

Survey on the schooling crisis

Mobile Vaani rural clubs (Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, UP, MP, Saajha Manch and other states)

August 5th to 23rd 2021

covid-response@gramvaani.org



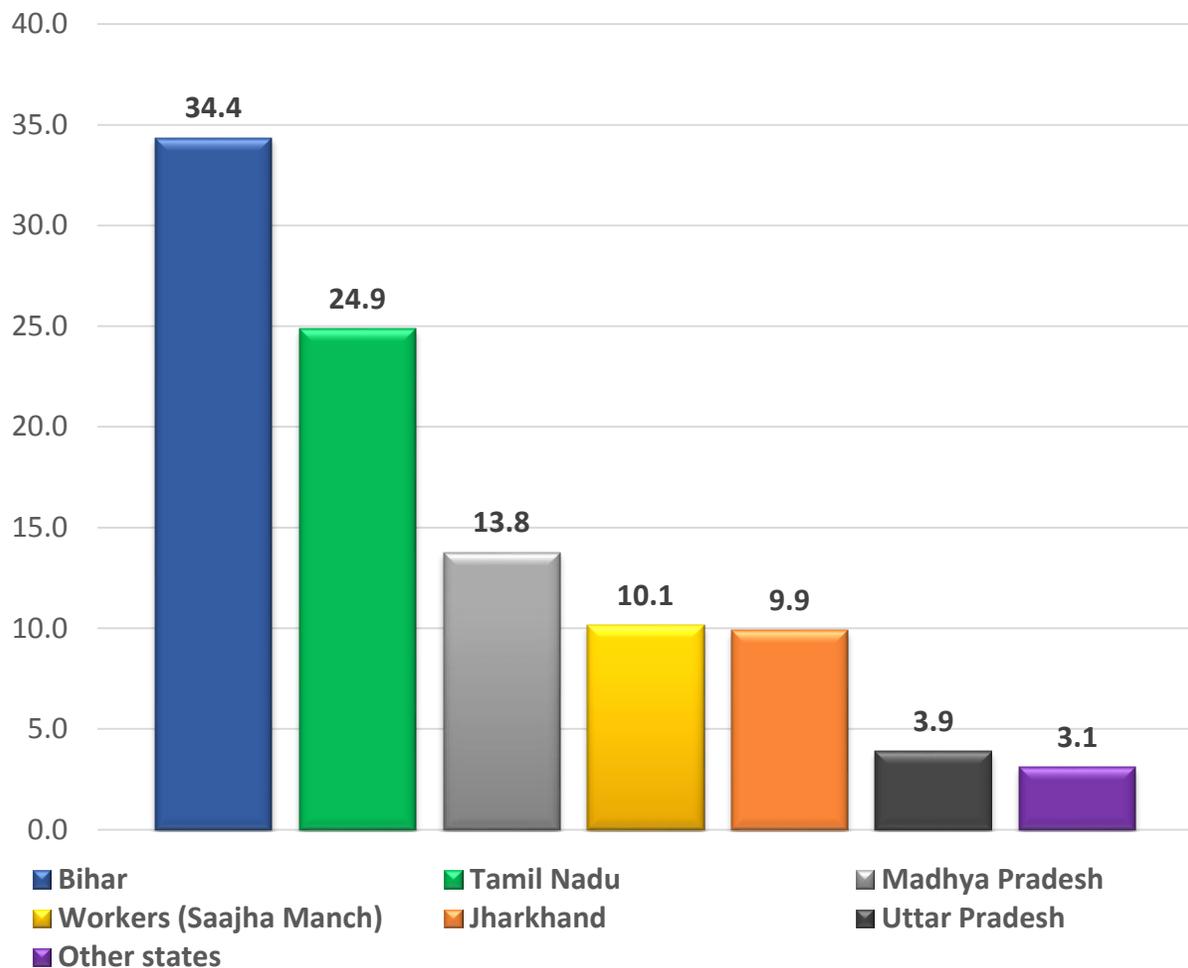
Executive summary

Schools have been shut since March 2020. With cases going down across country, many state governments are contemplating whether to reopen schools or not. Mobile Vaani put up a survey to parents to understand their view and apprehensions with regard to reopening up of schools, and to also assess the impact of the last 1.5 years of schools being shutdown. The survey was conducted from August 5th to 23rd 2021. The questionnaire consisted of 10 multiple choice questions.

- 1243 people participated in this survey to report about school re-opening and the impact of the lockdown on children's learning.
- 72% of parents want to send their children to schools while 14% are fearful of COVID and are reluctant in their wards to school. 9% said that they want to wait for vaccination of their child. Around 5% have yet not decided or cannot comment at the moment.
- Only 17% of parents said that they have separate smart phones with internet for their children to do online classes while 20% said that their children share the smart phones among themselves to undertake online classes. Around 55% of parents said that either they have a single smartphone in their houses for daily use or there is no smartphone, which impedes their children from online learning.
- Among those who are able to take online classes, children face many challenges. The foremost challenge stated by 36% of parents is that teachers are not able to pay attention to each and every child during online classes, followed by 36% of parents who said that online content is hard for their children to comprehend.
- 61% of parents are of the view that children have lost interest in studies and it has been one of the most adverse effects of children not being able to attend school. Mobile phone addiction, poor nutrition (as children are not able to avail Mid day meal and Aanganwadi provisions) are other adverse effects expressed by parents.
- 39% percent further expressed that their children have dropped out in order to work and earn for the household. Another 22% dropped out for a lack of resources like school fee, smartphones and laptops.
- 57% of parents suggested that the government must ensure that all the teachers and other staff have been vaccinated to smoothly resume schools. 19% suggested that schools can resume activities with a reduced number of children in classes along with following COVID related compliances like proper sanitation, masking and social distancing.

