackle the issue were quite minimal. To meet the immediate requirement of the people, interventions such as offering cash transfers under various programmes viz., Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) were visible.

In the initial two months, some states slowly started becoming proactive and identified that smartphones and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools could help in

imparting education to children. The Government of India issued guidelines² to use online modes to teach children. However, as indicated in the 75th round of National Sample Survey (NSS) data (2017/18), while only 4.4 per cent and 14.9 per cent of rural households had access to computer and Internet facilities, the corresponding share for urban households was 23.4 per cent and 42 per cent, respectively. Similarly, while 37.5 per cent of the urban households could operate computers, only 12.6 per cent of the rural households could do so (Government of India 2019). Thus, in rural areas where digital penetration is anyway quite low, in terms of access to digital devices, Internet connectivity, and digital skills, the existing inequality of the digital divide further exacerbated the inequality in the educational landscape for the haves and the have-nots. To overcome these challenges, state and non-state actors devised digital and non-digital initiatives so that the children could continue to learn. They also took measures that would address the children's nutritional requirements during school closure and post-re-opening. The forthcoming sections highlight the initiatives undertaken by the government, NGOs, teachers, and other stakeholders.

5.2.1 Digital Initiatives of the Government

After the initial hiccups, when there was no clue about what is to be done in the initial phase of the pandemic, things changed swiftly. Both the central and the state governments decided to promote online learning (Table 5.1).

At the national level, the Ministry of Education implemented various initiatives, including Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA),³ e-Pathshala, Swayam Prabha, National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA),⁴ DigiSATH,⁵ e-Vidyavahini,⁶ National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER), and the recent initiative of National Initiative for

² Government of India. (n.d.) *Pragyata Guidelines for Digital Education*, New Delhi: Ministry of Human Resource Development, available at https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/pragyata-guidelines_0.pdf

³ DIKSHA is both a web platform and a mobile-based application that provides subject-wise and class-wise learning content for Classes 1-12. Under this app, remedial and grade-based contents are shared on an everyday basis (NCERT 2020)

⁴ Web portal and app to train teachers

⁵ DigiSath was launched during the lockdown to provide study material in audio-visual and text format where education officials, teachers, parents, and children were connected through video conferencing and WhatsApp groups.

⁶ Web portal and mobile app in Jharkhand to monitor, measure and transform education service delivery and learning outcomes

Table 5.1: Educational interventions of central and state governments

Educational interventions	Centre*	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Rajasthan	Uttar Pradesh
Digital Education Measures (Online/Web portal/Mobile Apps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PM e-Vidya⁷ encompassing DIKSHA –one nation, one digital education platform; •NROER is a site for e-content that houses thousands of e-books, audio and video content •Online quiz competitions under DIKSHA •NISHTHA for capacity building of elementary teachers in 10 languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •DigiSATH (with support of Piramal foundation & Boston Consulting group – to reach out to students of government schools during lock-down •e-Vidyavahini mobile app •Use of DISKHA app •Preparation of digital content through ed-tech sources •Online Quiz on Saturdays •Audio-video content creation in collaboration with CINI & Pratham 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •QR Code for lessons & activities •Teacher Training through NISHTHA •Use of TeachMint, Microsoft Team and Zoom meet by teachers for online classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Issue free android phones to every student •Social Media Interface for learning Engagement (SMILE) programme •Online Quiz on Saturdays •Rajgyan portal with content by CBSE and state govt. • Remedial STAR programme for junior classes •Fifteen days online training of teachers through DIKSHA app •Audio-video content creation in collaboration with CMF & Pratham 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Prerna App for foundational literacy of class 1-5 •E-pathshala for content creation and dissemination •Use of DIKSHA app •Teacher training through NIISHTHA •Online quiz on every Saturdays for class 1-8
Education through TV channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SwayamPrabha⁸ – One class, one TV channel; •DTH channel for hearing-impaired students through sign language & audiobooks for visually impaired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •TV-Hamara Doordarshan Hamara Vidhyalaya 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •DD Chandana Channel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Shiksha darshan via DD Rajasthan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Doordarshan
Education through Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Curriculum-based radio programmes for Classes 1-8 by NCERT through 12 Gyan Vani FM and 76 community radio stations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Radio programmes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Shikshavani radio 	
Content through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Content through WhatsApp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Learning through WhatsApp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Makkala Vani 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •YouTube channel named E- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •WhatsApp activities

⁷ PM e-Vidya is an initiative that unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access to education

⁸ SwayamPrabha, a DTH TV channel, started functioning for school education from September 2020 and chapter-wise programmes are telecasted on this channel, covering Classes 1-12 with 2 and 3 hours of fresh slots for Classes 1-10 and Classes 11-12, respectively.

WhatsApp, YouTube links			YouTube Channel •WhatsApp activities & YouTube links	kaksha •Creation of WhatsApp group by teachers for lessons, activities and homework •Hawa Mahal ⁹ - Link for a short story and games is shared via WhatsApp	•Sharing of QR codes for books
Offline Measures	•Issue of order to prepare hot cooked MDM or food security allowance or the cooking cost followed in respective States •Offline measures like worksheet distribution, peer group learning, mobile schools, mobile libraries are indicated in the Learning Enhancement guidelines of NCERT (NCERT, 2020)	•Home visits by teachers •Doorstep delivery of textbooks •Mohalla/Open air classes •Peer support •Training parents •	•Home visits by teachers •Doorstep delivery of textbooks •Distribution of workbooks/worksheets •Bridge course 'Odu-Karnataka' for Classes 4 and 5 •100 days of reading campaign •Mohalla/Open air classes •Vattara Shala (brief period) •Library books	•Home visits by teachers •Doorstep delivery of textbooks •Mobile school •Mohalla/ Open air classes •Training to parents •SMILE V.2 (AaoGhar Par Seekhen - Distribution of workbooks at home for Hindi, Maths and English for Class 1-5 •Camp Vidya – learning initiative of community that engage girls to teach activity-based learning to children	•Home visits by teachers •Doorstep delivery of textbooks •Distribution of workbooks/worksheets •Mobile school •Mohalla classes ¹⁰ •Training parents
Others	•Manodarpan for psycho-social support and mental wellbeing of students and teachers through counselling services, online resources and helplines	•Community support to access TV, radio, and digital devices •Magazines in which poems/stories of children are published •Repairing of school buildings	•Nalikali Teaching	•Panchayat support to access TV, radio, and digital devices •Quiz programmes on Saturdays	•100 days School readiness programme

Source: Survey; * NCERT, 2020; GoI, Initiatives by School Education Sector in 2020-21 for Continuing Teaching and Learning, 2021.

⁹ NCERT special programme on Saturdays

¹⁰ This was an initiative undertaken by one of the panchayats in Varanasi called, 'Mera Ghar Mera Vidyalaya', which was later implemented across the state

Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN).¹¹ Some of these initiatives were undertaken even before the pandemic times. Under DIKSHA, children were provided access to lessons, teaching videos, slides, worksheets, etc. in the surveyed states of Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Rajasthan, and a few teachers reported using both DIKSHA and NISHTHA. Similarly, educational content was shared and teaching promoted through TV channels, radios, and WhatsApp groups. Of the various modes, WhatsApp was the most commonly used medium for sharing educational content across the surveyed states. Jharkhand government also collaborated with Pratham and CInI-Tata Trust to create audio-video content. The TV channel ‘Hamara Doordarshan Hamara Vidyalaya’ was used as a platform to deliver educational content. Karnataka delivered educational content to children through digital platforms such as Makkala Vani YouTube Channel, DD Chandana channel, etc.

In Rajasthan, the state government employed the Social Media Interface for Learning Engagement (SMILE) project to fill the learning gap by delivering online content and worksheet for government school students. Shikshavani (a radio channel) and Shiksha darshan (a television programme) were also engaged for this purpose. In addition, e-Kaksha, a YouTube channel, was created to deliver educational content. Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS) programme was also launched to improve the assessment system in schools.

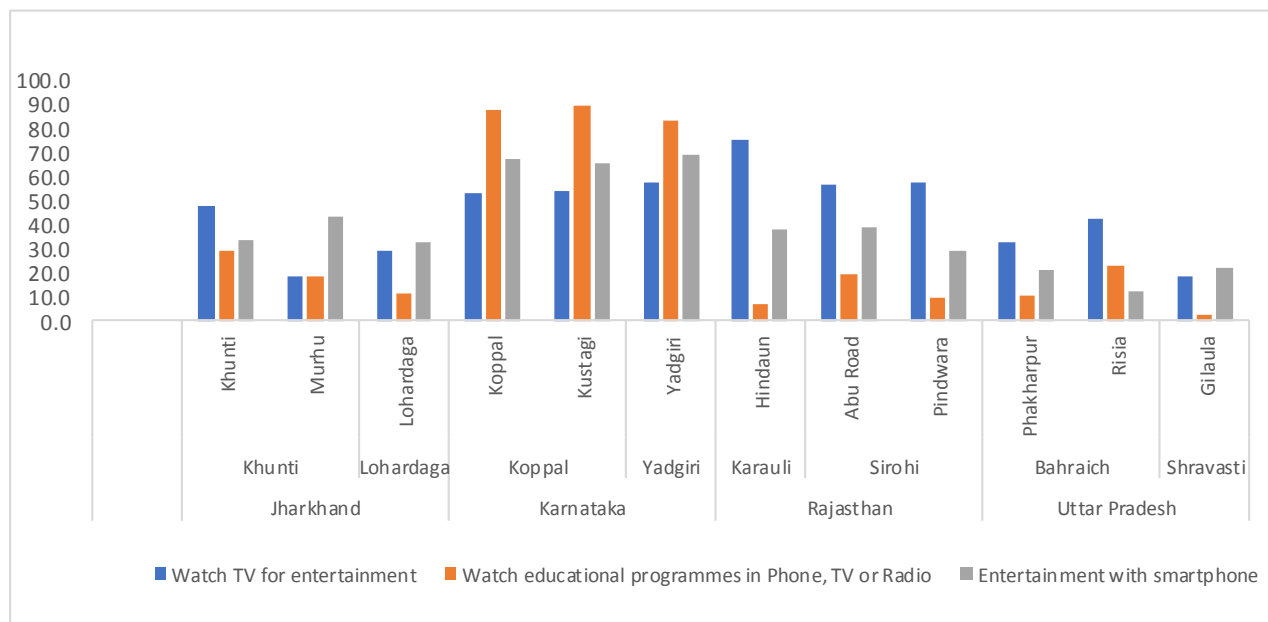
In Rajasthan, remedial classes were conducted. Through DIKSHA, teachers were given 15 days of online training. In Karnataka, while teachers said they used DIKSHA and NISHTHA apps, the children of both government and private schools stated they did not use any of the online learning tools and apps. In Uttar Pradesh, as per the government officials, Perna Apps, e-Pathshala and DIKSHA app were widely used and QR codes were accessed for lessons and activities. The government officials also said that worksheets were distributed, but the parents or children said that they did not receive any.

Although the government officials said that digital solutions were promoted, at the ground level only a few children corroborated the claim. For instance, the online mode was used to sustain learning continuity and deliver educational content to children but such mechanism and other digital solutions offered did not reach all. In Jharkhand, the usage of smartphones,

¹¹ It is a mission under Samagra Shiksha, which was launched by the Ministry of Education to ensure that every child attains foundational literacy and numeracy by the end of grade III, by 2026–27 and will cover children in the age group of 3–9 years.

tablets, and computers in remote and tribal villages was reported to be low. Even where it could be accessed, access was not available all the time. This was because of the non-availability of smartphones, network issues, data pack problems, etc. as reported by teachers and parents of Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Karnataka. Even, when the children had access to smartphones and the Internet, they did not limit their usage for education but rather used them majorly for entertainment.

Figure 5.1: Percentage of children using digital modes

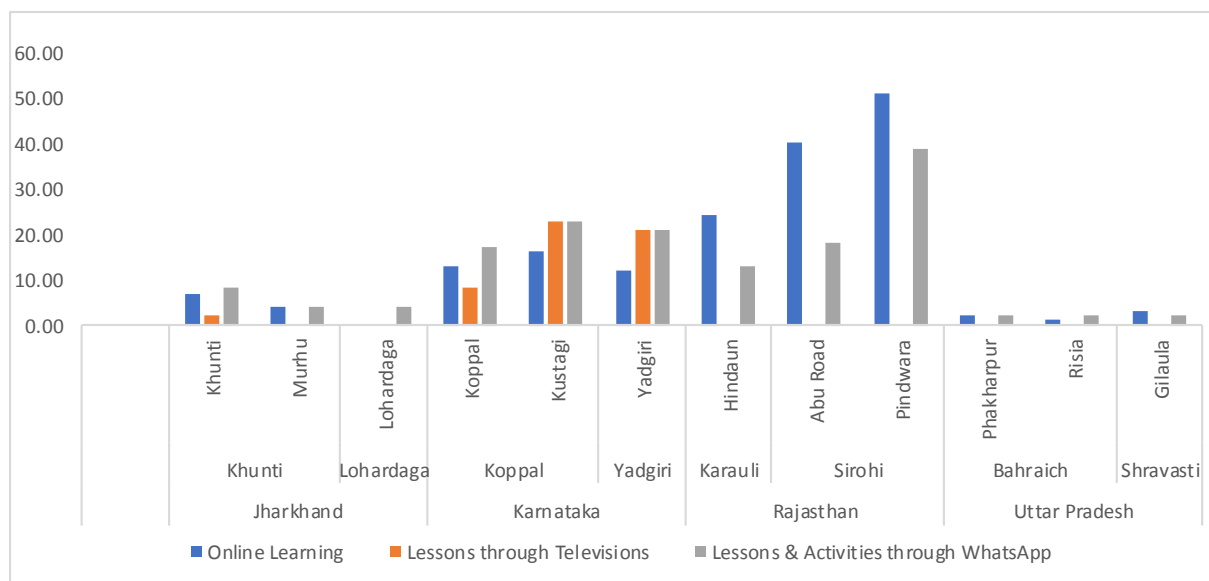


Source: CSD Survey 2022

Officials in Jharkhand said that television channels and web portals were created to deliver educational content. However, only one-fifth of the children in the state reported watching them. In contrast, 30 per cent of the children used television and phones for entertainment purposes. Parents also hardly reported their children watching television for educational purposes. In Khunti, 8 per cent of the parents said that their children used WhatsApp for lessons and activities. In Karnataka, Chandana TV channel for educational purposes was quite popular among the children, though usage of the phone was not in comparison. In Kalkeri village, Koppal district, Karnataka, a Class VI girl said that ‘during lockdown, I did not allow my parents to watch TV or serials, and I always watched Chandana channel, as I wanted to learn’. Only 11 per cent in Rajasthan reported using digital platforms for educational programmes (Figure 5.1). On the other hand, 75 per cent in Hindaun, Rajasthan said they watched television for entertainment. About 35 per cent of children used smartphone for entertainment. In the Gilaula block of Shravasti district in Uttar Pradesh, only

2 per cent of the children used digital devices for educational purposes, against 23 per cent in the Risia block of Bahraich district of the state. On the other hand, 20 to 40 per cent used smartphones and televisions for entertainment.

