State Of School Education In Rural India

Table of Contents

Introduction

Education is a vital pillar of progress and empowerment, particularly in rural India, where nurturing young minds holds paramount importance. Understanding the state of education and the role parents play in their child's learning journey is crucial for fostering positive educational outcomes. Education stands as a potent catalyst for progress and empowerment, transcending barriers and shaping the future of nations. In the vast expanse of rural India, nurturing young minds takes on paramount importance, as the transformative power of education holds the key to breaking the cycle of poverty and unlocking opportunities for generations to come. With this objective in mind, the Development Intelligence Unit (DIU), in collaboration between Transforming Rural India (TRI) and Sambodhi Research and Communications Pvt. Ltd, conducted a comprehensive survey. The survey was specifically focused on examining the impact of parental involvement on the education of school-going children in rural areas, seeking to shed light on the significant role they play in shaping their child's educational journey. Through a meticulously designed survey, this study sought to shed light on the far-reaching influence parents wield in molding the educational destinies of their school-going children in rural areas.

The survey aimed to analyze key attributes related to learning, digital education, enrollment status, dropout status, school infrastructure, teachers, and most importantly, parental motivation and participation. By analyzing these key attributes the study sought to uncover the extent to which parents influence their child's educational outcomes. Through an in-depth analysis of parents' aspirations, engagement in their child's education, provision of facilities for learning at home, and their interaction with teachers, the survey provides valuable insights into the ways parents actively contribute to their child's educational development. Moreover, the report highlights the critical role parents play in creating a conducive learning environment at home. Access to age-appropriate reading materials and regular conversations about school learning emerged as pivotal factors in nurturing a child's academic journey.

The findings from this survey will serve as crucial evidence to inform policy interventions, educational reforms, and community-driven initiatives, all with the aim of enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes of rural school-going children, bolstered by the proactive support and guidance of their parents. The findings of this report hold immense promise to inform policy interventions, educational reforms, and community-driven initiatives. Armed with evidence-backed insights, stakeholders can collectively work towards enhancing the educational experiences and outcomes of rural school-going children.

The State of School Education in Rural India is a pioneering initiative aimed at comprehensively assessing the landscape of school education in rural India. Spearheaded by the Development Intelligence Unit (DIU) in collaboration with the Transforming Rural India Foundation (TRI) and Sambodhi Research and Communications Pvt. Ltd., this pan-India survey endeavors to shed light on critical aspects of the status of the rural school-going children. The sample of respondents for the telephonic survey was randomly chosen from a pool of empanelled households maintained by Sambodhi Panels. Fixed longitudinal panels tend to suffer from the Hawthorne effect, which renders their outputs questionable. Sambodhipanels, on the other hand, maintains several baskets containing sizeable respondent pools of similar profiles (age/gender/occupation/location) and for every survey, randomly choose respondents from each basket basis of a quota for each profile mix. Through this method, they get to minimize the Hawthorne effect since the probability of the same respondent receiving a call multiple times during the year is improbable. At the same time, such a diverse panel ensures more representative coverage. Empanelled callers on the payroll are located across the states to ensure all calls were conducted in the local vernacular.

The survey seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can inform and guide policymakers, stakeholders, and education professionals toward better education planning and implementation. The primary focus of the study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions of school education. To this effect, a detailed questionnaire to gauge the involvement of parents in matters of education of the child such as subjects, performance in the class, regularity of attendance, the home environment created, interactions with teachers, participation in the school management committee, knowledge related to school infrastructure and facilities, the future outlook for children education, etc. was canvassed.

The survey of 6229 parents across 21 states of India. A screening was done to select only those parents having children in the age group of 6-16 years from the Sambodhi Panels. For households with multiple children within the age group, an index child was selected randomly among the children of that age in that household. The survey questions pertained specifically to that chosen index child.

In the following sections, the results are presented providing in-depth insights into the status of education in rural India.

3.1. Demography

This section provides a comprehensive description of the achieved sample, including demographic details, parents' education level, income level, and their distribution among different social categories. This information sets the context for understanding the educational landscape in rural areas.
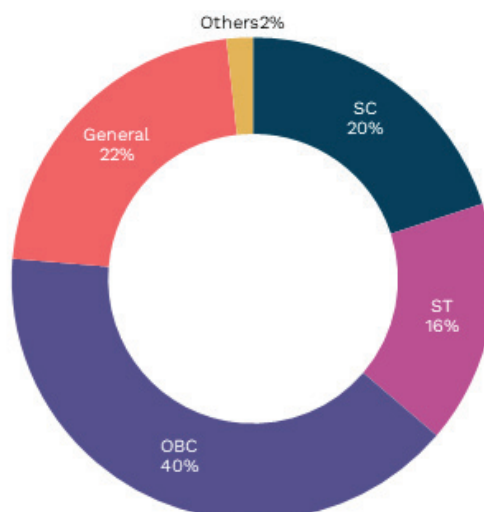
Among the 6229 respondents surveyed 73% were male, while 27% were female.

Figure 1. Gender Distribution of Respondents
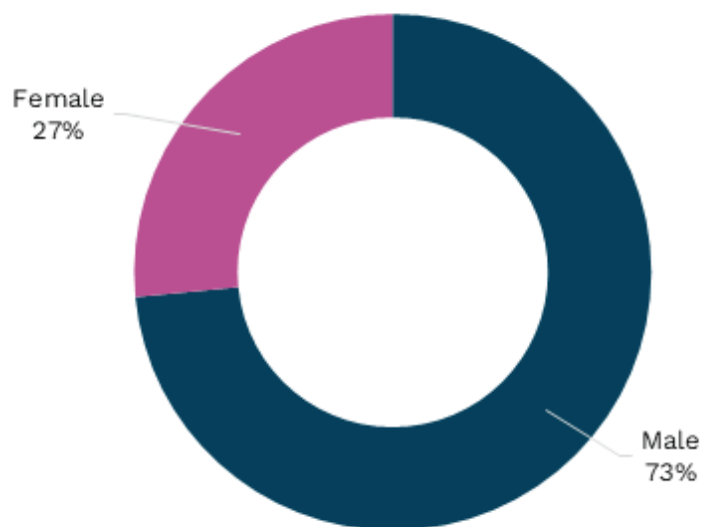
The respondents were asked regarding their social category, the caste distribution shows out of the total respondents, 22% belonged to the General Category, 20% to SC, 16% to ST, and 40% to OBC.

Figure 2. Respondent's Social Category

The level of parental support for their children's education hinges on both the economic status and educational background of the parents. The survey reveals that a significant proportion of fathers engage in low-income (37.5%) and middle-income jobs (41%), whereas a majority of mothers (62.3%) are non-earners, mostly homemakers.

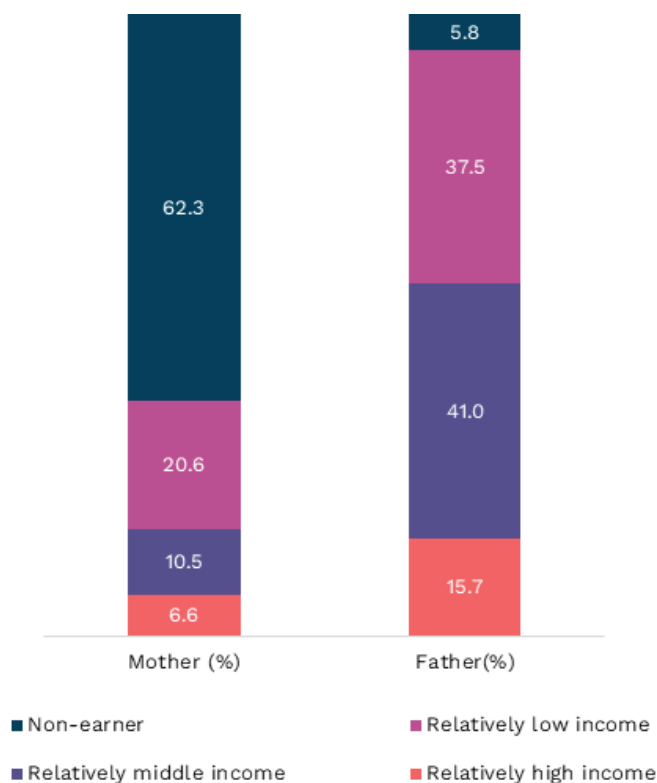*Figure 3. Mother and Father's Income Distribution*

Figure 4. Parents Educational Attainment (%)

Examining the educational attainment of the parents, it is observed that in general, the father of the child is more educated than the mother in a household. Among the households surveyed, the largest percentage of mothers have completed primary education, while the highest proportion of fathers have achieved an educational attainment of high school education.

Among the surveyed households we find that 91.9% of households had 1 or 2 children aged 6 to 16 years.

*Figure 5. Distribution of Number of Children aged 6-16 in a household (%)*
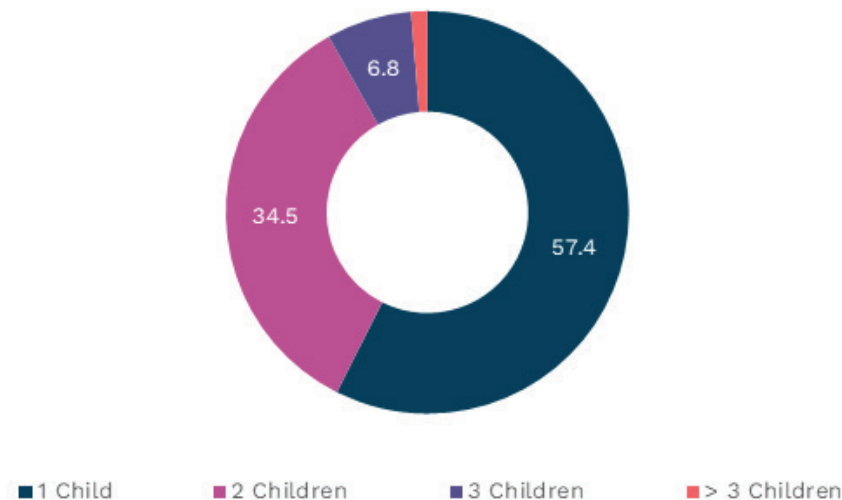
3.2 Enrollment rate among children

Education is a key driver of human capital development. When children are enrolled in school, they have the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies that are crucial for their personal growth and future success in the job market. High enrollment rates indicate that a significant proportion of children have access to education, promoting equity and inclusivity in society. Ensuring that all children could enroll in school regardless of their background or socio-economic status is essential for building a more just and equal society.

In our study, we observe high enrollment rate of children. Out of the 6229 households surveyed, 6135 households reported that their child was currently enrolled in school. 56 reported that their children had been admitted to school but subsequently dropped out, while 38 households had children between the ages of 6 and 16 who had never attended school.

Figure 6. Enrollment Status of Child
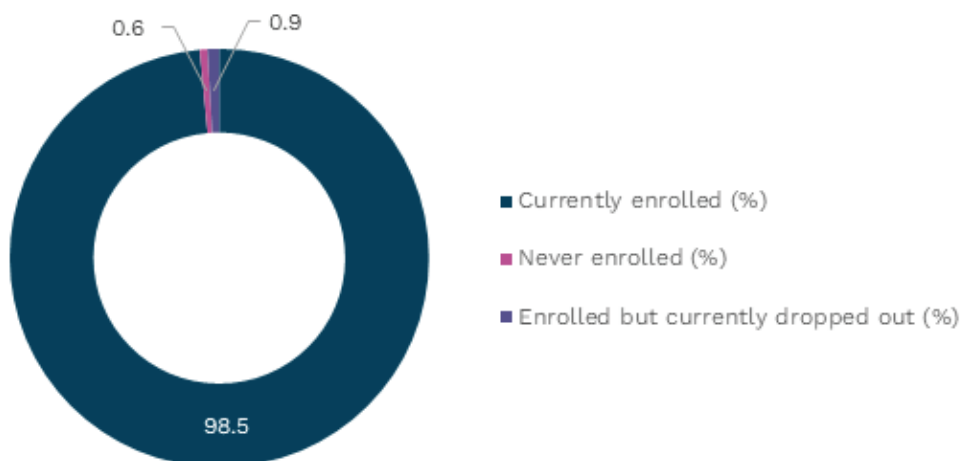
Analyzing enrollment by the social category of the children, we find no noticeable difference among different groups, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of Child Enrolment status by Social Category of Respondent

Social Category of Household	Child's Enrolment Status (%)	
	Currently in school	Currently OOS
SC	98.7	1.3
ST	97.7	2.3
OBC	98.6	1.4
General	99.0	1.1
Others	95.5	4.5

Parent's interest in enrolling their child in school appears consistent across different levels of parental education, as indicated in Table 2. It emphasizes that parents, irrespective of their own educational attainment, prioritize their children's education.

