24-03-2020

National Level Survey on Learning Loss in School Education During the Pandemic

NISA
National Independent Schools Alliance

Our Vision

The National Independent Schools Alliance – NISA is a platform that brings together budget private schools (BPS) from across the country to give them unified voice to address their concerns about legislation and bye-laws which apply to them and to facilitate quality improvements in day-to-day teaching and learning practices. NISA through its 50+ member associations spread across 26 states, represents over 1 Lakh Budget Private Schools, which cater to educational needs of more than 2 crore students below government per child expenditure through approx. 10 Lakh teachers.

Our Mission

We strive on cultivating a systemic level of change in schools and focusing on building strong platform, achieving policy change and creating awareness around Budget Private Schools by: -

- Advocating the immediate concerns of budget private schools via media and other channels to build relevant evidence.

- Creating an ecosystem for school Quality Improvement by partnering with different organizations working in the education space.

Our Programs

In order to create an enabling ecosystem for budget private schools to improve accessibility, affordability, and quality of education for the economically weaker sections of the society, NISA engages with stakeholders to:

- Enhance the image and voice of budget private schools through access to media and help them build evidence through systematic linkages with academia.

- Bring together different stakeholders including service providers, education experts, investors, financial institutions, thought leaders, education service providers, principals of the affordable school, proprietors, and association heads.

- Conduct workshops and training on leadership management, classroom teaching techniques, and other quality education modules with budget private schools.

- Provide legal aid via network of lawyers across the country.

- Enable BPS to have better access to credit and other services at affordable rate.

- Be an access point for relevant information for BPS.

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National Independent Schools Alliance (NISA), an apex group of school owners and heads has been working to modernise Budget Private Schools and the educational spectrum in the country, in the light of our evolving school education following the adoption of the National Education Policy, 2020.

The pandemic has wreaked havoc in our lives, health, economy, and education, among other things. School education in India, in particular, has faced one of the most serious issues in terms of learning loss. As a result, NISA has developed a project to assess learning loss across the country. The massive learning loss, despite significant improvements and new learnings among teachers and leaders, is thought to be due to a variety of factors, including poor to very poor attendance due to great digital divide, lack of interest in learning, non-inclusive teaching, non-integration of techno-pedagogy, and, of course, the challenges of teaching we face in Budget Private Schools.

The entire survey was carried out across the country with the help of private school teachers and volunteers. It is critical to not only understand the extent and nature of Learning Loss or other problems, but also to use the data points and analysis for immediate need-based interventions to fix the problems. Great care is taken at every step to collect data with precision and accuracy to ensure objective and scientific analysis so to obtain key learnings. I am fortunate that I have been entrusted with leading this national mission, and I have thoroughly loved every step of the process, from building tools for the Learning Gap Assessment Survey to analysing the data and compiling reports. I am confident that our Learning Loss Survey Report will be valuable to the Central and State governments, as well as budget private schools and other category schools, in structuring and implementing measures to help those children with significant learning losses entering mainstream learning.

I appreciate Dr. Kulbhushan Sharma's (President) faith and trust in me. I thank Mr. Tulasi Prasad (Vice President, Quality), Mr. Madhusudhan Sadula (Vice President, Advocacy), Mr. Thomas Antony (National Coordinator) and Ms. Nandita Singh (Research Associate) of the NISA Secretariat. I am grateful for the support received from Dr. Kuldeep K. Anand (National Quality Advisor), Dr. Anirudh Gupta (National Quality Advisor), core team members, state associations, leaders, teachers ,volunteers, parents and students. Furthermore, I am much obliged to Mr. VUM Prasad (Director, Paramita Group) for their excellent insights and guidance in our data analysis.

Finally, I fervently hope that all of our schools will bounce back by using the recommendations and suggestions in this report. It is important to get back on track so as to fully execute the National Education Policy.

Mr. Prasad E. Rao
Research head
NISA

It gives me immense joy that NISA has launched its research tank in order to ultimately help advocate for pressing education issues. We are a group of school leaders who contribute to society by sharing their depth of experience and expertise in the field of education. We are the best ones to diagnose our own difficulties with education. We alone can offer solutions to the challenges that plague the educational system. The irony is, despite being the largest contributor, the voice of private school leaders was never heard in advocacy sector for a better policy. NISA's study work, as well as this research report, will be a defining moment for all of us.

The National Level Survey on Learning Loss in School Education during the pandemic is one-of-a-kind attempt to enlighten readers about the predicament. This report is based on the several experiences of people during Covid-19, which ravaged the whole educational system. The unheard voices of students, teachers, and school leaders are represented in the data. Our efforts will not go in vain; we as educators are capable of promoting and implementing the best practises in order to close the learning gap.

NISA is thankful to the people who have cooperated and contributed selflessly in drafting the report: To the Research Quality Team headed by Dr. Prasad E. Rao (Advisor of NISA and Founder of Paramita High School, Telangana), Mr. MadhusudhanSadula (Vice President, Advocacy), Mr. Tulasi Prasad (Vice President, Quality), Dr. Kuldeep Anand (National Quality Advisor), Dr. Anirudh Gupta (National Quality Advisor), Mr. Thomas Antony (National Coordinator) , Ms. Nandita Singh (Research Associate) and to all the schools for their sheer participation .

We believe that by introducing the three fundamental components of educational research: ontology, epistemology, and axiology, we may introduce them to two crucial but unrelated conceptions of materiality. These are philosophical concepts that refer to a person's perspective of the world, the nature of knowledge and how we know it, and value it respectively.

Dr. Kulbhushan Sharma
President
NISA

INTRODUCTION

The education crisis that has afflicted almost 250 million children in India as a result of school closures enacted in response to the COVID-19 outbreak is examined in this brief. It emphasizes that the shift to online learning has resulted in "regression in learning" that has disproportionately impacted the poor, revealing a growing reliance on private tutoring and a great digital divide.

It is evident that schools went through a difficult patch during the pandemic and budget private schools too faced hardships where the autonomy of schools was in question, in terms of fee issues and so on. Budget Private Schools in India provide the majority of the education imparted by private education institutes in India. They are small to medium-sized institutions that serve India's economically marginalized people. These schools play a major role in filling gaps which are not served by the public education system. COVID-19 related lockdowns have hit BPS the hardest because of its survival on extremely thin margins, given that they charge the most minimal possible fees from parents.

The pandemic has had a medium to high range of adverse effects on School Education with Schools all across the country shut close to 19 months. It is assumed that there has been "a huge learning loss" in schools across the spectrum. It is in this context the foregoing lead statement has been set to measure the learning loss and learning gaps through a pan India survey.

Methodology of Study

The survey was conducted with 1502 students in urban/semi-urban/rural /schools across 17 states Assam, Telangana, Chandigarh, Haryana, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Gujarat. The report is based on the findings of a web-based questionnaire survey and telephonic interviews conducted by NISA .

Research methodology applied is largely quantitative with qualitative and social research components being part of the research.

Data Collection

As primary data is original, apt and the degree of accuracy is high to any research topic, the main course of activity is designed and built around various data collection techniques including questionnaires, interviews, oral and written diagnostic test tools. However, secondary data is contextually used and applied by using reports / surveys / research done by various agencies, bodies and NGO's on the subject to provide authenticity and validation to the research report on Learning Loss. Literature review has been quite supportive as well.

Selection criteria for sample selection

To achieve authenticity, accuracy and reliability of data the sample selection has coverage of all Regions i.e., North, East, West, South and North East of India covering Rural, Semi-Urban and Urban zones. As the learning loss was hypothesized to be from high to very high in budget private schools especially in rural and semi-urban and urban areas, Schools have been chosen with great care for conducting research. All areas - Regions & Zones of India have been covered for sample selection and research coverage.

Research volunteers

Covering far flung areas with high sample size is costly and time consuming for any Research project. However, in this case National Independent Schools Alliance has used the locally available teachers, trained them multiple times before they were sent for Research survey with the support of the managements of state units. All this was done at virtually no cost except the exclusion of voluntary services rendered. This research is undertaken using the existing resources and no part of the research or the whole is outsourced.

Research Tool Design

Questionnaires for students to covered the areas of

1. A) Academics

    B) Physical aspects

    C) Emotional challenges

    D) Relational issues

2. Diagnostic tests in

    1. Mother tongue - Reading - Writing & Comprehension

    2. English - Reading - Writing & Comprehension

    3. Math skills

Grade appropriate testing tools were set in Mother Tongue, English & Comprehension for Grade-3, Grade-5 and Grade-8 classes to test and assess students' present level of achievement, learning loss and learning gaps.

We thoroughly believe a well-designed survey can provide accurate data that can help us guide effective policy and programme decisions. Furthermore, it helped us in comprehending the experiences of those who lived during the pandemic when education went online.