Figure 5.2: Percentage of parents who reported the use of digital measures by the children



Source: CSD Survey 2022

Web portals were also offered as solutions, but their usage was affirmed by only 16 per cent of the parents (Figure 5.2). About 20 per cent of the parents said that their children accessed WhatsApp for lessons and activities. In Karnataka, some parents said that their children watched television to learn lessons, but none in Rajasthan could support the same. In Karauli and Pindwara of Rajasthan, a high percentage of parents affirmed access of online platforms such as online portals and WhatsApp for educational purposes. However, this was not the case in Uttar Pradesh. As low as 2–3 per cent in Bahraich and Shravasti districts said that their children used these online platforms for learning.

On the whole, it can be said that the interventions made by the centre and the states, in the form of digital solutions, failed to reach all the students; the vulnerable and marginalized sections were left behind as they did not have access to digital devices. This exacerbated the existing inequality in terms of the opportunity to education. The government needs to pay attention to such inequitable education, and resilience measures in the schooling and learning system have to be planned.

5.2.2 Offline Initiatives of the Government

Several key stakeholders also initiated several offline measures during the school closure. Face-to-face classes were held in open spaces, temples, panchayat bhavan, etc. for children living near these places. The teachers played a key role in these initiatives. In Jharkhand, school teachers were asked to take the printouts of study materials and distribute them to students who do not have access to any kind of digital device in their home. Quiz programmes were conducted on Saturdays. The teachers also undertook other offline measures such as home visits, *mohalla* classes, educational support through peers, etc.

In Lohardaga district, Jharkhand, 66 per cent of the parents affirmed that their children attended the *mohalla* classes. In Karnataka, during school closure, the teachers took open-air classes through Vidyagama and classroom teaching on a rotational basis. Nearly one-third of the parents affirmed that their children attended the Vidyagama classes. On the other hand, in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, less than 20 per cent of the parents reported that their children attended *mohalla* classes (Table 5.2). The Rajasthan government took the initiative to hold mobile school and Camp Vidya (a learning initiative that engages girls to teach activity-based learning to children) and distributed worksheets among students. In Uttar Pradesh too, offline measures such as home visits by teachers, *mohalla* classes, distribution of worksheets, etc. were undertaken for the benefit of the children.

			Small group teaching (<i>Mohalla</i> classes/ Vidyagama)	Home visit by teachers	Classroom teaching (later period of school closure)	Lessons at doorstep involving volunteers /NGOs
Jharkhand	Khunti	Khunti	25.00	8.00	33.00	6.00
		Murhu	42.00	14.00	47.00	2.00
	Lohardaga	Lohardaga	66.00	15.00	52.00	0.00
Karnataka	Koppal	Koppal	32.00	12.00	63.00	5.00
		Kustagi	44.00	21.00	57.00	12.00
	Yadgiri	Yadgiri	41.00	14.00	53.00	8.00
Rajasthan	Karauli	Hindaun	31.00	44.00	55.00	0.00
	Sirohi	Abu Road	14.00	49.00	36.00	0.00
		Pindwara	16.00	70.00	17.00	0.00
Uttar Pradesh	Bahraich	Phakharpur	22.00	19.00	68.00	2.00
		Risia	16.00	13.00	76.00	1.00
	Sharawasti	Gilaula	13.00	6.00	51.00	1.00

Source: CSD Survey 2022

In Pindwara, Rajasthan, a high percentage of parents (70 per cent) confirmed that teachers made home visits, while it was less than 20 per cent in the other three states.

When schooling was partially allowed, teachers started rotational classroom teaching and more than 50 per cent of the parents in all the states affirmed that their children attended those classes, except in Abu Road and Pindwara blocks of Rajasthan where it was around 25 per cent on average. In Risia, Uttar Pradesh, 76 per cent (a high percentage) of children attended these classes mainly due to low usage of digital platforms.

In Jharkhand and Karnataka, on average, less than 10 per cent of the parents stated that teachers involved volunteers for doorstep delivery of education; this was hardly the case in the other states.

5.2.3 Initiatives of the NGOs

Many civil society organizations (CSOs) offered support to children, teachers, schools, and the government during the pandemic crisis by developing worksheets and online content, organizing community classes within the villages, and other such remote learning measures. In the surveyed states, Aga Khan Foundation, Azim Premji Foundation, CInI, CMF, Pratham, Tata Trusts, TCL, etc. were engaged in independent activities or activities in partnership with the government during both the school closure period and the reopening phase to address the learning gap in children. Some organizations developed educational content based on the school syllabus, while others promoted the reading ability of children through reading activities and storytelling in the community libraries established by the NGOs in the villages. Some of the interventions undertaken by the NGOs are discussed here (Table 5.3).

Across the states, in the initial stage of the pandemic, the NGOs provided relief materials and dry rations to people. It was only after the relaxation of the first lockdown, that the NGOs shifted their focus on educational interventions at the ground level. Some of them collaborated with the government in developing online content.

In Jharkhand, Collectives for Integrated Livelihoods Initiatives (CInI), an associate organization of Tata Trusts, contributed towards strengthening the existing libraries in government schools. It also established two types of libraries: mini library and jhola library. CInI also provided training to teachers on online classes and encouraged students to write poems, stories, puzzles, riddles, etc. The volunteers of CInI-Tata Trusts held *tola* or *mohalla* group teaching and created digital content in the form of videos and games. The volunteers also worked towards expanding the digital repository to serve the government and the communities. CInI shared its digital contents through WhatsApp and offered support in

reaching out more number of learners through interactive voice response (IVR), radio, short message service (SMS), etc. in Khunti and Lohardaga districts.

Table 5.3: ICT and non-ICT interventions of NGOs

States	ICT interventions	Non-ICT interventions
Jharkhand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue of tablets to children • Preparation of Apps, tools, and study material in the form of audio-video content 	<p>CInI-Tata Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed two libraries: Mini library and Jhola library • Strengthened existing libraries in government schools • Experiential learning and pictorial learning by creating the environment by the way of painting and pictures • Group teaching by CInI and Tata Trust • Extra classes by teachers • Development of books for Hindi and Mathematics for different stages of learning (Primer) • CInI and Tata Trust encouraged children to write poems and the same is being published in magazines • Home visits by volunteers • Mohalla/open air classes • Creation of resource centres in block offices to provide training to teachers and officials
Karnataka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kallike-Tata Trusts radio programme 	<p>Kallike-Tata Trusts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Learning Centres (CLCs) • Tuition centres held by volunteers every morning and evening in open spaces, terrace of houses, etc. • Bridge course in government schools for Classes 1–3 and Classes 4–5 by Tata Trust animators in schools • Strengthening of government school libraries by provision of books • Provision of training to SDMC members • Development of workbook in English, Mathematics, and Kannada • Workshop on emotional disturbance and psychological issues <p>Sri Kshetra Dharmashala Rural Development Trust (SKDRD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of temporary teaching staff (Gyana Deepa Shikshakaru) • Provision of furniture to government schools
Rajasthan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of tablets by CMF 	<p>CMF-Tata Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community learning centres (volunteers are paid INR 3000 and INR 300 for their transportation) • Involvement in Hawa Mahal programme • CMF, Tata Trust developed books for Hindi and Mathematics in three stages of learning for children • Developed model library • Home visits by volunteers • Mohalla/open air classes

Uttar Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT programme in 36 government schools • Distribution of smartphones to 100 children by the UNICEF 	<p>TCL-Tata Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading, writing, poems, and story-telling (Lok Kahaniya) in community learning centres through volunteers • Running of library (community book fair) • Home visit by volunteers <p>Aga Khan Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning during the pandemic with the help of volunteers (similar to CLCs of Tata Trust) • Technical support to teachers for improvement in learning • Enhance learning through libraries, stories <p>Ahmed Seva Sanshan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairing of school washroom, boundary walls, water supply • Tracking of absentee school children • Tracking of disabled children • Distribution of books and activity sheets to children of Classes I-III • Visiting village to assess completion of worksheet by children • Distribution of sanitary pads to children
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Source: CSD Survey 2022

In Karnataka, Kallike-Tata Trusts established community learning centres (CLCs) in different parts of Yadgiri and Koppal districts and organized tuition centres with the help of local volunteers. Tata Trusts animators created bridge courses for Classes I-III and Classes IV-V in government schools in the post-reopening phase. In addition, government school libraries were strengthened by providing books. Kallike-Tata Trusts also offered support to school development and management committees (SDMCs) for reformation. Workbooks and activity cards were also developed for subjects such as English, Mathematics, and Kannada. Workshops were conducted for children on how to deal with emotional disturbances and psychological issues. Other NGOs provided furniture to government schools and appointed temporary teaching staff there. More than 50 per cent of the parents said they received support from NGOs in the form of community centres, wherein children learnt something during the school closure period. In both Yadgiri and Koppal, Karnataka, the Tata Trusts-Kallike implemented various interventions such as community learning centres and tuition centres in the villages and established libraries within schools, etc. Tata Trusts conducted a baseline study, which identified gaps in learning and higher order skills among children and felt that focus should be provided to the children at the individual level. As a result, CLCs were established in both Yadgiri and Koppal. In the Kustagi block of Koppal, the establishment of such centres is being worked out. Animators were appointed to manage the

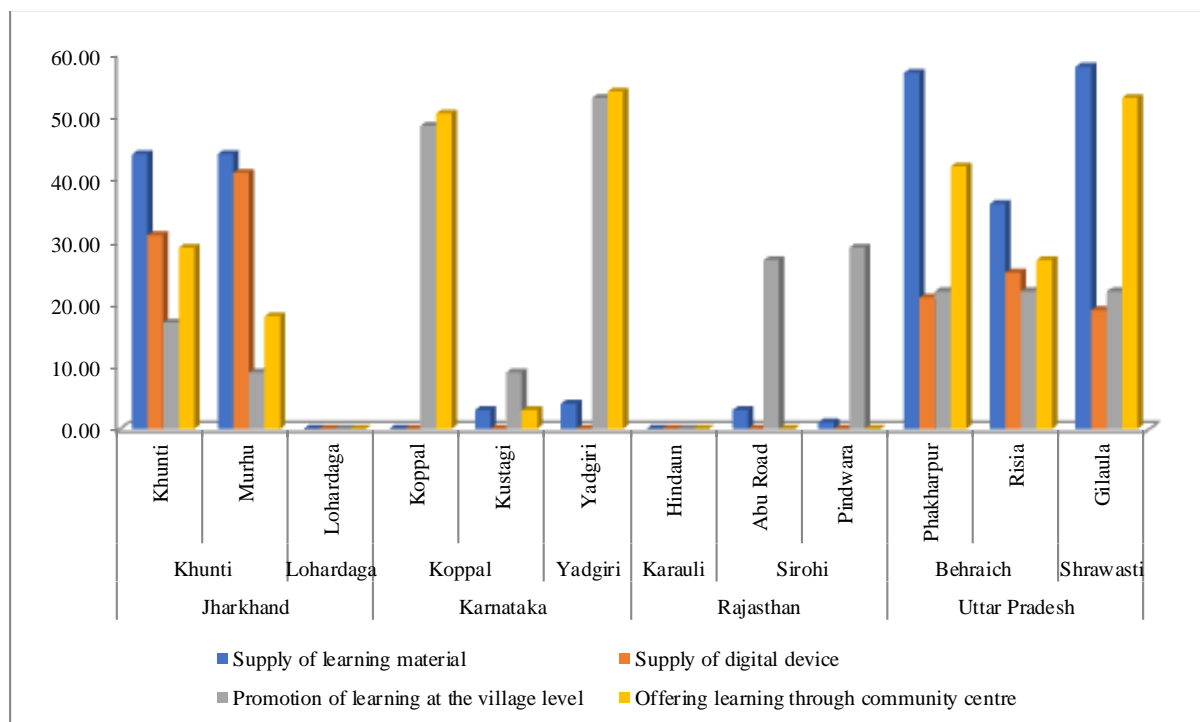
CLCs and teach basic mathematics and Kannada to the children. The Trusts also developed workbooks for Classes III to V and Classes VI to VIII. Library sessions were also held in the centre. During these sessions, children were made to read aloud, tell stories, do voice modulation exercises, and learn grammar and punctuations. Schools that had more than 200 children enrolled were selected for this initiative. Apart from the CLCs, tuition centres were also established in the houses of the village volunteers in Yadgiri block. These centres operated for 2 hours before and after school hours. The Trusts conducted book talks, where the children introduced a book that they had recently read. Based on the available space for libraries and teachers' interests, the Trusts established libraries in various schools. Apart from these interventions, Tata Trusts also collaborated with Karnataka Government for activities related to early childhood development, education, livelihood, skill development, and water and sanitation. Sri Kshetra Dharmashala Rural Development Trust (SKDRD) is a local NGO of the Yadgiri district that provided nine temporary teaching staff (Gyana Deepa Shikshakaru) to the government schools. The teachers were interviewed and appointed in various government schools and the Trusts dispensed the salary of such contractual teachers. In addition, the Trusts also provided desks, benches, etc. to the schools.

In Rajasthan, Centre for Micro Finance (CMF), in collaboration with Tata Trusts, created awareness among the community on the importance of learning continuation and the use of online classes, WhatsApp content, and educational television programmes. It issued tablets and appointed volunteers to teach children in small groups. After 2 hours of learning, the tabs shared by 8-10 children at a time were taken back. Three models of libraries were developed by CMF-Tata Trusts; it included the establishment of a model library, mini library, and *jhola* library. Through these libraries, books were made available to the children at their doorstep. In Sirohi district, the local NGOs were involved in creating awareness among local tribes on education, child protection, ill-effects of early marriage, and girl protection issues. In Abu Road and Pindwara blocks of Sirohi district, Rajasthan, CMF worked with teachers and children to improve the quality of education. In the Hindaun block of Karauli district, 55 members of CMF covered about 150 government schools. The School Facilitators (SF) or the Sikhshan Mitras of the CMF worked with the children, teachers, and SMC of government schools and the local community. When the first lockdown was relaxed, the school facilitators of CMF started working with 15 children in a group. Lack of space was a huge problem that came up. The schools did not allow the students to gather on their premises and as a solution, the local community provided alternative space. These became learning centres;

carpets were provided for the students to sit and the sarpanch provided masks, sanitizers, and soaps. The SFs collected the consent forms from parents for running such centres. In the initial seven months, the SFs visited the centres regularly, listened to the problems the children were facing and started the activities in the form of games. The SFs adopted a child-centric approach whereby teaching was done through the play way method. In order to connect with the children, songs were written based on the children's community and environment. In order to address the learning gap, individual care was provided by the SFs. For Hindi and Mathematics, special remedial classes were conducted for one hour each before the regular classes.