Table 2. Distribution of Child's school enrollment status by educational attainment of parents

Education Level of parent	Currently enrolled (%)	Never enrolled (%)	Enrolled but currently dropped out (%)
Illiterate and some schooling below Primary	95.3	1.6	3.1
Completed Primary but not Secondary	98.3	0.5	1.3
Completed Secondary but not Higher Secondary	99.2	0.3	0.5
Completed Higher Secondary and Above	99.0	0.6	0.4

In this survey, we recognize the significance of gender-based differences, prompting us to investigate the class from which the child dropped out of school based on their gender. The survey revealed, out of the total dropped out children, around one-fourth of male children discontinued their education during primary schooling. Comparatively, the dropout rate at that stage was higher for female children, reaching 35%. A higher proportion of both boys and girls dropped out of school after completing the primary school education. Non-availability of schools with higher sections within the village or nearby villages might have been a reason why these children had dropped out after the completion of the primary sections. Since the sample is very small and the survey is not especially on the Out of School children a detailed study on Out of School children might have thrown some insights into the actual reasons why these children actually dropped out.

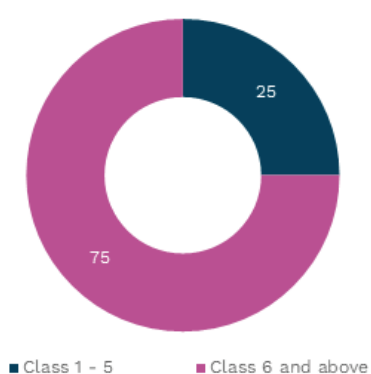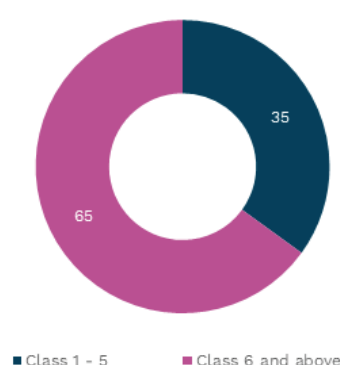*Figure 7. Percentage of Male Students dropped out*

Figure 8. Percentage of Female Students dropped out

25

75

■ Class 1 - 5   ■ Class 6 and above

35

65

■ Class 1 - 5   ■ Class 6 and above

Continuing our examination of gender-based differences, among the children categorized as Out-of-School (OOS), which includes those who dropped out or were never enrolled, 69% were male, while 31% were female children.

Table 3. Distribution of OOS children by their gender

Gender of child	Children who are currently out of school	
	No. of Children	%
Male	65	69%
Female	29	31%

3.3 Currently enrolled students

3.3.1 Parent's aspiration for children's education

Parental expectations of a child's educational attainment is crucial as it profoundly impact the child's academic performance, motivation, and long-term goals. High parental expectations inspire children to excel, boost their self-confidence, and instill a sense of responsibility towards their education. Moreover, parental expectations influence the level of support and resources provided to facilitate the child's learning journey.

Recognizing the significance of parental expectations, our survey aimed to understand it along with examining variations in such expectations based on factors such as parental education level and income.

According to the survey, 80% of parents express their desire for their children to become college graduates or attain higher degrees. Analyzing the gender distribution of the children, the findings indicate that parents exhibit a similar inclination for both their female and male children to pursue advanced education, including technical degrees, graduation, and post-graduation degrees. We observe that 32.5% of parents with male children aspire for them to be post-graduates or PhDs, while 27.8% of parents with female children hold the same aspiration.

Table 4. Distribution of parents' expectations of child's educational attainment by gender of child

Expected level of education of child	Boy (%)	Girl (%)	Total (%)
Up to elementary	4.4	3.9	4
Up to secondary	2.4	2.8	3
Higher Secondary	11.1	15.2	13
Graduation	49.6	50.3	50
Post-Graduation/PhD	32.5	27.8	30

We don't observe any difference is expectations among parents from different social groups. The majority of parents from all categories want their child to have at least a college degree.

Table 5. Distribution of parents' expectation of child's educational attainment by parents' social category

Social Category	Elementary (%)	Secondary (%)	Higher Secondary(%)	Graduation (%)	Above graduation (%)
SC	2.0	2.1	12.1	50.5	33.3
ST	9.3	3.2	13.2	55.8	18.5
OBC	2.6	2.4	14.2	51.6	29.2
General	4.6	2.8	11.2	43.2	38.2
Others, including minorities	12.4	4.8	15.2	34.3	33.3

The distribution of parents' expectations based on their own education level highlights a prevailing trend: the majority of parents, regardless of their educational background, wish for their children to become college graduates. Table 6 exemplifies this sentiment, where we see that while 54.3% of parents who completed secondary education desire a college degree for their children, 44.2% of illiterate parents share the same aspiration.

While there are some differences in parents' expectations of advanced education, these variations are relatively marginal. For instance, 28.5% of parents who completed secondary education and 42.4% of parents who graduated from higher secondary, expect their children to pursue education beyond graduation. In comparison, 15.7% of parents who didn't attend school and 19.1% of parents with only primary education hold similar expectations.

Overall, the data emphasizes the unanimous desire among parents for their children to attain a level of education higher than their own, with a majority considering graduation as an ideal educational milestone.

Table 6. Distribution of parents' expectations of children's educational attainment based on their own educational attainment level (%)

Expected level of education of child	Illiterate and some schooling below primary	Completed primary but not secondary	Completed secondary but not higher secondary	Completed higher secondary and above
Up to elementary	12.1	5.6	3.2	1.8
Up to secondary	5.9	4.2	1.5	1.5
Up to higher Secondary	22.1	21.8	12.5	5.1
Up to graduation	44.2	49.2	54.3	49.2
Up to beyond graduation	15.7	19.1	28.5	42.4

We see a similar pattern when we look at parents' aspirations based on their income level in table 7. 48.5% and 49.6% of parents belonging to non-earner and low-income categories, want their children to be college graduates while 52.6% and 48.2% of parents belonging to high-income and middle-income categories expect the same.

The difference in expectation of educational attainment changes when it comes to expectations beyond college degree. 31.5% of high-income households want their children to have an education beyond graduation while 34.3% of middle-income households want the same. Comparatively, 24.7% and 24.8% of low-income and non-earners respectively expect the same from their children.

Table 7. Distribution of parents' expectations of child's education attainment based on their income level (%)

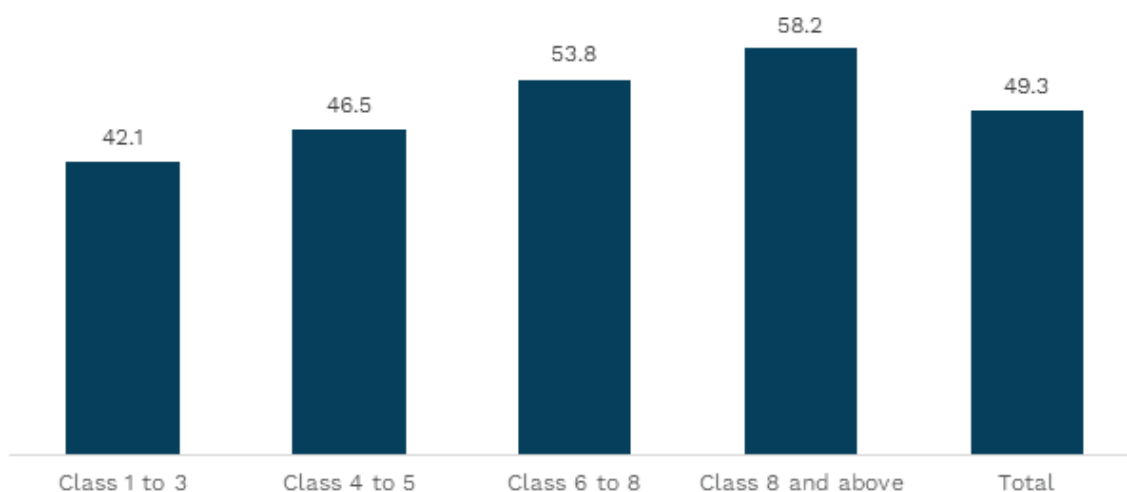| Expected level of education of child	Relatively high income	Relatively middle income	Relatively low income	Non-earner
Up to elementary	3.8	4.4	4.0	6.9
Up to secondary	1.5	3.3	2.8	2.0
Up to higher secondary	10.5	9.8	18.9	17.8
Up to graduation	52.6	48.2	49.6	48.5
Beyond graduation	31.5	34.3	24.7	24.8

3.3.2 Access to smartphone among children

The usage of smartphones among school-going children holds immense importance in facilitating their education. Smartphones offer a wealth of educational resources, interactive learning applications, and access to online study materials, providing children with opportunities for self-directed learning and skill development. This became a practice among the students during the COVID pandemic when the schools were shut down. Through educational apps and digital platforms, children started engaging themselves with subject-specific content, participating in interactive quizzes, and exploring diverse learning opportunities beyond traditional classroom settings. By integrating technology into education, children started gaining digital literacy skills, and critical thinking abilities, and become better prepared to navigate the modern world.

Understanding the significance of smartphone usage in children's education, we have surveyed various aspects of smartphone usage among school-going children in the surveyed households. The intent was to assess the prevalence and patterns of smartphone usage so as to grasp the extent of its impact on children's learning experiences and educational outcomes.

The findings indicate that 49.3% of children aged between 6 and 16 years have access to smartphones. Notably, a higher percentage of children from advanced classes possess such access, as illustrated in Figure 9.

*Figure 9. Access to smartphones by class of child (%)*

Examining the distribution of children's access to smartphones based on their parents' income level, shows, as expected, that while children of non-earners and low-income parents have relatively lower access to smartphones at 37.7% and 45.9%, respectively, the disparity is not significantly pronounced compared to affluent families. This suggests that smartphone usage among children has been well distributed across all income groups.

Figure 10. Access to smartphones by Parent's Income Level (%)
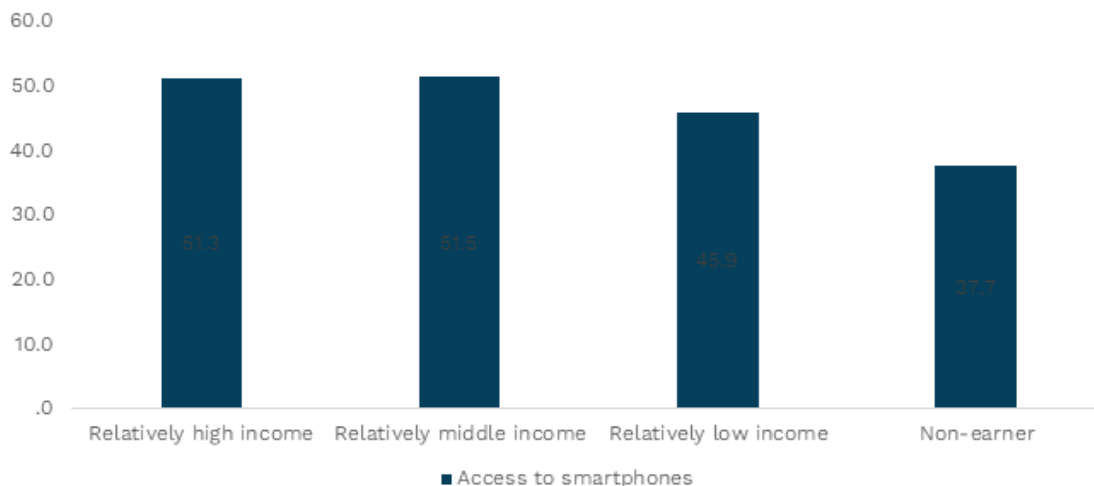
The survey also investigates the time spent on smartphone by children. Overall, nearly 73% of children utilize smartphones for less than 2 hours daily. Notably, older children tend to spend more time on their phones, with 25.4% of children in class 8 and above dedicating 2 to 4 hours, in contrast to 16.8% of children in classes 1 to 3.

*Figure 11. Distribution of time spent on smartphone by grade (%)*
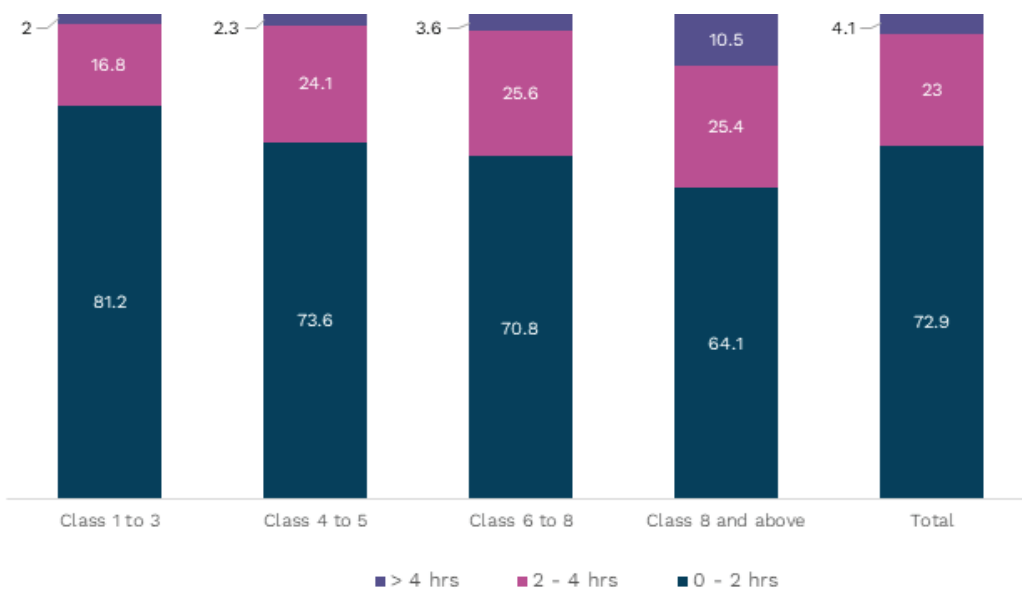
This survey looked into the smartphone usage behavior of children and revealed that while smartphones are primarily used for entertainment purposes, such as playing games, downloading, and watching movies, and listening to songs, their role in education is also noteworthy. We observed that a notable portion of children, specifically 34.9% of the children, rely on their smartphones to access study materials, demonstrating how these devices serve as valuable tools for learning. Additionally, only a fifth of the participants highlighted that smartphones are utilized for educational purposes through online tutorials, further emphasizing their impact on supporting education.