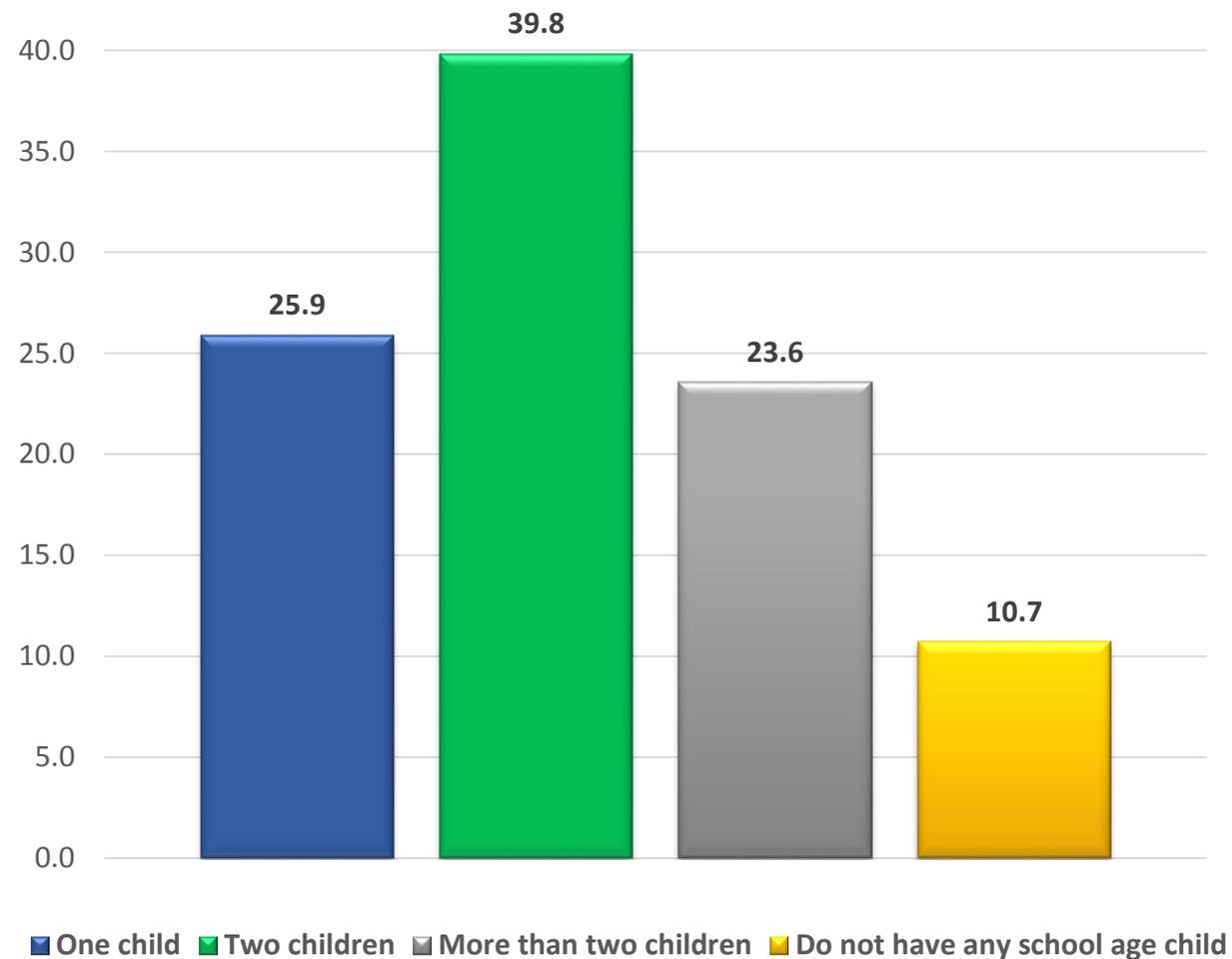
Findings

Q1 – Geography/instance wise responses (N=1243)



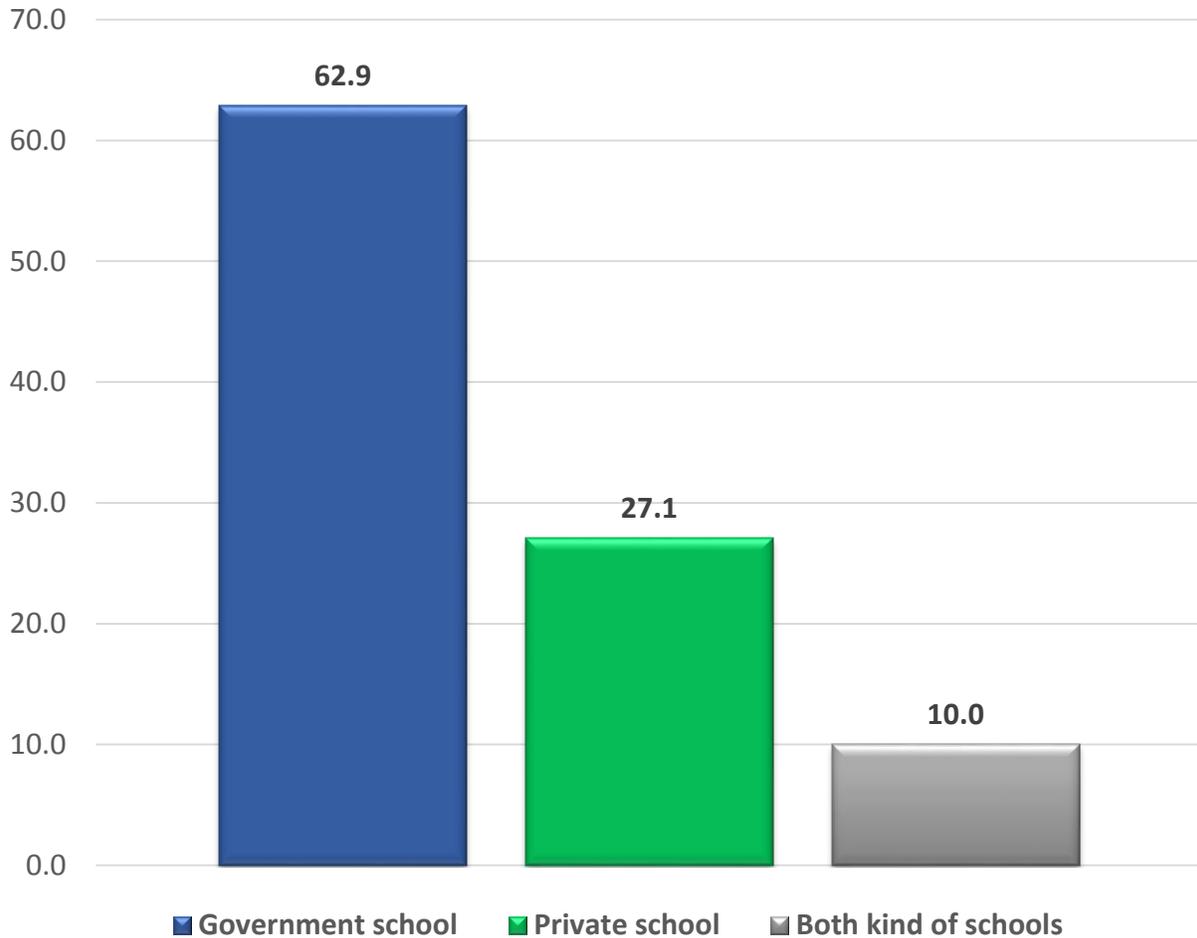
The school re-opening survey was commissioned in two languages. In Tamil Nadu, the survey was done separately in Tamil, for rest of the places, it was done in Hindi. Since Bihar has the maximum number of MV club users, most of the complete responses came from Bihar followed by Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh. Workers from Saajha Manch platform also participated in the survey in good numbers along with Jharkhand.

