# How far has India come in guaranteeing education? <br> The Right to Education Act \& ASER findings 2010-2012 

## Right to Education Act

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, which aims to provide compulsory schooling to all children in the 6-14 age group, came into force on April 1, 2010. Section 6 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act states that the local authority and the appropriate government shall ensure that there is a school in every neighborhood within a period of 3 years from the commencement of the Act. Section 19 of the Act states that where a school, established before the commencement of the Act, does not fulfill the norms and standards specified in the schedule, it shall do so within a period of 3 years from the commencement of the Act. This means, that by $31^{\text {st }}$ March 2013:

- The local authority and the appropriate government shall ensure that there is a school in every neighborhood.
- Every school must fulfill the norms and standards specified in the schedule of the Act. These norms and standards include:
- Pupil Teacher Ratio norms (These vary with school type, whether primary or upper primary, and number of children enrolled);
- All-weather building;
- At least one classroom for every teacher;
- Barrier free access;
o Office-cum-store-room-cum-Head teacher's room;
- Separate toilets for boys and girls;
- Safe and adequate drinking water facility for all children;
- Arrangements for securing the school building by boundary wall or fencing;
- Kitchen shed where mid day meal is cooked in the school;
- Library providing newspaper, magazines and books on all subjects, including story books;
- Teaching learning equipment to be provided to every class, as required;
- Play material, games and sports equipment to be provided to every class, as required

It has been clarified by the Central Government, through a guideline dated $26^{\text {th }}$ October 2012, that it is not necessary to have a playground within school premises. However, schools must provide alternative arrangements in nearby parks for children to play outdoor games and other physical activities.

## About ASER

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) is a sample based household survey, which has been conducted annually since 2005. ASER is conducted in every rural district in India and is carried out by a local organisation or institution in the district. The survey is conducted each year between the months of September and November. In 2012, the survey reached 567 districts, 16,166 villages, 331,881 households and $5,96,846$ children. About 500 organizations and 25,000 volunteers participated in this effort.
ASER seeks to answer two basic questions: Are children enrolled in school? Are they learning? Using simple tools, children in the age group 5 to 16, are asked to do a set of basic reading and arithmetic tasks. Since 2009, in each sampled village, ASER also included the survey of the largest government school with primary sections to collect information on RTE indicators.

## ASER findings \& RTE indicators

## How far have we come in meeting the desired RTE norms?

Since 2005, ASER has been reporting high enrolment levels across the country. In 2012, enrolment for children (age 6 to 14 years) was over $96 \%$.

But is this enough to guarantee education?
Is the proportion of out-of-school children declining?
If children are in school, are they learning?
Have schools achieved the infrastructure norms, as outlined in the RTE Act?

ASER findings from 2010-2012 provide empirical evidence on how far India and its states have come in complying with the RTE indicators. This report is based on ASER data for measureable RTE indicators.


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## Are children enrolled in school?

| Age group | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Age: 6-14 ALL | 3.4 | 3.3 | 3.5 |
| Age: 6-14 BOYS | 3.2 | 3.1 | 3.1 |
| Age: 6-14 GIRLS | 3.8 | 3.6 | 3.9 |
| Age: 7-16 ALL | 5.6 | 5.3 | 5.9 |
| Age: 7-10 ALL | 2.2 | 1.9 | 2.2 |
| Age: 7-10 BOYS | 2.1 | 1.8 | 1.9 |
| Age: 7-10 GIRLS | 2.4 | 2.1 | 2.4 |
| Age: 11-14 ALL | 5.2 | 4.8 | 5.4 |
| Age: 11-14 BOYS | 4.8 | 4.4 | 4.8 |
| Age: 11-14 GIRLS | 5.7 | 5.2 | 6.0 |

## What ASER says...

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 states that "every child of the age of six to fourteen years shall have a right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till completion of elementary education."

Nationally, for rural areas, ASER findings show that India is very close to achieving universal enrolment. For children in the age group 6-14 years, enrollment levels have been $96 \%$ or more for the last four years. We are now facing the "last mile" problem. Those who are still out of school are the hardest to reach and the hardest to teach. Special efforts have to be made to bring such children to school and to encourage them to attend school regularly.