Table 8. Distribution of activities on smartphones

Activities on Smartphone	Percentage of children using smartphones
Playing games	76.7
Downloading and watching movies	56.6
Downloading and listening to songs	47.3
Chatting with friends in social media platforms	10.9
Accessing/downloading study materials	34.9
Online learning through tutorials	18.9

As we observe children utilizing smartphones for educational purposes, parents have also noticed a considerable impact of smartphones in enhancing their children's interest in education. According to the survey findings, nearly 69% of parents believe that smartphones have played a significant role in increasing their children's interest in studies.

Figure 12. Parents' opinion on impact of smartphone on child's education (%)
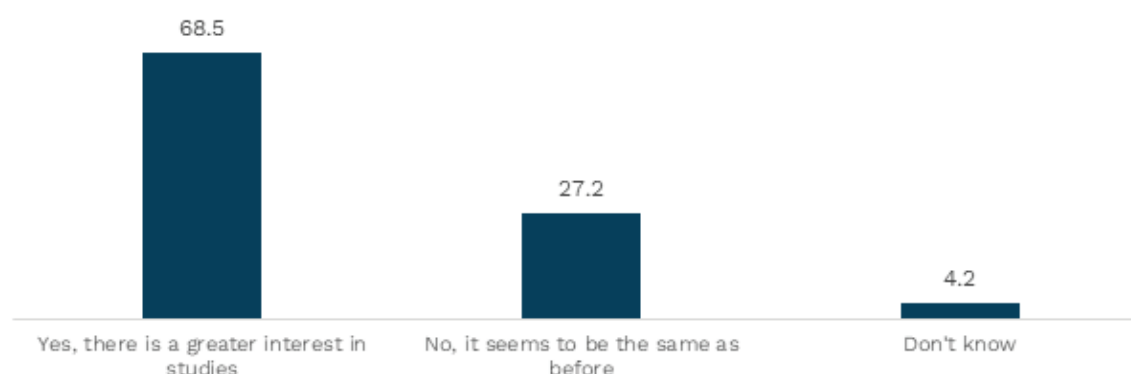
3.3.3 Engagement of Parents with Children

Parents' engagement with their children regarding education plays a pivotal role in supporting and enhancing a child's educational journey. When parents actively participate in their child's learning process, it fosters a positive learning environment at home, leading to improved academic performance and overall development. Regular communication with children about their studies allows parents to understand their strengths, weaknesses, and educational needs, enabling them to provide targeted support and encouragement. This involvement instills a sense of motivation and accountability in children, as they feel valued and supported in their educational pursuits. Additionally, parents' active engagement helps in identifying any challenges or learning difficulties early on, allowing timely intervention and academic support.

The survey has thoughtfully covered various aspects of parents' engagement with their children regarding education. It has explored parental supervision of the child's education, the frequency of parents' discussions with their children about their studies, and the extent of engagement in extra-curricular activities.

From the survey, we observed that a majority of children (62.5%) are under the supervision of their mothers when it comes to their studies, while 49% are supervised by their fathers. This highlights the important role parents play in guiding and supporting their children's academic pursuits at home. Additionally, over 26% of parents opt for private tutors to further enhance their child's education. While this trend demonstrates the proactive measures taken by parents to ensure their children receive the best possible learning opportunities and academic support, it is equally important to examine how these patterns differ among parents with varying educational backgrounds.

For children of parents who never went to school, supervision is often carried out by people other than their mother and father. For instance, 34.9% of these children study under the guidance of an elder sibling, 10.8% are supervised by Anganwadi workers, and 11.9% are taught by community teachers. Comparatively, 33.2% of these children receive supervision from their mothers, while 25.6% are supervised by their fathers.

This unique pattern in supervision reflects the diverse support systems that come into play in households where parents have not received formal education. While the direct involvement of parents may be limited, other family members and community workers step in to provide educational support.
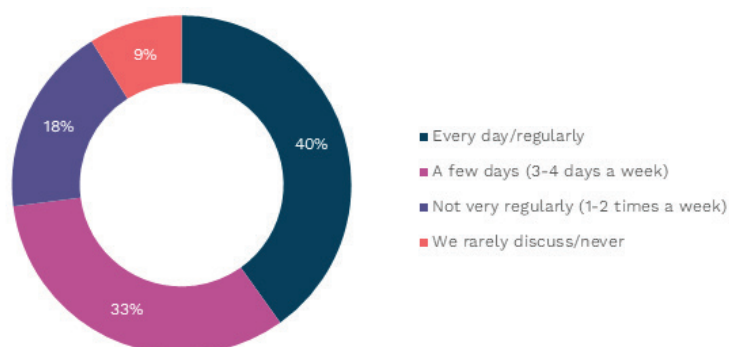
In contrast, parents with higher education levels primarily take on the role of direct supervision themselves of their children's education. Among the children whose parents had finished high school, 76% of them were supervised by their mothers, while 61% were supervised by their fathers.

Table 9. Distribution of person who supervises child's education outside of school vs highest level of education among either parent (%)

| Person providing supervision	Illiterate and some schooling below Primary	Completed Primary but not Secondary	Completed Secondary but not Higher Secondary	Completed Higher Secondary and Above	All Children
Study alone	30.2	14.6	11.2	7.0	12.3
Study under the supervision of mother	33.2	58.1	61.1	77.6	64.2
Study under the supervision of father	25.6	39.7	51.9	62.3	50.2
Study under the supervision of elder sibling	34.9	28.0	28.5	20.0	25.6
Study under the supervision of anganwadi worker	10.8	4.5	4.0	1.6	3.8
Study under the supervision of community facilitator/teacher	11.9	8.7	9.9	4.4	7.6
Study under the supervision of private tutor	31.0	34.2	25.1	21.6	26.7
Others	.2	.6	.4	.5	.5

Beyond the role of supervising their child's education, engaging in discussions about their schooling is equally crucial for parents. According to the survey findings, 73% of parents regularly have conversations with their children regarding their education, either on a consistent basis or at least 3-4 times a week, as illustrated in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Frequency of conversation between parent and child about what they learnt in school in a typical 6-day school week

- Every day/regularly — 40%
- A few days (3-4 days a week) — 33%
- Not very regularly (1-2 times a week) — 18%
- We rarely discuss/never — 9%

While examining the time spent by parents based on their income levels, we find that, close to 40% of parents across different income groups regularly ask their children about their education received in school. However, notably, 60% of non-earners actively engage with their children in regular inquiries about the education they receive in school.

Figure 14. Distribution of frequency of conversation with child about what they learnt in school in a typical 6-day school week - by highest income category of either parent (%)
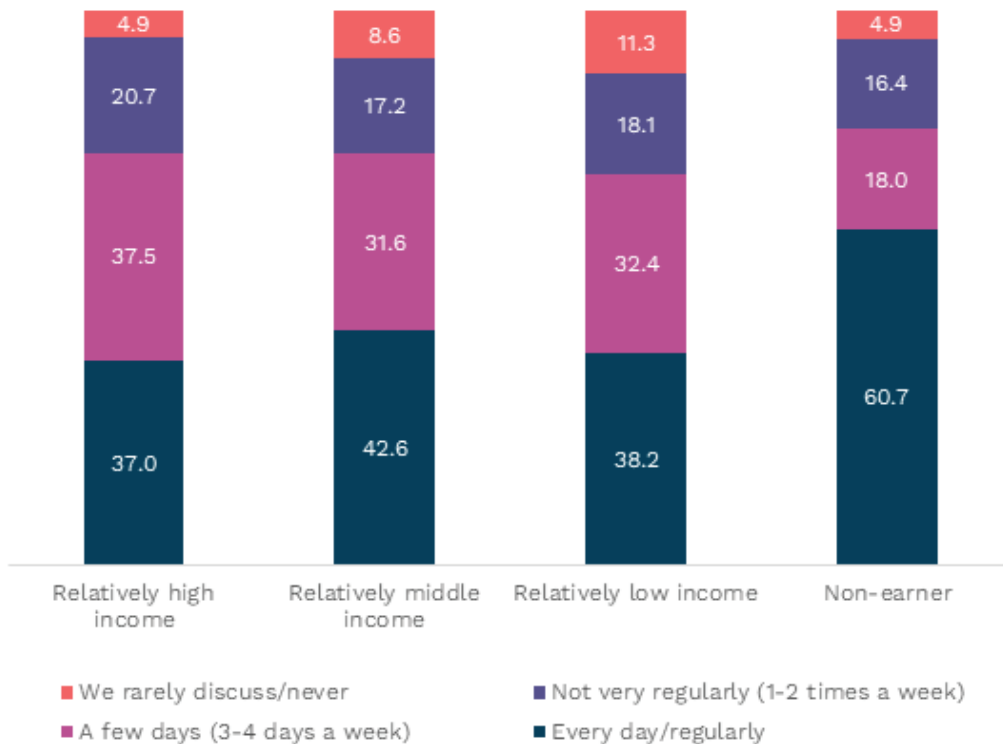
Regarding the distribution of parents with varying levels of education, a notable pattern emerges, showcasing the impact of educational attainment on parental involvement in their child's education. Among parents who never went to school, 28.7% regularly inquire about school education, while 25.1% rarely or never do so. In contrast, 46.3% of parents with education above higher secondary actively follow up on their child's education regularly, with only 4% rarely engaging in their child's education.

Figure 15. Distribution of frequency of conversation with child about what they learnt in school in a typical 6-day school week - by highest education level of either parent (%)
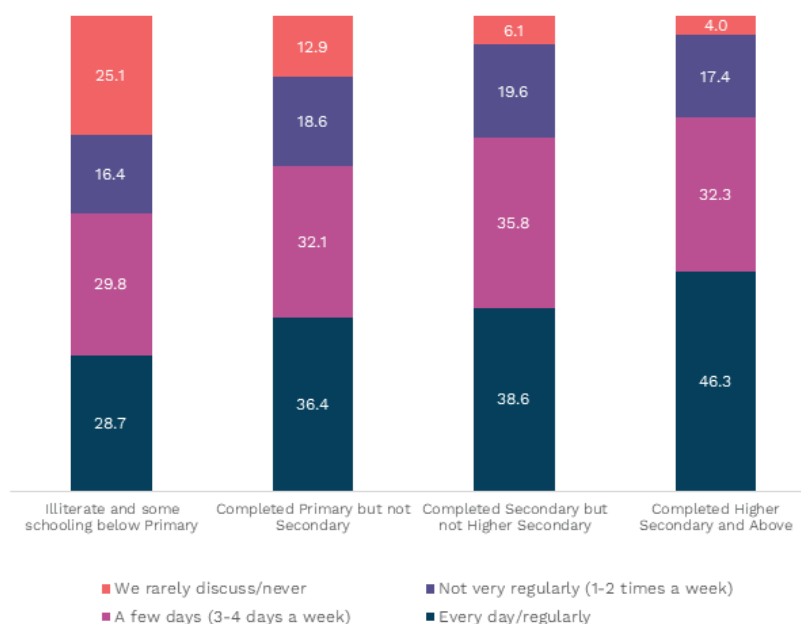
Engaging with the child in different extra-curricular activities also helps in the overall development of the child. From the survey, we observe that most parents spend time with their children in different forms of activities which help them in their overall development. Looking at the distribution of parent's engagement in extra-curricular activities with their child, it was observed that engagement of parents with lower educational attainment and lower income levels in comparison with parents with higher educational attainment and income level is significantly low in the former case. Figure 16 shows that while parents who are illiterate or completed some years of schooling but up to the primary level were engaged with their children in lower numbers (75%) the same is around 93% for parents who attained education beyond higher secondary level. However, the difference is marginal in the case of the level of earnings of the parents (refer to Figure 17).