In Uttar Pradesh, Tata Trusts in collaboration with Trust Community Livelihoods (TCL) undertook various interventions in Bahraich and Shravasti districts. These included ICT education in 36 government schools and the establishment of community centres in villages to take education directly to the children. The Trusts managed the community centres with the help of 200 volunteers. About 400 community centres were established in Kesarganj, Phakharpur, Gilaula, Risia, Chittorah, and Hariharpurani. These centres took care of basic reading, writing, basic numeracy, and literacy. Every centre was issued about 150 books. The local community and panchayat sarpanch supported these community centres by providing land, sitting arrangements, carpets, sanitizers, masks, etc. Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) offered technical support to teachers to enhance their learning. It also ran the community centres with the help of volunteers with the aim to impart education to children during pandemic times. Ahmed Seva Sansthan (ASS) in Bahraich district took care of the maintenance and repair of government school buildings, boundary walls, washrooms, etc. and also distributed sanitary pads to girls. Other measures it took included tracking of absentee students and differently abled children, distribution of worksheets to children, etc.

Figure 5.3: Percentage of parents reporting having received support from NGOs



Source: CSD Survey 2022

The NGOs in the surveyed states reported undertaking various activities to enhance the learning of children and to strengthen government schools. The utility of the services that the NGOs provided was verified at the ground level. Though parents in Lohardaga, Khunti, and Murhu, said that they did not receive support from NGOs more than 40 per cent of the parents from these blocks confirmed receiving learning materials from NGOs and 36 per cent of the parents confirmed the issuance of Tabs (Figure 5.3). In Khunti, 29 per cent of the parents affirmed NGO activities in the form of community learning centres. In Karnataka, a high percentage of parents said that volunteers helped in operating community learning centres and promoting learning at the village. Nearly 50 per cent of the parents in Koppal and Yadgiri blocks confirmed receiving support from the NGOs. On the other hand, in Kustagi, hardly any support from NGOs was reported. This can be correlated with the interventions of Kallike–Tata Trust, which has recently started working in this particular block. In Rajasthan, nearly 30 per cent of the parents said that they received support from NGOs in the form of learning initiatives at the village level. In Uttar Pradesh, about 25 per cent of the parents reported receiving the supply of study materials from the NGOs and learning through community centres, respectively. A little more than 20 per cent of the parents affirmed NGOs promoted learning at the village level, whereas 15 per cent confirmed that NGOs provided digital devices to the children.

Based on the interventions undertaken by the civil society organizations, it was noticed that these interventions catered to the requirement or the local needs and most of the measures implemented by NGOs were non-ICT interventions that offered inclusive solutions and provided education for all. Though Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh governments implemented full-fledged ICT measures, the ground reality was quite different as a large number of teachers lacked ICT skills to enable successful implementation of such measures immediately.

5.2.4 Interventions of Other Stakeholders

Other stakeholders such as elected representatives of panchayats, school management committees, community, etc. played a key role in supporting children's education in the post-pandemic times. In addition to these players, child protection officers and officials were also involved in ensuring children's safety. Some of the interventions of such stakeholders are discussed here.

Panchayats

Panchayats played a more active role in Karnataka and Rajasthan, in comparison to the panchayats in Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. In Karnataka and Rajasthan, the panchayati raj representatives from day 3 of the first lockdown started distributing food and dry rations to pregnant women and lactating mothers. They also engaged in an awareness drive, distributed sanitizers and masks, and sanitized villages and schools. With respect to education, they created WhatsApp groups for their respective villages to track the learning activities in their panchayats.

The sarpanch of Kustagi distributed seven smartphones and two refurbished laptops to the poorest families to facilitate online education. The panchayati raj representatives established panchayat libraries where children were invited to study for about 2–3 hours. In addition, the panchayati raj institutions engaged in strengthening the school infrastructure and facilities such as repairing boundary walls and toilets, water supply, smartboards, distribution of notebooks and pencils, planting of trees on school premises, and decorating walls with child-centric paintings.

Box 5.1: Dynamic leader of Khareta Panchayat, Karauli district, Rajasthan

In Karauli district, Rajasthan, the president of Khareta panchayat was dynamic and actively involved in making his village self-sufficient. He distributed vegetables cultivated in his land to people in need during the first lockdown, absorbed inward migrants through MGNREGA, planned agro-based processing unit for his village, promoted connectivity and roadways of his village, and made education of children his top priority. He plans to start a day boarding for government school children from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the summer vacation of 2022. This he hopes will help in narrowing the learning gap that has worsened during the pandemic. There are seven government schools in his village and he plans to provide evening food for them at his own cost. He often meets the teachers, tells them to work hard, or be prepared to get transferred. In every habitation of his panchayat, he has created a WhatsApp group of educated people, who on their own try to address the local problems and if they are not able to address them, such concerns are brought to the notice of sarpanch for his intervention.

Source: Interview with Panchayat Sarpanch, Rajasthan.

In the Yelleri panchayat of Yadgiri district, Karnataka, SDMC members played a key role in meeting the key requirements of school. Yelleri panchayat collected funds for school development activities and used the money to paint walls and install CCTV and smart classes in schools. In Uttar Pradesh too, the PRIs created WhatsApp group to address the problems in the villages and sanitized the schools. In the near future, the sarpanch of Bardehra village, Gilaula block, Shravasti, Uttar Pradesh plans to repair the dilapidated school buildings.

In Kalkeri village of Koppal district, Karnataka, the community members were quite active and vigilant regarding school safety. For instance, during the lockdown, some people tried to consume alcohol on the school premise at night, which the community members checked and regulated at their own initiative.

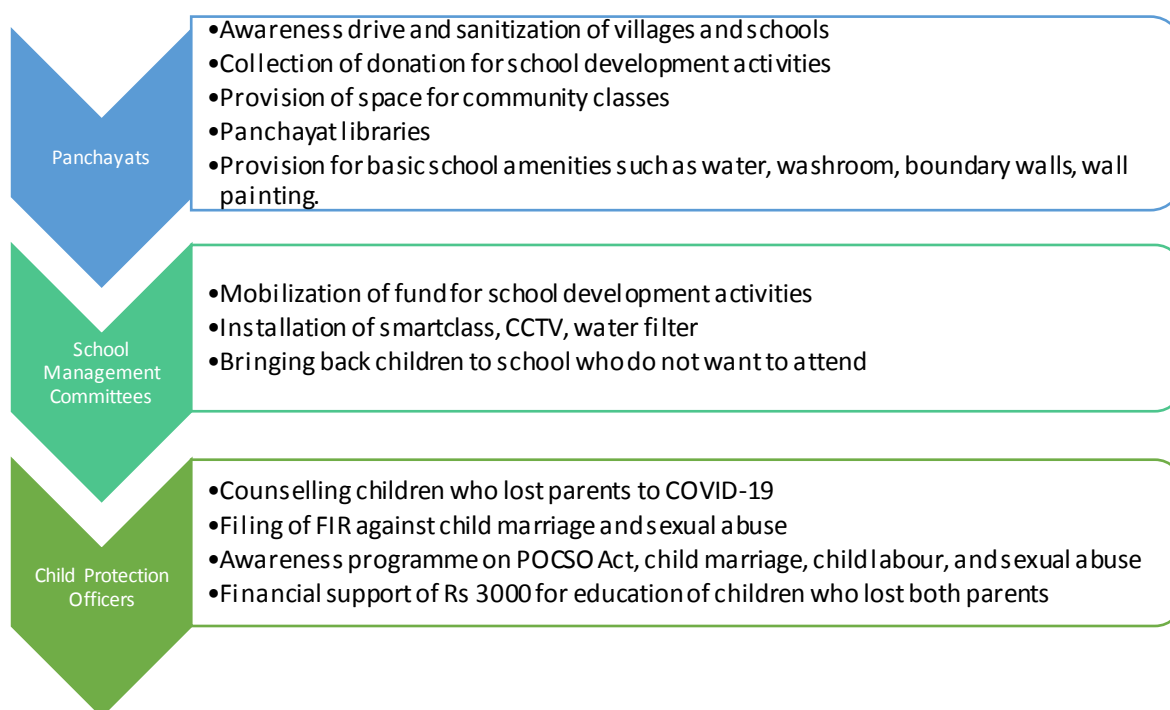
School Management Committees (SMCs)

Regarding the involvement of the SMCs, the SMC members and the elected representatives opined that community involvement through SMC is important to improve any school. An SMC president in Karauli district opined that regular PTMs are important because a child's future is the responsibility of the parents, teachers, and the community at large. However, the participation of the SMC varied from state to state.

In comparison to the other three surveyed states, the SDMC in Karnataka was found to be active. The SDMC of Yelleri village, Gurmitkal block, Yadgiri, had 24 members and met twice or thrice a month depending upon the urgency of the agenda. The SDMC was instrumental in bringing many of the children back to school. These children were reluctant

to resume school after a long break for reasons such as fear of whether they can study or teachers might scold them, losing interest in studies, or having started working. The SDMC mobilized funds from various sources and installed smart class, CCTV, and water filter in school. The classrooms were painted like a train and the *Nali Kali* room was artistically painted. For this, the SDMC provided the labour cost. It also collected Rs 1000 from each family in the village towards improving the school infrastructure post-COVID-19.

Figure 5.4: Interventions of key stakeholders



Source: Survey

In the Hindaun block of Karauli district, Rajasthan, the community was completely disconnected from the school and the parents were unaware of the happenings in the school. The SMCs were inactive and hardly any monthly meetings were conducted. Thus parental involvement was negligible in this block. An NGO staff in Hindaun stated that, '*kisi parents ko ye bhi nehi pata tha ke unke bachche padhte kaun si class me!*' (Some parents do not even know that their child is in which class!). SMCs were mostly in pen and paper and not active in the survey regions. Thus, it is important that the interaction between the school and the community is increased.

In Milkipura village, Hindaun block, Karauli district, Rajasthan, the SMC president acknowledged that no meeting had taken place in the last two years, although the rule is to meet on every new moon day as it is a holiday in the region. Further, it was stated that though

SMC members were given training, nobody was receptive to the problems faced by the SMCs. The SMC president felt that though theoretically SMCs held a powerful position, in reality they were powerless. Despite knowing the fact that '*some teachers rather than teaching, are just engaged in checking their mobile phones*', the SMC were unable to take any action.

On the other hand, though SMCs' role was emphasized by the teachers in both Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh, the survey team could not verify their participation at the ground level in Jharkhand and found it to be passive in Uttar Pradesh.

Child Protection Officers

The child protection officers in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh informed that in the post-pandemic times, children were under serious threat of issues related to child abuse, violence against children, child labour, child marriages, etc. and their safety greatly affected. In Karnataka, 98 cases of child marriage in Yadgiri were reported since the outbreak of COVID-19 and only nine first information reports (FIR) had been filed. Cases of child sexual abuse were also reported and in one of the cases, the FIR was filed against a teacher of a residential school. A District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) in Yadgiri informed that his unit had two residential institutions: Balakira and BalMandir, which are certified schools for boys and girls that gave care, protection, and free food to children. Many POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offence) cases were reported in Yadgiri; these were related to child pregnancy cases due to love affair, rape, etc. There were six such cases in Balakira and BalMandir. Bal Seva is a programme that supports the education and nutritional requirement of children and provides Rs 3500 per month to children till 18 years who have lost both their parents. In Yadgiri, six children are availing of this benefit.

In Uttar Pradesh, Labour Enforcement Officer (LEO) in Bahraich informed that UNICEF has undertaken an initiative in his block called 'Naya Sawera', under which activities such as rescue, rehabilitation, and enrolment are undertaken. This initiative was helpful to rescue children from child labour and mainstream them in regular schools.

5.3 Readiness of Anganwadi Centres and Schools in the Post-Reopening Phase

Though schools have often been considered sites of learning, they have more to offer. They help children in their holistic development by ensuring safety and nutritional support, providing opportunities to them for socialization, accommodating everyone despite differences, helping in gaining mental strength, exploring one's talents and skills, etc. More or less similar views were expressed by government officials and NGO staff interviewed in Rajasthan. According to them, schools i) provide overall development of children; ii) help students interact with children of different ages and backgrounds; iii) provide physical, mental, and emotional development through outdoor and indoor games; iv) teach healthy competition; v) teach how to live life and how to live together and work together.

However, with the outbreak of the pandemic, the children missed out on this opportunity for holistic development. During the survey period, the surveyed schools in different states were in different stages of school reopening and had undertaken various preparatory measures to ensure a safe environment for children. In comparison to private schools, government schools had engaged with various stakeholders such as civil society organizations, SMCs, community, and private players in strengthening the public schools. Some of the interventions that the Anganwadi centres, schools, and teachers undertook with the support of the government and other stakeholders are discussed in the following sections.

5.3.1 Entitlements Provided in Anganwadi Centres and Schools

Across all the surveyed states, the Anganwadi centres provided dry rations to children below 5 years, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. Apart from dry rations, the Anganwadi centres were engaged in regular health check-ups of children, vaccination drives, and registering the heights and weights of children in Poshan tracker. In Gurchayi village, Bahraich district, Uttar Pradesh, the Anganwadi did not supply the full quantity of the dry ration. As a parent reported if 1 kg was entitled, only half a kg was provided.

In the surveyed private schools, no entitlements or incentives were provided to the school children. However, fees for some of the children were waived as their parents were not in a financial condition to pay the fees. In contrast, almost all the government schools provided various entitlements such as the distribution of books, uniforms, etc. to their students. During

the school closure period, in contrast to the other states, in Uttar Pradesh, the schools asked the parents to collect the textbooks from the school premises. Again in Uttar Pradesh, during the reopening phase, Rs 1100 was directly transferred to the accounts of the children (Table 5.4). However, though incentives were provided to children in the form of cash transfers for uniforms, in many cases the money did not reach the children's accounts because the accounts had not been linked with Aadhaar¹². Even in cases where the money had reached, the families used it for other purposes such as agriculture, alcohol, etc.