In some states, older girls (in the age group 11-14 years) also need focused and immediate attention. In Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, the percentage of girls of this age group who are not enrolled is higher than 10\%. In Odisha, Jharkhand and Gujarat, the proportion of girls (11-14 years) who are not enrolled is more than $6 \%$.


| Table 2: Selected states: \% Children not enrolled in school 2010-2012 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| State | 2010 |  |  | 2011 |  |  | 2012 |  |  |
|  | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { All } \\ 6-14 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { Boys } \\ 11-14 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{\|c} \hline \text { Girls } \\ 11-14 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{c\|} \hline \text { All } \\ 6-14 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { Boys } \\ 11-14 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { Girls } \\ 11-14 \\ \hline \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{c\|} \hline \text { All } \\ 6-14 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { Boys } \\ 11-14 \end{array}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Girls } \\ 11-14 \end{gathered}$ |
| Andhra Pradesh | 3.3 | 4.5 | 6.6 | 2.8 | 4.2 | 6.0 | 2.6 | 3.4 | 5.6 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 2.5 | 3.1 | 4.0 | 3.5 | 3.2 | 4.8 | 2.7 | 4.5 | 3.7 |
| Assam | 5.0 | 9.0 | 7.4 | 4.2 | 8.6 | 5.5 | 4.4 | 8.7 | 5.8 |
| Bihar | 3.5 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 3.0 | 3.4 | 4.5 | 3.7 | 5.0 | 5.2 |
| Chhattisgarh | 1.9 | 3.0 | 3.2 | 2.4 | 3.8 | 4.3 | 2.6 | 4.4 | 3.8 |
| Gujarat | 4.0 | 5.6 | 8.0 | 2.7 | 2.9 | 6.1 | 3.1 | 4.2 | 7.1 |
| Haryana | 1.1 | 1.0 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 1.5 | 2.1 | 1.5 | 1.1 | 3.5 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 0.3 | 1.0 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.8 |
| Jammu \& Kashmir |  |  |  | 2.5 | 2.4 | 3.7 | 2.3 | 1.7 | 5.0 |
| Jharkhand | 3.8 | 5.5 | 4.9 | 4.7 | 5.8 | 6.4 | 4.4 | 6.4 | 6.3 |
| Karnataka | 3.1 | 4.0 | 5.9 | 2.8 | 3.9 | 5.1 | 1.9 | 2.4 | 3.8 |
| Kerala | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 1.8 | 2.7 | 3.3 | 2.2 | 3.1 | 3.3 | 3.1 | 4.2 | 5.2 |
| Maharashtra | 1.1 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.1 | 1.3 | 1.8 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 2.2 |
| Manipur | 1.8 | 2.5 | 3.3 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 2.3 |
| Meghalaya | 7.2 | 12.3 | 6.8 | 5.8 | 11.0 | 4.7 | 5.3 | 7.6 | 5.0 |
| Mizoram | 2.2 | 5.7 | 4.4 | 0.6 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 1.7 | 2.9 | 2.8 |
| Nagaland | 2.2 | 4.2 | 3.2 | 2.0 | 3.9 | 2.5 | 1.7 | 3.4 | 2.4 |
| Odisha | 4.5 | 6.4 | 7.2 | 3.7 | 5.4 | 6.4 | 4.1 | 6.2 | 6.6 |
| Punjab | 1.7 | 3.2 | 2.7 | 1.6 | 2.9 | 2.6 | 1.3 | 2.2 | 2.0 |
| Rajasthan | 5.8 | 5.5 | 12.1 | 4.5 | 4.2 | 8.9 | 5.1 | 4.9 | 11.2 |
| Sikkim | 1.9 | 4.4 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 2.2 | 0.9 | 2.7 | 3.5 | 2.7 |
| Tamil Nadu | 1.0 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 0.6 | 1.2 | 0.9 |
| Tripura | 1.8 | 2.2 | 3.4 | 1.3 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 1.5 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 5.2 | 7.4 | 9.7 | 6.1 | 7.4 | 9.7 | 6.4 | 8.8 | 11.5 |
| Uttarakhand | 1.7 | 2.2 | 4.0 | 1.1 | 1.8 | 1.2 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 3.8 |
| West Bengal | 4.6 | 8.3 | 5.5 | 4.3 | 8.4 | 4.3 | 3.3 | 6.5 | 4.2 |
| All India | 3.4 | 4.8 | 5.7 | 3.3 | 4.4 | 5.2 | 3.5 | 4.8 | 6.0 |

Note: Figures from Goa and union territories have not been included.
'Not enrolled' = dropped out + never enrolled

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## Learning Levels: Reading, Arithmetic \& English

## What ASER says...

ASER asks children to read simple text in their regional language, do basic arithmetic operations and read easy English sentences. Here are the findings from 2012:

Reading: The estimates for rural India suggest that less than half of all children currently in Std V can read Std II level text. Close to one fourth of all children in Std VIII are also struggling with basic reading fluency in their regional language.