Key findings of the report

Distribution of Sample Data

The distribution of research scope and sample data is designed in such a way that demographic dividend is ensured and the sample is well represented and reliable. North represents higher sample collection followed by South with East and West in third and fourth places respectively.
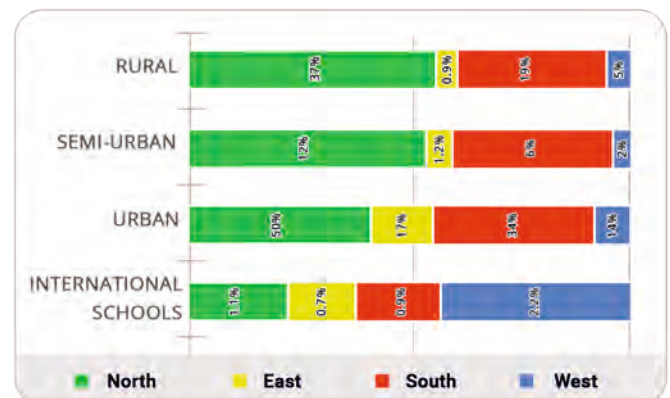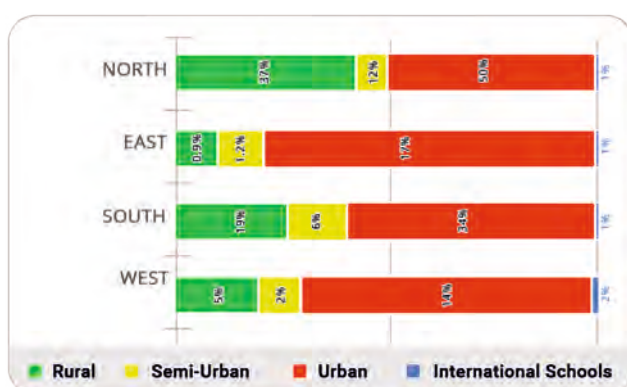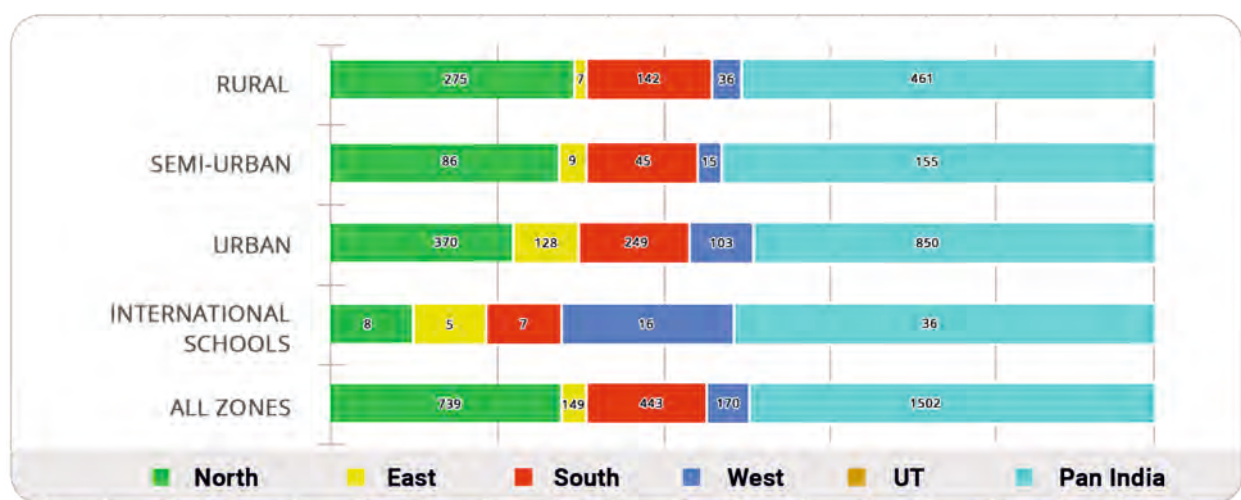
The samples are collected mostly from Budget Private Schools located in Rural, Semi-urban and Urban areas. Urban sample aggregates 57% of 1502 respondents followed by Rural samples with 31%.

CLASS -WISE	III	V	VIII	Total
Rural	147	162	152	**461**
Semi - Urban	46	55	54	**155**
Urban	279	282	289	**850**
International Schools	11	19	6	**36**
Pan India	483	518	501	1502

- Class-III ▪ Class-V ▪ Class-VIII
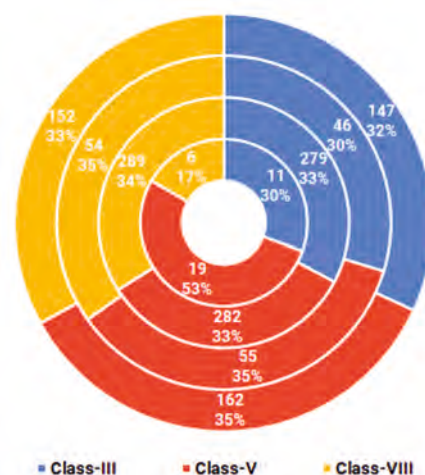
Organisation of Online classes

97.9% of respondents (1471) have reported that schools have organised online Teaching and Learning during the pandemic which is phenomenal in these hard times. The same 98% level is equidistributed with marginal differences across all the zones in the country - Semi-Urban and Urban areas. However, 100% of the respondents in Rural zone reported in the affirmative about schools organising online classes.

Schools Organised Online Classes
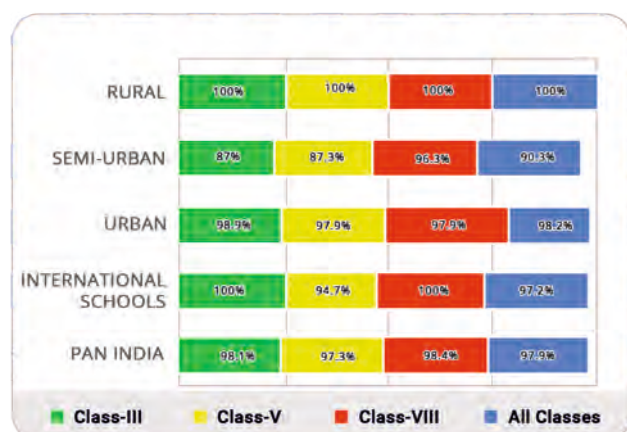
Effective Platform for Teaching & Learning
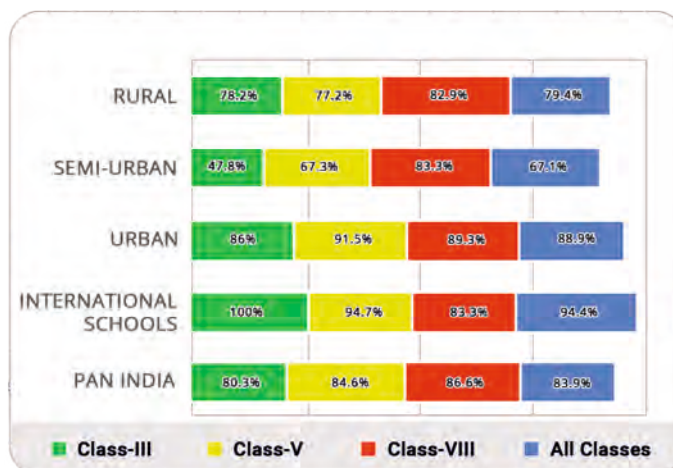
Effective tools and platforms used for Teaching and Learning

It has been observed that interactive platforms such as Zoom / Google Meet / Microsoft Teams have been used to the tune of 83.9% (1260 out of 1502 respondents) and 4%(61) respondents have used other non-interactive platforms like YouTube, Doordarshan, T-SAT etc. The remaining 12%(181) have not joined online classes during the pandemic due to lack of internet connectivity and devices/gadgets.