Q2 - Number of school age children (N=1243)



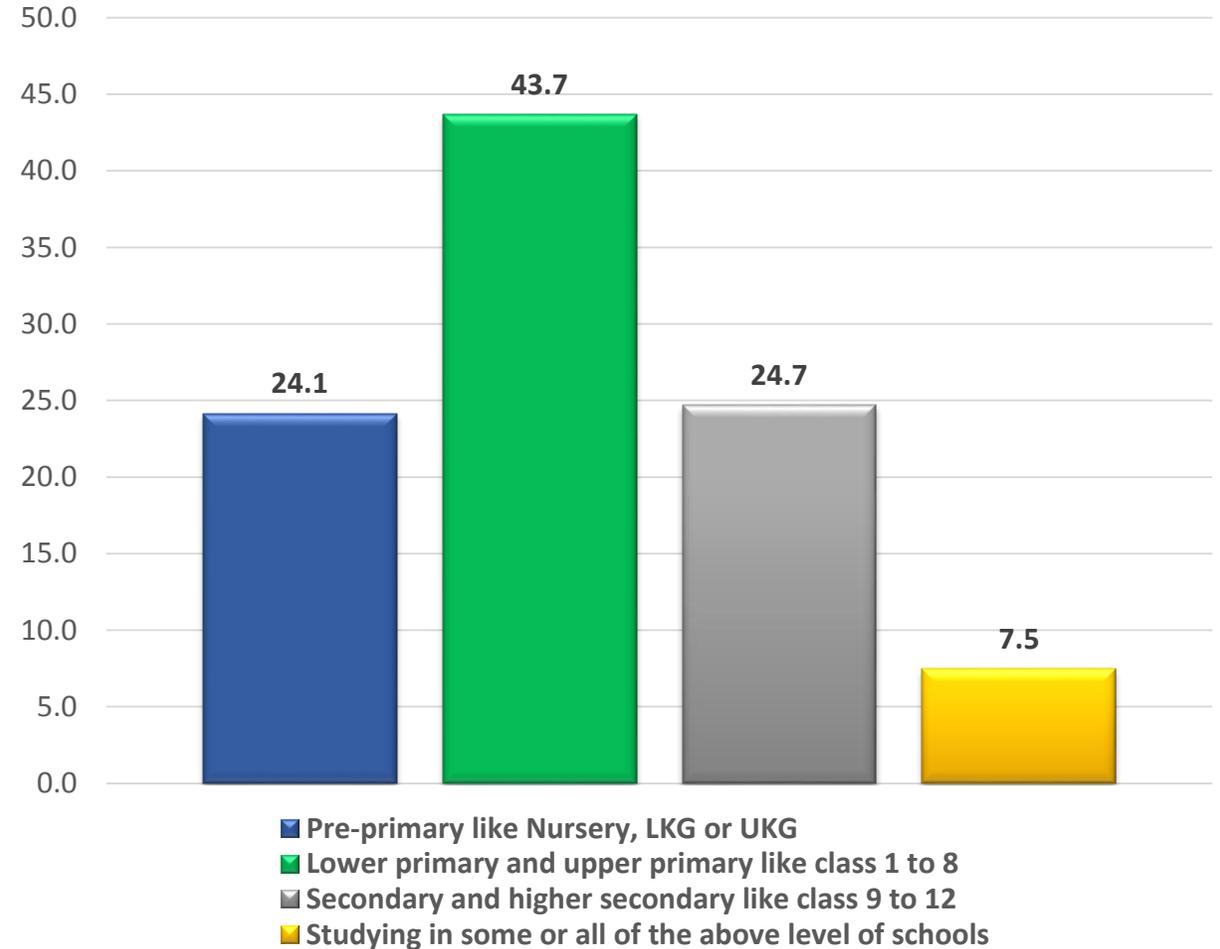
A total of 1243 respondents were interviewed during the survey. 133 respondents said that they do not have any school age children and were excluded from further analysis, while 495 said that they have two children in the defined cohort followed by 322 respondents who have one child of school going age. 293 respondents have more than two children.

Q3 - Kinds of school your children are enrolled in (N=1110)



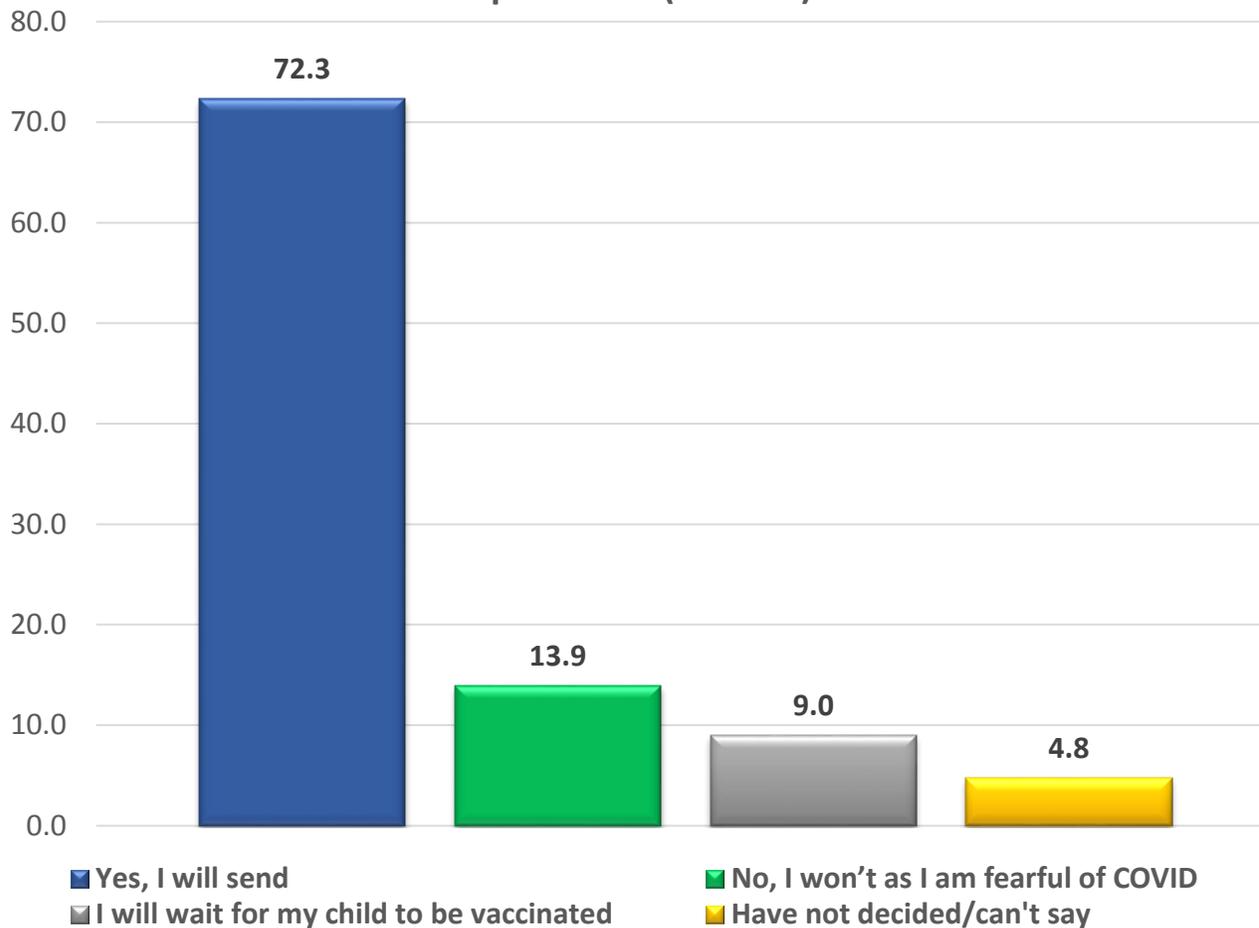
As per Pratham's [Annual Status of Education Report \(Rural\) 2020 Wave 1](#) there was a clear shift from private to government schools between 2018 and 2020, in all grades and among both boys and girls. Reasons may include financial distress in households and/or permanent school shutdowns among the private schools. Data from our survey and corresponding voice reports by people seems to corroborate with this.

Q4 - Level of school, children are enrolled in (N=1110)



Majority of the sample comprised of parents whose children are enrolled in primary school classes. Around 24 percent reported that their children are enrolled in pre-primary classes while 24.7 said that their children are enrolled in secondary and higher secondary classes.