Mid-day meals were not provided after the school closure was announced. However, once the Supreme Court's direction¹³ was made, the centre gave similar instructions. In Karnataka, parents in Yelleri, Yadgiri districts of Karnataka reported that they received dry rations from the school during the lockdown period for the initial four months. The supply included items like oil, wheat, dal, rice, and salt. It was also reported that not all students could get the dry rations, as some of the children had migrated along with their parents to other parts of the country. After the school was reopened in October 2021, a regular supply of MDM was resumed in the school and the provision of rice, sambar, banana or eggs was given thrice a week.

¹² Aadhaar is a unique identification card issued by the government for the purpose of identification

¹³ Item No. 14. Suo Motu Writ Petition (C) No(s).2/2020. Available at:
https://main.sci.gov.in/pdf/LU/18032020_112059.pdf

Table 5.4: Entitlements provided by government schools

Schools	Textbooks			Uniform			MDM			Sanitary Pads			Others		
	Before COVID-19	During closure	Reopening	Before COVID-19	During closure	Reopening	Before COVID-19	During closure	Reopening	Before COVID-19	During closure	Reopening	Before COVID-19	During closure	Reopening
Jharkhand															
UPGPS, Lohardaga	√	NR	√	√	NR	√	√	√(dry ration)	√	√	×	×	NR	NR	NR
UPGPS Maildih, Muruh	√	NR	√	√	NR	√	√	√(dry ration)	√	√	×	×	NR	NR	NR
GMS Gowa, Muruh	√	NR	√	√	NR	√	√	√(dry ration)	√	√	×	×	NR	NR	NR
Karnataka															
GHPS, Yelleri, Yadgiri	√	×	√	√	NR	√	√	√(dry ration)	√	√	×	×	√ (health supplements)	NR	NR
GHPS, Kalkeri, Koppal	√	NR	√	√	NR	√	√	√(dry ration)	√	√	×	×		NR	NR
GHPS, Kustagi	√	NR	√	√	NR	√	√	√(dry ration)	√	×	×	×	√ (drawing colours)	NR	√ (drawing colours)
Rajasthan															
Govt. Senior Secondary school, Kyarda Kalan, Karauli	√	NR	√	√	NR	√	√	√(dry ration)	√	√	×	×	NR	√ (Community classes and home visit)	√ (Remedial STAR programme)
GPS-Rewari Bas, Sirohi, Abu Road	√	NR	√	√	NR	√	√	√(dry ration)	√	√	×	×	NR	√ (Community classes and home visit)	√ (Remedial Classes)
Uttar Pradesh															
Prathmic Vidyalaya, Gurchayi	√	√	√	√	NR	(cash)	√	√(dry ration)	√(dry ration)	√	NR	NR	√ (health supplements)	√ (health supplements)	√ (health supplements)
Uchh Prathamik Vidyalaya, Bardehra	√	√	√	√	NR	(cash)	√	√(dry ration)	NR	√	NR	NR	NR	√ Cash transfer for uniform and conversion cost of MDM	NR

NR indicates 'no response'
 Source: CSD Survey, 2022

Before the outbreak of the pandemic, menstruating girls in government schools were provided with sanitary pads, which is yet to be resumed. Apart from other entitlements, in Karnataka, the schools reported of providing colour pencils to children and health supplements such as iron tablets. In Uttar Pradesh too, health supplements were provided by the schools to the children in all three phases.

5.3.2 Towards Addressing the Learning Gaps in Children

In order to address the learning levels of children, schools made an assessment of the learning levels of children. In the initial days, there were relaxation of the curriculum and observations were made on the learning levels and capacity of each child. Some of the measures followed in the surveyed schools were play-way methods, teaching through songs, peer tutoring, small group tutoring, etc. in order to engage the children. In particular, the children welcomed the Nali Kali system in Karnataka; it had child-friendly classrooms with painting on the walls. In Jharkhand, children were greeted with balloons on the first day of school reopening.

5.3.3 Towards Bringing Children Back to School

Bringing back children to school after a break of about 1.5 years was a major challenge for the schools, as some of them had lost interest in studies while others had started engaging in income-generation activities and taking care of household needs. Some children, as noted in Karnataka, had also migrated along with their parents to support the family income.

5.3.4 Towards Safe Environment of Anganwadi Centres and Schools

Across the four states, elected representatives of panchayats supervised the sanitization of Anganwadi centres and schools, every week and free distribution of masks and sanitizers. In almost all the states, the Anganwadi workers reported that the government did not provide safety kits even when they worked as COVID-19 warriors at the ground level and carried out door-to-door surveys.

In addition, it was essential that schools focused on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities. Protocols were put in place in different parts of the country with respect to the reopening of schools. The physical distancing norm was followed by the Anganwadi centres in the initial days. However, they found it difficult to ensure physical distancing among children.

Table 5.5: Measures adopted by Anganwadi centres and schools to ensure the safety of the children after reopening (multiple responses in %)												
Measures adopted by Anganwadi centres	Jharkhand			Karnataka			Rajasthan			Uttar Pradesh		
	Khunti		Lohardaga	Koppal		Yadgiri	Karauli	Sirohi		Bahraich		Sharawasti
	Khunti	Murhu	Lohardaga	Koppal	Kustagi	Yadgiri	Hindaun	Abu Road	Pindwara	Phakharpu	Risia	Gilaula
Regular sanitization	100.0	50.0	30.0	40.0	50.0	90.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	30.0	40.0	30.0
Distribution of safety kits	0.0	30.0	40.0	40.0	20.0	0.0	10.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0
Physical distancing	0.0	20.0	30.0	20.0	30.0	10.0	90.0	50.0	100.0	70.0	60.0	60.0
Measures adopted by schools												
Regular sanitization	80.0	80.0	90.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	60.0	50.0	40.0	40.0	50.0
Distribution of safety kits	60.0	40.0	70.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	60.0	20.0	20.0
Physical distancing	40.0	30.0	90.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	90.0	30.0	40.0	10.0	30.0	20.0
No measures taken	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	10.0	0.0

Source: CSD Survey 2022

In the schools too, the teachers took adequate precautions to ensure a safe environment for the students. The panchayats engaged in sanitizing the schools and distributing free masks. Some of the NGOs also provided free masks and sanitizers to the schools. Physical distancing norms also prevailed for some period of time in the schools. Children were asked to attend schools on a roster basis to avoid crowding the premises. However, some parents were hesitant to send their wards to school, as these had been used as quarantine centres during the pandemic.

Though various stakeholders, viz. central and state government, NGOs, schools, teachers, community, etc. had adopted different measures and interventions, it cannot be denied that the pandemic situation has caused unprecedented damage to the learning environment of children and caused a permanent setback in their life. Most of the measures adopted were only time gap arrangements. However, in order to address the long-term challenges posed by the pandemic, systemic solutions are needed that can address immediate and long-term challenges.

6

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the review of the literature made in this study and the primary survey carried out in the field with the key stakeholders of education, viz., children, teachers, parents, schools, NGOs, and government, this chapter summarizes the key concerns that have emerged in the post-pandemic era and need to be addressed in the area of children's education. In relation to the main areas of concern, key recommendations have been made for the policymakers, Tata Trusts, field staff of the Trusts, funding agencies, other NGOs, and the local community.

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

6.1.1 Effect of the Pandemic on the Family and Children

Socio-Economic Impact: From the study, it is evident that there has been a sharp rise in unemployment and loss of livelihood. The fall in income levels has pushed households down the income ladder. Despite the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) giving beneficial social assistance in the form of cash and kind, people are yet to recoup from the indebtedness and associated vulnerabilities induced by the pandemic.

Increased Workload of Children: Adverse family situations forced some children to drop out of school and contribute to family income. Care work and household chores also led to the dropout of a small portion of children. Accompanying parents for work, sibling care, and household chores increased the workload of those remaining in school. Gender differences were evident in the work undertaken by boys and girls including boys running errands and girls engaging in housekeeping.

Health and Nutrition of Children: There was also disturbance in the children's nutritional intake; some indulged in over-eating while others did not have enough food to eat. Anganwadi centres and schools provided take-home rations (THR) only at a later stage and had been neglected in the initial period of the lockdown. However, one-fourth of the children said the supply was irregular. While sanitary pads were distributed to adolescent girls regularly during the pre-pandemic times, it had not yet been resumed even after two years.

Well-being of Children: During school closure, it was seen that the children suffered from increased stress levels and anxiety. Their physical activity had decreased and social interaction had reduced. Drop in income often led to increase in domestic violence at home, which left an impact on the children's mental well-being. Despite all the negative impacts reported regarding the children's well-being during the closure period, a positive factor too was highlighted; a stronger bonding emerged between parents and children during this period.

Protection of Children: While the loss of livelihood of parents forced the boys to enter the labour market, the girls were forced to get married at a young age. Cases of child labour, trafficking, child abuse, child marriage, etc. were highlighted in the surveyed states. However, there is hardly any data on child protection and the existing mechanism of child protection lacked effectiveness in addressing the challenges.

6.1.2 Effect of Pandemic on the Education of Children

- *Education during School Closure*

Prolonged school closure: The 18-months school closure disrupted children's education and affected their everyday routine and discipline. It had an adverse impact on children's development in all forms: emotional, mental, and physical. In Uttar Pradesh, some children got addicted to alcohol and drugs and as a result the parents desperately wanted the schools to open in a full-fledged manner.

Access: As the pandemic had led to income loss, a substantial proportion of children were shifted to government schools because their parents were unable to pay private school fees.

Disruption in school infrastructure: The school closure for a prolonged period affected the school infrastructure. On average, one in five parents expressed concerns about the dilapidated condition of school toilets, boundary walls, and conditions of classrooms.

Teacher shortage: Teacher shortage was a major issue that was highlighted in the surveyed government schools. To address this issue, contractual teachers are appointed and in some schools, these teachers were appointed and paid by the panchayats or the NGOs.

Capacity building of teachers: In Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, more than 50 per cent of the teachers said they received training during the school closure phase. In Uttar Pradesh, only

about 40 per cent of the teachers on average stated that the training was on use of digital device, while in other states, it was underreported.

- *Learning Experience of Children*

Learning of children with access to digital education: Though digital education was promoted during the school closure period, only 27.5 per cent had access to a digital device. Among those who had access to digital education, only 15.8 per cent found the online learning experience to be good. Parents expressed concerns about the children's increased screen time and exposure to harmful content. Online education was not based on children's needs; instead, it was designed in a top-down manner, which did not benefit the children and the community.

Learning of children with no access to digital education: Three-fourths of the surveyed children did not have access to digital education and amongst them, nearly 10 per cent did not study at all during the school closure period. About 70 per cent hardly studied for 1–2 hours and only about one-third of the children gave substantial time for studies. The learning of these children was facilitated through *mohalla* classes, Tata Trusts' community learning centres, and tuitions by volunteers.

Overall impact on Learning: Parents felt that their children's learning was severely hampered, as they had forgotten the basics and were not able to construct even basic sentences. Their learning was not commensurate with their grades. Further, the learning pace has also been affected and some children lost interest in studies, as reported by 35 per cent of the parents.

6.1.3 COVID-19 Response Measures: Interventions of Key Stakeholders

Initiatives of the government: The government initiatives mostly focused on digital solutions viz., web portals, mobile apps, television, radio and YouTube channels, and WhatsApp to share educational content with the children. The most widely used digital solution was Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA). However, only 32 per cent of the children used digital devices for educational purposes, while more than 40 per cent used them for entertainment. Though the government undertook offline initiatives at a later stage, viz., home visits by teachers, *mohalla* classes, and regular classroom teaching, these lacked effective implementation.

Initiatives of the NGOs: In the surveyed states, Tata Trusts along with its associate organizations and other NGOs mostly engaged in providing a face-to-face learning experience to children, through community learning centres (CLCs). The NGOs carried out other activities too which included improving the government school libraries, execution of learning activities for children such as book talk, read aloud, storytelling, writing of poems, riddles, stories, puzzles, etc. Condensed workbooks for various subjects and activity sheets were prepared for the primary and upper primary classes. The NGO initiatives were mostly based on local requirements and included non-ICT interventions that offered inclusive solutions and provided education for all.

Initiatives of teachers: Despite many teachers not playing an active role in bringing the children back to school, examples exist of primary school teachers playing an effective role in this regard. Without the intervention of these primary school teachers, many children might not have taken admission to upper primary classes and most likely would have dropped out. On average, 60 per cent of the teachers said that they were constantly engaged in making home visits to track children.

Initiatives of other stakeholders: Other stakeholders such as elected representatives of panchayats, school management committees, and the community also played a key role in supporting children's education in the post-pandemic times. They engaged in sanitizing schools, distributing masks and sanitizers, and also taking care of the maintenance of school infrastructure. SMCs were majorly involved in the mobilization of funds for school development activities and brought back children in some of the schools.

Readiness of Anganwadi centres and schools post-reopening: Anganwadi centres and schools by and large exhibited readiness in welcoming back children to schools in the post-reopening phase. To ensure children's safety, centres and schools were sanitized, masks distributed, and sanitizers arranged.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the insights that emerged from this study, the following actionable recommendations have been suggested as short-term and long-term solutions for the key stakeholders, so that the children can resume their schooling in the post-pandemic era with confidence and success.

6.2.1 For Policymakers

Social protection of marginalized sections: Policymakers need to be made aware that social assistance has to be offered to the marginalized sections and additional jobs created through MGNREGA, which will relieve the people from the clutches of poverty and high indebtedness.

Protection of children: The government should relax criteria for benefit packages where needed, increase residential facilities for girls, and show zero tolerance for incidents of child abuse, child labour, trafficking, early marriage, etc.

Investment in collection of real-time data on child vulnerabilities: In the post-pandemic times, cases of dropouts and cases of abuse, trafficking, early marriage, child labour, etc. have increased. To address these vulnerabilities, the government should invest in the collection of accurate data on child vulnerabilities.

Interventions for children should be right-based, inclusive, and sustainable: The state has to take the prime responsibility of protecting and ensuring that the Right to Education of children is not threatened or violated, even in an emergency situation.

Financial allocation for education: Concerns should be raised to the policymakers on the inadequacy of funding for education and implementation of the norms and provisions of Right to Education Act.

Strengthen public education: The public education system has to be strengthened with regard to teacher recruitment, training of teachers, and infrastructure, and the government should give priority to these aspects.