Activity & Project based Learning
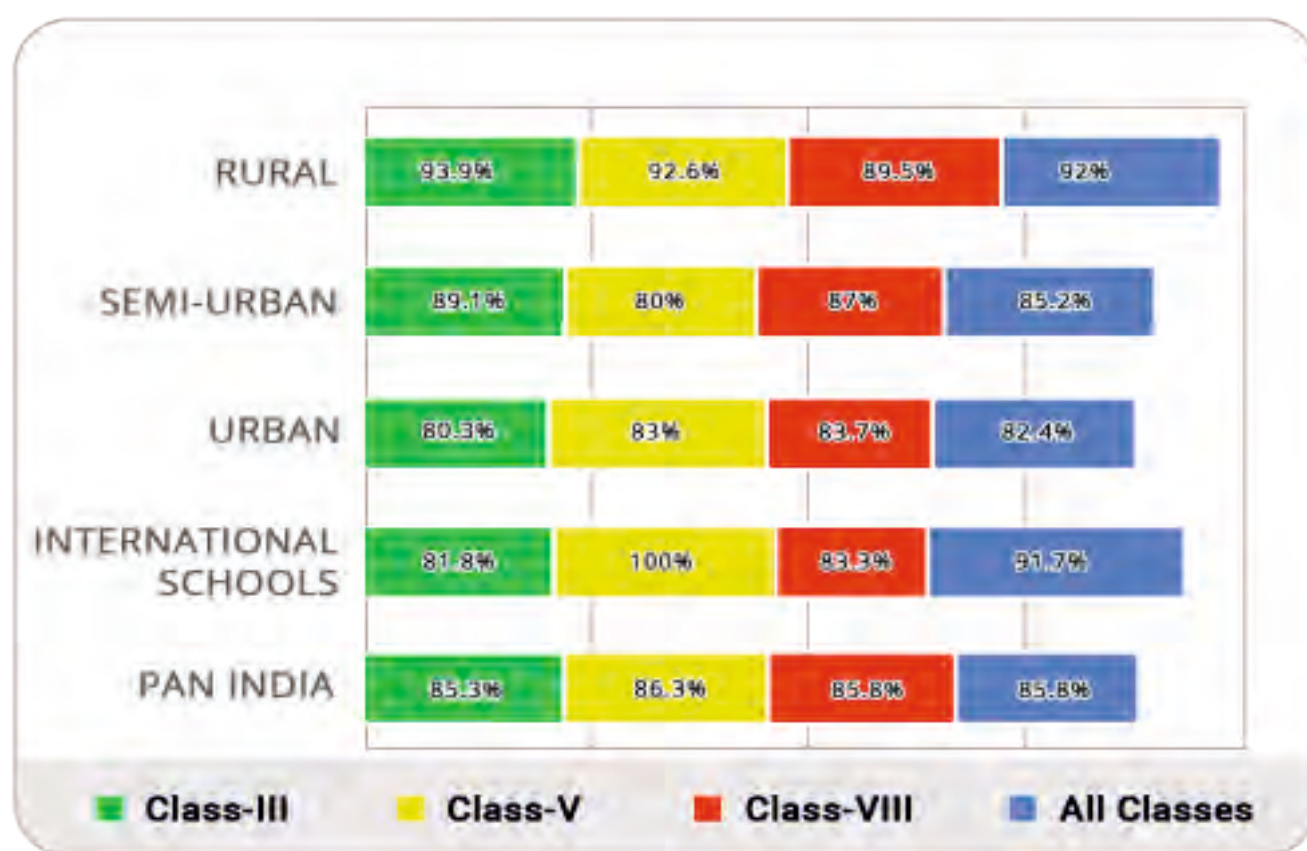
A whopping 85.8% (1289) of the respondent students prefer Activity & Project based learning. The expression of intent for this type of learning is seen across all the zones including the Rural.

When Schools were about to re-open after the pandemic, students were asked about their joining and interest for the offline classes. Interestingly, 98.6% of the respondent students preferred offline classes which is indicative of the impending shift from online classes. Incidentally, when students were asked about their continuation in the same school, 98.2% of the students expressed their opinion in the positive. This is good news for the schools as a large number of students were irregular to online classes or have not joined at all during the pandemic and also as expected 83.2% of the respondents felt that they missed their friends and the school.

Students' Interest in Offline Classes

	Class-III	Class-V	Class-VIII	All Classes
RURAL	98.6%	98.8%	100%	99.1%
SEMI-URBAN	100%	100%	96.3%	98.7%
URBAN	98.2%	97.9%	98.6%	98.2%
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS	100%	100%	100%	100%
PAN INDIA	98.6%	98.5%	98.8%	98.6%
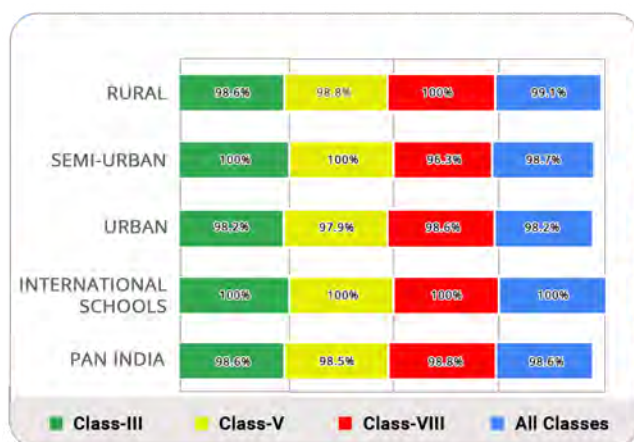
Students Opted to Continue in the Same School

	Class-III	Class-V	Class-VIII	All Classes
RURAL	98%	98.8%	99.3%	98.7%
SEMI-URBAN	100%	96.4%	98.1%	98.1
URBAN	98.9%	97.5%	97.6%	98%
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS	100%	94.7%	100%	97.2%
PAN INDIA	98.8%	97.7%	98.2%	98.2%
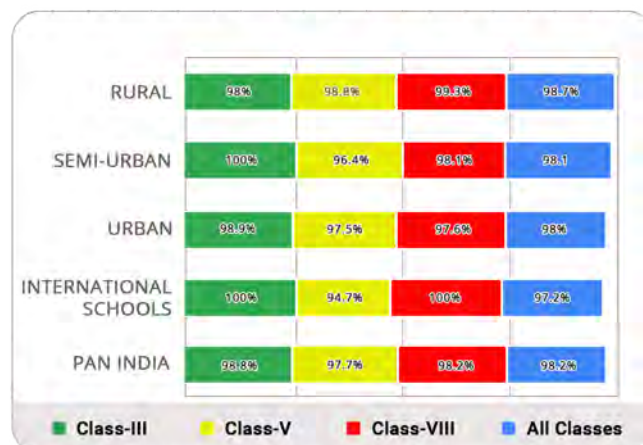
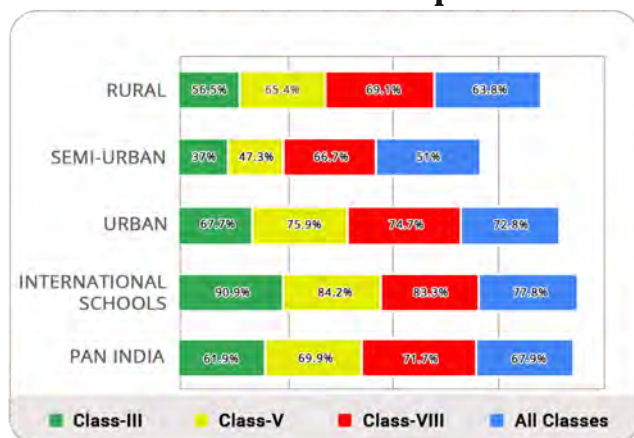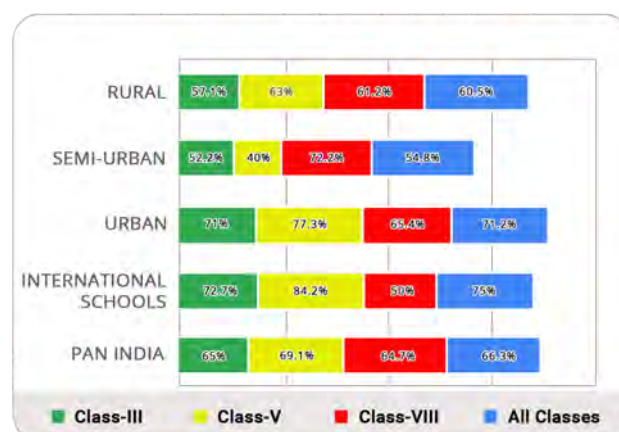67.9% which is above 2/3rd of the respondent students felt the online classes were helpful in their learning and 66.3% rated their learning last year was between excellent and good.

Students Felt Online Classes Were Helpful

	Class-III	Class-V	Class-VIII	All Classes
RURAL	56.5%	65.4%	69.1%	63.8%
SEMI-URBAN	37%	47.3%	66.7%	51%
URBAN	67.7%	75.9%	74.7%	72.8%
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS	90.9%	84.2%	83.3%	77.8%
PAN INDIA	61.9%	69.9%	71.7%	67.9%

Students Rated Learning Excellent & Good

|	Class-III	Class-V	Class-VIII	All Classes
RURAL	57.1%	63%	61.2%	60.5%
SEMI-URBAN	52.2%	40%	72.7%	54.8%
URBAN	71%	77.3%	65.4%	71.2%
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS	72.7%	84.2%	50%	76%
PAN INDIA	65%	69.1%	64.7%	66.3%

44.6% of the respondent students expressed difficulty in coping up with the present class in 2020-21 whereas 32.8% of respondents were not feeling confident of pursuing the present class. 45.1% of the Students expressed their desire for special classes to cover the learning loss and gaps.