Figure 16. Distribution of engagement of parents with child in curricular/extra-curricular activities by parent's education level (%)
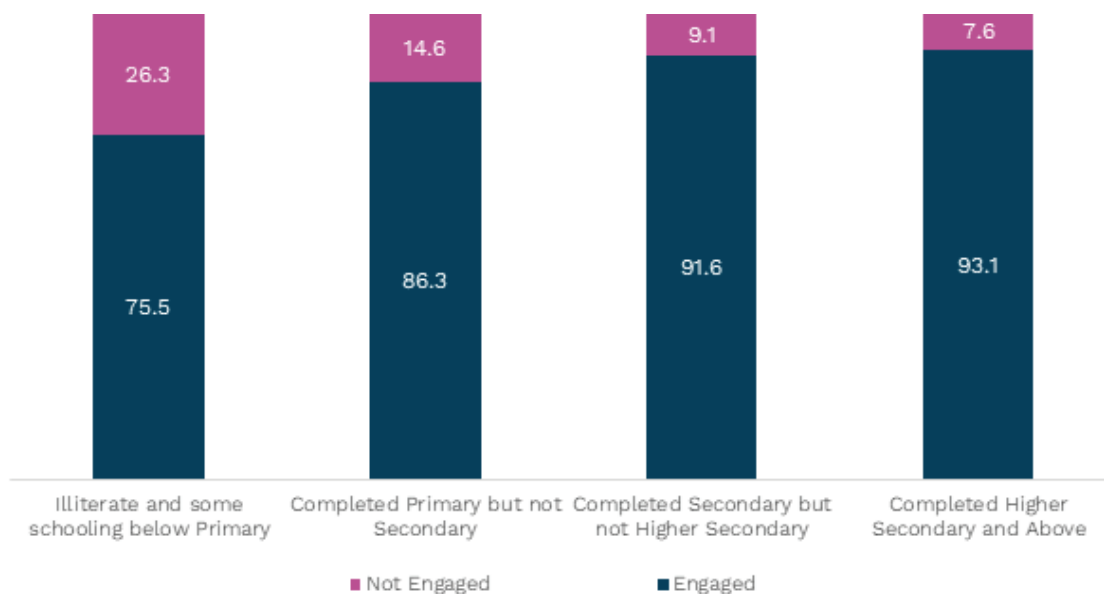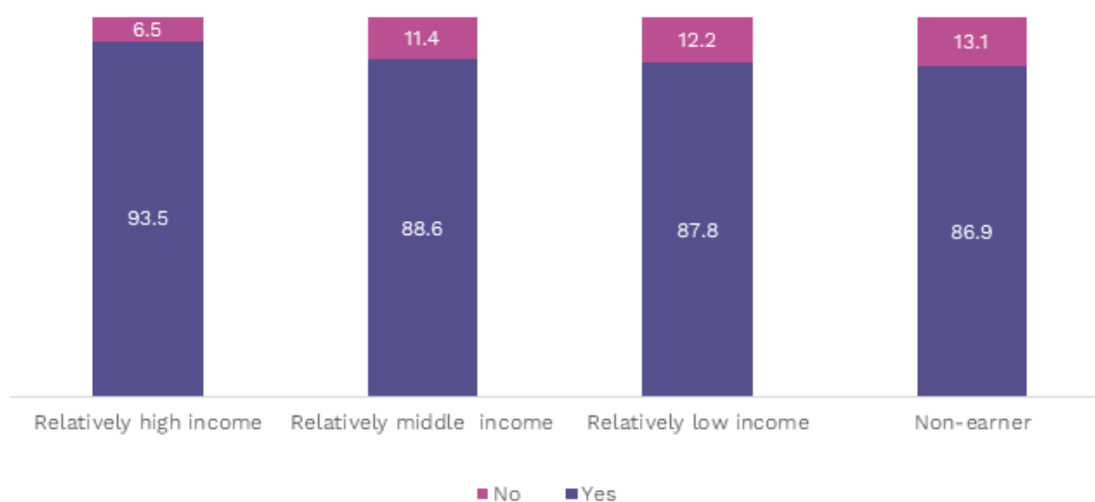

Figure 17. Distribution of engagement of parents with child in curricular/extra-curricular activities by highest income category of either parent (%)

3.3.4 Facilities provided for education at home

The facilities provided for education at home play an important role in supporting the academic development of school-going children. A conducive home environment with adequate resources fosters a positive learning experience and enhances a child's engagement with their studies. Providing age-appropriate reading materials, such as books and magazines, stimulates a child's curiosity and nurtures a love for reading, which in turn strengthens their cognitive abilities and language skills. Additionally, designating a specific space at home for uninterrupted study allows children to focus better on their academic tasks and encourages disciplined study habits. Ensuring that the child receives uninterrupted study time at home facilitates concentration and promotes a deeper understanding of the subjects they are studying. Recognizing the significance of these aspects in shaping a child's educational journey, our survey specifically covered the above-mentioned topics.

The survey reveals that 22.1% of children bring home storybooks from the school library. This trend remains consistent across different social categories, as evident in Table 10.

Table 10. Distribution of children bringing story books to home from school library - by parent's social category

Social category	Percentage of children who brought story books from library	Percentage of children who do not bring story books from library	Percentage of parents who do not know
SC	22.3	71.2	6.5
ST	23.6	64.7	11.7
OBC	20.1	72.9	7.0
General	24.3	70.8	4.9
Others, including minorities	21.9	66.7	11.4
All categories	22.1	70.7	7.3

While 22.1% of children reported having brought story books from the school library, almost 40% of parents surveyed provided story books and other age-appropriate reading materials to their children.

Figure 18. Availability of non-text book reading materials at home (%)
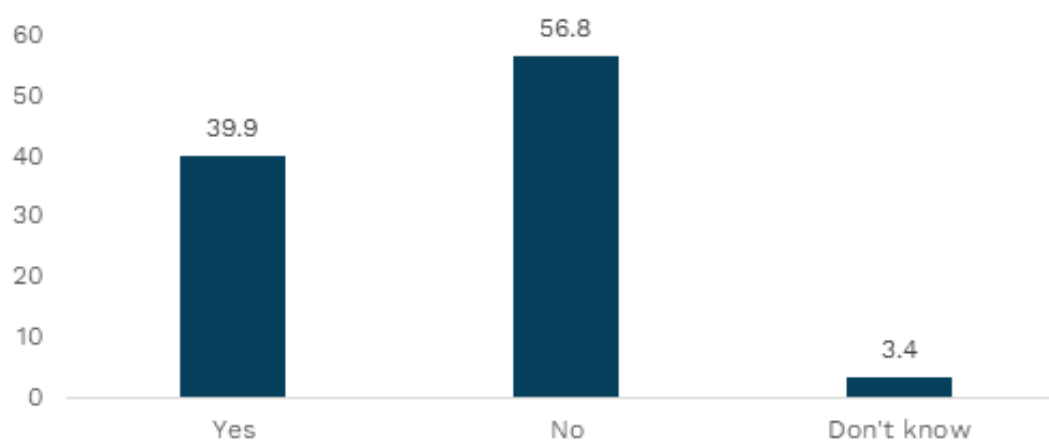
The availability of such reading materials also varies based on the education and income levels of parents. Lower-educated parents and those with lower incomes face challenges in providing these books to their children. For instance, while 51.6% of high-income parents can afford to offer such materials, only 36.2% and 29.5% of low-income and non-earning parents, respectively, are able to do so.

Likewise, as shown in Figure 20, there is a noticeable disparity in the provision of such books based on parental education levels. While 48.2% of parents who completed high school education could understand the importance of providing these reading materials to their children, only 26.3% of parents with no schooling have the same capability. However, it is worth noting that parents who managed to complete education up to the secondary level also strive to provide access to such non-textbook reading materials, as 43.1% of them engage in this endeavor.

Figure 19. Availability of non-text book reading materials at home – by income category of the primary earner among the parents (%)
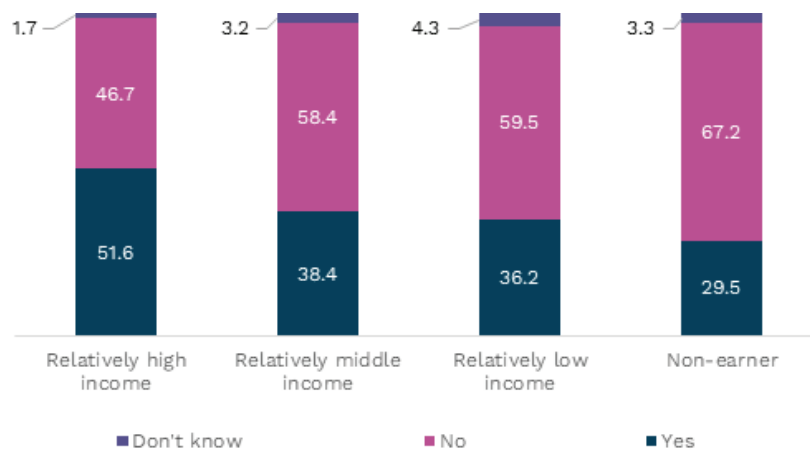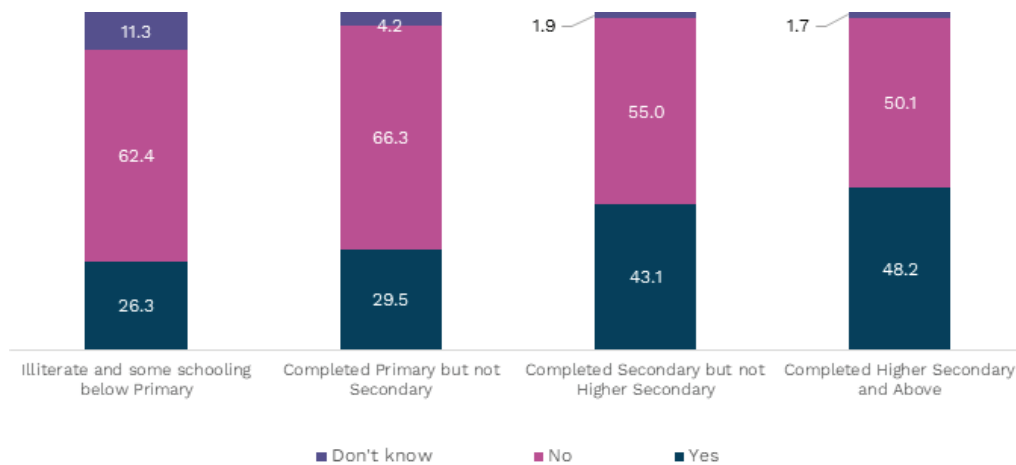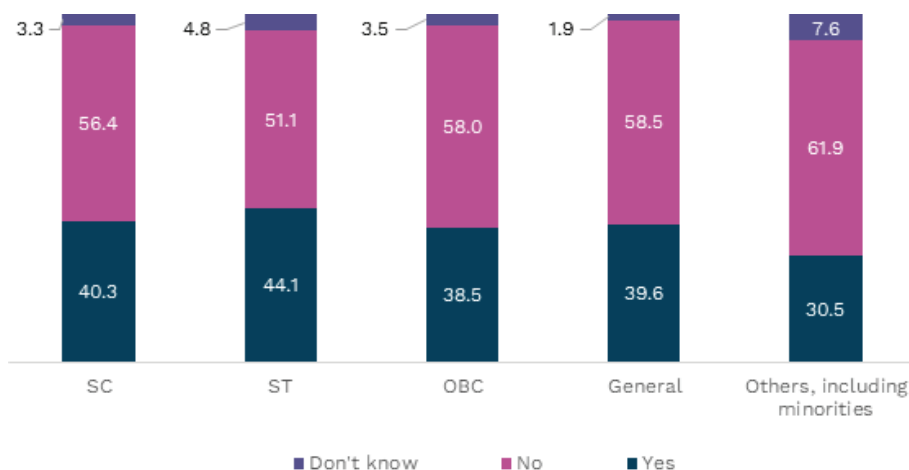

	Relatively high income	Relatively middle income	Relatively low income	Non-earner
Don't know	1.7	3.2	4.3	3.3
No	46.7	58.4	59.5	67.2
Yes	51.6	38.4	36.2	29.5

Figure 20. Availability of non-text book reading materials at home – by highest education level of either parent (%)

	Illiterate and some schooling below Primary	Completed Primary but not Secondary	Completed Secondary but not Higher Secondary	Completed Higher Secondary and Above
Don't know	11.3	4.2	1.9	1.7
No	62.4	66.3	55.0	50.1
Yes	26.3	29.5	43.1	48.2

However, similar to usage of school library we don't see very large differences in parents' provision of non-textbook reading materials to their children across different social categories as seen in Figure 21.

Figure 21. Whether age-appropriate reading materials other than school-books available at home - by social category of parents (%)

	SC	ST	OBC	General	Others, including minorities
Don't know	3.3	4.8	3.5	1.9	7.6
No	56.4	51.1	58.0	58.5	61.9
Yes	40.3	44.1	38.5	39.6	30.5

Another aspect explored in the survey was the availability of a designated study space at home. The findings revealed that more than 60% of earning parents, regardless of their income level, provide such a dedicated studying space for their children. However, among non-earners, 47.5% of parents were able to provide such a space, as depicted in Figure 22. As depicted in Figure 23 the same pattern can be seen among parents who had completed different levels of education (62-69%) as against parents who are illiterate or have some years of schooling but have not completed primary school (47.5).