Q5 - Would you like to send your children to school if it gets open now? (N=1110)



Voices from the ground

Children are attending school/ want to attend school

Once the school restarts then I will surely go, being poor, don't have any android phone or laptop for online classes. Since schools and tuition centers were closed, we have forgotten whatever we have learnt.

[Raviraj, student of class 12th, Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh](#)

I will send the children to school, I do not have smartphone or laptop at home so there were no online classes for my children, they have forgotten everything whatever they have learnt.

[Ashok, parent, Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh](#)

I along with my sisters want to attend school

[Muskan, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh](#)

I am very excited with the prospect of re-opening of schools and colleges.

[Saurabh Mishra, student, Uttar Pradesh](#)

We are now sending the child to the school, school is open for 2 days in a week, school is practising safety norms, we are waiting for full resumption of school.

[Saloni Sharma, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh](#)

Children have been greatly affected by COVID. Daughter is in matric and she's attending school for one day in a week. It does seem that schools are maintaining social distancing.

[Waseema Khan, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh](#)

My school has started, they are maintaining cleanliness, Mid day meal has not been provided and I have also not received ration from last two months.

[Mithilesh, student of class 7, Rohtas, Bihar](#)

With the number of Covid-19 cases decreasing across the country, several states have reopened schools and educational institutions. In this survey, an overwhelmingly large majority of parents said that they would like to send their children to school. As per the parents, the schools should open with proper protocols. Students, parents, teachers and staff should be vaccinated. The main fear among parents is with regard to an alarmist discourse in India that the third wave will affect the children severely. [LocalCircles](#), a polling platform in urban areas among upper class families also found that around 53 per cent of parents support the reopening of schools in August or September.

Voices from the ground

Schools must be cautious and follow COVID compliances

School has to be cautious with regard to COVID compliance. Proper monitoring of children has to be there, all the teachers must be vaccinated: [Kavita Sharma, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh](#)

School must reopen but with Corona guidelines like masking and social distancing: [Shyam Lodi, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh](#)

In MP, schools have been reopened, I know about a blind school where no COVID compliance is being followed: [Jeetendra, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh](#)

The child is not studying at all and there is overall deterioration. Schools must re-open as their future is at stake. School should follow safety measures but it must function now.

[Jagatlal Manjhi, parent, Siwan, Bihar](#)

School opening will be beneficial for children. Guideline given by government needs to be followed: [Avinash Kumar, Jamui, Bihar](#)

Parents are fearful and apprehensive

Corona is again spreading everywhere, I don't think it is feasible to send children to school. Schools can re-open later: [Devaraj, parent, Erode, Tamil Nadu](#)

No, I will not send my children to school as Corona is still there: [Parent, Champaran, Bihar](#)

Children are deprived of teacher's attention and mobile phone can't be an alternative. The activities are not planned and if parents are not present, children start playing video games. I am not comfortable with the idea of sending children to school as fear of Corona is still there: [Saurabh, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh](#)

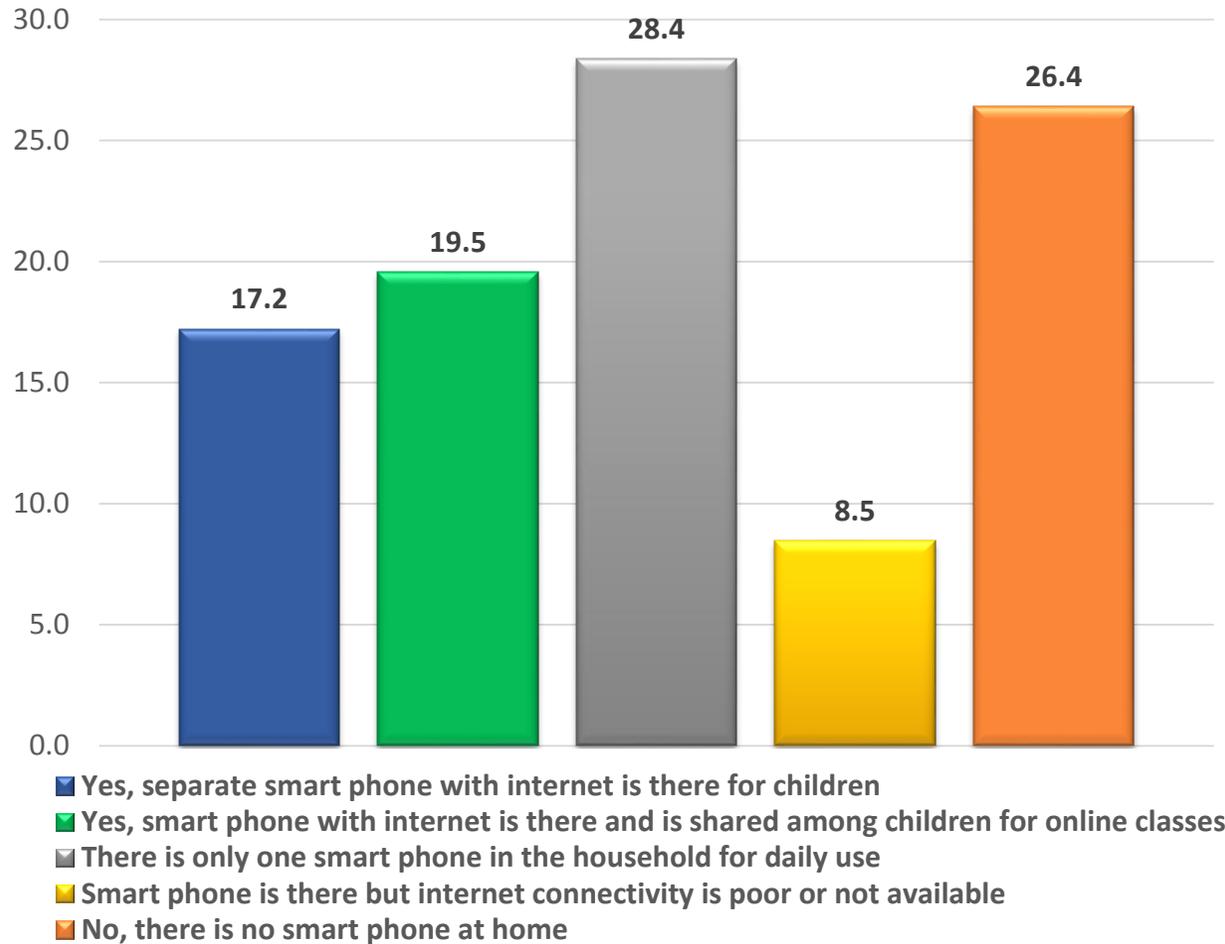
Parents are apprehensive regarding school re-opening, parents are not able to decide whether they should send their wards to school: [Divya Bhagwani, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh](#)

It has been one month since schools have started but not many students are attending classes because of being afraid of Corona: [Yogesh, Chindwara, Madhya Pradesh](#)

I will not be sending my children to school. I can't leave them dying of COVID: [Elderly person, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh](#)

The government must arrange for food for poor and reopening of schools must not be a priority. Parents in any case will not send their children as there is third wave coming. I am satisfied with online education of my daughters: [Pinki Gupta, parent, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand](#)

Q6 - Do your children have access to smart phone with internet for doing online classes? (N=1110)



The necessity of online schooling during the pandemic has thrown into relief the sharp difference between the economic classes. Data suggests that students in rural areas or other underprivileged students do not have smartphones or internet connections to keep up with online learning. Around 55 percent of the parents here said that either they have a single smart phone in their houses for daily use or there is none. The problem is further aggravated by the fact that internet speed is slow in rural areas and there are regular connectivity breaks.