Students Expressed Difficulty to Cope
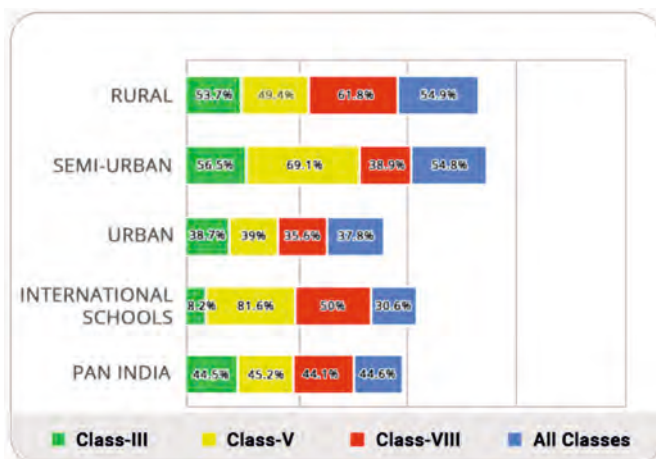
Students Not Feeling Confident
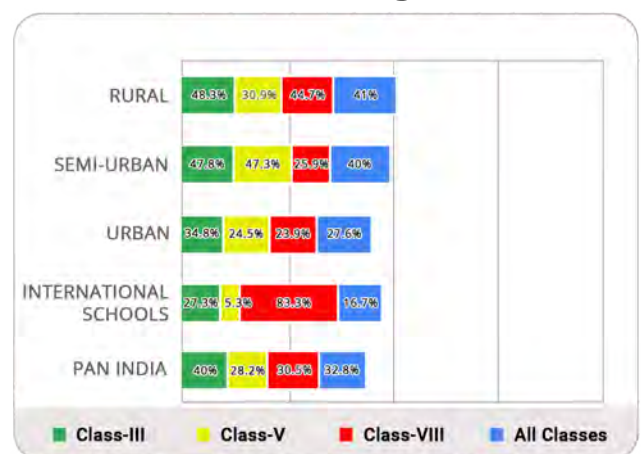
Special Classes to Cover 'learning Loss and Gaps'
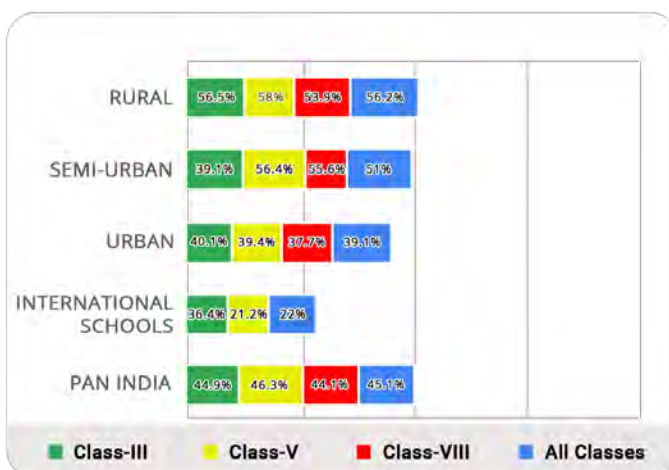
Students in Stressed Home Environment
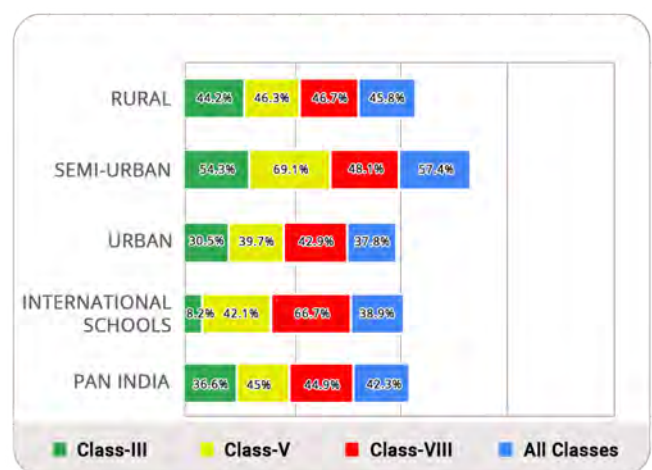
The pandemic impact on students is quite evident as 42.3% of the total respondents reported that they went through stress, tension and anxiety. Also long confinement at home revealed a stressed home environment in every fourth student.

Students' honest responses are reflective of their present mind status - the responses are indicative of multiple challenges students have either gone through or are currently going through. The responses are clearly instructive for School Leaders, Parents, Society and the Government.

SKILLS ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

Grades - 3, 5 and 8 were selected for sampling and data collection. Students were asked to give self-assessment and the same was assessed through a Pen-and-Paper Test (Diagnostic Test) to corroborate the achievement scale in Reading, Writing and Comprehension in Mother tongue, English languages; and Mathematics. Local/Mother tongue languages of the respective regions/states were covered in the data collected.

Levels variance between Students'
Self-Assessment viz-a-viz Actual Assessment (Diagnostic Test)

	MOTHER TONGUE						ENGLISH						MATH	
	Reading		Writing		Understanding		Reading		Writing		Understanding		Mathematics	
3LA	0	0.0%	4	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
2LA	3	0.2%	4	0.3%	4	0.3%	3	0.2%	4	0.3%	5	0.3%	2	0.1%
1LA	108	7.2%	111	7.4%	81	5.4%	119	7.9%	80	5.3%	82	5.5%	84	5.6%
Equal	1192	79.4%	1230	81.9%	1218	81.1%	1209	80.5%	1248	83.1%	1222	81.4%	1273	84.8%
1LB	183	12.2%	136	9.1%	176	11.7%	152	10.1%	157	10.5%	178	11.9%	129	8.6%
2LB	15	1.0%	16	1.1%	21	1.4%	18	1.2%	11	0.7%	14	0.9%	12	0.8%
3LB	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	2	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	2	0.1%

* LA is Level Above and LB is Level Below

- It has been noticed that 80% to 82% of Students can assess their skill levels appropriately in Mother Tongue and English languages and a little higher in Mathematics at 85%.

- 10% to 13% of Students assessed themselves above one-to-many levels of their present class abilities in Mother Tongue and English; and 10% in Mathematics.

- On the other side up to 8% and 6% undervalued their present knowledge by one and more levels in Languages and Math respectively.

Students' Self-Assessment exercise witnessed a large proportion of students (up to 85%) are conscious and aware of their present skill levels in Languages and Math.

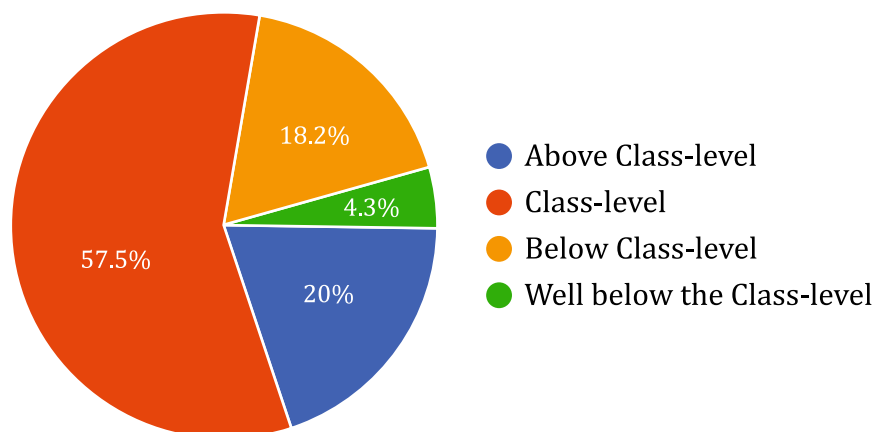# Mother Tongue Language - Performance Analysis and Summary