Arithmetic: The situation with arithmetic is even more worrying. In most states, children are expected to do simple division problems by Std IV. The ASER data for 2012 indicates that three out of four children in Std $V$ have difficulty in correctly solving a 3 digit by 1 digit division problem. Even in Std VIII, about half of all children are unable to solve such a problem.

English: English as a subject is taught in most states from early grades. In Std V, over three quarters of all children cannot read simple English sentences. By Std VIII, only about half of all children can read basic English text.

Although the RTE Act guarantees eight years of schooling, as a country we must aspire to ensure that children spend at least eight years in school and at the end of this period they are well prepared for moving into higher classes in school. After eight years of schooling, every Indian child should have basic skills of reading, comprehension, expression, critical thinking and problem solving and be prepared to deal adequately with life.

## Snapshot of ASER tools

बहुत दिनों से बारिश हो रही थी। गाँव में सभी जगह गंदा पानी भर गया था। सभी बारिश के रुकने की राह देख रहे थे। अचानक एक दिन बारिश रुक गई। सूरज निकल आया। सब लोग खुश हो गये। आसमान में चिड़ियाँ उड़ने लर्गी। लोग अपने कपड़े सुखाने लगे। बच्चे भी घरों से बाहर निकलकर खेलने लगे।


## What is the time?

This is a large house.
I like to read.

Table 3: Selected states: \% Children in different classes who can:

| State | Std V : ASER 2012 |  |  | Std VIII : ASER 2012 |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Read a Std II level text | Do a simple division problem | Read basic English sentences | Read a Std II level text | Do a simple division problem | Read basic English sentences |
| Andhra Pradesh | 59.4 | 41.1 | 47.2 | 87.0 | 65.9 | 76.9 |
| Arunachal Pradesh | 51.8 | 44.7 | 59.7 | 87.4 | 79.1 | 88.5 |
| Assam | 36.3 | 11.4 | 16.3 | 67.4 | 31.1 | 48.9 |
| Bihar | 44.4 | 31.4 | 16.3 | 80.8 | 67.0 | 48.9 |
| Chhattisgarh | 46.1 | 14.1 | 7.2 | 77.5 | 31.4 | 31.2 |
| Gujarat | 47.6 | 13.9 | 6.5 | 80.9 | 41.3 | 35.1 |
| Haryana | 59.8 | 42.9 | 41.9 | 87.4 | 67.2 | 69.0 |
| Himachal Pradesh | 72.8 | 48.7 | 54.7 | 90.1 | 71.8 | 81.3 |
| Jammu \& Kashmir | 41.0 | 20.9 | 52.7 | 64.7 | 36.8 | 69.9 |
| Jharkhand | 37.8 | 24.2 | 18.8 | 75.8 | 57.4 | 45.1 |
| Karnataka | 48.5 | 19.9 | 17.4 | 74.6 | 46.1 | 48.9 |
| Kerala | 65.2 | 45.9 | 62.7 | 84.3 | 75.0 | 86.0 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 33.1 | 12.3 | 8.3 | 67.8 | 34.9 | 24.1 |
| Maharashtra | 58.3 | 22.6 | 21.2 | 83.2 | 44.4 | 50.0 |
| Manipur | 63.6 | 44.7 | 65.1 | 85.3 | 73.9 | 85.4 |
| Meghalaya | 64.6 | 18.5 | 66.0 | 78.3 | 49.8 | 81.7 |
| Mizoram | 59.2 | 43.8 | 54.1 | 94.2 | 86.3 | 90.9 |
| Nagaland | 52.6 | 34.6 | 64.7 | 88.6 | 81.7 | 90.3 |
| Odisha | 47.0 | 18.3 | 20.4 | 73.2 | 42.9 | 48.4 |
| Punjab | 71.3 | 52.0 | 52.1 | 86.3 | 63.8 | 70.8 |
| Rajasthan | 46.9 | 21.1 | 14.7 | 77.5 | 45.1 | 39.8 |
| Sikkim | 61.6 | 43.8 | 83.5 | 93.6 | 78.1 | 97.2 |
| Tamil Nadu | 29.9 | 13.0 | 24.0 | 65.2 | 37.4 | 46.2 |
| Tripura | 36.8 | 20.8 | 18 | 66.0 | 42.7 | 47.6 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 42.7 | 21.1 | 15.5 | 69.6 | 36.5 | 31.9 |
| Uttarakhand | 58.4 | 35.0 | 29.6 | 83.9 | 57.4 | 53.9 |
| West Bengal | 48.7 | 28.5 | 23.9 | 76.2 | 42.7 | 40.2 |
| All India | 46.8 | 24.8 | 22.5 | 76.4 | 48.1 | 47.0 |