Voices from the ground

No access to smartphone

I have children at home at they require smartphones to take classes online, since I don't have a smartphone, my children are not able to attend these classes, children's development has been marred because of closure of schools.

[Sintu Thakur, Munger, Bihar](#)

I will send my child to school as education has been affected, school must open with 50 percent attendance. 95 percent of people here do not have any smart phone or laptop for online classes as this is a rural area. Children are not able to comprehend the online content. Future of children is in grave danger.

[Shivbihari Tiwary, parent, Jamui, Bihar](#)

No, I will not be sending the children to school, laptop and mobile phones is only for rich people and I can't afford it. Children's education has been suffered during the Corona period.

[Sanjay Chauhan, Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh](#)

Schools must reopen as we do not have resources to provide online classes to children.

[Parent, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh](#)

My child has not done any online class as I did not have any resource like smartphone or laptop. Government must re-open the schools.

[Mohan Rai, parent, Samstipur, Bihar](#)

I will send my children to school. All the household can't afford smartphones or laptops, children from these families suffered during the period.

[Dayawanti Devi, parent, Bokaro, Jharkhand](#)

Voices from the ground

Since the schools were closed, children are not studying, there is no smartphone in house so children are deprived of online classes.

[Mukesh Kumar, parent, Bokaro, Jharkhand](#)

Teachers are saying that most of the children are not able to attend online classes as they do not have access to android mobile phones. The quality of education and teaching has gone down.

[Teachers, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand](#)

Children did not get a chance to study through online classes as either mobile was not there or it was not recharged.

[Mona, Parent, Chindwara, Madhya Pradesh](#)

I did not have a smartphone and my child was not able to attend any online class, the child did not receive any education from last 1.5 years. The government has opened school but I am very fearful of sending my child.

[Soni Devi, parent, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand](#)

If the government has directed, then parents will send their wards to school. Online education has not been of much use as many of the households in this Panchayat does not have a 4G phone.

[Dhanvir Kamat, Samastipur, Bihar](#)

Bad/disturbed internet network

Children are not able to study as internet network is mostly disturbed in this area.

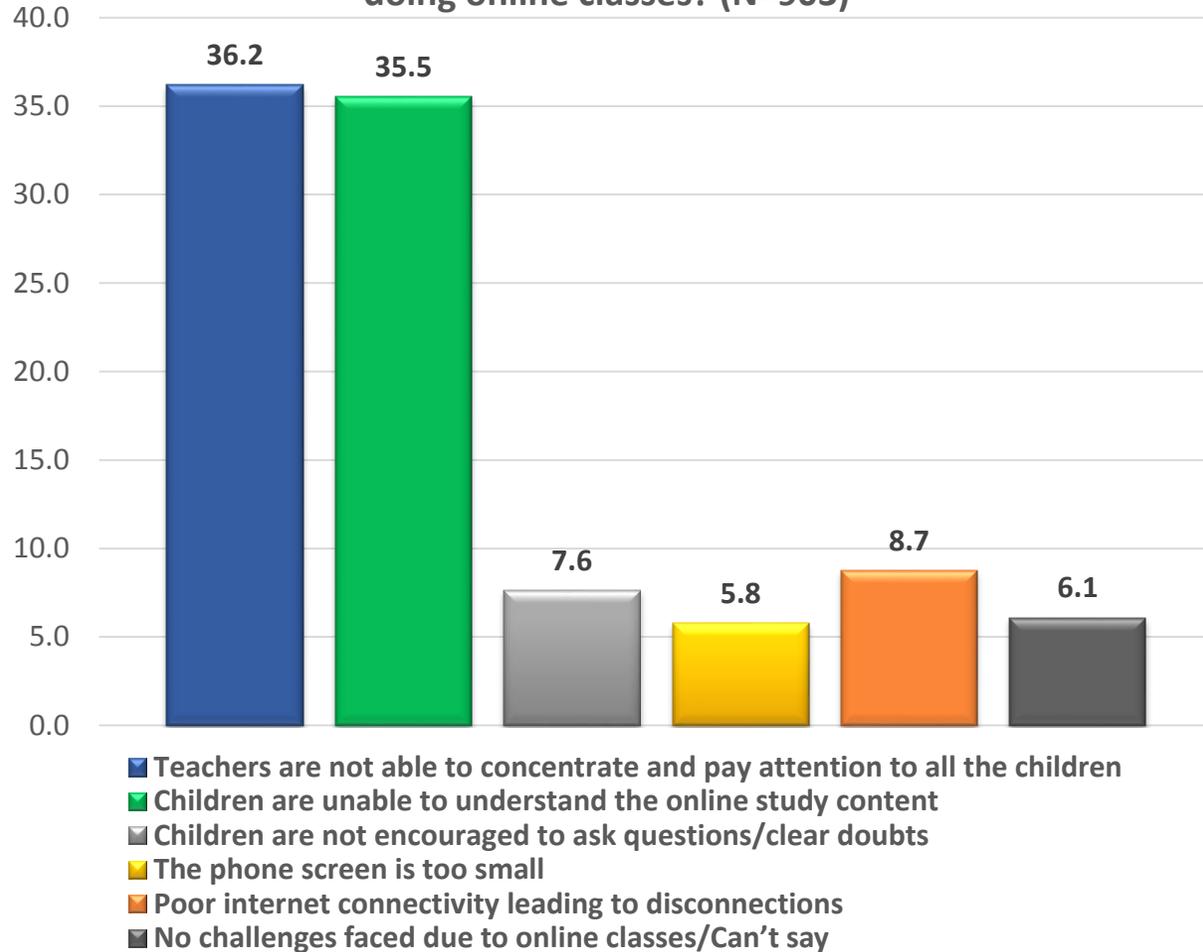
[Parent, Chindwara, Madhya Pradesh](#)

Have access to smartphone

My household does not have a laptop but there is one smartphone, children were not concentrating during the online class and I will send them to school once it resumes.

[Meghnad Kumar, parent, Samastipur, Bihar](#)

Q7 - What is the foremost challenge faced by children in doing online classes? (N=903)



Parents in general believe that online learning cannot be a substitute for in-person lessons at schools where children interact more with each other. That contributes to their holistic development physical, mental and behavioural. The greatest demerit they see is the lack of attention from the teachers on children followed by children not being able to understand the online content. Poor internet connectivity in rural areas also hampers the continuity of online classes.

Voices from the ground

Children are deprived of school and it has had very bad effect on children. Children are not able to follow the online content.

[Pankaj Kumar, Samastipur, Bihar](#)

Teachers are not paying due attention on each of their pupils. If the school maintains social distancing, encourage to uses sanitiser and mask, then I will send my ward to school. Online studies does not serve much purpose.

