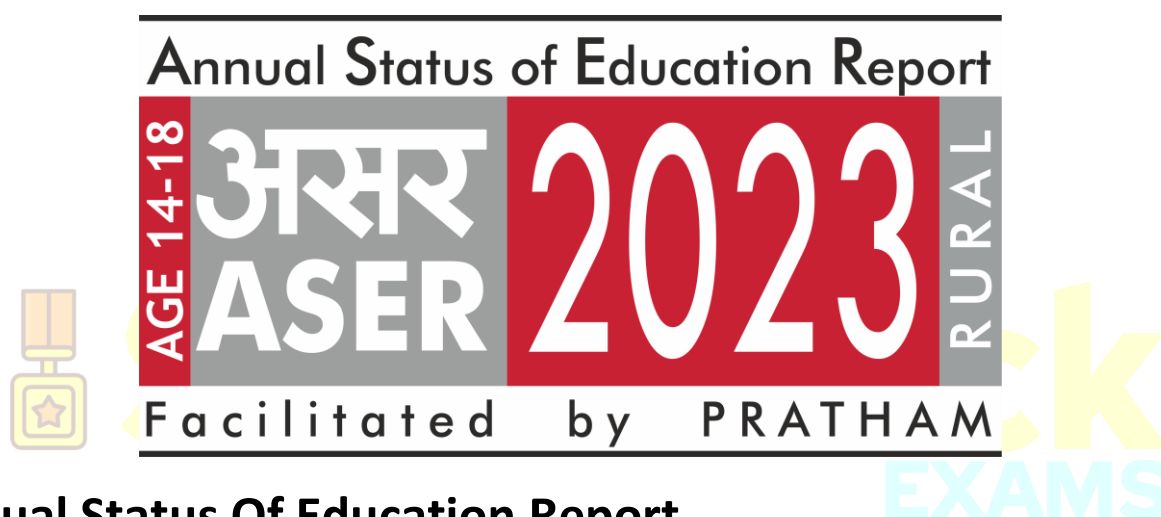


ASER Survey Report

Why In News

- The **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)**, titled '**Beyond Basics**', was released. It involved a survey by civil society organisation Pratham among rural students aged 14 to 18 years.
- The household survey, conducted in 28 districts across 26 states, assessed the foundational reading and arithmetic abilities of 34,745 students.



Annual Status Of Education Report

- ASER is a nationwide citizen-led household survey that provides a glimpse of the status of children's schooling and learning outcomes in rural India.
- The ASER 2023 "Beyond Basics" survey was conducted in 28 districts across 26 states, reaching a total of 34,745 youth in the age group 14-18 years.



- One rural district was surveyed in each major state, with the **exception of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh**, where two rural districts were covered.
- It discussed the activities students are engaged in, their basic and applied reading and math abilities and digital awareness and skills.
- “The surveyed youth were given **five types of tasks** -- basic reading, maths and English abilities; application of basic skills to everyday calculations; reading and understanding written instructions; and financial calculations that need to be done in real life. Youths’ performance on **digital tasks was summarised** taking into account digital awareness and aptitude,” it said.

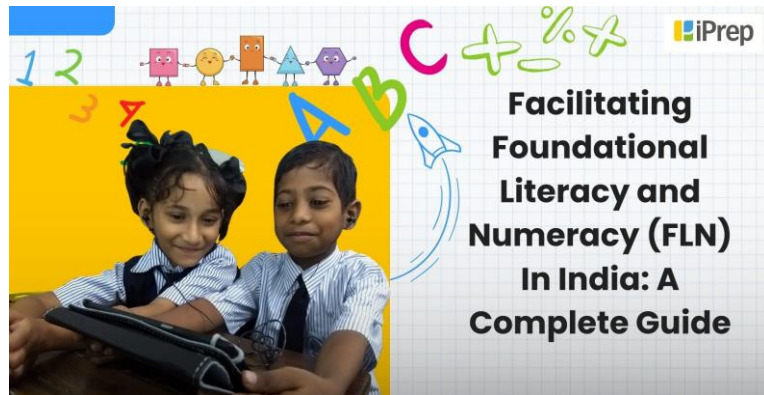
What Does Report Says

- The report painted a grim picture outlining that overall **86.8 per cent** among the **14-18 year age category** are enrolled in either school or college and the enrollment percentage goes down with the age.
- The proportion of youth who are now not **enrolled in school or college rises** with age from 3.9 per cent of 14-year-olds to 10.9 per cent of 16-year-youth and 32.6 per cent of 18-year-old students.