Figure 22. Availability of designated study place at home by income category of the primary earner among the parents (%)
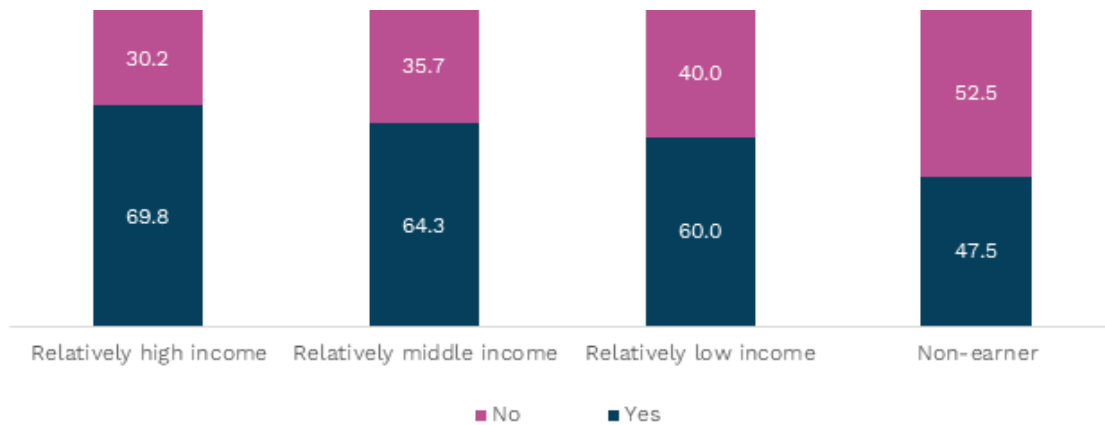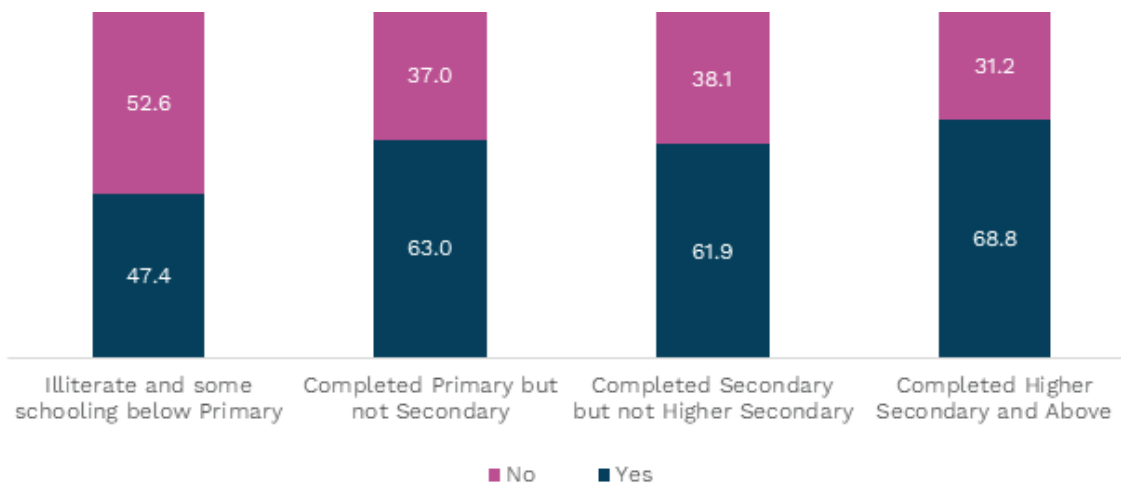

Figure 23. Availability of designated study place at home by highest education level of either parent (%)

The survey also inquired about whether children were given uninterrupted study time at home to focus on their curricular work. Notably, we observed that providing such dedicated time is considered essential by parents, as close to 85% of parents with any school education responded affirmatively. Even among illiterate parents, a significant 68.8% were providing their child with uninterrupted study time at home, as illustrated in Figure 24.

Figure 24. Whether parents make any effort at home to ensure that child gets some time to study - by highest education level of either parent (%)
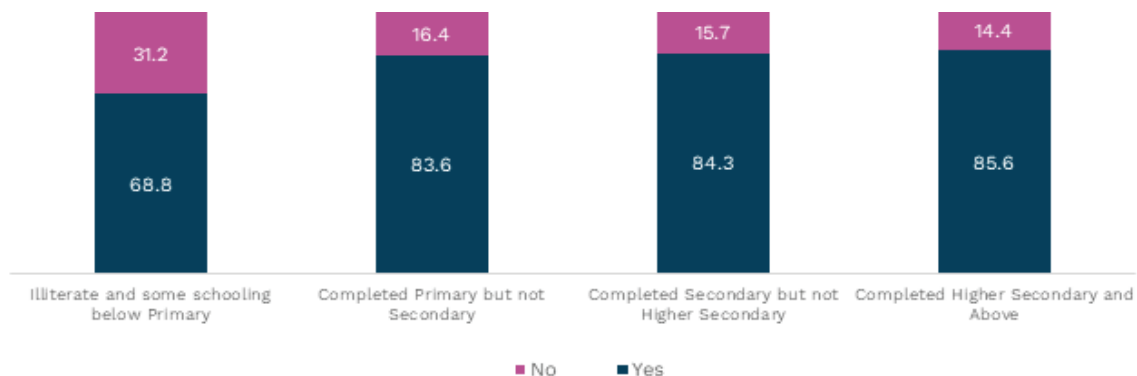
3.3.5 Parent Teacher Interactions

Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) hold immense importance in the context of the survey conducted. These meetings serve as crucial platforms for fostering effective communication and collaboration between parents and teachers. By attending PTMs, parents gain valuable insights into their child's progress, strengths, and areas needing improvement in their academic journey. This knowledge enables parents to actively support and complement their child's learning at home, creating a holistic educational experience.

A large proportion of parents (75%) of currently enrolled school children attended PTMs, indicating their active involvement in their child's schooling. Next, we delve into the detailed attendance of parents in PTMs, taking into consideration their education and income levels. As revealed in Figure 25, a notable trend emerges regarding the awareness of PTMs among parents with varying education levels. Fewer parents with lower education are aware of PTMs, whereas the awareness increases with higher levels of educational attainment of parents. Specifically, while 55.3% of illiterate parents are aware of PTMs, the awareness percentage rises to 77.5% for parents who completed secondary education and reaches 81.6% for parents with higher secondary education or higher levels of educational attainment.

Figure 25. Distribution of parent's awareness about parent-teacher meeting by highest education level among either parent (%)
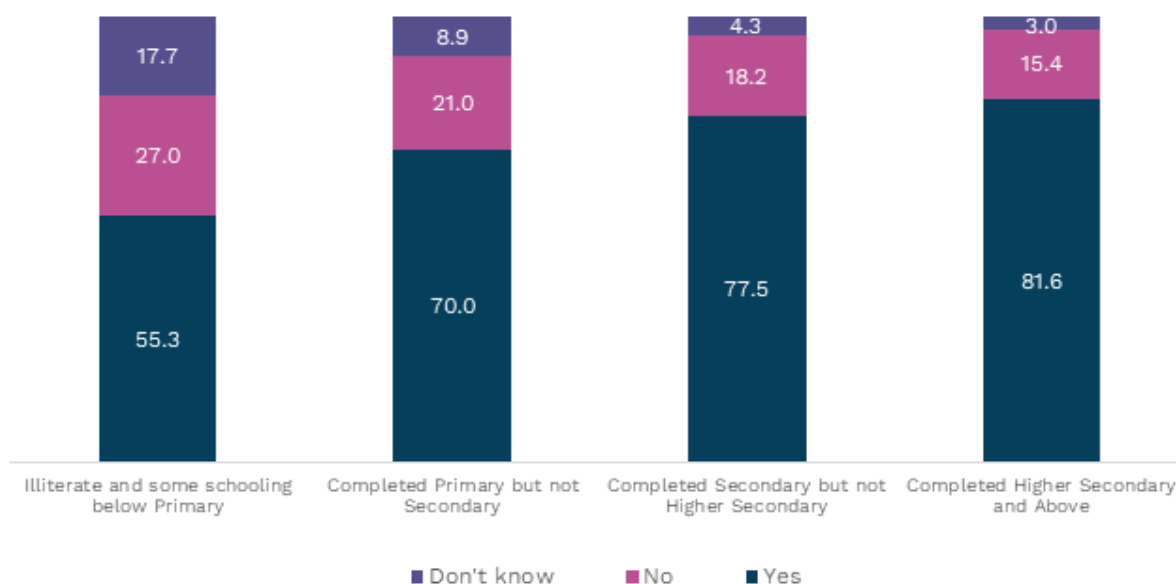
While it is evident that parents with lower education are less likely to be aware of PTMs, Figure 26 reveals that among those who are aware of these meetings, most parents attend them regardless of their education level. For instance, among illiterate parents who are aware of PTMs, 81.4% responded to have attended these meetings in the past year. Similarly, an even higher attendance rate of 91.6% was reported among parents who completed their school education and were aware of PTMs.

Figure 26. Parent's attendance of PTM in past year by highest education level among either parent (%)
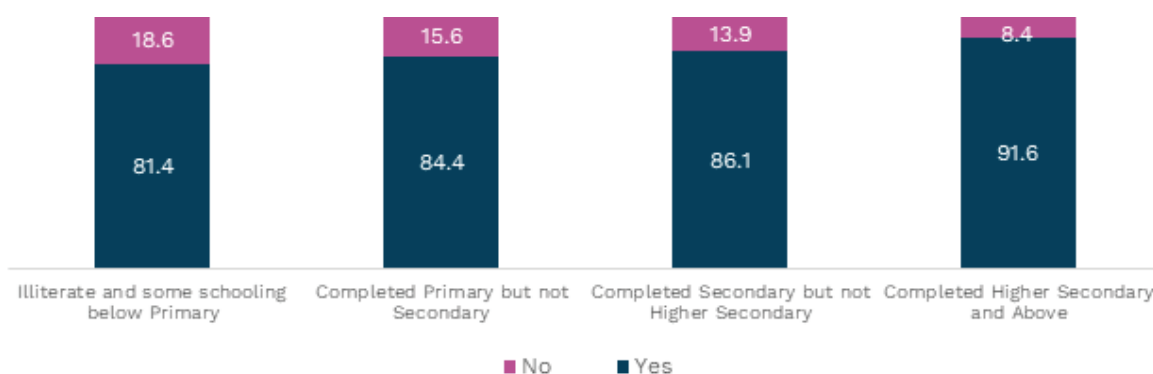
PTMs have proven to be highly beneficial for attending parents, with a significant 91% of them reporting that teachers discussed the importance of parental involvement in facilitating their child's education at home.

Moreover, a substantial number of parents have shown keen interest in proactively meeting schoolteachers to inquire about their child's progress in school. From the survey we found that 43.5% of illiterate parents met teachers voluntarily to know about their child's progress. Comparatively, 59.5% and 64.5% of parents who completed secondary and higher secondary schooling respectively, did the same.

Figure 27. Whether parents ever had any voluntary meeting with teacher to understand child progress - by highest education level of either parent (%)
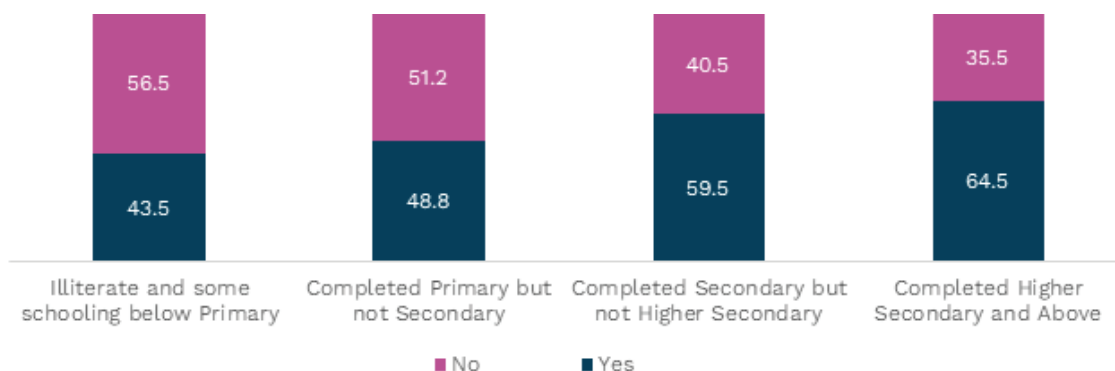
3.3.6 Teacher and child absenteeism