[Preeti Kumari, parent, Uttar Pradesh](#)

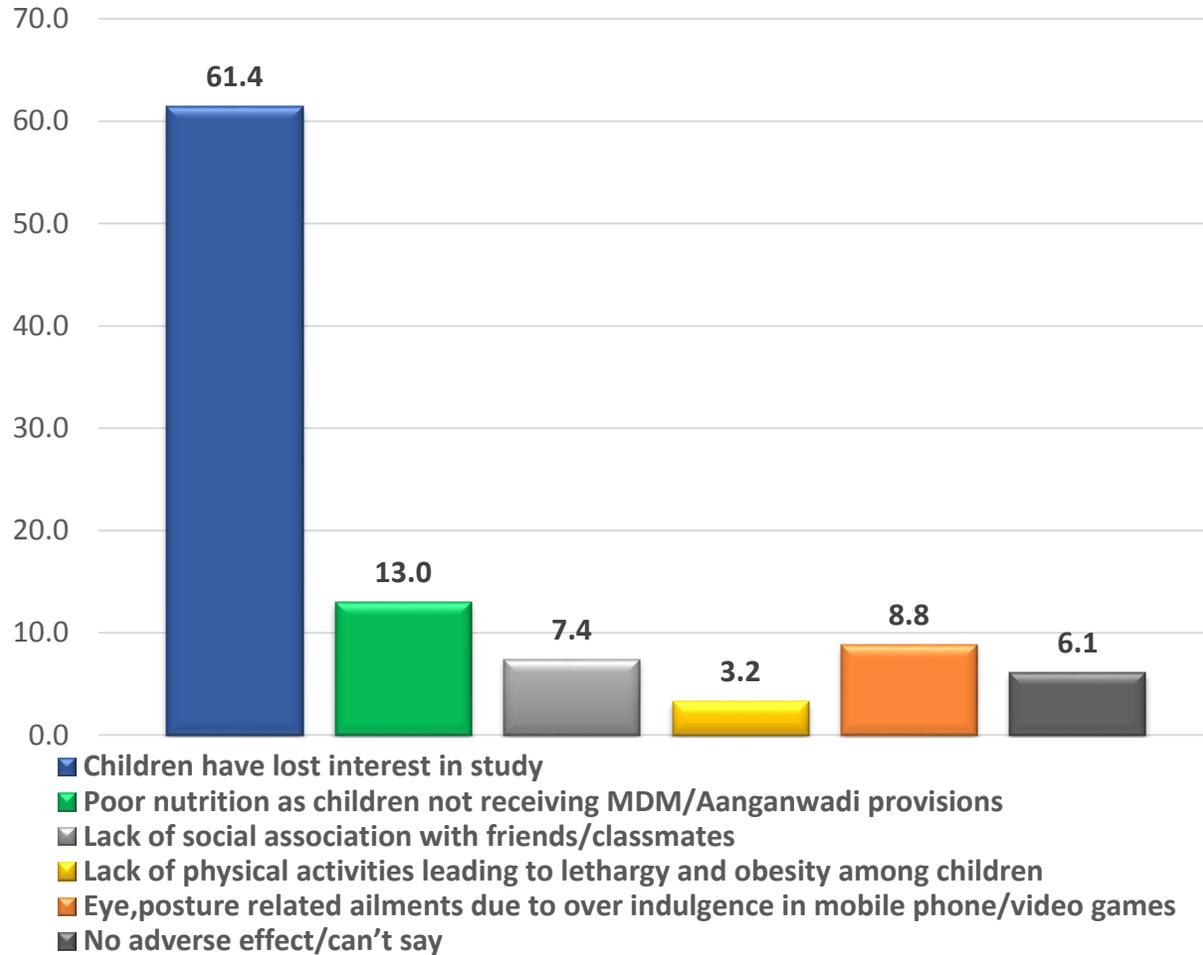
Digital education will not be of any use of children.

[Parent, Samastipur, Bihar](#)

Children are not able to study because of poor concentration, online system of education has caused adverse effects on children

[Naveen Kumar, BDO, Samastipur, Bihar](#)

Q8 - What has been the most severe adverse effect on children not being able to attend school? (N=1110)



The Covid crisis has hit education hard everywhere. Parents have opined that the closures not only interrupted educational progress; they also curtailed normal social interaction and limited access to essential services families relied on, including school nutrition and health programs. In addition, continuous exposure to mobile phones and other gadgets have lead to eye and posture related ailments in children.

Voices from the ground

Deterioration in level of education

Children are not able to write their own name and their handwriting has become poor.

[Nithya, parent, Erode, Tamil Nadu](#)

School are opening from September, it is a good step as children reading, writing and comprehension skills have severely deteriorated.

[Suresh, parent, Erode, Tamil Nadu](#)

Children's education level has gone down, their hand writing has deteriorated, there were children who were due for admission but could not be admitted because of the pandemic. Online studies and continuous indulgence in mobile phones has lead to eye related issues among children.

[Mithilesh Kabir, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh](#)

I am studying in sixth grade, I have not been able to focus on my studies off late, I am forgetting what I have learnt in school previously.

[Praising Pal, student of class 6th, Erode, Tamil Nadu](#)

Education has been severely hampered, schools must open now.

[Prathepa, student of class 10th, Erode, Tamil Nadu](#)

Online study has never been popular in India and it is not useful as individual queries are not being answered by teachers. If there is a single smartphone, then children are not able to use it. Closure of schools has lead to dire circumstances and children's time table has been severely affected.

[Vivek, parent, Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh](#)

Voices from the ground

It is imminent that children have lost interest in studies, most of the things they learnt in school has now been forgotten, school must re-open

[Priya, parent, Erode, Tamil Nadu](#)

Online education has not been beneficial for students because most of them are not paying attention and playing games. The ill affect is that some children have forgotten how to write their names.

[Parent, Tamil Nadu](#)

Addicted to mobile phones

All the focus of children has shifted on playing games and they have lost interest in studies, in my opinion school should open.

[Jothi, parent, Tamil Nadu](#)

Children being at home is not good either for them or the parents, most of them have become addicted to mobile phones. They are also annoying parents by making unnecessary demands.

[Dharmaraj, Putthokotai, Tamil Nadu](#)

Children whose parents are visually challenged are suffering as they don't know whether are children are studying online or doing something else on mobile phones.

[Gandhimati, parent, Erode, Tamil Nadu,](#)

Children's concentration level has gone down. The over indulgence in mobile phones has affected them greatly.

[Ananthi, Viruddhanagar, Tamil Nadu](#)