- Flagging that the **Covid-19 pandemic** had propelled a threat to livelihoods with older children dropping out of school, the report underscored that the fear “turned out to be unfounded”.
- “The **proportion of out-of-school children** and youth has been declining, led by the government’s push to universalise secondary education,” it stated.

- The report, however, pointed out that while young people remain in school longer, there's no significant change in their **foundational literacy and numeracy** skills (FLN).



- In 2017, 76.6 per cent of 14-18-year-olds could read a Class 2-level text, while in 2023, this number is slightly lower at 73.6 per cent.
- In arithmetic, in 2017, 39.5 per cent of youth could do a simple (Class 3-4 level) division problem, while in 2023, this proportion is slightly higher at 43.3 per cent.
- **“More than half struggle** with division (3-digit by 1-digit) problems. Only 43.3 per cent of 14-18-year-olds are able to do such problems correctly. This skill is usually expected in Class 3-4,” the report found.

Vocational Education



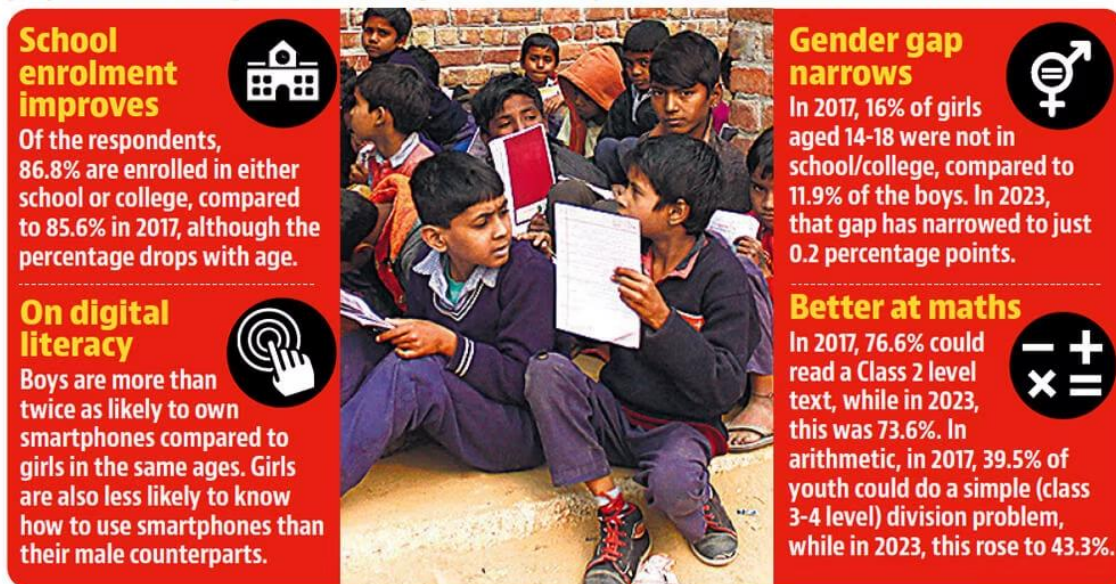
- **“Only 5.6% of surveyed youth report** taking vocational training or other related courses currently. Youth at the college level are the most likely to be taking vocational training (16.2%),” the survey found adding that most youth are taking short duration courses of six months or less.

- On **abilities such as basic reading**, math and English abilities; application of basic skills to everyday calculations; reading and understanding written instructions; and financial calculations that need to be done in real life, about 25% still cannot read a **Class II level text fluently in their regional language**.
- While females (76%) do better than males (70.9%) in reading a Standard II level text in their regional language, males do better than females in arithmetic and English reading. “Of the youth who can do subtraction or more, over 60% are able to do the budget management task, about 37% can apply a discount, but only about 10% can calculate repayment,” the report added.

