



# Education Cannot Wait.

**#ActNow!**

A fact-finding study report on elementary education in Rajasthan





## Massive learning loss among school children due to the Covid-19 pandemic

The world endured a huge learning loss in school children due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. That substantial learning loss has occurred among students across classes, and geographies have been made quite clear in many studies conducted by various agencies. The Education of more than 1.5 billion students worldwide has been hampered due to the global pandemic. State governments and the Union Government had started many initiatives to engage children with Education. But, due to the lack of digital resources or access, many children needed help to avail of these benefits.

To make up for the loss of studies in these two years, Atmashakti Trust, in collaboration with a Rajasthan-based NGO, Jatan Sansthan, conducted a fact-finding study to understand how the state is faring in terms of providing opportunities for students to bridge their learning loss in a post-covid scenario. It was part of a collaborative national education campaign titled "Education Can't Wait. #ActNow!"

### Why the study was undertaken

- To know whether the education department has taken any initiatives toward the learning recovery program.
- To implement a refresher course for the Hindi-medium students of Class I – VII in Govt. Schools / Govt. aided schools.
- To minimize the impact of lost learning among the students.
- To boost the confidence level of students for mainstreaming in the current academic session.
- To share the recommendations to the concerned regarding the bottlenecks and the addressing mechanisms for the education system.



### Coverage, process and methodology of the study

The fact-finding study was conducted between November and December, covering 209 villages of Rajsamand district in Rajasthan, to capture efforts of the state government towards the recovery of learning loss due to school closure during the pandemic. However, this time, the study was not limited to LRP but also migration, dropouts, and school infrastructure, which contributes to the overall learning performance of children. The study collected data from 224 respondents on LRP, 209 respondents on RTE norms, 134 respondents on dropouts, and 85 on migration.

The fact-finding was conducted using online forms covering all the stakeholders who are part of the Learning Recovery Program & Right To Education, Dropout & Migration. The sampling was done in the selected areas among the students, parents, SMC, and other stakeholders involved in the process to understand the ground reality of the implementation through a self-administered fact-finding form.\*

*\*Respondents: Students from Class III-IX, Parents, SMC members & Other Stakeholders*

## Key findings

### Learning recovery programme (LRP)



- The fact-finding Report shows that 55.4%(124) of students are feeling difficulties in the curriculum, as they have lost their learning over the last two years. If students think they need help in their Education, how long they can continue is a big question for all concerned.
- 6.7% of students said they are not getting support from the teacher, whereas 1.3% said neither has asked teachers to help them resolve their learning-related issues.
- The fact-finding Report shows that 31.7%(71) of students feel entirely lost in their current classes, whereas 31.3% (70) of students feel lost sometimes. If students feel lost in their Education, how long can they continue it?
- The fact-finding reveals that even though the schools have opened in the last seven months after nearly two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no student assessment conducted to know the students' learning outcomes as per their standards.
- The Report revealed that the Rajasthan government has no LRP program, which will force children to be at the periphery of Education. Therefore, it will be tough for the students to recover from the learning losses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Right to Education (RTE) Norms

The Right to Education Act lays down norms and standards relating to Pupil-Teacher-Ratios (number of children per teacher), classrooms, separate toilets for girls and boys, drinking water facilities, number of school working days, working hours of teachers, etc. Every elementary school (Primary school & Upper Primary School) in India has to comply with norms to maintain a minimum standard set by the Right to Education Act. Following are the study findings on the status of RTE norm compliance in the surveyed areas of Rajsamand district in Rajasthan:

- The lack of adequate school teachers enormously affects Education, particularly in rural Rajasthan. The fact-finding Report discovered that 15.3%(32) schools need more than one teacher compared to the number of sanctioned posts in their school. Similarly, 13.9%(29), 12%(25), & 5.7%(12) of schools need more than 2,3, and 4 teachers, respectively.
- Every school must have at least the same number of classrooms as the number of classes. Common classrooms for multiple classes impact the learning outcome on a large scale. The fact-finding Report uncloaks that 11.5(24) schools need more than one classroom compared to the number of classes in the school. Similarly, 22% (46), 20.1% (42), 6.2% (13), & 7.2% (15) of schools need more than 2,3,4,5 classrooms, respectively.