The survey also encompassed an examination of absenteeism among both teachers and children. Understanding absenteeism among teachers can provide insights into the quality and consistency of education being delivered, while studying student absenteeism can help identify barriers that may hinder children's access to education. The findings indicate that teacher absenteeism is not a major issue, with 77.51% of respondents reporting full attendance by teachers in the past month. 16% of respondents reported that teachers took less than a week's leave. Only 3.5% of respondents noted that the teachers were absent for more than 2 weeks.
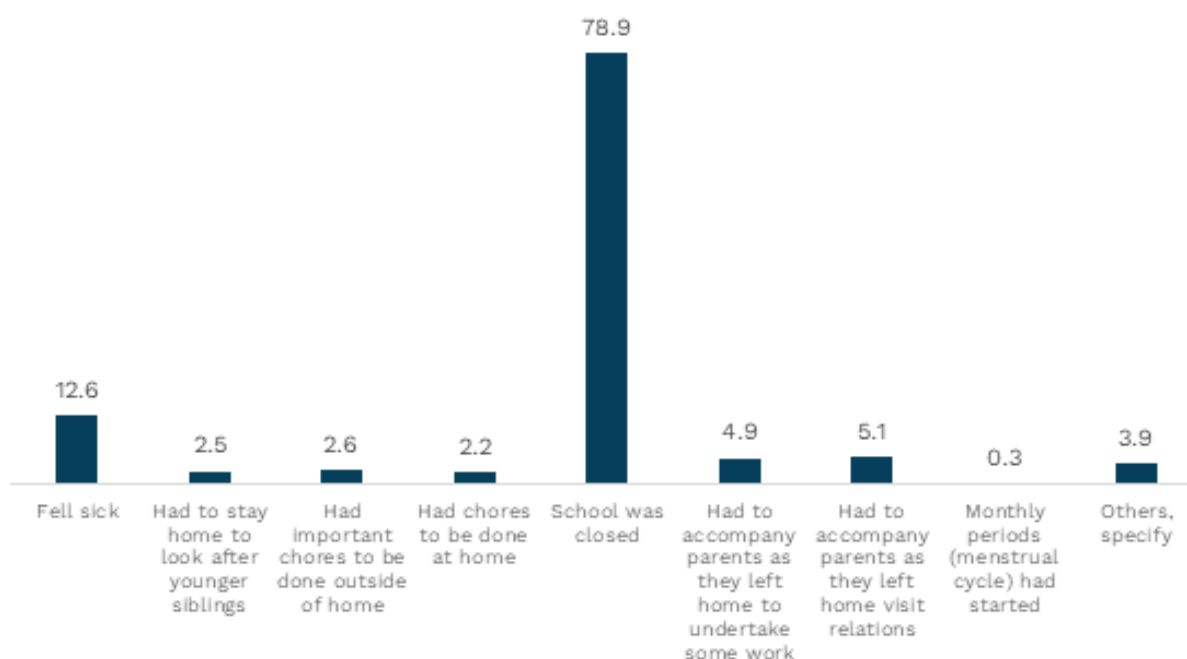
Figure 28. Distribution of number of days teacher was absent in the past month as reported by the children (%)
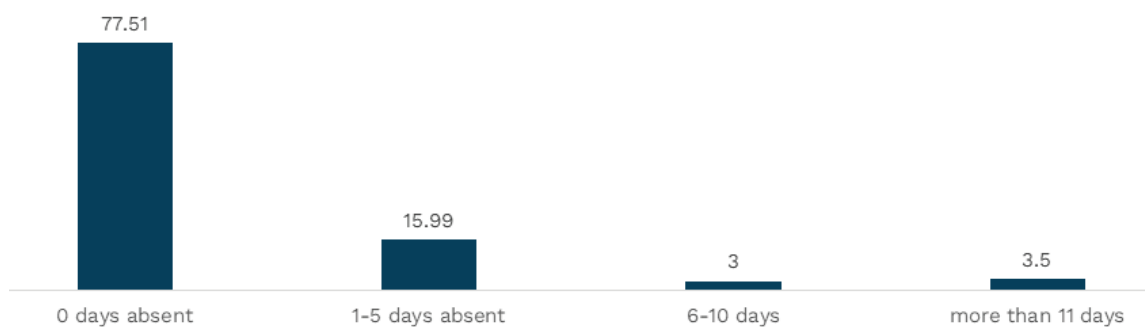
In the survey, respondents were questioned about their children's school attendance in the past week. 45.7% of households reported that the child had missed school at least once during that time. However, it is crucial to consider that the survey coincided with school holidays, which appeared to be the major reason for non-attendance. Figure 28 illustrates that a significant 78.9% of absentee children's schools were closed during the survey period.

Table 11. Child's absence from school in last week (in %)

The child was absent from school for at least 1 day in the past week	45.7
The child attended school every day	52.5
Don't know	1.8
Total	100.0

Category	Value
Fell sick	12.6
Had to stay home to look after younger siblings	2.5
Had important chores to be done outside of home	2.6
Had chores to be done at home	2.2
School was closed	78.9
Had to accompany parents as they left home to undertake some work	4.9
Had to accompany parents as they left home visit relations	5.1
Monthly periods (menstrual cycle) had started	0.3
Others, specify	3.9

3.3.7 Parents' reasons for sending child to school

The survey investigated the reasons why parents send their children to school and found that the majority of parents aspire for their children to achieve greater success in life, surpassing their own accomplishments by acquiring skills for better-paying jobs. Among the various reasons cited by parents, 43.5% expressed their desire for their children to avoid labor work in the future. Additionally, 62.1% of parents emphasized the importance of their children's learning skills for securing better-paying jobs, while 57.5% expressed their hope for their child's future success exceeding their own.

Table 12. Reasons given by the parents for sending their child to school.

Reason for sending a child to school	% of parents
For Mid-day meals	9.5
The school provides free uniform	7.1
For Scholarship	5.3
Children while staying at home are mischievous	7.6
My spouse and I can go to work while the children are at school	9.8
Shouldn't be involved in labor work in the future	43.3
I want my children to learn skills that are in demand in the market so that it increases their job prospects	62.1
Through education, I want my children to achieve more success in life than what we have achieved as his/her parents	57.5
My child/ family will gain respect in the village/ community etc.	29.5
As they grow up, I don't anyone to say they are illiterate or having limited intelligence	26.8
I want my children to move away from regressive thinking brought about by social taboos and be progressive in their outlook towards life	16.3
Total	100.0

Upon examining the distribution of parents' reasons based on their educational attainment, we find that for parents with no education, the most significant reason for sending their children to school was to provide them with opportunities beyond labor work in the future.

Among higher-educated parents, we observed two prominent motivations for sending their children to school. Firstly, they believed that education equips their children with valuable skills for better job opportunities. Secondly, they expressed a strong desire for their children to achieve greater success in life than themselves. The variation in parents' reasons for sending their children to school based on their education level is illustrated in Figure 30.

Figure 30. Distribution of parents' reasons for sending children to school by their educational attainment (%)
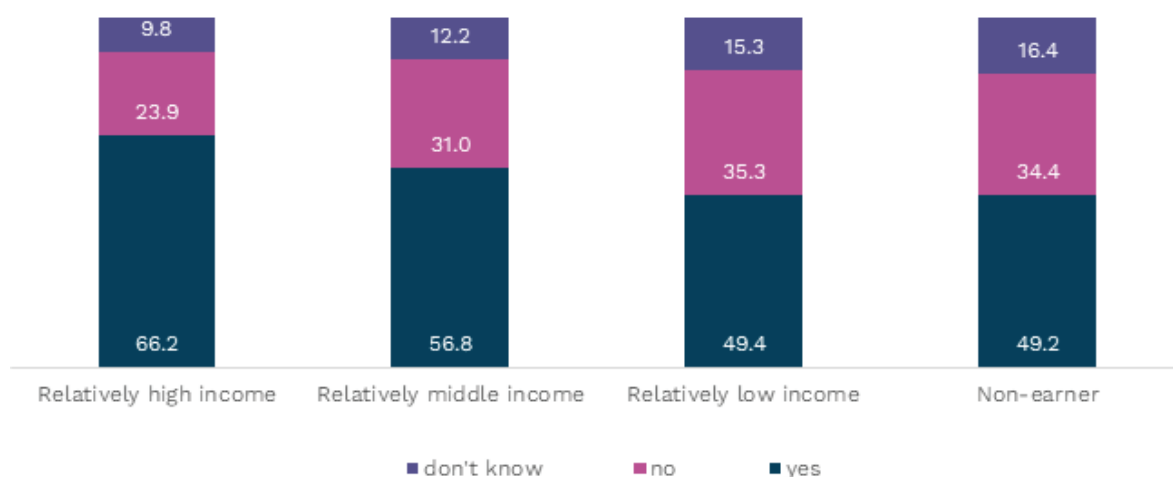

3.3.8 Affordability of higher education

In this section, we delve into the topic of parents' expectations regarding the affordability of higher education for their school going children. Understanding whether parents believe higher education is financially feasible is crucial, as it greatly impacts their aspirations for their child's educational journey.

In this survey, 55.7% of respondents expressed the belief that higher education is affordable, while 31.3% of parents held a contrary view. Upon analyzing the distribution of this expectation across various income levels, we found that a larger proportion of parents from higher income groups consider higher education to be financially attainable. Surprisingly, almost half of non-earners and individuals with low-income share this perception, as illustrated in Figure 31. This indicates that higher education is seen as financially viable for a significant portion of the rural population, irrespective of their financial condition.

Upon examining parents' beliefs about the affordability of higher education across different social categories, we find no notable difference among the groups. On average, close to 56% of parents perceive higher education as affordable, as depicted in figure 32.

We observe that almost 65% of parents from minority and other categories find higher education affordable, which is the highest among all categories. However, given that respondents from minority and other categories are only 1.71% of the sample, their sample estimates may vary a bit more than the true population parameters.

Figure 32. Proportion of parents who believe that education for their children beyond school is affordable - by social category of parents (%)
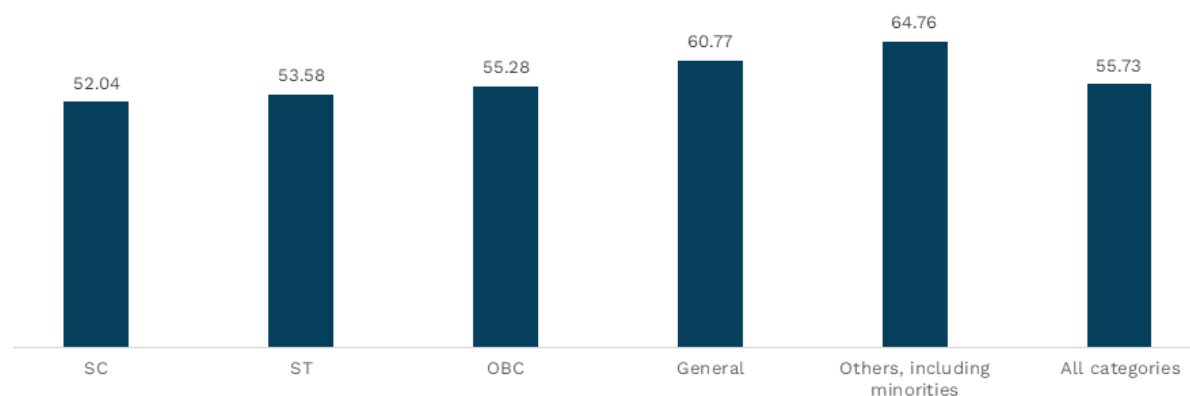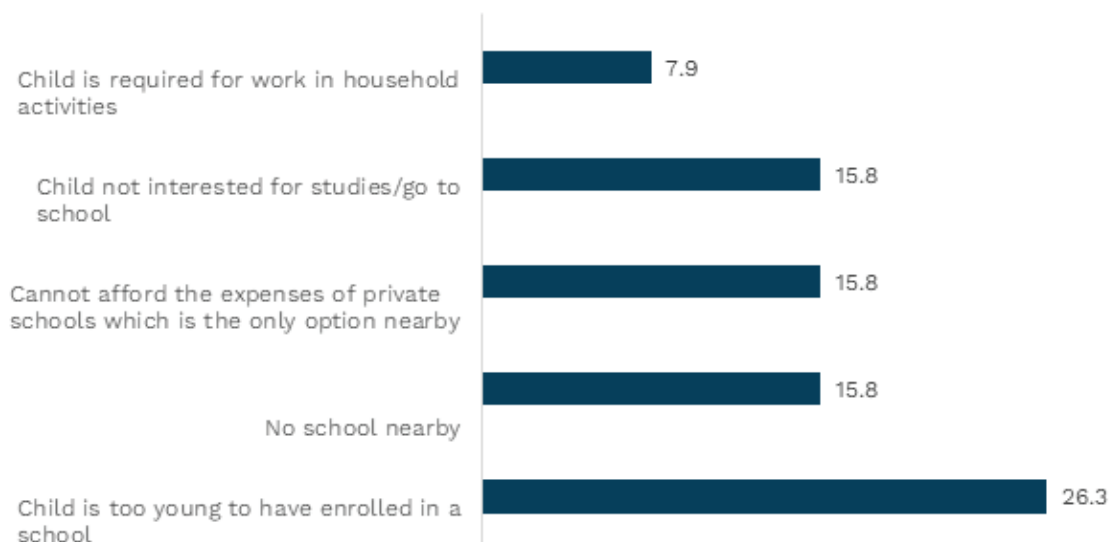

3.4 Out of School children

Studying various aspects of Out of School (OOS) children is crucial in the context of this survey. We have already touched upon certain aspects of OOS children in a previous section. In this section, we delve deeper into their situation to gain a more comprehensive understanding by exploring the top reasons for not enrolling children in school and understanding the primary factors contributing to school dropouts. However, the numbers being small and this survey has not covered the parents of out-of-school children it is not justifiable to infer any conclusion.

26.3% of parents believed their child to be too young to be enrolled. Among other reasons, 15.8% of parents cited the unavailability of nearby schools, unaffordability of schooling, and disinterest among children in education as some of the top reasons.