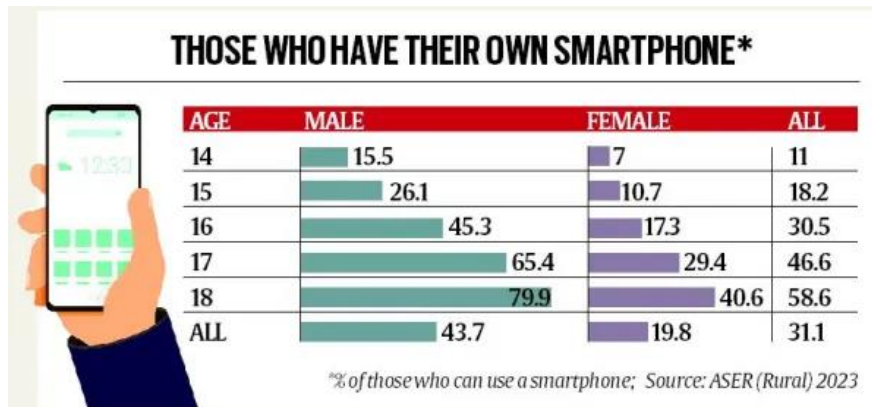
Learning outcomes lag among teens



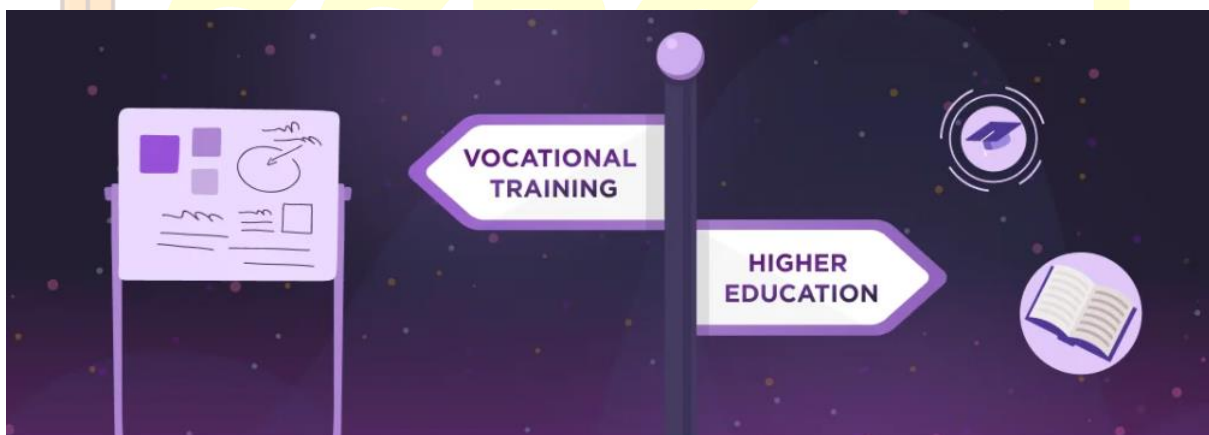
The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2023, titled 'Beyond Basics', is based on a survey of 34,745 people between the ages of 14 and 18 in government and private institutes across 28 districts in 26 states



- **Close to 90% of all youth have a smartphone** in the household and know how to use it. “Of those who can use a smartphone, males (43.7%) are more than twice as likely to have their own smartphone than females (19.8%). Females are less likely to know how to use a smartphone or computer as compared to males,” it added.
- Across all tasks using **mobile phones, males outperformed females**. “Performance on digital tasks improves with education level. The ability to do digital tasks increases with basic reading proficiency,” it added.



- The **majority of respondents in Class 11** or higher were studying humanities-related subjects. The responses also reflect what is available in their villages. It is possible that someone wants to do science, but their local high school does not have science.
- But again, there may be other ways to connect to subjects that the local high school does not offer.



- The **system is also very streamlined**, but the **New Education Policy of 2020** allows for more flexibility. There should be a way for a student to register for other kinds of learning opportunities.
- Over some time, it should loosen up; physical restrictions should also loosen — you may not have a physical science teacher, but there are science teachers in the world from whom you should be able to learn.