- The Fact-finding Report reveals that 2.9%(06) of schools don't have drinking water sources on their premises. The government needs to take immediate action to resolve the issues through convergence with the allied departments.



- The fact-finding Report unlocks that drinking water sources in 1%(02) of schools are fully damaged, whereas partially damaged in 2.4%(05) of schools. Firstly, schools lack Drinking water sources. Secondly, the existing authorities are fully or partially damaged on many occasions. So an exact need for quick action by the concerned department towards addressing the issues.
- Lack of sufficient Drinking water facilities makes the situation worse in dry areas and during the summer. The fact-finding Report reveals that 3.3%(07) of schools are struggling with insufficient drinking water, whereas 5.3%(11) are struggling partially.
- The fact-finding Report shows that 5.7%(12) of schools access non-drinkable water. Unsafe drinking water leads to many waterborne diseases that ultimately impact students' physical and mental health, and the same need to be resolved at the earliest.
- The fact-finding Report disclosed that 17.4%(36) of schools don't have separate kitchen sheds. The absence of a detached kitchen shed increases the risk of accidents on the school campus. The mid-day meal program is one of the crucial elements of the school system; without a kitchen shed, it is affected.
- As per the fact-finding Report, 2.9%(06) of schools are running with fully damaged kitchen sheds, whereas 12.5%(26) are partially damaged. Unsafe Kitchen-shed always increases the lifetime risk of cooks working in the school and other consequences.
- The fact-finding Report affirms that 01%(02) of schools need toilet facilities. Lack of toilet facilities heavily impacts the easiness and irregularity of students, especially girls.
- The fact-finding Report discloses that 5.3%(11) of schools need separate toilets for boys and girls. Separate In almost all the offices and institutions, we can find separate toilets for males and females then, so why is it not there in schools even after 13 years of the implementation of the RTE, and this is the primary need for the students?
- The fact-finding Report explores that 22.5%(47) of school toilets lack water facilities. As per the statement given by parents, toilets are only used with proper water facilities.
- As per the fact-finding data, 5.3%(11) aren't using the toilets in the school either because of cleanness or damaged structures. Then how can we expect sanitation awareness from the children?



- The fact-finding Report reveals that 1.4%(03) of toilets in schools are fully damaged, whereas the partial damage case is 13.5%(28). Villagers pointed out that schools lack toilets, and secondly, the existing toilets are fully or partially damaged on many occasions. So one can assume how sanitation practice is going on in the schools.
- Playground serves a vital role in the physical and mental health of students. SMC members and parents are seriously concerned about the lack of playgrounds. The fact-finding Report discovers that 15.3% (32) of schools need playgrounds.
- The fact-finding Report reveals that 11.6%(24) schools don't have boundary walls. Parents are saying that the students, assets & school infrastructure inside the school are unsafe because of the absence of a boundary wall.
- The fact-finding Report shows that 61.2%(126) of schools need repairing. Parents' statement also implies that schools need help with delays in improving.
- Lack of community involvement in school management is a severe concern for the overall development of the school. The fact-finding reports reveal that 17.2%(36) of SMC members never participate in monitoring school work.
- The RTE Act mentioned special provisions for exceptional cases, but as per the fact-finding Report, 40.2%(84) of schools don't have any special provision for the disabled.
- A complaint lodging system is a sign of transparency and democracy, but the fact-finding Report reveals that 51.7%(108) schools don't have to complain about lodging mechanisms in schools for the disabled or any others.