MOTHER TONGUE	Above Class-level				Class-level				Below Class-level				Far below Class-level			
	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total
READING																
Rural	5%	14%	28%	16%	65%	63%	54%	61%	24%	17%	14%	18%	7%	6%	4%	6%
Semi-Urban	4%	25%	31%	21%	67%	65%	46%	59%	22%	9%	19%	16%	7%	0%	4%	3%
Urban	19%	22%	20%	20%	47%	48%	53%	49%	28%	25%	21%	24%	6%	6%	6%	6%
International Schools	27%	26%	33%	28%	55%	53%	50%	53%	9%	0%	17%	6%	9%	21%	0%	14%
Pan India	14%	20%	24%	19%	55%	54%	52%	54%	25%	20%	19%	21%	6%	6%	5%	6%
WRITING																
Rural	5%	10%	18%	11%	57%	60%	62%	60%	30%	20%	14%	21%	7%	9%	5%	7%
Semi-Urban	2%	15%	19%	12%	63%	65%	63%	64%	30%	20%	17%	22%	4%	0%	2%	2%
Urban	17%	16%	16%	16%	45%	47%	55%	49%	32%	30%	25%	29%	6%	7%	4%	6%
International Schools	36%	21%	17%	25%	36%	53%	67%	50%	18%	0%	17%	8%	9%	26%	0%	17%
Pan India	13%	14%	17%	15%	50%	53%	58%	54%	31%	25%	21%	25%	6%	8%	4%	6%
UNDERSTANDING																
Rural	13%	14%	26%	18%	59%	63%	56%	59%	20%	15%	14%	16%	7%	8%	3%	6%
Semi-Urban	9%	27%	37%	25%	72%	65%	48%	61%	17%	7%	13%	12%	2%	0%	2%	1%
Urban	20%	22%	25%	22%	51%	49%	52%	51%	25%	24%	20%	23%	4%	5%	4%	4%
International Schools	36%	21%	67%	33%	64%	63%	33%	58%	0%	11%	0%	6%	0%	5%	0%	3%
Pan India	17%	20%	27%	21%	56%	56%	52%	55%	23%	19%	17%	20%	5%	6%	3%	5%

MOTHER TONGUE	Above Class-level				Class-level				Below Class-level				Far below Class-level			
	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total
READING																
Rural	7	23	42	72	95	102	82	279	35	27	22	84	10	10	6	26
Semi-Urban	2	14	17	33	31	36	25	92	10	5	10	25	3	0	2	5
Urban	54	61	59	174	132	134	152	418	77	71	60	208	16	16	18	50
International Schools	3	5	2	10	6	10	3	19	1	0	1	2	1	4	0	5
Pan India	66	103	120	289	264	282	262	808	123	103	93	319	30	30	26	86
WRITING																
Rural	8	17	28	53	84	98	94	276	44	32	22	98	11	15	8	34
Semi-Urban	1	8	10	19	29	36	34	99	14	11	9	34	2	0	1	3
Urban	48	44	45	137	126	133	158	417	88	86	73	247	17	19	13	49
International Schools	4	4	1	9	4	10	4	18	2	0	1	3	1	5	0	6
Pan India	61	73	84	218	243	277	290	810	148	129	105	382	31	39	22	92
UNDERSTANDING																
Rural	19	23	40	82	87	102	85	274	30	24	22	76	11	13	5	29
Semi-Urban	4	15	20	39	33	36	26	95	8	4	7	19	1	0	1	2
Urban	55	61	71	187	143	138	149	430	71	68	58	197	10	15	11	36
International Schools	4	4	4	12	7	12	2	21	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	1
Pan India	82	103	135	320	270	288	262	820	109	98	87	294	22	29	17	68

My reading in mother Tongue
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

18.2%
4.3%
57.5%
20%

My Written Skills in Mother Tongue
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

25.4%
4.8%
55.4%
14.4%

My level of understanding mother Tongue
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

15.7%
3.2%
57.5%
23.6%

Reading in Mother Tongue
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

21.2%
5.8%
58.8%
19.2%

Written Skills in Mother Tongue
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

25.4%
6.2%
53.9%
21.3%

Level of understanding mother Tongue
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

19.6%
4.5%
54.6%
21.3%
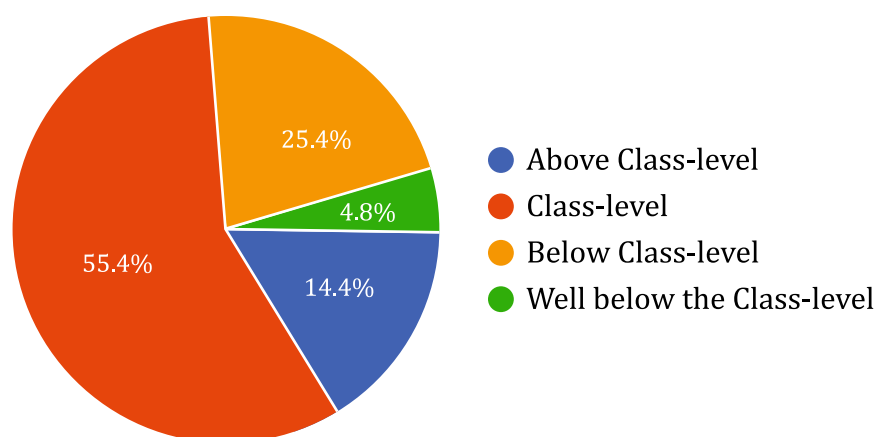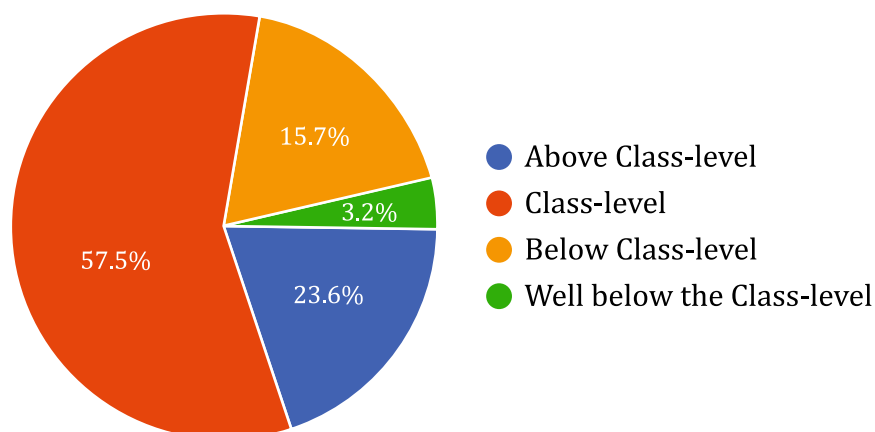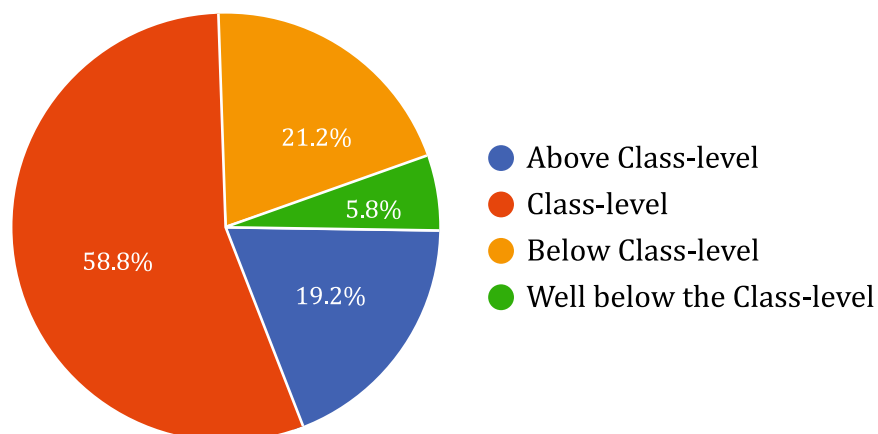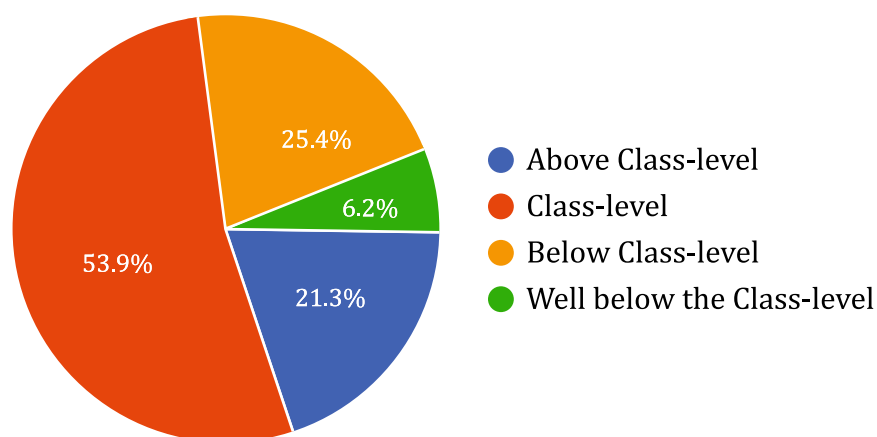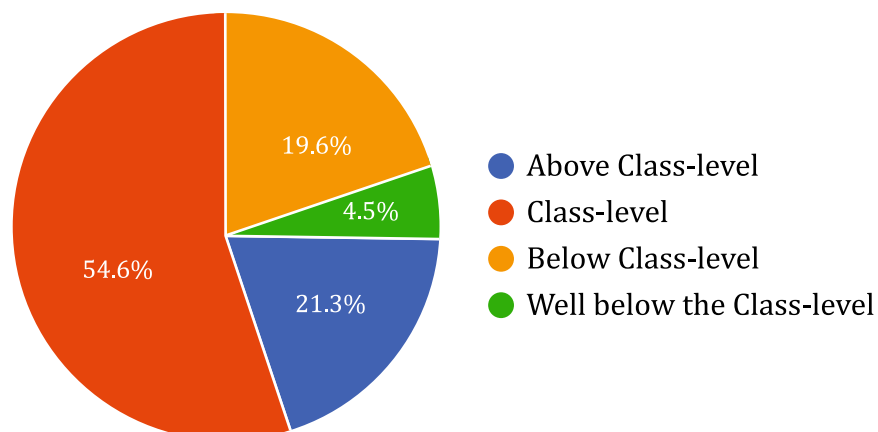
Mother Tongue - Key takeaways

- Mother tongue challenges in Reading are observed in all the Zones with Urban based Students registering the highest percentage of 30% followed by Rural zone with 24%.