Recognition of ICT as a tool, rather than a replacement for face-to-face education: It is important to highlight with evidence that, ICT cannot be a replacement in any circumstances for face-to-face education; it can be used as a tool to bridge the gap.

Wider definition for learning: The pandemic revealed the gaps in the learning levels of children. The concept of learning has to relate to the holistic development of children. Though attempts on this front were made in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and the Right to Education (RTE) Act, no full-fledged measure has been undertaken. The NCF

needs to be revisited to widen the perspective of learning, in light of what was revealed during the pandemic.

6.2.2 For Funding Agencies

Fund for studies on child vulnerabilities: As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of real-time data on the number of children who have dropped out of school in the post-pandemic times and cases related to child labour, trafficking, child abuse, child marriage, etc. Financial support is needed in order to address issues related to child vulnerabilities.

Financial support for COVID-19 impact research and interventions: Donor organizations can also fund research and interventions that try to examine and address COVID-19-induced vulnerabilities in children's education.

6.2.3 For Local Community

Promoting community ownership of schools: In Rajasthan and Karnataka, the panchayats, school management committees and the community played an active role. However, it was not at all evident in most of the other states. The other states should replicate the models successfully implemented by these two states.

Active involvement of PRIs and SMCs: Panchayats and SMCs should be actively involved in school strengthening activities. They should be incentivized for their positive contribution towards school development.

6.2.4 For Tata Trusts, Field Staff, and Other NGOs

On the various recommendations highlighted for policymakers, Tata Trusts, field staff, and other NGOs can engage in the implementation of activities, advocacy, capacity building, etc. and make community resources available. In this regard, the specific recommendations that can be formulated in their activities are given in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Specific Recommendations for Tata Trusts and NGOs

	Implementation (Service Provision)/ Awareness Generation	Advocacy	Capacity Building	As a Watchdog in Tracking Educational Interventions
Provision of additional social assistance to the marginalized sections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply of emergency kits, food supplements, dry rations, etc. during emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy on the need for social protection measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of ASHA, Anganwadi workers, SHGs, community, etc. on immediate response measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey on social protection of vulnerable people
Collection of real-time data on child vulnerabilities and addressing the concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection on child marriage, child trafficking, child labour, child abuse, etc. at the village/block/district/state level wherever possible • Awareness building and learning interventions for girl's education and children with special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy on the lack of updated data on child vulnerabilities • Advocacy on the exclusion of eligible children from accessing COVID-19 relief in the case of parental death 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camps and counseling sessions for affected children and mainstreaming them in schools • Vocational training and remedial classes for children to pursue both education and work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whistleblowing in the case of identification of cases of child marriage, trafficking, labour, abuse, etc. • Whistleblowing in the case of misconduct with children in residential schools, camps, houses, schools, etc. • Involving volunteers or community mobilizers to monitor and check child vulnerabilities
Strengthening the public education system on aspects of teacher recruitment, training, and infrastructure building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing the curriculum of training modules of the teacher training institutes • Handholding public schools in meeting their requirements post-reopening • Resource mobilization for interventions on infrastructure building of government schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy on teacher recruitment and quality of teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of trainers • Teacher training should include children's lived experiences in pedagogy • Training sessions for teachers on handling children post- COVID-19, psychological support for children, learning enhancement, child development, etc. • Training on teacher preparedness to handle future emergencies/school closure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment study on teacher shortage • Policy brief on the inadequacy of funds to meet COVID-19 challenges
Recognition of ICT as a tool to cope with any emergency, rather than as a replacement for face-to-face education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridging the gap in ICT wherever possible to facilitate children who do not have digital access • Continuation of community learning activities to ensure face-to-face learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy through policy brief on the advantages and disadvantages of digital education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of teachers on using ICT as a tool for education • Counseling sessions with children to deal with mobile addiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion and dialogue with educational stakeholders on the prudent use of ICT

Ensuring that right of children to education is protected and inclusive measures are adopted	Early Childhood Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A awareness drive with parents on the need to send their children to school and ensure regular attendance post-reopening • Ensure regular supply of nutritional meals and supplements to children in Anganwadi centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy when (nutritional meal) right to food and education are not ensured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of Anganwadi workers and teachers on handling children in the post- reopening phase • Handholding Anganwadi teachers with their requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the functioning of Anganwadi centres
	School Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A awareness drive with parents on the need to send their children to school and ensure regular attendance post reopening • Ensure regular supply of MDM/dry ration to children in schools • Educational interventions for hard-to-reach residential pockets, children of migrant households, children who have dropped out, etc. (who were beyond the reach of the government) • Track the transition rate and completion rate of students till higher secondary levels and plan and execute interventions for dropped out or working students • Awareness campaigns with parents on the psychological impact of school closure on children • Lived experiences of children should be incorporated into the interventions of NGOs interventions – e.g. separate learning slots for working children; different learning strategies for children who lost interest in studies; critical dialogue, sessions and discussions with children facing violence or aggressive situation at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy on the inadequate funding to meet RTE norms and requirements • Advocacy when MDM/dry rations and education are not ensured 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of teachers on handling children in the post-reopening phase • Handholding teachers with their requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the functioning of schools
Widening the definition of learning and planning and executing interventions for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing toolkits for teachers on holistic learning of children • Learning interventions to address the learning gap of children, especially in Classes III-V 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate and dialogue with parliamentarians, NGOs, academicians, etc. on the concept of holistic learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher training on holistic learning of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through policy briefs and field surveys, highlight the narrow definition of learning

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Annexures

Annexure Tables for Chapter 4

Table 4.1A: Parental perception of the effect of school closure on education

State	District	Block	Perception	
			Affected	Not affected
Jharkhand	Khunti	Khunti	56.00	44.00
		Murhu	74.00	26.00
	Lohardaga	Lohardaga	68.00	32.00
Karnataka	Koppal	Koppal	81.00	19.00
		Kustagi	59.00	41.00
	Yadgiri	Yadgiri	96.00	4.00
Rajasthan	Karauli	Hindaun	88.00	12.00
	Sirohi	Abu Road	80.00	20.00
		Pindwara	98.00	2.00
Uttar Pradesh	Bahraich	Phakharpur	56.00	44.00
		Risia	52.00	48.00
	Shravasti	Gilaula	60.00	40.00
Total sample			72.33	27.67

Source: CSD Survey 2022

Table 4.2A: Teachers' engagement in various activities during school closure

Teachers' engagement in various activities during school closure (multiple responses)			Non-Academic activities			Academic activities			
			Distribution of rations	Monitoring physical distance	Vaccination drive	Online (WhatsApp, video, calling, etc.)	Both online and offline	Home visits	Teaching was not possible at all
Jharkhand	Khunti	Khunti	50.0	30.0	40.0	70.0	10.0	20.0	0.0
		Murhu	20.0	40.0	40.0	70.0	30.0	0.0	0.0
	Lohardaga	Lohardaga	40.0	50.0	60.0	60.0	10.0	30.0	0.0
Karnataka	Koppal	Koppal	30.0	0.0	70.0	70.0	0.0	30.0	0.0
		Kustagi	30.0	30.0	50.0	80.0	0.0	10.0	10.0
	Yadgiri	Yadgiri	20.0	50.0	50.0	80.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
Rajasthan	Karauli	Hindaun	50.0	10.0	30.0	20.0	30.0	30.0	20.0
	Sirohi	Abu Road	10.0	10.0	20.0	30.0	30.0	40.0	0.0
		Pindwara	30.0	20.0	40.0	40.0	20.0	40.0	0.0
Uttar Pradesh	Bahraich	Phakharpur	30.0	70.0	10.0	60.0	20.0	20.0	0.0
		Risia	10.0	50.0	40.0	30.0	20.0	20.0	30.0
	Shravasti	Gilaula	60.0	30.0	20.0	60.0	10.0	30.0	0.0

Source: CSD Survey 2022

CHILDREN'S SCHEDULE

Study of Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Children in Four States

Schedule No. _____

State: _____

District: _____

Block: _____

Village: _____

Instruction to the caller/surveyor:

- Introduce your name, organization, locality
- Briefly state the purpose of the survey
- Kindly take their consent (both parents and children) and inform them that it will take 10-15 min to answer the questions you will be asking. Please inform the parents/guardians that they can stop the interview or choose not to answer a question if he or she does not feel comfortable answering it.
- Make sure that 50 per cent of the fathers and mothers will be covered in the sample

Purpose of the Survey

- *To study the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children in rural areas*

Name of the Investigator: _____; Gender: _____

Mobile Number: _____; Email ID: _____

District: _____; State: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

This survey is carried out by CSD in partnership with Tata Education and Development Trust

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Sangha Rachna, 53 Lodhi Estate, New Delhi – 110 003
Tel: 011-24615383, 011-24611700, website: csdindia.org

Section A: Children's Profile

1.	Name of the Child		
2.	Age	_____years	
3.	Gender	Female	1
		Male	2
4.	Social Categories	Scheduled Caste (SC)	1
		Scheduled Tribe (ST)	2
		Other Backward Class (OBC)	3
		General Category	4
		Others (Specify_____)	5
		No Response	6
5.	Religion	Hindu	1
		Muslim	2
		Christian	3
		Others (Specify_____)	4
6.	Education Level of Child's Father	Illiterate	1
		Elementary school educated	2
		Secondary/higher secondary educated	3
		Graduation and above	4
		Don't know	5
7.	Education Level of Child's Mother	Illiterate	1
		Elementary school educated	2
		Secondary/higher secondary educated	3
		Graduation and above	4
		Don't know	5
8.	Father's Occupation	Salaried	1
		Casual Labour	2
		Self-employed	3
		Unemployed	4
		Others (specify_____)	5

9.	Mother's Occupation	Salaried	1
		Casual Labour	2
		Self-employed	3
		Unemployed	4
		Others (Specify_____)	5
10.	Residential Status of the Family	Migrated for work	1
		Never migrated for work	2
11.	Which Grade/Class Do You Study?		
12.	Type of School	Government	1
		Government-aided private school	2
		Unaided private school	3
		Others	4
13.	Were You There in the Same School Before Lockdown?	Yes	1
		No	2
14.	If No, What Was the Main Reason for Changing School?	Could not pay fees to the private school	1
		Migrated here recently	2
		The earlier school was far away	3
		The earlier school has been merged into this school	4
		Others (Specify_____)	5

Section B. Present Education Scenario

1.	Has your school reopened?	Yes	1
		No	2
2.	If yes, the month of school reopening	2021	2022
3.	If yes, what all facilities and regulations does your school have?	Temperature checking	1
		Sanitizer	2
		Masks	3
		Enough space for maintaining social distancing	4

		Regular hand wash with soap	5
		Hot mid-day meal	6
		Others (Specify_____)	7
4.	The number of children in your class	Before COVID-19	
		During closure	
		During reopening	
5.	Have some of your classmates not joined back?	Yes	1
		No	2
6.	If yes, who are they?	Mainly girls	1
		Mainly poor children	2
		Children with special needs	3
		Others (Specify_____)	4
		Don't know	5
7.	What is the present mode of education?	Offline/face-to-face	1
		Offline-online mixed	2
		Mostly online	3
		No classes	4
		Others (Specify_____)	5
8.	After the school reopened, tell us how you felt with reason.	Feeling	Reasons
		Happy	
		Sad	
		Anxious	
		Pressurized	

Section C: Experiences at Home During COVID-19-Induced School Closure

1.	How did you spend most of your time	Watch TV for entertainment	1
----	-------------------------------------	----------------------------	---

	during the school closure? (Major 3 items)	Watch educational programmes on TV or radio Entertainment with smartphone Help with domestic chores Play indoor games Play outdoor games Take care of siblings/elderly Engagement in income-generating activities Studying books (including textbooks/story books) Drawing/singing/dancing Others (Specify_____)	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11																																										
2.	What works did you get involved in during lockdown which you didn't do earlier? (Major 3 items)	Cooking Sibling care Earning money Helping parents with domestic chores Others (Specify_____)	1 2 3 4 5																																										
3.	With whom did you interact in the past 2 years and for what purposes?																																												
4.	How did you study during school closure?	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Hours Spent</th> <th>0</th> <th><1 h</th> <th>1–2 h</th> <th>2–4 h</th> <th>>4 h</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Online classes</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community classes</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Both</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tuitions</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>No class</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Others</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Hours Spent	0	<1 h	1–2 h	2–4 h	>4 h	Online classes						Community classes						Both						Tuitions						No class						Others						
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Online classes																																													
Community classes																																													
Both																																													
Tuitions																																													
No class																																													
Others																																													

		(Specify_____)					
5.	What is your experience of online classes?	Better than face-to-face teaching				1	
		Same				2	
		Worse				3	
		No experience with online classes				4	
		Others (Specify_____)				5	
6.	Please mention the reasons behind your response						
7.	Mention what you enjoyed or disliked during school closure	Enjoyed	Disliked	Initially enjoyed later disliked	Initially disliked later enjoyed		
	a.) Being at home						
	b.) Interacting and meeting teachers						
	c.) Interacting with friends						
	d.) Doing homework						
	e.) Online classes						
	f.) Others (Specify_____)						

Section D. Health and Well-being Related

1.	Did you get regular MDM during school closure?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Received only for a brief period	3
		Others (Specify_____)	4
2.	If yes, in which form?	Cooked	1
		Dry	2
		Others (Specify_____)	3
3.	If yes, how did you receive it?	Went to school for that	1
		Cash transfer	2

		Delivered at home	3
4.	Did you receive a health kit (like a mask, sanitizer, etc.)	Yes	1
		No	2
5.	If yes, who came to distribute it?	Anganwadi worker	1
		Other health workers	2
		Teachers	3
		NGO people	4
		Other (Specify_____)	5
6.	Was your village ever sanitized?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Don't know	3
7.	When the school was closed, how often did you go out of the house?	Everyday	1
		A few times a week	2
		A few times a month	3
		Not at all	4
8.	For what reasons did you go out? (3 main reasons)	To meet friends	1
		Household needs like vegetable purchase	2
		To support income	3
		To attend social functions	4
		Community classes	5
		Library	6
		Tuitions	7
		Others (Specify_____)	8
			9
9.	Where did you play when school was closed?	Park	1
		Inside house	2
		Just outside house	3
		All the above places	4

		Others (Specify _____)	5
10.	Did any of your schoolmates/friends get married in the past 2 years?	Yes No	1 2
11.	During school closure, did your extra-curricular activities (like singing, drawing)	Increase Decrease Not engaged	1 2 3
12.	During school closure, did your reading story books apart from your textbooks	Increase Decrease Not engaged	1 2 3
13.	During school closure, did your interaction with teachers	Increase Decrease Not engaged	1 2 3
14.	During school closure, did your interaction with friends	Increase Decrease Not engaged	1 2 3
15.	During school closure, did your interaction with parents	Increase Decrease Not engaged	1 2 3