## Dropout of children

The last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic have been challenging for all of us, and children were the worst victim of it. The fear of getting infected and the lockdowns meant that educational institutions, including schools and colleges, remained shut for regular classes for the better of 2020 and 2021. Though classes switched to online mode, only a few portions of these children could get access to it. The reason was that they needed a digital device to access online Education or the facility of internet connection in their areas, which deprived them of learning in online mode.

As a fallout, many children dropped out of school since they remained out of Education for a prolonged period. Following are the study findings on the dropout of children from school in the surveyed areas in Rajasthan:

- The fact-finding Report reveals that out of the 134 dropout cases, 62.7% belong to ST, 14.2%, 17.2%, & 3.7% are from SC, OBC, and General categories, respectively.
- The significant reasons for dropout found from the fact-finding are 40.7% said because they are engaged in household work, 14.2%, 26.9%, 3%, 6.7%, & 14.2% have told their dropout reasons Because of difficulties in the curriculum, other reason, Parents aren't interested, engaged in labor work, & either parent has migrated or not interested respectively.
- Teachers counseling for rejoining the school, The fact-finding Report says that in the case of 13.4% of students, not any of the teachers came and asked them to go back to school, and the rest, 86.6% have shared that though the teachers have come to them and asked them to rejoin the school, but they didn't.

- During fact-finding, it is also found that 30.6% of parents don't even try to send their children back to school. There were no efforts from the SMC, said 45.5% of the respondents
- The fact-finding reveals that out of the total, 56% of the students said that they had yet to have an opportunity to read, nor was there any scope for them to be engaged in reading activities because of different issues during the COVID-19 pandemic.

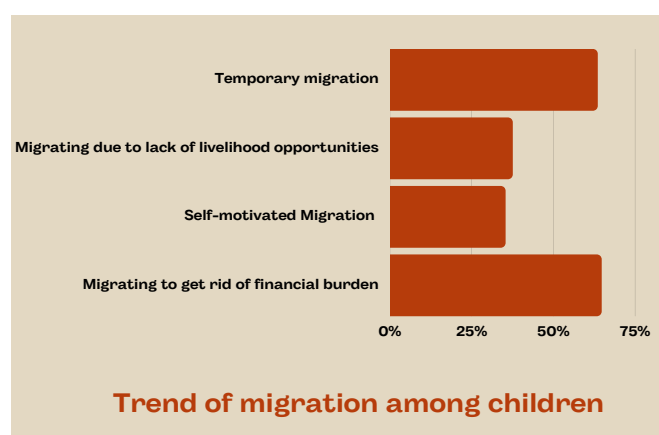
## Migration and its impact on children's education

India's 2011 Census recorded 453 million internal migrants in India, forming a significant 37% of the total population. In addition, one in every five migrants is a child, resulting in an estimated 92.95 million migrant children.

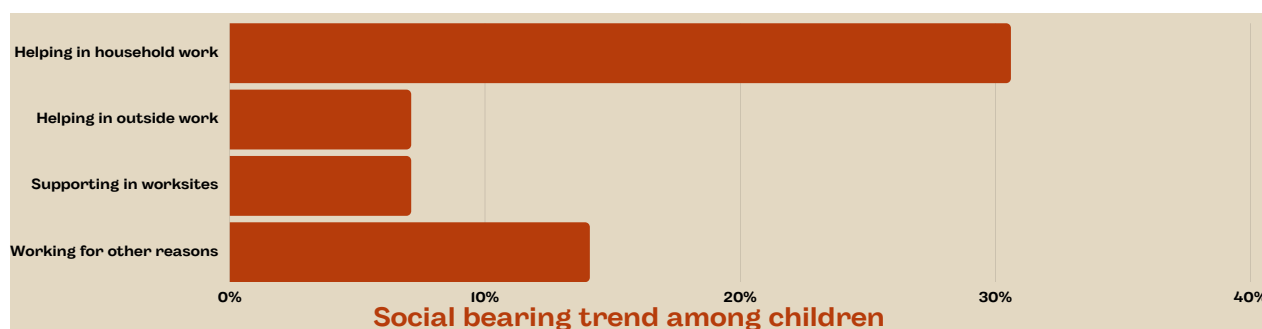
Children whose parents migrate accompany them to work sites or stay back in the source village, left behind without one or both parents. In addition, the generally fixed nature of the schooling system makes it difficult for children who accompany their parents to continue their Education during their movement to and from work sites and stay therein. A total of 85 students were found during the sample fact-finding who either migrated out or in and because of that, they are out of school.