Figure 33. Top 5 reasons behind not ever enrolling children to school (%)

Reason	%
Child is required for work in household activities	7.9
Child not interested for studies/go to school	15.8
Cannot afford the expenses of private schools which is the only option nearby	15.8
No school nearby	15.8
Child is too young to have enrolled in a school	26.3

The same was asked of parents whose children had dropped out and the results are shown in Figure 34. Notably, 58.6% of parents responded that the children weren't interested in studies, while 44.8% responded that the child had to drop out for paid work to support the family.

Some differences emerged in the reasons for dropping out between girls and boys. As shown in Figures 34 and 35, disinterest in studies accounted for 71.8% of boys leaving school, while 48.7% dropped out to support their families financially. On the other hand, among girls, 36.8% cited the need to earn for their families as the reason for leaving school, and 31.6% of girl child's parents reported disinterest in studies as the cause of discontinuing education.

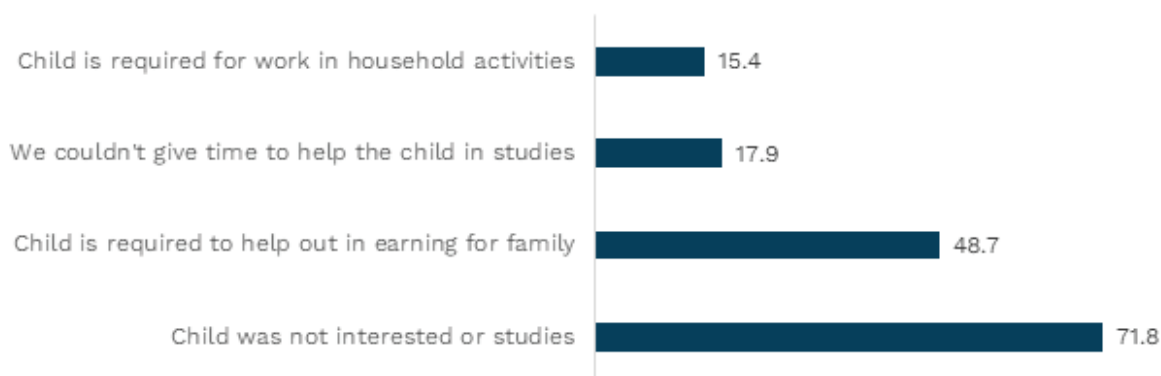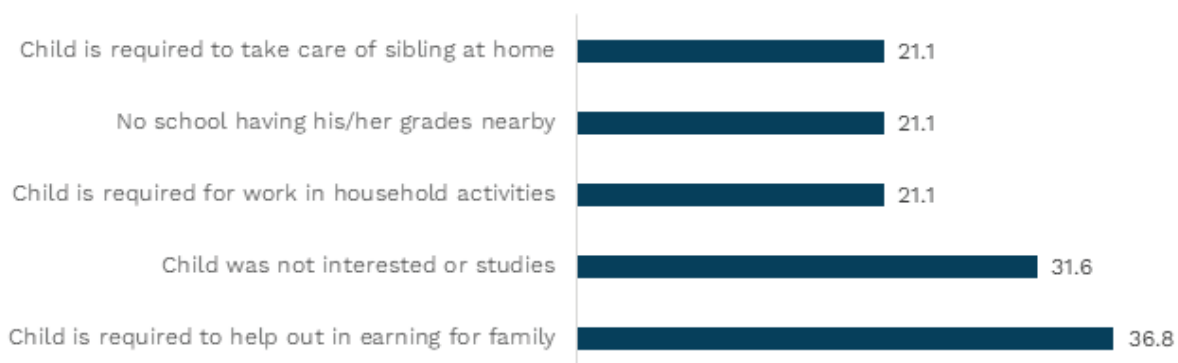*Figure 34. Top reasons for dropping out of school - boys (%)*

Reason	%
Child is required for work in household activities	15.4
We couldn't give time to help the child in studies	17.9
Child is required to help out in earning for family	48.7
Child was not interested or studies	71.8

Figure 35. Top reasons for dropping out of school - girls (%)

Reason	%
Child is required to take care of sibling at home	21.1
No school having his/her grades nearby	21.1
Child is required for work in household activities	21.1
Child was not interested or studies	31.6
Child is required to help out in earning for family	36.8

The survey also revealed that 50% of parents were keen on re-enrolling their children who had previously dropped out of school. However, the survey also indicated that only 24% of the dropped-out children themselves expressed a willingness to return to school. These contrasting perspectives shed light on the complexity of re-enrollment efforts and emphasizes the need for tailored strategies to encourage and support children's return to education.

Impact of using local level resources in enhancing delivery efficiency of education services – a case study of Madhya Pradesh

4.1 Change vectors

To further understand the impact that focused interventions involving local resources can have on the delivery of education in interior rural spaces, we ran a supplementary survey among education change vectors who are engaged by TRIF in selected districts of Madhya Pradesh. The idea behind this survey was to get inputs on the functioning of schools and the oversight role being played by various statutory structures within schools which brings together parents and the school administration. This survey also allowed us to look at any oversight role being played by the community and its statutory structures in the functioning of the local schools. Naturally, the areas of the investigation went beyond the questions asked to parents.

To set the context, we must first start with an understanding of who are change vectors and as catalysts, what are they engaged to do. Change Vectors (or CVs) are a result of TRIF's effort in bringing community ownership and community/parent engagement to Schools, which, in their understanding, will possibly bridge the existing trust deficit and bring a sense of purpose in teaching. The project recognised that this requires a new mode of engagement with the community and will require fostering a new ethos supported by practical methods like the engagement of Community Volunteers. Starting with building communities' perspective on education, and appreciation of the role of school and children in shaping a child's life mechanism for learning, TRIF's engagement is planned in a comprehensive manner both at the supply side with the public education system as also on the demand side with communities.

The project's engagement's focus on the demand side is with parents, community members, and key community-based structures in order for them to develop an understanding of the school, which are the drivers for success. In order to institutionalise a process that creates an environment that promotes learning of engagement, it is imperative that communities' affective and effective engagement is ensured through:

- Change Vectors championing and spearheading processes aimed at building and nurturing an environment of learning and curiosity within the community and;
- Interface mechanisms instituted with the existing functional and statutory structures such as the School Management Committees, standing committees in the Gram Panchayat, etc.

These Community Volunteers are local women leaders who connect to issues, the impact of the failure of education from their own experience. They are committed individuals who have the ability to question norms, bring information, influence, and inspire communities to take individual and collective action. CVs are like "vectors" supported by RNGO regularly and equipped with tools, and techniques to anchor discussions in Village Organisations, Education sub-committee and also support women leaders, and citizens to raise education-related matters in various available platforms such as Gram Panchayat meetings, block/cluster level federation meetings, etc. They also work to organize campaigns in villages to involve communities with schools. In effect, they are the force to initiate a process/ discussion to bring a learning environment in the community and the school.

4.2 Achieved coverage and profile

A total of 273 change vectors were covered in this survey. As mentioned earlier, they were all from the state of Madhya Pradesh.

75% of the CVs had had some schooling, ranging between 1-12 years of formal education. Just over 1 in 5 were illiterate themselves.

One CV was covered per project village, i.e. each CV would be responsible for one or several schools located within the village boundary. The CVs had confirmed that overall, 95% of the children aged 6-14 years in their respective villages went to a government school or a government-aided school. The rest went to private schools,

4.3 Survey findings

4.3.1 Enrolment drives

94 Percentage of the CVs had confirmed that the schools in their village conduct annual enrolment drives

97 Percentage of the CVs had confirmed that there is no resistance to such kind of drive among any groups or communities

Whatever little resistance faced seemed to have come from the Scheduled Tribe communities. Even though the quantum of such resistance is minuscule, nevertheless, the prevalent reasons cited were not valuing education and, in some cases, resistance from the upper castes who did not want lower caste children going to the same school as their children.

4.3.2 Dropout surveys and surveying of out-of-school children

**59** Percentage of local schools have conducted dropout surveys

43 Percentage of local schools have conducted surveys among currently Out-Of-School children

The CVs were further asked whether teachers in schools that do conduct surveys among current OOS children have received any formal training on how to carry out such surveys. Just a shade below 50% could confirm that the teachers did receive such training but around 1 in 3 did report that they did not know whether this was the case.

The CVs were further asked as to apart from teachers, who all are involved in OOS surveys or drop-out surveys.

Figure 36. Engagement of others in dropout and OOS surveys (%)
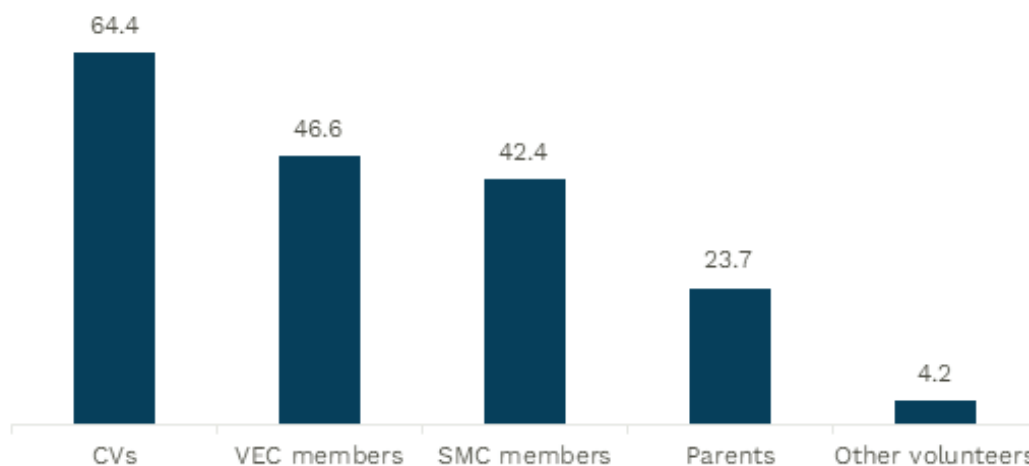
The survey reveals that in around two-thirds of the cases, the CVs themselves were engaged in conducting these surveys while in around half the schools where such surveys are conducted, the VEC members were engaged as well. Further, in 2 out of 5 schools where such surveys were going on, SMC members were also engaged in this exercise. It may be noted that parents were not a regular feature in such surveys, schools preferring to do this through their own staff or with the statutory bodies established in the school or within the community.

95 Percentage of the schools who conducted OOS surveys did so at least once a year. The rest did it once in two years.

Almost all the CVs had confirmed that their schools covered all the habitations, including the smallest hamlets.

Less than 2 % of the CVs had reported that follow-up meetings were not conducted with parents of OOS children identified in the survey, while over 98% could confirm that such meetings are indeed conducted to encourage them to send their children back to school.

Regarding the success rate of getting these children back to school, what the CVs had to report was indeed encouraging.

Figure 37. Success rate of getting OOS children back into school
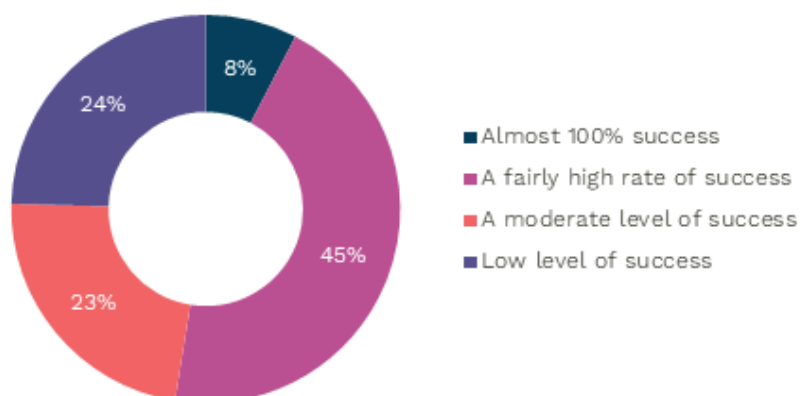
While very few (8%) admitted to be achieving 100% success, as high as 45% reported to be achieving a fairly high level of success, which is the best outcome that one should really be hoping for, given that in Madhya Pradesh, many marginalized families are prone to seasonal as well distress migration to other states.

While a third of the CVs had reported that there are children from particular communities who are not attending school or have dropped out of the system, two-thirds did report that such cases are not community-specific. Among those who did mention that this phenomenon is community-specific, 67% could confirm that they are primarily from among the Scheduled Tribe Communities.

The CVs, being local residents, were asked for their opinion as to why some children are not attending school or have dropped out of the system. The top four reasons given have been tabulated below.

Table 13: Reasons behind why some children are not attending school or have dropped out of the system

Perceived reasons	Percentage
Most of these families are landless and have to migrate frequently for labour work and they take their children with them	53.1
The children from these households help their parents in economic activities	52.2
Parents are not educated enough to understand the value of education	47.8
They can't afford the education of their children	23.0

### 4.3.3 Parents' interest in their child's education

This section has been covered at length during the main survey where the parents themselves were the primary respondent. However, two additional aspects which were asked of the CVs have been discussed hereunder.