Section E: Learning Related

1.	Mention how you received your textbooks during school closure.			
2.	During school closure what new things did you learn?	Studied textbooks and other books	Yes	1
			No	2
		Did co-curricular activities	Yes	1
			No	2
		Cooperated/helped siblings and friends	Yes	1
			No	2

		Asked questions to teachers and put extra effort to continue education so that I can join back school	Yes No	1 2
		Others (Specify_____)		
3.	Along with your parents, did you learn anything new?	Agricultural activities		
		Carpentry		
		Pottery		
		Poultry		
		Cooking		
		Others (Specify_____)		
4.	Daily how many hours did you study during school closure?		Not at all < 1 hour 1–2 hour 2–3 hour 3–5 hour More than 5 hour	1 2 3 4 5 6
5.	When do you think you were able to study more?		When school was closed When school was open Same in both situations Others (Specify_____)	1 2 3 4
6.	Given a choice, which mode of learning you would choose?		Regular schooling Online mode Tutions only Others (Specify_____)	1 2 3 4
7.	Why?			
8.	What do you like about going to school?		I learn new things Meet and play with friends	1 2

		Get hot-cooked meals	3
		Others (Specify_____)	4
9.	Is schooling from home possible according to you?	Yes	1
		No	2
10.	If yes, why	I can complete my lessons even from home	1
		I can meet friends and teachers online	2
		I can do other work along with my lessons	3
		Others (Specify_____)	4
11.	If not, why	Nobody to teach at home	1
		No learning environment at home	2
		No digital device	3
		Difficult to take time for studies	4
		Others (Specify_____)	5
12.	What form of assessment helps you in learning?	Regular tests	1
		One-time annual exam	2
		No tests only classes	3
		Others (Specify_____)	4

Section F. Technology Related

1.	Whether you had access to a phone before the lockdown?	Yes	1
		No	2
2.	How many hours did you spend on the phone daily (including studies)?	Not at all	1
		< 1 hour	2
		1–2 hour	3
		2–3 hour	4
		3–5 hour	5
		More than 5 hour	6

3.	Who taught you how to participate in online classes?		
4.	Are you able to operate smart devices for online classes?	Yes	1
		No	2
5.	Do you have access to the Internet at home?	Yes	1
		No	2
6.	Was your teacher able to teach in an online mode?	Yes	1
		No	2
		Only some were good	3
		Others (Specify_____)	4
7.	Did you or your teacher face Internet connectivity-related issues?	Often	1
		Sometimes	2
		Very rare	3
8.	Did you have to share the phone with siblings for online classes?	Yes	1
		No	2
		No online class	3
		No phone at home	4
9.	If yes, were there conflicts often?	Yes	1
		No	2
10.	If yes, how did you manage/resolve it?		
11.	Teachers used to teach better in	Face-to-face classes	1
		Online mode	2
		Can't say	3

Section G: Tuitions Related

1.	Did you have private tuition classes during school closure?	Yes	1
		No	2
2.	If yes, in which mode?	Online	1
		Offline /face-to-face	2
3.	For which subjects? (Multiple options)	English	1
		Language (Hindi/Kannada)	2
		Maths	3
		Science	4
		Social Science	5
		Others (Specify_____)	6
4.	Before lockdown too, did you take tuitions classes?	Yes	1
		No	2
5.	Duration of tuition?	1–2 hour	1
		2–3 hour	2
		More than 3 hour	3
6.	Tuition fees paid/month	Free tuition	1
		Less than 100	2
		100–250	3
		251–500	4
		501–1000	5
		More than 1000	6
		Don't know	7

Section H: Questions for Girls Only

1.	Were you transferred from private to government school post- COVID-19?	Yes	1
		No	2
2.	Did you face any discrimination in using digital devices at home	Yes	1

	for studies in comparison to your brother?	No Not applicable	2 3
3.	Do you get time to study at home?	Yes No	1 2
4.	Are you engaged in earning money?	Yes No Not applicable	1 2 3
5.	Were you given more work at home than your brother?	Yes No No brother	1 2 3
6.	Did you receive sanitary napkins at schools before lockdown?	Yes No Not applicable	1 2 3
7.	Did you receive sanitary napkins when the school was closed?	Yes No Not applicable	1 2 3
8.	Do you use the toilet of your school?	Yes No Mostly avoid using it No toilet in school	1 2 3 4
9.	Do you feel your school is safe?	Yes No	1 2
10.	Give reasons for your answer		

Section I: Observation by Surveyor

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Parent's Schedule

Study of Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Children in Four States

Schedule No. _____

State: _____ **District:** _____

Block: _____ **Village:** _____

Father: _____ **Mother:** _____ **Guardian:** _____

Mobile Number: _____

Instruction to the caller/surveyor:

- Introduce your name, organization, locality
- Briefly state the purpose of the survey
- Kindly take their consent (both parents and children) and inform them that it will take 10-15 min to answer the questions. Please inform that parents/guardians can stop the interview or skip a question if he or she does not feel comfortable answering it.
- Make sure that 50 per cent of the fathers and mothers will be covered in the sample

Purpose of the Survey

- *To study the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children in rural areas*

Name of the Investigator: _____; *Gender:* _____

Mobile Number: _____; *Email ID:* _____

District: _____; *State:* _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

This survey is carried out by CSD in partnership with Tata Education and Development Trust

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Sangha Rachna, 53 Lodhi Estate, New Delhi – 110 003
Tel: 011-24615383, 011-24611700, website: csdindia.org

Section A: Basic Profile				
S. No.	Indicators	Response(s)		
1.	Name of the Respondent			
2.	Gender	Female	1	
		Male	2	
3.	Age	_____ Years		
4.	Number of Members in the Family/Family Size:	Female	Male	Total
	Children (<14 years)			
	14–18 years			
	Adult			
	Total			
5.	Religion	Hindu	1	
		Muslim	2	
		Christian	3	
		Other (Specify _____)	4	
6.	Social Category	Scheduled Caste (SC)	1	
		Scheduled Tribe (ST)	2	
		Other Backward Class (OBC)	3	
		General Category	4	
		Other (Specify _____)	5	
		No Response	6	
7.	Education Level of Respondent	Illiterate	1	
		Elementary school educated	2	
		Secondary/higher secondary educated	3	
		Graduation and above	4	
8.	Education Level of Spouse	Illiterate	1	
		Elementary school educated	2	
		Secondary/Higher secondary educated	3	
		Graduation and above	4	
9.	Occupation/ Other Sources of Income of Respondent	Pre-COVID-19	Lockdown	Post-Lockdown
10.	Occupation/ Other Sources of Income of Spouse			
11.	Are you a member of SMC (School Management Committee) or any other committee			
12.	Annual Income of the Family (v)	Pre-COVID-19	Lockdown	Post-Lockdown
	<Rs 25,000			
	Rs 25,000–50,000			
	Rs 50,000-1 lakh			
	Rs 1–2.5 lakh			
	1.5–5 lakh			
	> Rs 5 lakh			

13.	Annual Expenditure incurred for School Fees (√):		
	Nil		
	≤ Rs 500		
	Rs 501–2000		
	Rs 2001–5000		
	Rs 5001–10,000		
	Rs 10,001–15,000		
	Rs 15,001–20,000		
	> Rs 20,000		
14.	Annual Non-fee Expenditure for Education(√):		
	Nil		
	≤ Rs 500		
	Rs 501–2000		
	Rs 2001–5000		
	Rs 5001–10,000		
	Rs 10,001–15,000		
	Rs 15,001–20,000		
	> Rs 20,000		
15.	Kindly mention the items of non-fee expenditure for education (books, shoes, stationary, etc.)		
16.	Number of Children Attending:		
	Anganwadi (<6 years)		
	Pre-primary school (<6 years)		
	No school (<6 years)		
	Government school (6-18 years)		
	Private school (6-18 years)		
	Dropped out (6-18 years)		
17.	Reason for Drop out for Boy child	To earn	1
		To take care of siblings	2
		To do household work	3
		Others (Specify _____)	4
18.	Reason for Drop out for Girl Child	To earn	1
		To take care of siblings	2
		To do household work	3
		Others (Specify _____)	4

Section B: Educational Profile of Children (Children Attending/Not Attending Anganwadi [0–5 Years] and Elementary School [I – VIII])

S. No.	Edu. Status!!	Gender (F/M)	Age	Disability in Child (Y/N)	Type of school attended before COVID-19*	Whether transferred to new school post-COVID-19 (Y/N)	If yes, the reason for transferring from previous school (if applicable)++	Cost incurred for education (Pre- COVID-19)#	Cost incurred for education (Post-Lockdown)#	Going for tuition? (Y/N)	If Yes,	
											Tuition fees	Hours spent on tuition
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
C.1												
C.2												
C.3												

!!Class I–1, Class II–2, Class III–3, Class IV–4, Class V–5, Class VI–6, Class VII–7, Class VIII–8, Never enrolled–9, Attended and dropped–10; Anganwadi–11

* Government–1, Private-aided–2, Private-unaided–3, Others (Specify) –4 .-----

++ Inability to pay fees –1, Closure of school–2, Lack of access to digital class–3, No teaching–4, Migrated–5, Others–5 (specify) _____

Nil (Free education)–1, < 500–2, 500–2000–3, 2000–5000–4, 5000–10,000–5, 10,000–15,000–6, > 15,000–7

Section C: Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Children (Use v)				
I. Indicators - General Impact		Increased	Decreased	Same
1.	Impact of COVID-19 on general activities of children			
	<i>Eating</i>			
	<i>Sleeping</i>			
	<i>Watching TV</i>			
	<i>Digital games and videos</i>			
	<i>Physical activities</i>			
	<i>Social interaction</i>			
	<i>Playing with friends (face-to-face)</i>			
	<i>Spending time with friends remotely (online, social media, phone, etc.)</i>			
	<i>Change in everyday routine</i>	*****		
	<i>Accompanied parents to work</i>			
	<i>Artwork/singing and other creative work</i>			
	<i>Any other (Specify _____)</i>			
2.	Remarks on the general impact on children:			
II. Impact on Well-being			(Use v)	
3.	Impact of COVID-19 on well-being of children			
	<i>Overweight/obesity</i>			
	<i>Underweight/malnourished</i>			
	<i>Strain in eyes</i>			
	<i>The feeling of left alone</i>			
	<i>Any other (Specify _____)</i>			
4.	Number of children who got infected with COVID-19 under 3-14 years			
5.	If yes:			
	<i>Recovered after a mild illness</i>			
	<i>Recovered after a major illness</i>			
6.	Post- COVID-19 impact on health:			
	<i>No impact</i>			
	<i>Mild health issues</i>			
	<i>Major health issues</i>			
7.	In case of illness, whether received the needed help?		Yes	1
			No	2
8.	If yes, from whom:			
9.	If not, what kind of support was missing:			
10.	Remarks on the well-being of children:			

III. Behavioural Change in Children Post-COVID-19 (Use v)		
11.	What kind of behaviour was exhibited by children:	
	Increase in stress/anxiety level	
	Increase in fear level	
	Increased anger	
	Increase in happiness level	
	Increase in sadness level	
	Increase in stubbornness	
	Reduced social interaction	
12.	Remarks on overall behaviour of children:	

Section D: Impact on Education (Tick Where Applicable)				
S. No.	Indicators		Government School	Private School
I. During School Closure				
1.	During school closure, whether the education of children was affected or not?	<i>Not affected (1)</i> <i>Moderately affected(2)</i> <i>Severely Affected (3)</i>		
	If yes, what are the reasons:	<i>Online class was not effective (1)</i> <i>Could not hold the attention of children in online mode (2)</i> <i>Lack of peer group learning (3)</i> <i>No classes (4)</i> <i>Others (Specify_____)</i>		
	If not, what are the reasons:	<i>Parents could hold the interest of child (1)</i> <i>Child was self-motivated to study (2)</i> <i>Teacher could hold the interest of child (4)</i> <i>Support from tuition (5)</i> <i>Regular classes (6)</i> <i>Others (Specify_____)</i>		
II. School Reopening				
2.	Whether school has reopened for children?	<i>Yes (1)</i> <i>No (2)</i> <i>For a brief period (3)</i>		
	If yes, reasons for sending			
	If not, reasons for not sending			

3.	How does your child feel in attending school?	Happy (1) Sad (2) Scared/Fearful (3) Others (Specify_____)			
4.	What is the mode of teaching for children?	Online (1) Offline (2) A mix of both (3) No classes (4) Others (Specify_____)			
5.	What do you think about the learning level of your children?	Decreased (1) Same (2) Improved (3) Don't know (4)			
	Basic alphabets (1)				
	Basic reading (2)				
	Basic writing (3)				
	Basic numeracy (4)				
	Basic manners (5)				
	Basic lessons (6)				
	Others (Specify_____)				
6.	What is your perception of your child's learning?	The child has lost interest in studies (1) Learning pace has decreased (2) Same as before (3) Others (Specify_____)			
III. Support Received by Children from:		Government School	Private School		
A.	Anganwadi/Pre-School:	2020	2021	2020	2021
	Provision of childcare				
	Supplementary nutrition				
	Education of children				
	Colouring kit				
	Immunization				
	Health check-up				
	Others (Specify_____)				
B.	School:				
7.	<i>Incentives received</i>				
	School books				
	Note books				
	Stationery				
	MDM				
	Health supplements				
	Sanitary pads				
	Others (Specify_____)				
8.	<i>Arrangement made for learning</i>				
	Classroom teaching				
	Small group teaching with distance norms				
	Online learning				

	Play-way method of teaching online				
	Lessons through TV				
	Lessons at door step involving volunteers /NGOs				
	Lessons and activities through WhatsApp				
	Home visits by teachers				
	Teaching through phones				
	No arrangement for learning				
	Others (Specify_____)				
9.	<i>Arrangement made for assessment</i>				
	Term-end exams (Online)				
	Term-end exams (Offline)				
	Periodic review of child's performance (online)				
	Periodic review of child's performance (Offline)				
	No Assessment				
	Others (Specify_____)				
10.	Remarks on learning and assessment:				
C. Support from NGOs:					
11.	Kind of support received from NGOs (tick where applicable)				
	Supply of learning material				
	Supply of digital device				
	Promotion of learning at the village level				
	Offering learning through community centre				
	Others (Specify_____)				
12.	Additional Information on the Measures of NGOs				
13.	Overall Remarks: Kind of Support that Parents Need for Ensuring Learning of Children:				