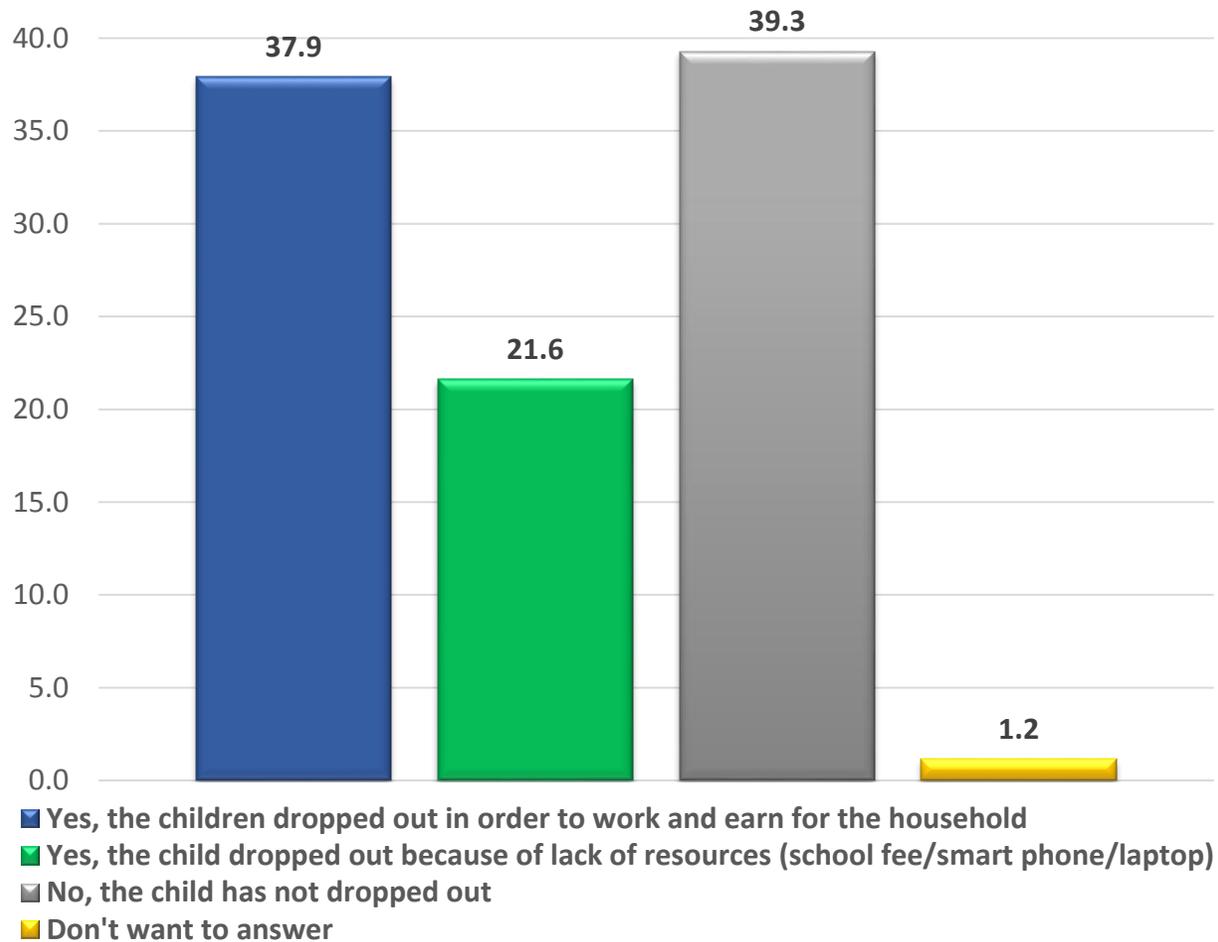
Children are facing eye related issues through continuous use of mobile phones, online classes does not serve much purpose.

[Harinarayan Shivastava, parent, Chindwara, Madhya Pradesh](#)

I will be sending my children to school. Children ahs been deprived of education during the Corona period. They are spending most of the time on mobile phones.

[Arjun Paasi, parent, Rohtas, Bihar](#)

Q9 - Has any of your children dropped out from school after schools being closed due to COVID? (N=1110)



Close to 60 percent of parents said that their children have dropped out from the school after schools were closed due to pandemic. Of this, around 38 percent said that children have dropped out in order to work and earn while 21.6 percent said that they were not able to afford the school fees or did not have laptop and smartphone to cater to the demands of online education. Since this data of so many children dropping out of school was on higher side, some of the respondents were resurveyed but the result remained largely the same.

Voices from the ground

Child has started working after being dropped out

During the lockdown, the income stopped completely, the elder son dropped out from the school and is now working in a private company to run the household.

[Shri Krishna Bihari Tiwary, parent, Jamui, Bihar](#)

Hailing from a poor family, we do not have a smart phone to continue online studies. Both me and my sister are sitting at home since the schools are closed. To help the family financially, I have started a small shop

[Sunny Kumar, Munger, Bihar](#)

Children belonging from poor homes does not have resources like laptop and mobile to take online classes hence many of them are taking up small jobs to help run the household

[Naval Kishore Paswan, Munger, Bihar](#)

Children dropped out from school

I have a son, since I did not have money to arrange for a smartphone, the child had no option but to stop studying

[Soni Devi, parent, Hazaribagh, Jharkhand](#)

As work was not available, there has been no income during the lockdown, can't afford schooling for children

[Mohan Kumar, parent, Munger Bihar](#)

I had three school age children, two of the children dropped out from school to run the house. Due to bad monetary condition, both are driving auto rickshaw now.

[Harender, parent, Jamui, Bihar](#)

Child has dropped out of school because we cannot afford the fees. There is no work available.

[Sushil Thakur, parent, Munger, Bihar](#)

Voices from the ground

Children withdrawn from private school

The child was going to a private school earlier. Due to non availability of any work, I have to withdraw my child's admission. School did not give any concession in fees.

[Parent, Samastipur, Bihar](#)

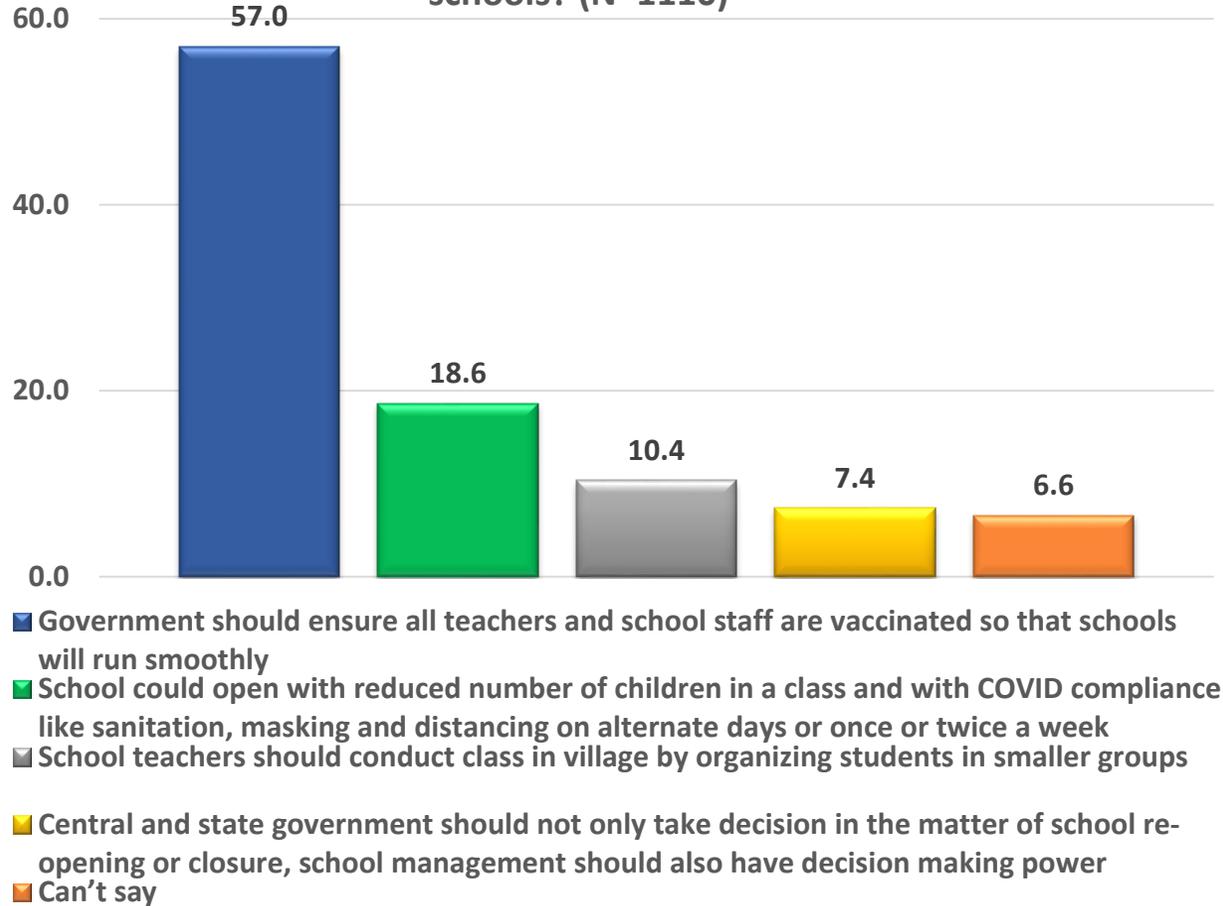
Earlier the child was enrolled in a private school. Financial condition has worsen during the pandemic and I got him admitted to government school.