- Mother tongue challenges are observed in Primary Classes and continued with marginal improvement in middle and secondary school - Class-III @ 28%, Class-V @ 25% and Class-VIII @ 21%.

- Writing skills in Mother tongue are found to be a major concern with 35% of Urban students falling below one-class (29%) and below two-class (6%) levels.

- Writing challenges among the Rural zone Students are ranged around 30% - 32% in Grade-3 followed by Urban schools with 35% in both below one-class and below two-class levels.

- International Schools have bigger challenges in both Reading and Writing of Mother tongue with 14% and 17% respectively.

- The difficulty level is found to be higher in respondents in Writing compared to Reading across all the grades and zones.

- Students Understanding of Mother Tongue is found to be better than their writing skills and, in some cases, Reading also.

- Urban based Schools have major challenges in Reading, Writing and Understanding of Mother Tongue.

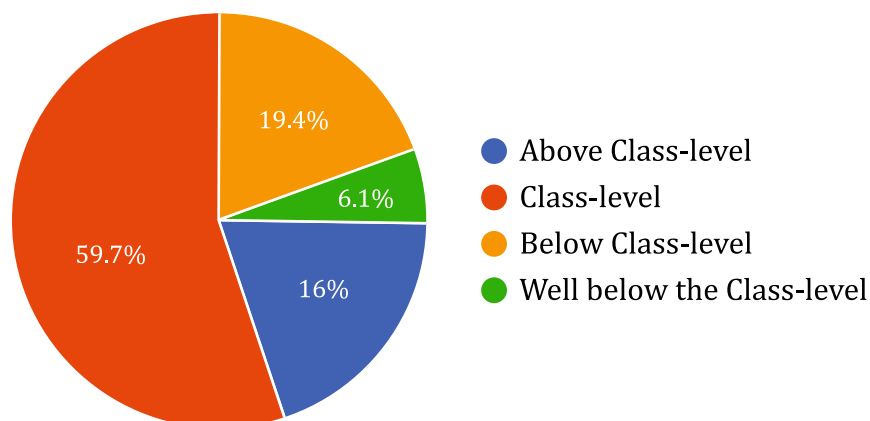# English Language - Performance Analysis and Summary

ENGLISH	Above Class-level				Class-level				Below Class-level				Far below Class-level			
	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total
READING																
Rural	10%	13%	13%	12%	55%	60%	70%	62%	28%	18%	11%	19%	7%	9%	7%	8%
Semi-Urban	4%	18%	24%	16%	59%	71%	57%	63%	35%	11%	17%	20%	2%	0%	2%	1%
Urban	13%	17%	23%	18%	56%	45%	55%	52%	27%	27%	18%	24%	4%	11%	4%	6%
International Schools	55%	26%	33%	36%	45%	74%	67%	64%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Pan India	12%	16%	20%	16%	55%	53%	60%	56%	27%	21%	16%	21%	5%	9%	4%	6%
WRITING																
Rural	8%	10%	11%	10%	49%	57%	64%	57%	34%	23%	18%	25%	9%	9%	7%	8%
Semi-Urban	4%	16%	26%	16%	59%	64%	50%	57%	35%	20%	22%	25%	2%	0%	2%	1%
Urban	10%	11%	16%	12%	53%	46%	57%	52%	33%	31%	22%	29%	4%	11%	5%	7%
International Schools	45%	26%	33%	33%	55%	74%	67%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Pan India	10%	12%	15%	12%	52%	53%	59%	55%	33%	26%	21%	26%	5%	9%	5%	7%
UNDERSTANDING																
Rural	7%	9%	11%	9%	48%	61%	64%	58%	35%	23%	18%	25%	10%	7%	7%	8%
Semi-Urban	4%	18%	31%	19%	57%	65%	46%	56%	33%	16%	20%	23%	7%	0%	2%	3%
Urban	15%	12%	18%	15%	50%	48%	55%	51%	33%	29%	22%	28%	3%	11%	5%	6%
International Schools	55%	21%	50%	36%	45%	79%	50%	64%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Pan India	12%	12%	17%	14%	50%	55%	57%	54%	33%	25%	21%	26%	5%	8%	5%	6%

ENGLISH	Above Class-level				Class-level				Below Class-level				Far below Class-level			
	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total
READING																
Rural	14	21	19	54	81	97	106	284	41	29	17	87	11	15	10	36
Semi-Urban	2	10	13	25	27	39	31	97	16	6	9	31	1	0	1	2
Urban	37	48	66	151	155	126	160	441	75	76	52	203	12	32	11	55
International Schools	6	5	2	13	5	14	4	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pan India	59	84	100	243	268	276	301	845	132	111	78	321	24	47	22	93
WRITING																
Rural	12	17	16	45	72	93	97	262	50	37	28	115	13	15	11	39
Semi-Urban	2	9	14	25	27	35	27	89	16	11	12	39	1	0	1	2
Urban	27	32	45	104	148	131	166	445	92	87	64	243	12	32	14	58
International Schools	5	5	2	12	6	14	4	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pan India	46	63	77	186	253	273	294	820	158	135	104	397	26	47	26	99
UNDERSTANDING																
Rural	11	14	16	41	71	99	98	268	51	37	28	116	14	12	10	36
Semi-Urban	2	10	17	29	26	36	25	87	15	9	11	35	3	0	1	4
Urban	41	35	51	127	140	135	160	435	91	81	64	236	7	31	14	52
International Schools	6	4	3	13	5	15	3	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pan India	60	63	87	210	242	285	286	813	157	127	103	387	24	43	25	92

My Reading in English Language
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

19.4%
6.1%
59.7%
16%

My Written Skills in English Language
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

24.6%
6.6%
57.1%
13.4%
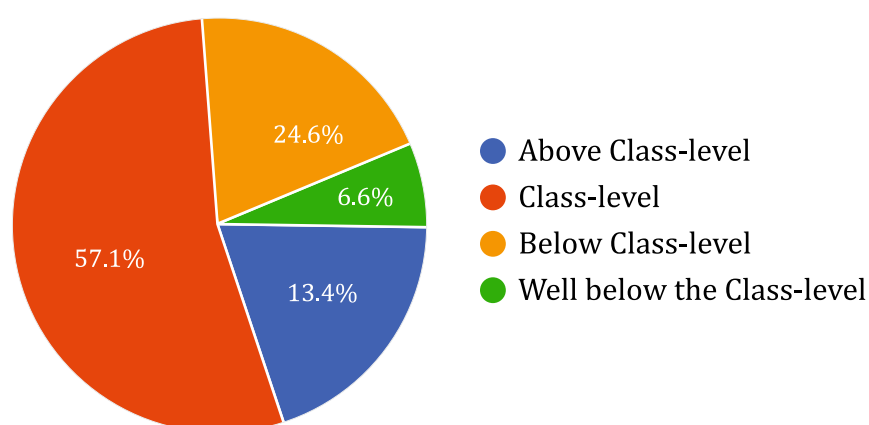
My level of understanding in English Language
1,502 responses
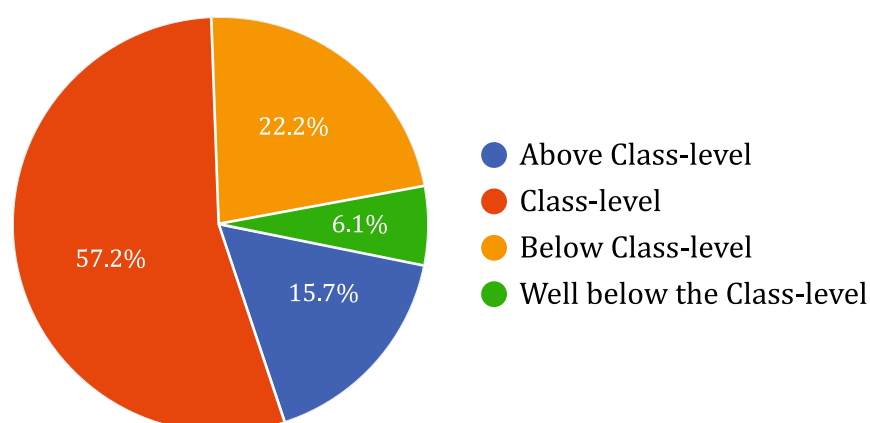
- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

