

DECLINE IN PRE-PRIMARY ENROLMENTS CONTINUED IN 2021-22, SAYS GOVT. REPORT

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Education and related issues

The number of children entering pre-primary classes in 2021-2022 saw a further decline, resulting in 30% fewer students in this school section as compared to pre-Covid as younger students with less access to remote learning continue to bear the biggest brunt of learning loss during the pandemic, according to a report released by the Ministry of Education.

A total of 94.95 lakh students entered pre-primary classes in 2021-2022, registering a drop of 10% as compared to the previous year when 1.06 crore children enrolled in these classes. However, in 2020-2021, there was already a decline of 21% enrolment in pre-primary classes as compared to 1.35 crore the year before due to school closures and classrooms moving online, according to the Unified District Information System for Education Plus report on school education.

Enrolment in primary classes, which include classes 1 to 5, also saw a drop for the first time, falling from 12.20 lakh in 2020-2021 to 12.18 lakh in 2021-2022. However, the total number of students from primary to higher secondary increased by 19 lakh to 25.57 crore.

Also for the first time since the pandemic, the report records a decline in number of schools due to closures as well as a lack of teachers. There were 20,000 fewer schools in 2021-2022 as the total number of schools dropped from 15.09 lakh to 14.89 lakh.

There were also 1.89 lakh or 1.98% fewer teachers as their number reduced from 96.96 lakh in 2020-2021 to 95.07 lakh in 2021-2022.

Computer facilities were available in 44.75% of schools, while Internet access was available only in 33.9% of schools. However, their availability has improved as compared to pre-Covid when only 38.5% of schools had computers and 22.3% had Internet facilities.

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