Section E: Challenges Faced by Parents			
I. Socio-Economic Challenges			
1.	Loss of livelihood	Yes No	1 2
2.	Reduced income	Yes No	1 2
3.	Starvation due to loss of income	Yes No	1 2
4.	Increase in workload	Yes No	1 2
5.	Difficulty in balancing household work and studies of children	Yes No	1 2
6.	How did you survive this challenging period (Multiple answers)	<i>Did not face any problem</i> <i>Borrowed money</i> <i>Used past savings</i> <i>Sold land</i> <i>Sold cattle</i> <i>Mortgaged gold</i> <i>Others (Specify_____)</i>	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
II. Education-Related Challenges			
7.	Disruption in the education of child due to migration – inward/outward	Yes No	1 2
8.	Increased expenditure for education (digital device and Internet)	Yes No	1 2
9.	Lack of subject knowledge to teach children	Yes No <i>Not applicable</i>	1 2 3
10.	Lack of digital literacy to handle online classes	Yes No	1 2
11.	Lack of digital device at home	Yes No	1 2
12.	Simultaneous handling of online classes for 2 or more children	Yes No <i>Not applicable</i>	1 2 3
13.	Difficulty in handling multiple platforms – material, assignment, activities, WhatsApp group, and instruction for children	Yes No <i>Not applicable</i>	1 2 3
14.	Did you indulge in harsh parenting? If yes, why	Yes No	1 2
15.	If yes, specify_____		
16.	Additional information on education-related challenges faced:		

Section F: Parental Perception on the Effect of Pandemic on Children (Use v)			
S. No.	Indicators		
1.	What are the negative aspects of the pandemic (Multiple Answer)	Additional expenditure (buying digital devices/Internet) Difficult to manage online with office Increased screen time for children Exposure to inappropriate online content No/curtailed physical activity of children Overeating/overweight of children Undereating/malnourished Children under anxiety and stress Boredom of children Difficult to manage/give attention to more than one child Sleep disorder of child Issue related to eyes/specs Increased stress level of parents Any other (Specify _____)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
2.	What are the positive aspects of the pandemic?	Can spend good quality time with family and children Better bonding between parents and children Able to enhance digital skills Any other (Specify _____)	1 2 3 4
3.	Additional information:		

Section G: After Re-Opening of Schools: Reality Check							
S. No.	Indicators	Government School			Private School		
		Yes	No	Sometimes	Yes	No	Sometimes
I. Safety related:							
1.	Availability of sanitizer in school						
2.	Availability of hand wash facility						
3.	Ensuring social distance in classrooms						
4.	Temperature checking (thermal screening)						
5.	Ensuring the use of mask						
6.	Availability of medical kits in school						
II. Education related:							
7.	Child-friendly approach in classroom						
8.	Attention to children individually						
9.	Tracking of learning gaps						
10.	Improving learning level						
III. Infrastructure related:		No change	Good	Dilapidated	No change	Good	Dilapidated
11.	Availability of boundary walls						
12.	Proper school building						
13.	Cleanliness of school and classroom						

14.	Clean toilet with water facilities						
15.	Availability of MDM						
	Additional information related to reopening of schools:						

Overall observation (To be filled by the investigator):

TEACHER'S SCHEDULE

Study of Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Children in Four States

Schedule No. _____

State: _____ District: _____

Block: _____ Village: _____

Instruction to the Caller/Surveyor:

- Introduce your name, organization, locality
- Briefly state the purpose of the survey
- Kindly take their consent (both parents and children) as it will take 10-15 min to answer the kind of questions you will ask. Please inform that parents/guardians can stop the interview or skip a question if he or she does not feel comfortable answering it.
- Make sure that 50 per cent of the fathers and mothers are covered in the sample

Purpose of the Survey

- *To study the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children in rural areas*

Name of the Investigator: _____; Gender: _____

Mobile Number: _____; Email ID: _____

District: _____; State: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

**This survey is carried out by CSD in partnership with Tata Education and
Development Trust**

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Sangha Rachna, 53 Lodhi Estate, New Delhi – 110 003

Tel: 011-24615383, 011-24611700, website: csdindia.org

Section A: Profile

1.	Name		
2.	Gender	Female	1
		Male	2
		Transgender	3
3.	Religion	Hindu	1
		Muslim	2
		Christian	3
		Any Other	4
4.	Social Category	Scheduled Caste (SC)	1
		Scheduled Tribe (ST)	2
		Other Backward Class (OBC)	3
		General Category	4
		Others (Specify _____)	5
		No Response	6
5.	Name of School		
6.	Type of School	Government	1
		Aided	2
		Unaided	3
		Others (Specify: _____)	4
7.	Nature of Appointment	Permanent	1
		Contractual	2
8.	Educational Qualification	High School	1
		Higher Secondary	2
		Graduation	3
		Post-Graduation	4

		M.Phil./Ph.D.	5
9.	Trained	Yes	1
		No	2
8.	Professional Qualification	D.Ed./ BTC (Primary/elementary level)	1
		B.Ed.	2
		M.Ed.	3
		Others (Specify: _____)	4
10.	Distance of Your Residence from School	Less than 1 km	1
		Within 5 km	2
		Within 5–10 km	3
		More than 10 km	4
11.	How Do You Commute to School	Walking distance	1
		Shared auto/rickshaw	2
		Bus	3
		Own Vehicle	4
		Others (Specify _____)	5
12.	Teaching Experience in Current School	_____ years	
13.	Total Teaching Experience	_____ years	

Section B: COVID-19 Impacts on Access to Education

1.	Number of children in your class/school who attended classes regularly	Pre-COVID-19 (in 2019)	
		During pandemic-induced school closure (2020)	
		After school reopening (2021)	
2.	Reasons for change in the number of children	Migration of parent	1
		Shifted school due to economic condition	2

		Lack of gadgets among students	3
		Lack of gadgets among teachers	4
		Network/Internet issues	5
		Others (Specify _____)	6
3.	Have some of your students dropped out after the school reopened?	Yes	1
		No	2
4.	If yes, who are they?	Mainly girls	1
		Mainly poor children	2
		Children with special needs	3
		Don't know	4
		Others (Specify _____)	5
5.	Methods to track children after school reopened	No measure	1
		Telephonic call	2
		Messaging/WhatsApp	3
		Home visits	4
		Others (Specify _____)	5
6.	Reasons if no measures were adopted to track children	Teachers were engaged in other assignments	1
		Couldn't contact the families	2
		Transportation was difficult	3
		Others (Specify _____)	4
7.	Measures taken to motivate to re-join the left-out students	Met in person	1
		Telephonic conversation	2
		Providing facilities like _____	3
		Others (Specify _____)	4
8.	Did any migrant child take admission in your school	Yes	1
		No	2
9.	If not, why	Didn't have a transfer certificate	1

		Didn't have proper documents	2
		Our school didn't take any new admission	3
		No migrant approached	4
		Others (Specify: _____)	5

Section C: COVID-19 Impacts on Teaching

1.	During the pandemic your workload	Increased	1
		Remained the same	2
		Decreased	3
2.	During the pandemic, what all non-academic duties did you perform?	Nothing	1
		Managing inter-district checkposts	2
		Distribution of rations	3
		Managing queues outside ration shops	4
		Election duty	5
		Vaccine drive	6
		Monitoring marriages and social gathering	7
		Others (Specify _____)	8
3.	How many hours did you contribute to non-academic work per week?	No time	1
		Less than 15 hour	2
		15 to 30 hour	3
		30 to 45 hour	4
		More than 45 hour	5
4.	How many hours did you contribute to teaching/academic work per week?	No time	1
		Less than 15 hour	2
		15 to 30 hour	3
		30 to 45 hour	4
		More than 45 hour	5
5.	Do you think your involvement in non-academic	Yes	1

	work impacted your time/effort for students?	No	2
6.	Mode of teaching during pandemic-induced school closure (2020) <i>(Multiple responses possible)</i>	Online (WhatsApp, video calling, etc.) Both online and offline TV/Broadcast Home visits No teaching was possible at all Others (Specify _____)	1 2 3 4 5 6
7.	Which mode according to you was helpful for children to continue their studies?	Online (WhatsApp, video calling, etc.) Both online and offline TV/Broadcast Home visits None Others (Specify: _____)	1 2 3 4 5 6
8.	Why?		
9.	Challenges faced during pandemic-induced school closure (2020) <i>(Multiple responses possible)</i>	Lack of gadgets among students Lack of gadgets among teachers Lack of digital learning among teachers Difficulty of children in following the online class Movement of children to/ from other schools Other (Specify _____)	1 2 3 4 5 6
10.	Mode of teaching after school reopened (2021)	Regular classes in two shifts Regular classes without shifts Both online and offline No teaching was possible at all Others (Specify _____)	1 2 3 4 5
11.	Challenges faced after school reopened (2021)	Parents not sending to school due to fear of virus Learning loss	1 2

	(Multiple responses possible)	Drop out of children	3
		Movement of children to/from other schools	4
		Others (Specify _____)	5
12.	Your suggestion to make up for learning loss after school reopened		
13.	Your suggestion to prevent dropout of children after proper school reopening		

Section D: COVID-19 Impacts on Learning of Children

1.	Do you think COVID-19 has impacted the learning levels of children? If yes, state the problems faced by children.		
2.	During school closure interaction with students	Reduced significantly due to online teaching	1
		Same like pre-COVID-19 situation	2
3.	Do you think children's dependency on off-line tuitions increased	Very much	1
		Only for children who can afford tuition	2
		Not at all	3
4.	What has been the mode of continuous comprehensive evaluation of student's learning in 2020 (Multiple responses possible)	Oral tests online/over phone	1
		Students submitted videos	2
		Take away written tests	3
		Home assignments/project work	4
		No evaluation done	5
		Others (Specify _____)	6
5.	Students' performance during school closure in 2020	Was satisfactory	1
		Was below satisfactory	2
		Children learned nothing	3

		Others (Specify _____)	4
6.	What challenges you faced to evaluate children's learning? (Multiple responses possible)	<p>Couldn't realize whether children understood or not</p> <p>Not sure whether children did takeaway tests themselves</p> <p>Many students were untraceable often</p> <p>Movement of children to/from other schools</p> <p>Others (Specify _____)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>
7.	Were children groups/ Bal-Sansad active during the closure?	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Not sure</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>
8.	Are you part of the SMC or other education committee?	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p>
9.	Did your students learn something new during school closure?	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Not sure</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p>
10.	Did children face any social and emotional problems?	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p>
11.	If yes, what kind of problems?		
12.	COVID-19 impacts on the children learning	<p>Positive impacts:</p> <hr/> <p>Negative impacts:</p>	
13.	How do you think the role of education has changed after the pandemic?		
14.	Have you taken any initiative to continue the education of	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p>

	all children?		
15.	If yes, please share		
16.	Which children have been most impacted during school closure?	Girls	1
		Socially disadvantaged children	2
		Differently abled children	3
		Others	4

Section E: Situation and Preparedness

1.	Did you receive any training to teach in the new medium/ways of teachings	Yes No	1 2
2.	If yes, what was the training given on?	Use of digital devices Contact during pandemic Early learning during the pandemic Use of PPE kits Others (Specify _____)	1 2 3 4 5
3.	Were you given safety kits during the closure?	Yes No	1 2
4.	Did you receive your salary on time during the school closure in 2020?	Yes No	1 2
5.	Did you receive your salary on time after school reopened in 2021?	Yes No	1 2
6.	Were academic staff laid off within 2020–2021?	Yes No	1 2
7.	Was any scheme/incentives announced for teachers in your state?	Yes No	1 2
8.	After school reopened, how do you ensure safety in the schools?	Regular sanitization Distribution of safety kits Regular testing	1 2

		Physical distancing	3
		No measures taken	4
		Others (Specify_____)	5
			6
9.	Are there WASH facility in your school during the phased reopening of schools?	Yes	1
		No	2
10.	Is the school equipped with the following?	Spacious classrooms	1
		Hand wash facility	2
		Clean drinking water	3
		Clean useable toilets for girls and boys	4
		Ramp	5
		Teacher for each class	6

Section F: Financial Impacts

To what extent has the pandemic impacted your institution financially?

	Increase	Same level	Decrease	Not applicable
Government public funding				
Tuition fees				
Private funding				
Other new sources				

Section G: Observation by Surveyor

Anganwadi Schedule

Study of Impact Of COVID-19 Pandemic on Children in Four States

Schedule No. _____

State: _____ **District:** _____

Block: _____ **Village:** _____

Mobile Number: _____

Instruction to the caller/surveyor:

- Introduce your name, organization, locality
- Briefly state the purpose of the survey
- Kindly take their consent (both parents and children) as it will take 10–15 min to answer the questions you will ask. Please inform that parents/guardians can stop the interview or skip a question if he or she does not feel comfortable answering it.
- Make sure that 50 per cent of the fathers and mothers will be covered in the sample

Purpose of the Survey

- *To study the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children in rural areas*

Name of the Investigator: _____; *Gender:* _____

Mobile Number: _____; *Email ID:* _____

District: _____; *State:* _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

This survey is carried out by CSD in partnership with Tata Education and Development Trust

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Sangha Rachna, 53 Lodhi Estate, New Delhi – 110 003

Tel: 011-24615383, 011-24611700, website: csdindia.org

Section A: Basic Profile

S. No.	Particulars		Codes
1.	Name		
2.	Age		
3.	Religion	Hindu	1
		Muslim	2
		Christian	3
		Others (Specify_____)	4
4.	Social Categories	Schedule Caste (SC)	1
		Schedule Tribe (ST)	2
		Other Backward Caste (OBC)	3
		General Category	4
		Others (Specify_____)	5
		No Response	6
5.	Location of Anganwadi Centre	School Premise	1
		Panchayat Building	2
		Others (Specify_____)	3
6.	Mode of Functioning of Anganwadi	Only government support	1
		PPP support (CSR)	2
		NGO support	3
		Others (Specify_____)	4
7.	Kind of Support Provided under PPP or by NGOs	Capacity Building	1
		Infrastructural Development	2
		Strengthen Supplements	3
		Others (Specify_____)	4
8.	Educational Qualification	High School (IX–X)	1
		Higher Secondary (XI–XII)	2
		Graduation	3