22.2%
6.1%
57.2%
15.7%

Reading in English Language
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

21.4%
4.9%
56.3%
16.2%

Written Skills in English Language
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

26.4%
4.9%
54.6%
12.4%
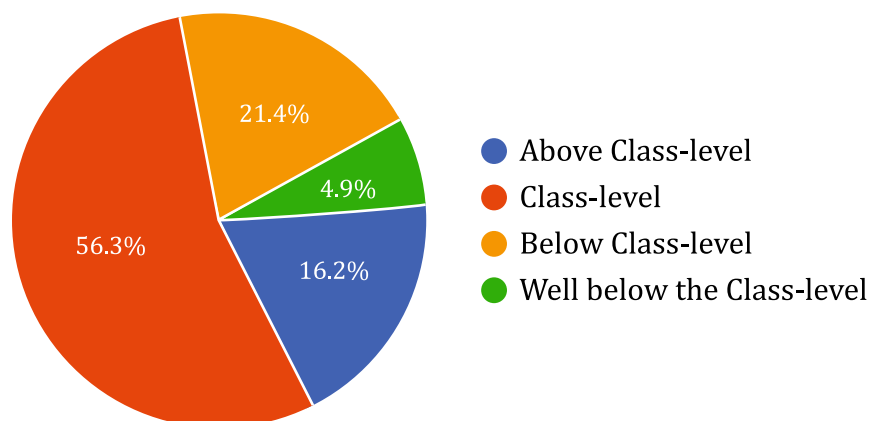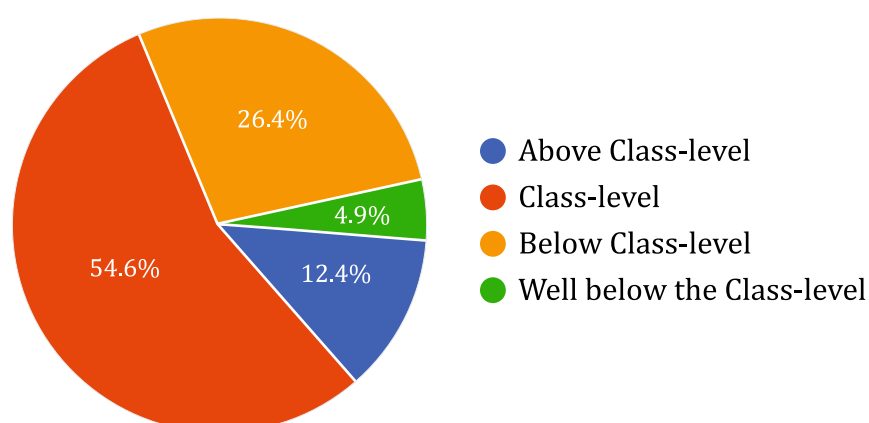
My level of understanding English Language
1,502 responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

25.8%
4.9%
54.1%
14%
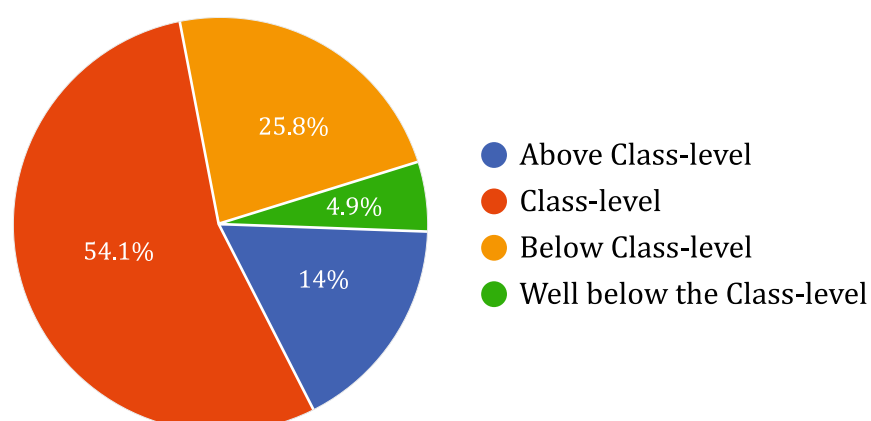
English - Key takeaways

- International Schools have excellent scores in Reading, Writing and Understanding of English across all the zones. Not even a single student is falling below Class-level performance.

- Reading skills in English in Grade-3 across all the zones are at an aggregate of 35% below one-class and two-class levels of the present class. However, Grade-5 stands at 26% and Grade-8 at 19% respectively in terms of English Reading challenge.

- Surprisingly, difficulty level in Reading skills in Urban Schools are found to be higher at an aggregate of 30% across all the zones with Grade-3 and Grade-5 are reporting major challenges compared to Grade-8.

- While 24% and 6% of Students in Urban areas fall below one-class level and below two-class level respectively, Semi-Urban based Schools report overall 21% below one-class level (20%) and below two-class level (1%).

- Major Writing and Understanding challenges are seen across all the zones and in all the classes except International Schools.

- It is observed that Grade-5 Students are experiencing severest challenges in Writing and Understanding at 40% aggregate level.

- Grade-3 presents a huge problem in Writing across all the zones. Incidentally, the Understanding difficulty levels in Grade-3 are almost matching Writing challenges.

- Grade-8 students present challenges in Writing & Understanding at an aggregate of 25% compared to Reading at 19.4%.
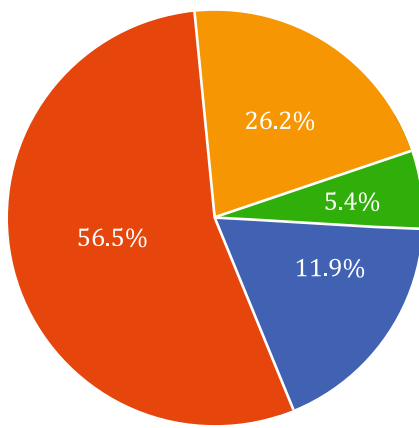
Mathematics - Performance Analysis and Summary

MATHEMATICS	Above Class-level				Class-level				Below Class-level				Far below Class-level			
	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total
Rural	8%	9%	7%	8%	48%	54%	65%	56%	36%	28%	20%	28%	8%	9%	9%	9%
Semi-Urban	7%	11%	9%	9%	57%	75%	69%	67%	30%	15%	19%	21%	7%	0%	4%	3%
Urban	13%	14%	13%	13%	57%	44%	53%	51%	27%	31%	26%	28%	4%	11%	8%	8%
International Schools	45%	21%	17%	28%	45%	58%	50%	53%	9%	21%	33%	19%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Pan India	11%	13%	11%	12%	54%	51%	58%	54%	29%	28%	23%	27%	5%	9%	8%	7%

My Knowledge of Math
1,502 responses

Note: Overall Proportion of The Responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

MATHEMATICS	Above Class-level				Class-level				Below Class-level				Far below Class-level			
	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total	III	V	VIII	Total
Rural	12	15	10	37	70	87	99	256	53	45	30	128	12	15	13	40
Semi-Urban	3	6	5	14	26	41	37	104	14	8	10	32	3	0	2	5
Urban	35	40	37	112	159	124	154	437	74	88	75	237	11	30	23	64
International Schools	5	4	1	10	5	11	3	19	1	4	2	7	0	0	0	0
Pan India	55	65	53	173	260	263	293	816	142	145	117	404	26	45	38	109

Knowledge of Math
1,502 responses
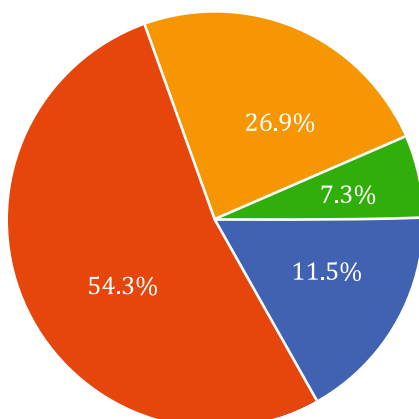
Note: Overall Proportion of The Responses

- Above Class-level
- Class-level
- Below Class-level
- Well below the Class-level

Mathematics - Key takeaways

- Grade-3 Students have major challenges in Mathematics with 44% falling below one-class level (36%) and two-class level (8%).