[Sunita Devi, parent, Munger, Bihar](#)

I have two children studying in private schools earlier, I had to withdraw them from there since I could not afford two separate mobile phones for children, there is only one phone in the household for daily use.

[Nirmal Mahto, parent, Bokaro, Jharkhand](#)

Q10 - In order to have better future for children, what option you could suggest with respect to resumption of schools? (N=1110)



The survey solicited suggestions from parents with respect to re-opening of schools. Majority of parents feel that government must see to it that all the teaching and other school staff members have received vaccination in order to have smooth resumption. Around 19 percent also suggested that schools could resume activities with reduced number of children in classes along with following COVID related compliances like proper sanitation, masking and social distancing.

Voices from the ground

Educating children is important but schools must resume its activities after following the COVID compliances like wearing masks and sitting at prescribed distance: [Muthu, Chennai, Tamil Nadu](#)

Children are not being able to focus on their studies from last two years, it's high time that government open school with all the safety measures in place. [Laxmi, parent, Salem, Tamil Nadu](#)

The government decided to open the school in the month of September and we are welcoming this move, the reason is, that children are not getting quality education at home. For a better future school must resume its activities: [Prakash, Tirupur, Tamil Nadu](#)

School must re-open as that is required for children's bright future: [Sakthi, TN](#)

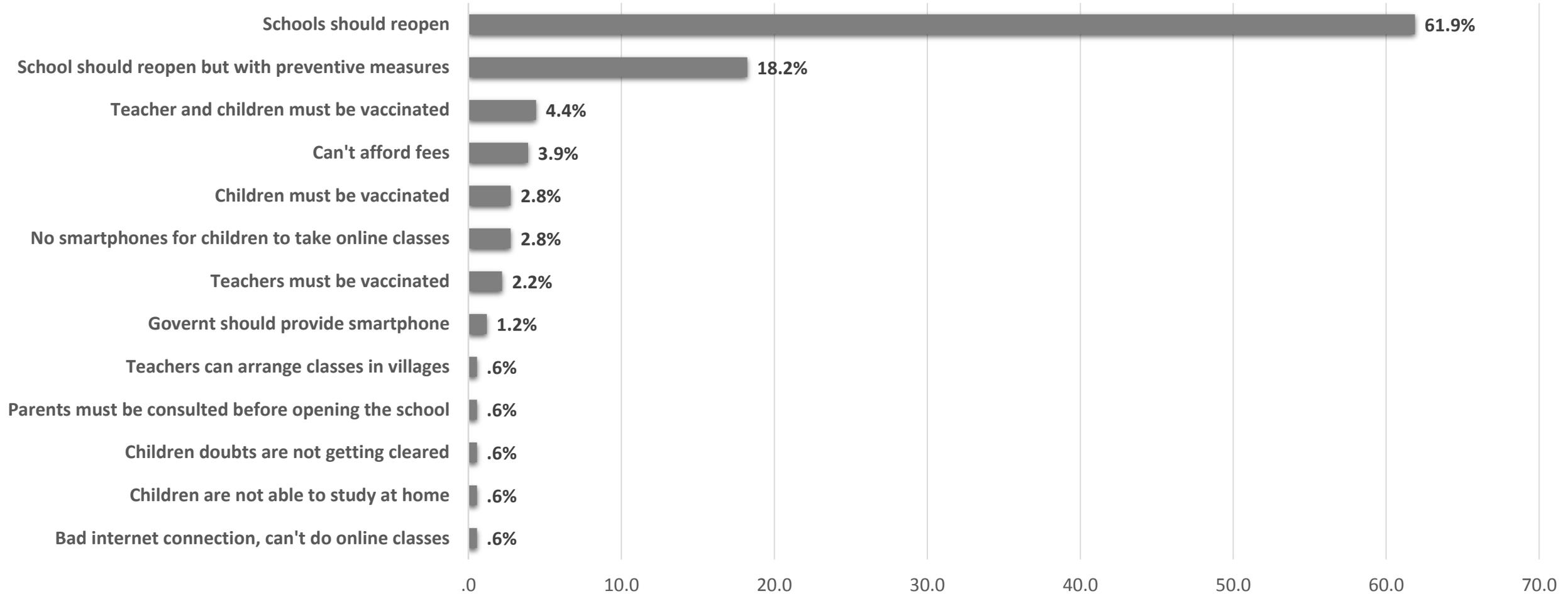
Being at home all the time is boring and not good for our future. Eagerly waiting for my school to re-open and meet my friends. [Vigneshwari, student of class 6th, Erode, Tamil Nadu](#)

I am happy about resumption of schools but it should be done keeping all the safety measures like vaccination in place: [Parent, Kovai, Tamil Nadu](#)

I think government should provide all the safety net to children at schools because, children from different places will congregate at schools and that can lead to spread of Corona. Government must think wisely on it: [Papathi, Chennai, Tamil Nadu](#)

I ask government to resume school activities but with precaution. Children are not able to study at home and they have lost interest in study. Since money is scarce, providing separate smart phone to child is not easy and children are spending more time playing games on it: [Naveen, Bihar](#)

Q11 - Messages recorded by respondents pertaining to school reopening (N=181)



Parents were provided an option to record their messages with respect to reopening of schools. A total of 181 respondents recorded these messages. Analysis of the data shows that more than 80 percent of parents were univocal and want schools to reopen. In their view, online method of classes has not been of much benefit to children as children have not been able to concentrate in these classes. In addition to this, most parents hailing from rural geographies do not own a laptop or smartphone, their children are devoid of online mode of education and sending their wards to school is the only option available to them, one of the parent quoted *“Corona ka darr hai lekin baccha school nahi jaega to uska bhavishya kya hoga, There is fear of Corona but if the child will not go to school then what will be his future”*. Parents also reported a general degradation in child’s reading, writing and comprehension ability and they see children not attending school, a major reason for this. Of this, around 18 percent opined that school must reopen but with preventive measures in place like proper distancing between students, masking, good sanitation at premises etc. 4.4 said that children should be vaccinated prior to opening of school.

Thank You

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