**Karnataka Parents’ Survey**

**Majority of children in schools without textbooks, mid-day meals; 70% of parents say their children’s reading and writing skills have declined or stayed the same**

Children from poor and disadvantaged families are facing serious obstacles to resuming learning, as schools re-open, according to a quick survey of parents with school-aged children in Karnataka. The survey was conducted in November 2021, about one month after schools officially re-opened, and covered parents with children in both government and private fee-paying schools in rural and urban areas.

**Significant numbers of children have not come back to schoo**l. About 16 percent of school age children were reported to be not enrolled in school. The situation was worse last year, with 25 percent of children not being enrolled according to their parents. That means that many children are coming back to school without even formal enrolment in the previous year.

**30 percent of families said that the school was not open for their youngest enrolled child**.

**The majority of children were not receiving cooked mid-day meals**. While 13 percent reported receiving dry rations, only 35 percent confirmed that their child received a cooked meal at school.

**Textbook supply and distribution has serious gaps**. Over 40 percent of families said that their child did not have all textbooks for the current grade. About 21 percent said the child had no textbooks or were unclear, while 22 percent said that the child had some of the textbooks.

**Nearly 70 % of parents felt that the ability to read and write of their child had declined or stayed the same or they were unclear**. This was clearly an area of concern in their qualitative responses as well. Many said that children had lost their knowledge, during the pandemic, because they could not follow the online classes. Another area of concern was the loss of the habit of studying.

**Communication with parents about the academic performance of their children is weak**. The majority of parents reported some communication from the school regarding re-opening. But only 40 percent said that they had received some information from the child’s teacher about the child’s learning gaps.

**Parents were still hopeful that school re-opening will help their children to learn**. The majority were happy with the decision to re-open schools , while many also expressed concerns for the health and safety of children in case of disease outbreaks.

The 102 sample households were drawn from poor rural and urban settlements of Bangalore Rural, Bangalore Urban, Chikkaballapur, Dakshina Kannada and Kolar. The survey was conducted during October-November 2021, after schools had officially opened. The households had about 170 children in the school-going age. The principal source of earning was from casual labour or self-employed. About 28 percent of the sample households consisted of Dalits and 45 percent OBCs. About 13 and 15 percent were Muslim and Christian, respectively. The overwhelming majority had between 1-2 children in the school age group. Especially in Bangalore, households had different linguistic backgrounds, including Kannada, Tamil and Telugu. About 35 % of the sample children were in private fee paying schools.