- Schools in the Semi-Urban zone experience Math challenge in Grade-3 at an aggregate of 37% - below one-class level (30%) and below two-class level (7%).

- Similarly, Grade-5 Students are found to be facing a bigger challenge with 42% aggregate - below one-class level (31%) and two-class level (11%).

- Grade-8 Students in Urban zone are struggling with Math at an aggregate of 34%.

Math data analysis presents a big concern. The data points reveal severe Mathematical challenges are seen across the Grades in all the Zones. One-in-Three Students are struggling with Math, wherein Students fall in either 'below One-Class level' or 'below two-class level'. This key understanding is an eye-opener for all the Educators, Schools, Department of Education and the Governments at Centre & States.

Recommendations and Suggestions

- Language reinforcement strategies and techniques to be adapted by schools to improve LSRW skills and comprehension abilities as early as primary years programme.

- Integrated language teaching and learning as suggested in NEP may be of great help to ward off all language learning related challenges.

- Word identification, proper pronunciation, correct spelling, reading dynamics, writing accuracy, building comprehension abilities and fluency and creativity in expression should be made integral to curriculum planning and delivery.

- Poverty of language skills in the formative and primary years of learning will have deleterious effects on overall learning in children.

- Each school is advised to give top priority to language learning in the form of language, not as a subject or discipline - languages are flourished and learning is assured. The schools and parents understand this nuance to support students.

- Monotony is observed largely in preparatory and early Primary classes as language elements are continually drilled without making any sense leaving the students high and dry.

- Language skills of a student can be greater when he /she is schooled in a rich and vibrant language environment, be it at school, home and community.

- It is also observed that students having sound knowledge of languages can do well in non-languages. Hence, prioritise on the Teaching and Learning of languages in ECCE and Preparatory classes.

- In the Middle and Secondary grades students should be taught how to think, learn, integrate languages, non-language disciplines and express themselves in multiple languages. Schools can use Literature, Poetry, Arts, Sports, Sciences, Social Sciences, Community life, Service and Values to augment language learning.

- Language teachers to be trained to teach in multiple languages, not through translation.

- Assessments and feedback mechanisms should be reflective of language learning promotion and not subject centric.

- Drilling, repetitive sum practices which are commonly in practice are not productive in terms of authentic learning outcomes.

- Gamification, blocks building in ECCE, number learning and understanding through association, direct experiencing of shapes sizes etc. are recommended in ECCE.

- Teaching and Learning of Math concepts linked to life and one's experiences offer stimulus to students and prevent Math phobia engulfing student's mind space.

- Computer simulations, Math Projects and theme based Interdisciplinary Projects may make students Math friendly.

- Logic and reasoning, Sport-Math integration wherever possible, Mental Math and advanced Math concepts in Secondary and Senior Secondary classes for logically brained students may be of good help.

- Self-Assessment by children should be encouraged in schools which may help them view the performance, learning levels and challenges, if any with objectivity.

Remediation

- Remediation programs should be designed for students of Grades-3, Grade-5 and Grade-8 who are not at the current grade level in terms of capacities and achievability. As the Pandemic has adversely affected learning, a sizable number of students of other grades too may have developed huge learning gaps.

- It is recommended that Schools should design interest-generating and sustainable, activity based remedial classes. Peer-mentoring, peer-teaching, senior student support and guidance may be of great help. Please ensure each student is properly diagnosed before suggesting and devising remediation strategies and tools.

- Schools should help students achieve grade readiness within the time frame, lest the Learning Loss and Gaps may remain unchanged which may disengage students from studies.

Physical Orientation

During the Pandemic, students were confined to their homes. They were away from any regular physical activities. The same observation was made in the NISA Research Report. Schools should begin to reorient them to undergo physical fitness regime on a regular basis following COVID protocols in school sports areas. Schools should give immediate priority to improving students' physical well-being. Breathing techniques, concentration promoting activities, Yoga, Karate and other sports to be planned well.

Reprogramming Students' Emotions

It is observed that a sizable number of students have developed psychic and emotional challenges during the Pandemic. Even child parent relationship issues have come to the fore. Schools have a larger responsibility to address these challenges timely by taking all the required initiatives including offering counselling sessions, monitoring student behaviour and responses or reactions, taking parent support, educating them and training the teachers in emotional and psychic literacy. Informal meetings, open sessions, happy sharings, reflections etc will provide some relief from the emotional and psychic challenges.

Hybrid Learning

As schools are going through uncertain times, we should wake up to the realities and opt for Hybrid and Blended Models of teaching and learning. Schools can perform well, should they adapt to the "Change". What is required is the will and intent to change. Budget Schools or for that matter any type of school can perform well and survive if the adaptation to the changes is immediate, the understanding is deep and efforts are supreme with continual awareness programs and relevant training in place. Quality Learning can happen only when the learning is meaningful to the learner.

Retention and Continuation of the Students

Students by and large prefer to continue in the existing school. Schools should reach out to students and parents, educate them on the importance of students joining classes immediately without any delay. If this is done immediately, Budget Private Schools can not only survive but also can contribute to student growth in different spheres.

Student Learning choices

Students expressed their intent of learning through Activity Based Learning and Project Based Learning Methods in addition to good teaching. Schools that can organize teaching - learning programs through Inclusion, Equity, Quality and Reach may become much sought-after schools. Techno - Pedagogy integration at every level of Curriculum design and transaction is what school leaders should aim at. The entire teaching learning process should generate a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for all the stakeholders. Fifty(50) hours of training should be made mandatory for every teacher and leader in service.

Leader's task and tracking

School leader is expected to be in the forefront as a continuous co-learner, good humanist, right mentor, assiduous collaborator, high risk taker, keen observer, non-judgemental practitioner, proactive decision maker and a major contributor to quality bench marking of education.

For Governments' (Central & State) reference and necessary action

Governments at the Centre and States should take cognisance of NISA Research Report and other research reports related to Learning Loss & Gaps and initiate the following steps forthwith.

- Budget Private Schools should be provided with emergency contingent pandemic funds to resume offline classes without major challenges.

- School Leaders and Teachers working in private schools should be provided training and facilitation in Activity-based Learning (ABL) and Project-based Learning (PBL) along with the Public School Leaders and Teachers.

- Though the National Education Policy is unveiled and is going to be implemented from 2022-23, no major initiatives have been taken by the Governments or Departments of Education to prepare and train the workforce to implement it in letter and spirit. As the policy is expected to provide new direction to Schools and Higher Education, it is incumbent on all stakeholders to seize the matter with utmost urgency and commitment to its implementation.

- Schools of Excellence based on certain strict criteria are identified and modelled for replication in the respective Regions / States.

- Counsellors and Special Education Teachers' requirement is increasingly felt in schools nowadays. There is a severe shortage of these professionals. The Government is requested to start short-term diploma courses in all the States to meet the counselling demands.

Conclusion

This nation-wide research project to study and assess the 'Learning Loss and Gaps' in the students during the pandemic by NISA - National Independent Schools Alliance is very timely and relevant in the present context. The entire NISA team and representatives of several states have come together on this mission in the interest of providing high quality education to every student studying across the country. The way Teachers, School Leaders, Students and Parents responded to the Research project is highly appreciable. The data collection was done smoothly and transparently covering Schools and Students in Rural, Semi-Urban and Urban zones. Student responses were collected, analysed and assessed in a very transparent manner and the data that has been arrived at is analysed with complete objectivity. Performance analysis was done based on the responses alone but not on interpretations. Factuality, accuracy, transparency and honesty in research report preparation are the hallmarks of NISA Research on Learning Loss and Gaps. The way the entire team of Leadership and Teachers responded to this challenging task without any cost impact is a great example set for all those contributing to the field of Education. The very purpose of carrying out this research will be fulfilled provided all the stakeholders re-dedicate themselves to the cause of providing benchmarking quality of education to each and every child studying in our schools. The findings and recommendations and suggestions, it is hoped, will be of great value to the Educators and Education Administrators. Finally, NISA feels proud and elated to take up this massive country-wide research on 'Learning Loss and Gaps' and bring it out in the form of a research report.

Acknowledgement

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Acknowledgement to NISA State Leaders who Supported this Research

MV Ramchandra Reddy
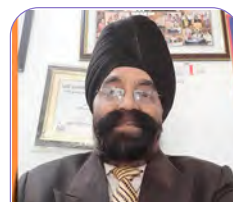Andhra Pradesh Unaided Schools Management Association

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