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## School observations

In each year's ASER, from 2009 onwards, in each sampled village, the largest government school with primary sections was visited on the day of the survey. Information about schools is based on these visits.

| Table 4: All India (rural): |
| :--- |
| Number of schools visited 2010-2012 |
| Type of school |
| Std I-IVN: Primary |
| Std I-VIINIII: Primary + Upper <br> primary |
| Total schools visited |

Table 5: All India (rural): Student and teacher attendance on the day
of the visit 2010-2012

| Std I-IVN | Std I-VIINIIII |  |  |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
| \% Enrolled children present <br> (Average) | 72.9 | 71.0 | 71.3 | 73.4 | 72.0 | 73.1 |
| \% Teachers present (Average) | 87.1 | 87.2 | 85.2 | 86.4 | 86.7 | 85.4 |

## RTE indicators

| Table 6: All India (rural): Schools meeting selected RTE norms 2010-2012 |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| \% Schools meeting the following RTE norms: |  | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
| Pupil-teacher \& classroomteacher norms | Pupil-teacher ratio | 38.9 | 40.8 | 42.8 |
|  | Classroom-teacher ratio | 76.2 | 74.3 | 73.7 |
| Building | Office/store/office cum store | 74.1 | 74.1 | 73.5 |
|  | Playground | 62.0 | 62.8 | 61.1 |
|  | Boundary wall/fencing | 51.0 | 53.9 | 54.7 |
| Drinking water | No facility for drinking water | 17.0 | 16.7 | 16.6 |
|  | Facility but no drinking water available | 10.3 | 9.9 | 10.4 |
|  | Drinking water available | 72.7 | 73.5 | 73.0 |
| Toilet | No toilet facility | 11.0 | 12.2 | 8.4 |
|  | Facility but toilet not useable | 41.8 | 38.9 | 35.1 |
|  | Toilet useable | 47.2 | 49.0 | 56.5 |
| Girls toilet | \% Schools with no separate provisions for girls toilets | 31.2 | 22.7 | 21.3 |
|  | \% School with separate girls toilets and: |  |  |  |
|  | Toilet locked | 18.7 | 15.0 | 14.1 |
|  | Toilet not useable | 17.2 | 18.7 | 16.4 |
|  | Toilet useable | 32.9 | 43.7 | 48.2 |
| Library | No library | 37.4 | 28.7 | 23.9 |
|  | Library but no books being used by children on day of visit | 24.7 | 29.1 | 32.2 |
|  | Library books being used by children on day of visit | 37.9 | 42.2 | 43.9 |
| Mid-day meal | Kitchen shed for cooking mid-day meal | 82.1 | 83.7 | 84.4 |
|  | Mid-day meal served in school on day of visit | 84.6 | 87.5 | 87.1 |

## What ASER says...

A) Attendance - teachers and students

Since 2009, ASER findings have shown a decline in both teacher and student attendance. In 2012, in primary schools, the average percentage of students present was $71.3 \%$ and the percentage of teachers present stood at 85.2\% on day of visit.

## (1) Pupil-teacher ratio

ASER's school observations show improvement in compliance with PTR norms. In 2010, the proportion of schools meeting these norms was $38.9 \%$. This figure has risen to $42.8 \%$ in 2012.
$\rightarrow$
Drinking water
The proportion of schools with drinking water facilities has remained largely unchanged since 2010. In 2012, 73\% schools visited had drinking water facilities available.

## (1) <br> Toilets

The proportion of schools without toilets has reduced from $12.2 \%$ in 2011 to $8.4 \%$ in 2012. Approximately $80 \%$ of the schools visited had a separate toilet for girls. Of all the schools visited, close to half had useable facilities, in comparison to a third in 2010.

Mid-day meal
The mid-day meal was observed being served in 87.1\% of all schools visited, an increase over 2010.

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 specifies a series of norms and standards for a school.
Norms for number of teachers vary according to the level of the school (primary or upper primary) and total student enrollment.
Norms for classrooms require the school to have at least one classroom for every teacher.
Norms for facilities require schools to provide each of the facilities mentioned in the table above, among others.
RTE norms regulate provision of facilities but not their useability. ASER school observations also include whether facilities could be used. This information is included in the table above.














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[^0]:    Note: Figures from Goa and union territories have not been included.