First of all, CVs were asked why some parents from their village, in their experience, do not spend time at home helping their children with their studies. According to the CVs, this is primarily because such parents are themselves illiterate (opinion held by 87% of the CVs), or they are too busy working in the fields or in the

open throughout the day, and by the time they come home, they are too tired (78%). Interestingly enough, less than 1 in 5 CVs were of the opinion that this was because such parents believed that it is the job of the teachers to do so.

The CVs were further asked to opine (based on their experience from the project) on what factors seem to determine the level of interest being taken by parents in the study of their wards. The following diagram provides the results from the survey.

Figure 38. What factors seem to determine the level of interest being taken by parents in the study of their wards (%)
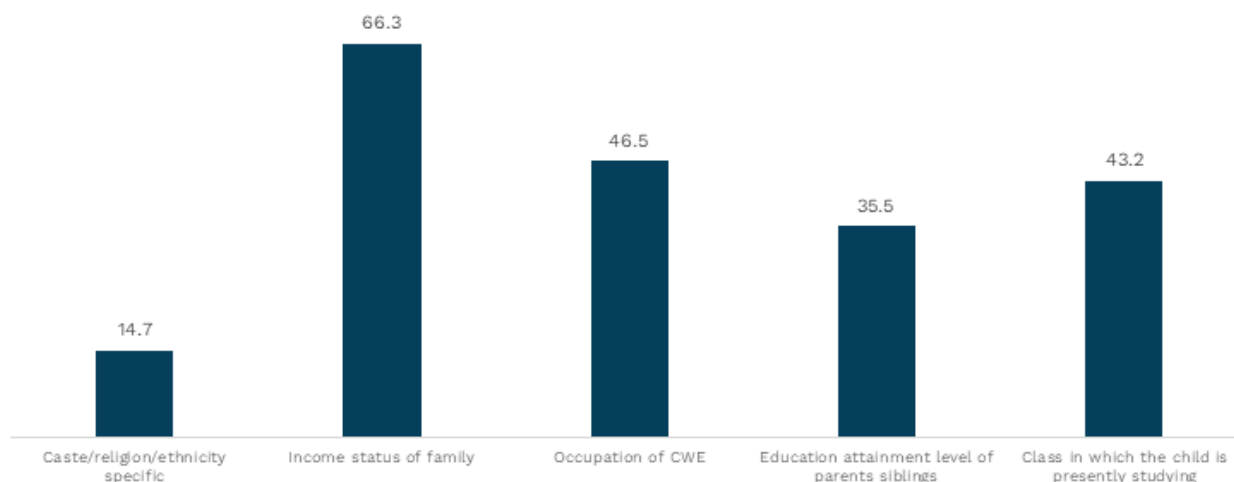
According to the Change Vectors, it is the income status of the family which is the primary determinant, followed by, but to a lesser extent, factors such as the occupation of the family breadwinner (which essentially determines income status anyway) as the grade in which the child is studying presently. Higher the grade, the more difficult it would be for parents with relatively lower education levels to cope with the curriculum being taught.

### 4.3.4 School Management Committee meetings

The School Management Committee (SMC), constituted under the Right to Education Act 2009 plays an important role in ensuring accountability in India's education system, especially in Government schools. The Act envisions the SMC as a decentralized governance model which empowers them to keep track and monitor the functioning of the schools and oversee that the school grants are used effectively. The SMCs consist of representatives of the local authority, parents or guardians of students, and the principal and teachers of the school. Three-fourths of SMC members must be parents or guardians and half must be women.

SMCs play a pivotal role in developing the tri-annual School Development Plans and annual work plans for the schools in every district and subsequently for every state of India. The RTE Act also highlights the critical role of parents as part of SMCs for developing a sense of ownership towards good education of their child and for strengthening and improving the performance of schools in India. Overall, SMCs focus on the holistic development of the schools, which not only accounts to ensure good school infrastructure, but also supervision/monitoring of finance, management, and academic progress of children, with equal participation and say, bringing transparency in India's education system.

89 Percentage of the CVs could confirm that in the school/s under their charge, SMC meetings are conducted regularly.

Figure 39. Apart from school staff, who all are members in the SMC

Figure 39. Apart from school staff, who all are members in the SMC
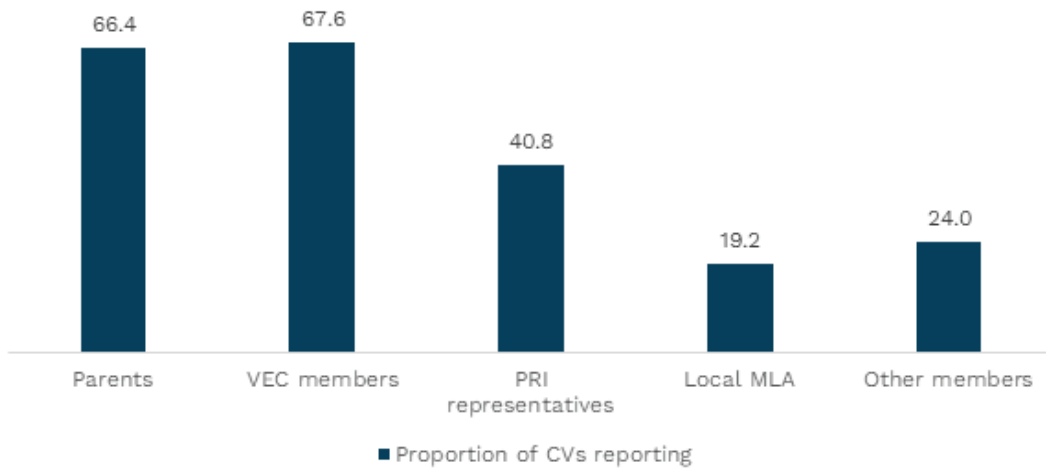
Two out of three CVs had confirmed that the SMCs of their local school had parents as their members. Again, two out of three could further confirm that a member of the Village Education Committee was also a member of the school SMC. Apart from VECs (which often do have elected representatives as members) a little over 40% of the CVs also reported that other PRI members were part of their SMC.

Being a designated member is one thing, but it is more important to be a regular attendee in meetings. According to the Change Vectors who participated in this survey, apart from school staff, it is the parents (81%) who are mostly regular attendees in these meetings. They are followed by VEC members (66%). The rest of the members seem to be occasional attendees.

Figure 40. Who attends SMC meetings regularly (%)
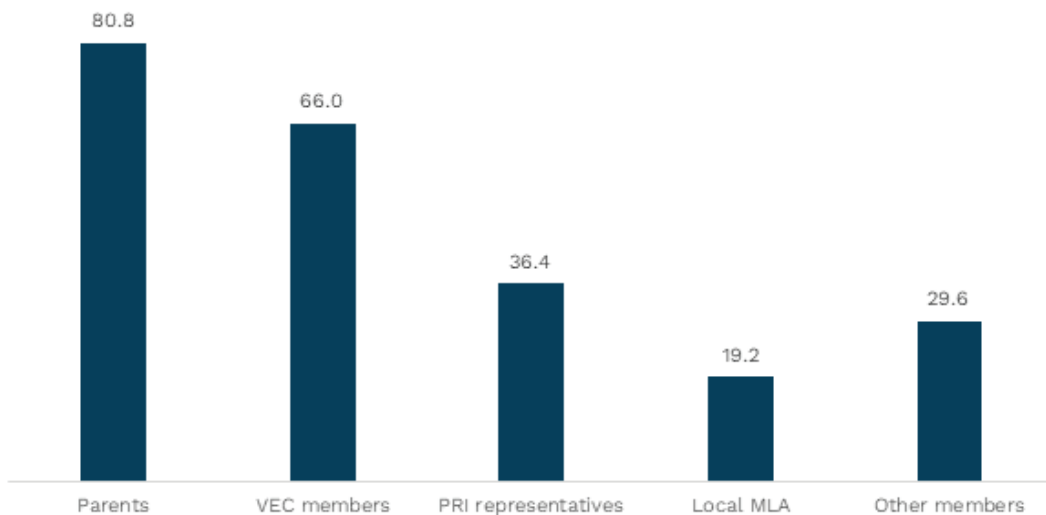
Further, according to the CVs, in 68% of the villages, the majority (if not most) of the parents do take an active interest in the proceedings of the SMC. They also confirmed that where parents are attendees, their viewpoints are recognized in such meetings.

As a concluding part to this section, the CVs were asked whether they can through some light on what is discussed in the SMC meetings of the schools that are functioning within their locality.

Table 14: Issues usually discussed in SMC meetings (%)

Quality of teaching	84.0
Monitoring of Mid-day meals	64.8
Maintenance of school infrastructure	54.0
Survey of dropouts	49.2
Teacher attendance	40.4
Enrolment drive	34.0
Maintaining PTR	12.8
Regular PTA	12.0
Other issues	11.6

Quality of teaching seems to have been the most discussed topic in SMC meetings. This was followed by monitoring mid-day meals. Around half of the schools discussed matters to do with school infrastructure, as well as surveys of dropouts. Teachers' attendance is discussed but only in around 40% of the schools.

4.3.5 Parent-Teacher meetings

Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTM) are a routine part of the school's yearly calendar and play a huge role in shaping a child's educational journey and future academic success. Parents know their children's habits, difficulties and skills like no other. Teachers act as children's second parents and observe them for hours every day in the classroom. When teachers and parents develop a strong bridge to help the child excel, it can create wonders. A parent-teacher meeting is a perfect way to discuss the child's progress, the best ways to help the child, and exchange insights and thoughts about the child's developmental milestones and academic progress.

65 Percentage of the CVs could confirm that in the school/s under their charge, the majority (if not most) of the parents do attend the PT meetings.

Having said that, nearly one in three CVs did confirm that only a minority of the parents attend such meetings. The few parents who are irregular in such meetings or do not attend them at all, the governing reasons for not doing so are:

* There is very short notice for such meetings and parents cannot attend due to jobs (71.4%)
* Parents are not willing to attend such meetings (71.4%)
* Parents are not aware of such kinds of meetings (14.3%)
* School does not make it mandatory for parents to attend the meetings (49.2%)

One redeeming aspect of rural schools as reported by the CVs was that based on their experience under this project, 84% of the parents and community at large do think that they have a responsibility towards ensuring accountability among teachers.
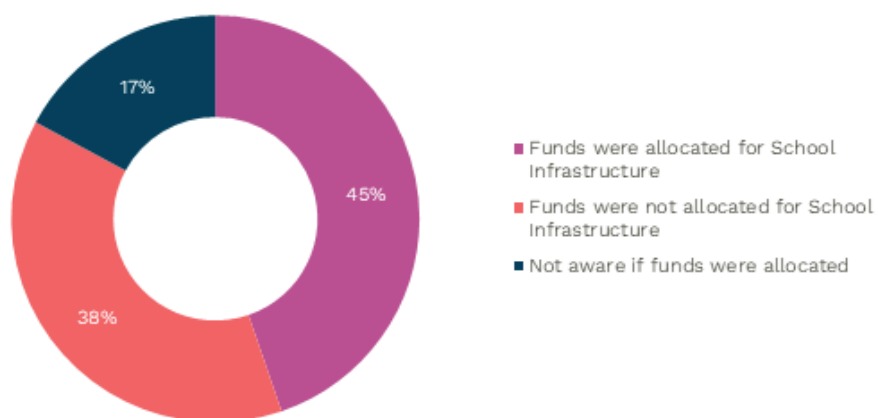
4.3.6 School functioning

20 Percentage of the CVs could confirm that their village/school has ever raised funds from the community for the maintenance of school infrastructure.

66 Percentage of the CVs, in their personal capacity, have raised a demand for the requirements for school infrastructure in a gram sabha meeting in the past.

Only 45% of the CVs who had raised a demand for school infrastructure in Gram Sabha meetings could confirm that funds were allocated to the school through GPDP following their petition. At the same time, 38% could confirm that their request had not been complied with while a further 17% remained unaware whether allocations were done or not.

Finally, as a concluding part of this research among Change Vectors, it was asked whether teachers regularly came to school. It is noteworthy that 87.5% of the CVs could report that all the teachers attended school regularly in their schools, while 12% could confirm that most of the teachers do so. It was clear that at least in this project area of the state of Madhya Pradesh, teacher absenteeism was not an issue.

About the Development Intelligence Unit (DIU)

The Development Intelligence Unit (DIU) brings data and expert analysis to the intersection of opportunity and deprivation in rural India. The DIU supports stakeholders who navigate the increasingly opaque, complex and uncertain world of data to analyse social and economic developments, forecast trends and better understand development programmes and practices. Doing so provides actional insight to improve the efficacy and effectiveness of development initiatives.

The DIU platform is a clearing-house of rural information presented in a user-friendly format, addressing the needs of diverse stakeholders in public, private and civil society. It brings rural India into focus and furthers the field of rural analytics for understanding, positioning and informing stakeholders and decision makers.

DIU specialises in evidence-based insights that will create an impact for governments and non-profits. It has expertise to develop data-driven solutions to public policy challenges based on robust evidence, expert insights and data analysis. It is providing data, research and tools to amplify issues in order to help rural India gain a voice, spark deeper conversation and help shape the future of India.

State Of School Education In Rural India