



END Education Exclusion

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This research brief was compiled by the National Coalition on Education Emergency. It summarizes data obtained from studies conducted across India and selected international studies between early 2020 and mid-2021. The complete research compendium can be found [here](#):

The research findings convey a consistent and grim picture. Continuous school closures and the limited reach of online/remote learning have had catastrophic consequences for children, on the academic, emotional, nutritional, social, and economic fronts.

More than 90% of underprivileged parents (97% in rural areas) want schools to reopen as soon as possible (SCHOOL, 2021)

As early as mid-2020, UNESCO estimated that about 14 crore students in primary school and 13 crores in secondary school had been affected by the lockdown in India (UNESCO, 2020). We must act now to RESUME and RENEW Education for 26 Crore Children!

Children from marginalized communities do not have internet or cell phones

- Only 4% of students in rural areas have access to essential digital infrastructure; more than 80 % of students in urban areas do not have access to essential digital infrastructure.
- Only 2% of students from the lowest income quintile reported having essential digital infrastructure.
- Only 4% of SC and STs, 8% of Muslims, and 7% of OBC students had access to essential digital infrastructure. (Reddy et al., 2020)



Girls are less likely to have access online education

A recent survey of 3176 households across four Indian states conducted by the Centre for Budget and Policy Studies found:

- In more than 70% of the households, the phone belonged to a male member.
- Only 26% of the girls who responded to the survey said that they had unhindered access to phones at home.
- Girls spent a disproportionate amount of time on chores and care work and less time on education. (Ghatak et al., 2020)

- State Governments should open schools (from anganwadis to high schools) at the earliest.
- Guidelines should be put in place for safe reopening of schools and for helping children resume their learning.
- All teachers should be vaccinated on priority basis.



What are the challenges of online pedagogy?

- 80% of parents in government schools (100% in Bihar) and 60% in private schools felt that education was not delivered (Oxfam, 2020).
- More than half of the teachers surveyed perceive remote learning materials and methods to be less effective than classroom teaching (UNICEF, 2021).
- 50% of urban teachers and 40% of rural teachers were in touch with students through WhatsApp and phone calls (Singh et al., 2020).

Children are dependent on Mid-Day Meals for nutrition

The inability of children to access cooked meals during the lockdown is likely to have had a detrimental effect on their nutrition and health. The impact may be worse for girls and children from marginalized groups.

- Globally, the pandemic put an estimated 115 million children at risk of severe malnutrition (Lancet Covid-19 Commission, 2021).
- Approximately 35% of children did not receive their mid-day meals. Of the remaining 65%, only 8% received cooked meals, while 53% received dry rations and 4% received the money in lieu of the Mid-Day Meal (Oxfam, 2020).

Increased child labour and child marriages

- NSSO (2018) data indicates that 35% of school drop-outs occur due to involvement in economic activities and 26% due to financial constraints. There is an increased likelihood of child labor arising from large-scale job loss among casual laborers.
- PTI (2020) reported that the 'CHILDLINE 1098' in India announced a 50% increase in calls received on the helpline, requesting protection from abuse and violence, since the lockdown began.
- According to Census (2011) data, India had over 10 million children (5-14 years) and 23 million adolescents working across industries. There are fears that school closures are beginning to push these numbers up.

What is the extent of learning loss?

- Across the world, "interrupted learning" is among the top adverse consequences of COVID-19 school closures. COVID-19 led school closures caused worldwide learning losses estimated at two-thirds of an academic year on average (UNESCO, 2020).
- 92% of children on average have lost at least one specific language ability from the previous year across all classes (Azim Premji Foundation, 2021).
- 82% of children on average have lost at least one specific mathematical ability from the previous year across all classes (Azim Premji Foundation, 2021).

Economic distress due to the pandemic

The survey of 3176 households across four Indian states revealed:

- Marginalized lower caste groups are disproportionately affected by a factor of three as they are over-represented in vulnerable jobs.
- 84% said there weren't enough employment opportunities.
- 84% reported experiencing severe cash crunch.
- 63% reported food shortages, 71% in Bihar reported food shortages.
- 70% minorities said there is not enough food at home.
- (Ghatak et al., 2020)



The risk of higher rates of infection due to the re-opening of schools is marginal compared to the risk of learning loss and losing the gains in universalising participation in basic education made over the past years.

- Recent evidence from modeling studies indicates that school closures alone would avoid only 2-4% of deaths, a percentage much smaller than other strategies such as social distancing.
- Data from countries that reopened schools or did not shut them in the first place, indicates low community transmission rates of less than 1 new case per day per 100,000 people.
- Trends in child-to-child transmission in schools are poor, indicating that relevant prevention strategies can potentially be effective in preventing transmission in the school setting.
- Children 9 years or younger have demonstrated lower seroprevalence and susceptibility as compared to children aged 10-14 years.
- Studies also indicate much lower infections in children under the age of 10, under the same conditions of exposure to infected household members, as compared to adults and adolescents (The Lancet Covid-19 Commission, 2021)

RESUME AND RENEW EDUCATION

Suggested measures for school reopening

- Open schools safely: health and sanitation measures; vaccination and testing of teachers; pre-planned seating arrangements; limit numbers per classroom through for example, alternate day attendance, using additional public buildings.
- Communicate with parents and engage them in the school reopening plans: Bring every child back to school.
- Provide Mid-Day Meals to all students in publicly funded schools, whether they are attending physically or remotely.
- Design effective strategies for schools and teachers to support students' socio-emotional well-being and address learning gaps.



[Click here for references](#)

Prepared by the National Coalition on the Education
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