Following are the study findings on migration and its impact on children's Education in the surveyed areas in Rajasthan:

- Out of the total, it is found that the migration pattern is like 63.5% of the respondents said they are temporarily migrating. The rest, 37.5%, have said they permanently migrated out because of insufficient livelihood opportunities in the locality. 35.3% of the respondents said they willingly migrate out, whereas the other 64.7% said they are migrating cogently because of no other options.



- Current engagement of the migrant students-30.6% have said they are helping their parents in the household work, 7.1%, 7.1% & 14.1% have said working outside, supporting their parents at the work site, and due to some other reasons, respectively.



- The fact-finding reveals that 75.3% of the parents take their children with them while migrating because no one is left in their homes to care for them. Similarly, 10.7% and 14.1% said they need their children's support at the worksite for more income and other reasons, respectively.

## Recommendations

Taking into account the issues found during the survey, a series of discussions took place with teachers, parents, SMC members, PRIs, academicians, and local education administration to address the current situation. After the meeting, some broad recommendations came up, which are mentioned below:

- Students found the LRP teaching materials interesting. The material should be distributed and made accessible to all students.
- The LRP learning materials could also be prepared in tribal languages wherever the Multilingual Education Scheme is implemented.
- The two years of learning losses cannot be recovered with a short program of 3 months only. A long-term approach is required to meet the gaps created. LRP should be continued until the students achieve the class-appropriate learning output.
- The monitoring mechanism for LRP should be put in the public domain for assessment by the general public.
- A visible transparency board in the school informing the compliance status of RTE norms shall be made on the premises.
- The infrastructural requirements, such as the appointment of teachers, classrooms, boundaries, water, separate toilets for boys and girls, different kitchens, playground, etc., need to be urgently fulfilled as per the Right To Education norms.
- A community Driven Social Audit may be conducted to assess the implementation of RTE.
- The parents and school management committee should proactively engage in the Learning Recovery Plan. More sensitization is required for the parents on the immediate need for learning recovery.
- Teachers' training is crucial for any program such as LRP.
- The student's assessment results and LRP, in particular, should be communicated to parents in time.
- Community awareness is required to resolve many issues, such as the engagement of students in household work.
- Learning losses can't be recovered only by going to school. Hence students need to spend time on their studies during off-school hours. School teachers or volunteers can facilitate the classes during those hours for faster recovery.
- PRIs need to be sensitized to RTE norms and LRP. The government should ensure the participation of PRIs in LRP implementation and fulfilling the norms of RTE.
- A shortage of teachers hampers the quality of learning imparted in school. Hence, the teacher's appointment is a must to run any program effectively, such as LRP.
- Teachers are engaged in many non-teaching activities affecting the learning of students. Teachers should be only entrusted with teaching and engaging with the students.
- Lack of funds at the panchayat level results in the delay in completing infrastructure building/repairs of schools. Hence adequate funds should be with the Panchayat to meet the infrastructural requirement.





## About Us

Atmashakti is a right-based catalyst organization that coalesces Tribal and Dalit people for their socio-economic and political empowerment. For over a decade's consistent focus on collectivizing the community, Atmashakti has facilitated the formation of more than 23 collectives in 17 districts and 84 blocks of Odisha and Uttar Pradesh. This is Atmashakti's first intervention in Rajasthan with NGO Jatan Sansthan. To learn more about us, please visit [www.atmashaktitrust.com](http://www.atmashaktitrust.com)

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