		Post-Graduation	4
		Others (Specify_____)	5
9.	Distance of your Village from Anganwadi	< 1 km	1
		1–2 km	2
		2–4 km	3
		> 4 km	4
10.	Number of Staff in the Anganwadi Centre (AWC)	Anganwadi Teacher	
		Anganwadi Worker (AWW)	
		Anganwadi Helper (AWH)	
		Others (Specify_____)	
11.	Experience in Years as Teacher/Worker in AWC	< 2 year	1
		2–5 year	2
		5–10 year	3
		> 10 year	4

Section B: AWC Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

I	Activities of AWC	(Use Code)			
			Pre-COVID-19	Closure	Reopening
1.	Kind of Activities Undertaken by AW Teacher	Play-way method of teaching with games, blocks, puzzles, etc.	1		
		Talking with children	2		
		Drawing and painting	3		
		Planning activities for children	4		
		Monitoring health and behaviour	5		
		Others (Specify_____)	6		
2.	Kind of Activities Undertaken by AW Worker	Play way method of teaching	1		
		Maintain register	2		
		Health awareness campaign	3		

		Carry out survey				
		Distribution of health supplements	4			
		Immunization	5			
		Measuring height-weight of children	6			
		Issue of deworming tablets	7			
		Provision of cooked meal for children	8			
		Referral services	9			
		Others (Specify_____)	10			
			11			
3.	Kind of Activities Undertaken by AW Helper	Cleanliness of AWC	1			
		Bringing children to AWC	2			
		Cleanliness of children	3			
		Prepare cooked meal for children	4			
		Others (Specify_____)	5			
4.	Other Activities of Anganwadi Centre:					
II	AWW and Use of Technology					
5.	Do you use smartphone for AWC-related work?	Yes	1			
		No	2			
6.	Has the government given you a smartphone?	Yes	1			
		No	2			
7.	Were you provided training for using a smartphone?	Yes	1			
		No	2			
8.	Do you have the digital skill to enter data in apps	Good in digital skill	1			
		Basic knowledge of digital skill	2			
		Low knowledge of digital skill	3			

		Lack of digital skill	4			
9.	Your usage of digital apps for work	More usage	1			
		Average usage	2			
		Less usage	3			
		No usage	4			
10.	Purpose of usage of digital device	Poshan tracker	1			
		Entry of height-weight of children	2			
		Upload of documents	3			
		Undertake activities with children	4			
		Others (Specify_____)	5			
11.	What challenges did you face in using digital devices in your work?	ECCE activities cannot happen without contact	1			
		Attention span of young children is low	2			
		We are new to the use of such devices	3			
		Difficulty in proper communication	4			
		Lack of digital device	5			
		Others (Specify_____)	6			
12.	Additional Information Related to Use of Technology/Smartphone for Work:					

	taken		<p>Couldn't contact the families</p> <p>Transportation was difficult</p> <p>Others (Specify:_____)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p>			
5.	Mode of contact		<p>Meeting with mother and child in AWC</p> <p>Meeting with only mothers</p> <p>Meeting with mother and child in small groups</p> <p>Home visits</p> <p>Others (Specify:_____)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p>			
6.	Challenges during closure		<p>Lack of regular contact</p> <p>Movement of children to other village</p> <p>Inability to follow activities</p> <p>Parents were scared to provide us entry</p> <p>Didn't get sanitizer, mask</p> <p>Safety measures were not provided</p> <p>Others (Specify_____)</p>	<p>1</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p>	*****		*****
7.			Additional Information related to access of children to AWW after COVID-19 outbreak:				
II			Pre-school Learning after COVID-19 Outbreak	Pre-COVID-19	Closure	Reopening	

8.	Has the AWC been linked with schools		Yes No	1 2			
9.	Methods of teaching		Through games Through songs Through dance Others (Specify_____)	1 2 3 4			
10.	Learning tools provided		Attractive classroom with painting Story books Crayons Colours Colouring books Carpets for sitting Others (Specify_____)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7			
11.	Hours spent for teaching		1–2 hours 2–4 hours No teaching Others (Specify_____)	1 2 3 4			
12.	Did children face any behavioural problem?		Yes No	1 2			
13.	Were they referred to PHC for support?		Yes No	1 2			
14.	If yes, number of children referred to PHC for support		< 2 children 2–4 children 4–8 children	1 2 3			

			More than 8	4			
15.	Your perception on learning levels of children		Good	1			
			Average	2			
			Reduced learning	3			
			No learning	4			
			Others (Specify_____)	5			
16.	After reopening, did you identify any change in learning levels		No. Most children were the same	1	*****	*****	
			Yes. Most children forgot the activities	2			
			Everyone forgot the activities undertaken before pandemic	3			
17.	Usage of smartphones for imparting learning to children		No usage	1			
			Play rhymes	2			
			Songs/Videos to learn numbers	3			
			Songs/Videos to learn letters	5			
			Others (Specify_____)	6			
18.			Information related to learning and your suggestion for enhancing learning of children:				

Section D: Preparedness, Safety and Others

			Codes	Response
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1.	After the centre closure, did you receive any training to interact with children?	Yes No	1 2			
2.	If yes, what was the training given on?	Use of digital devices To contact children during pandemic To undertake activities during pandemic Use of PPE kits Others (Specify____)	1 2 3 4 5			
3.	Did you receive salary on time	Yes No	1 2	Pre- COVID- 19	Closure	Reopening
4.	Did you get additional incentives?	Yes No	1 2			
5.	If yes, for what? Specify					
6.	New scheme/incentives announced for AWWs in your state	Issue of smartphone Additional pay for use of smartphone Others (Specify_____)	1 2 3			
7.	Were you given safety kits during closure?	Yes No	1 2			
8.	If not, what were the challenges you faced	Increase in pocket expenditure Due to lack of safety some of the colleagues fell ill I lost some of my colleagues to COVID-19 during duty Others (Specify____)	1 2 3			

			4	
9.	After reopening how did you ensure safety in the centre?	Regular sanitization Distribution of safety kits Regular testing Physical distancing Others (Specify____)	1 2 3 4 5	
10.	What is the support you expect?	Regular sanitization To track all children back to school Arrangement of spacious rooms Issue of safety kit Increase in salary Others (Specify____)	1 2 3 4 5 6	
11.	Additional information on the challenges faced by you and support needed from government and parents:			

Section E: Observation by Surveyor



School Schedule

Study of Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Children in Four States

Schedule No. _____

School U-DISE No. _____

State: _____ District: _____

Block: _____ Village: _____

Section A: School Profile

S. No	Particulars	Response	Codes
	Name of the headteacher		
	Name of the school		
	Classes available in the school		
	Distance of the school from the habitation of children		
	Was this school merged under the school rationalization policy		
	School type	Girls	1
		Boys	2
		Co-Ed	3
	Management Type	Government	1
		Private aided	2
		Private un-aided	3
		Others (Specify)	4
	Medium of instruction	English	1
		Hindi	2

		Kannada	3
		Other	4
		Regular	Contractual
		Total	
	Number of Sanctioned Teachers		
	Number of Teachers Filled		
	Number of Vacant Position		
	Enrolment in the school (Elementary I to VIII)	June 2019	June 2021
	Total enrolment in the school		
	Drop out of students		
	Status of school functioning		
	Not opened yet after closure	Yes	1
		No	2
	Opened for a brief period	Yes	1
		No	2
	Opened and continued functioning	Yes	1
		No	2
	Others (Specify)		
	Were parents willing to send their wards to school? Specify reasons for yes or no		

	Additional Remarks on Enrolment/Dropout (e.g. increase/decrease in enrolment; Reason for dropout? What can be done to address issue of dropout, etc.):

Section B: Basic Norms of School Pre- and Post-COVID-19

S. No.	Items	Pre-COVID-19	Post-COVID-19
1.	Number of Teachers in Classes I to V: < 60 children = 2 teachers 61 to 90 = 3 teachers 91 to 120 = 4 teachers 121 to 200 = 5 teachers > 150 children = 5 + 1 headteacher > 200 children = (1:40) + 1 headteacher	No. of Children	
		No. of Teacher	
		Ratio	
	Number of Teachers in Classes VI to VIII: PTR: 1:35	No. of Children	
		No. of Teacher	
		Ratio	
2.	School Building and Facilities: (Good 1 , Bad 2, Dilapidated 3)	Pre-COVID-19	Post COVID-19
i.	Condition of school building		
ii.	Condition of the classroom		
iii.	Condition of ramps (barrier-free access)		
iv.	Condition of boundary wall		
v.	Separate toilet for boys (functional too)		

vi.	Separate toilet for girls (functional too)		
vii.	Safe and adequate drinking water for all children		
viii.	Condition of kitchen shed (mid-day-meal)		
ix.	Condition of playground and sports equipment		
x.	Condition of furniture		
xi.	Availability of electricity		
3.	No. of working days in a year for: Classes I to V: (200 as per norm)		
	Classes VI to VIII: (220 as per norm)		
4.	No. of instructional hours in a year for: Classes I to V: 800 instructional hours as per norms		
	Classes VI to VIII: 1000 instructional hours as per norms		
5.	No. of working hours per week for teachers (45 hours including preparation hours as per norm)		
6.	Condition of teaching learning materials		
7.	Condition of library and books		
	<p>***** Support with latest photographs for above sections where relevant *****</p> <p>Overall remarks and observations:</p>		

Section C: Policy Measures of the State Post-COVID-19 and Challenges Faced by School

S. No.	Indicators		
	Education Related Measures Promoted by the State:		
	Facilities	Measures promoted by the state	Challenges in implementation
	ICT infrastructure		

	Child-friendly approach in classroom		
	Individual attention on children		
	Tracking of learning gaps		
	Improving learning level		
	Safety-related Measures Taken by State		
	Health (Sanitizer, Mask, Screening, Medical kit provision)		
	Social Distance Norm		
	Overall Observation (if any):		

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Section D: Measures of School for Imparting Education

S. No.	Indicators	Pre-COVID-19	During closure	Reopening
I	Incentives provided			
	School books			
	Note books			
	Stationery			
	MDM			
	Health supplements			
	Sanitary pads			
	Others (Specify_____)			
	Remarks			
II	Arrangement made for learning			
	Classroom teaching			
	Small group teaching with distance norms			
	Online Learning			
	Play-way method of teaching online			
	Lessons through Televisions			
	Lessons at doorstep involving volunteers/NGOs			
	Lessons and activities through WhatsApp			
	Home visit by teachers			
	Teaching through phones			
	No arrangement for learning			
	Others (Specify_____)			
	Remarks on Learning			
III	Support offered to marginalized children			
IV	Support offered to differently abled child			
V	Support offered to child who lost their parents			
VI	Support offered to migrant children			
	Do you think children have lost interest in studies? If yes, what measure have you taken to promote the interest of children?			

	Do you think there is a learning gap in children post-COVID-19? If yes, what are the challenges faced and how do you plan to deal with such challenges?
	Innovative Measures Adopted by the Schools
1	What were the innovative/best practices adopted by the school to enhance enrolment in the school post-COVID-19?
2	What were the innovative/best practices adopted by the school to impart learning in the school post-COVID-19?
3	What were the innovative/best practices adopted by the school to enrol differently abled children?

Section E: Educational Experience and Challenges Faced by Children

S. No.	Indicators
1.	Social and Economic Challenges Faced by Children (loss of parents, income, migration):
2.	Psychological Challenges Faced by Children:
3.	Learning-related Challenges Faced by Children

4.	Problems of Children Enrolled in Various Grades from Classes I to VIII				
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade I</th> <th>Other Classes</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Grade I	Other Classes		
	Grade I	Other Classes			
5.	Problems of migrant children				
	Additional Information on the Challenges Faced:				

Observations

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Focus Group Discussion with Children

State:	
District:	
Block:	
Village:	
Date:	

1. Experience during lockdown? How to spend your time during school closure?
2. Did you get involved with new kind of during lockdown?
3. After school reopened, how did you feel? Give reasons.
4. Were there any issues related to online classes?
5. Which mode of education you enjoy the most and why?
6. What all you received from your school during closure?
7. Discrimination faced by Girl Child (access to digital device, study time, work engagement, earning money, doing household work)?
8. Do you feel your school and home is a safe place? If yes/no, why

Open Remarks:

Focus Group Discussion with Parents

State:	
District:	
Block:	
Village:	
Date:	

1. Did your income decrease/increase post-COVID-19? If yes, how?
2. Impact of COVID-19 on children (activities/well-being).
3. During school closure, whether the children education got affected?
What are the reasons?
4. Reasons for sending children to school post-reopening?
5. Reasons for not sending children to school post-reopening?
6. Support received during COVID-19 from school/Anganwadi/NGO.
7. Challenges faced during COVID-19? (Income/education of children)
8. Post-reopening, what did the school offer and what is lacking in the school (government and private comparison).

Additional Remarks :

Interview with Child Right Officers/Education Officers

Name:

Designation:

Block/District:

1. What problems have been faced by the children in your district after the pandemic?
2. What are the special problems faced by migrant children?
3. What are the initiatives undertaken in your block for children health and protection due to the pandemic?
4. What are the initiatives taken for continuing education of children by the state and the district? (BEO)
5. Are there cases of increasing child marriage at the block level? (child protection officer)
6. Are there other cases related to protection of children (physical, sexual abuse, trafficking for work, etc.)? (child protection officer)
7. What challenges you faced as an office bearer to cater to the needs of the children?
8. What are your suggestions for actions/schemes for addressing needs of children?
9. What measures can NGOs take to address the needs of children?
10. Anything else you want to share...best practice in your block undertaken for continuing education of children ensuring their safety (best practice of state, district, block, government schools to strengthen government schools)

Interview with Sarpanch and PRI members

Name:

Name of Panchayat:

Designation:

Block/District:

1. What are the initiatives undertaken by your panchayat in your block for children health and protection due to the pandemic?
2. What are the initiatives taken for continuing education of children?
3. What are the measures taken for strengthening government schools?
4. Are there cases of increasing child marriage at the block level?
5. Are there other cases related to protection of children (physical, sexual abuse, trafficking for work, etc.)?
6. What challenges you faced as an office bearer to cater to the needs of the children?
7. What are your suggestions for actions/schemes for addressing needs of children?
8. What measures can NGOs take to address the needs of children?
9. Anything else you want to share...Good Practice in your Panchayat, etc.

Interview with NGOs

NGO:

Name:

Designation:

Block/District:

1. What are the problems faced by the children in general in this locality?
2. What are the problems faced by the children after the pandemic particularly?
3. What are the initiatives taken by your organization to address the challenges faced?
4. What are the measures taken to enhance the learning of children?
5. What kind of intervention should be taken by the government to meet the requirements of the children?
6. Anything else you want to share...

