

# Impact of School Closures on Foundational Learning in Jalna

Padho Jalna Baseline Report 2021-22



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### **About Jalna Education Foundation (JEF)**

Jalna is a district in central Maharashtra in the North Marathwada region with a population of over 20 Lakhs. It's a Tier III city and relatively underdeveloped as compared to other parts of the state. There are over 4.5 Lakh children studying in over 2400 schools in Jalna.

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## **Examination Team:**

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Dilip Kendre

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Rukminikant Dixit

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Pratibha Karwa

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Rushikesh Vajpayee



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## **Assessment Team:**

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Madhuri Zanwar

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Laxmi Yadav

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Shital More

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Diksha Gaikwad

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Vaishali Dodke

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Tejas Agrawal

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Bhagwan Patil

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## **Data Entry and Analysis Team:**

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Omkar Shiram

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Shivam Tambat

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Snehal Bairagi

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Sheetal Khule

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## **Program Design Team:**

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Suresh Lahoti

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Swapnil Sarda

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Suresh Kulkarni

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Santosh Jadhav

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Rahul Lahoti

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## **Project Supported by:**

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Mahyco Hybrid Seeds Pvt Ltd.

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**Published by:**

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## Jalna Education Foundation

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Opposite Mahesh Bhavan,

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Mantha Road,

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Jalna 431203

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Phone: 7020518768

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Email: jefjalna20@gmail.com

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# Executive Summary

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Schools in Jalna, also in most of the country, have been closed for more than 550 days!

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As documented by several studies, online education reached only a small minority of

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students and was not effective in imparting most skills. The Padho Jalna Baseline report

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2021 documents the learning crisis in government schools unleashed by the pandemic-

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induced school closures in Jalna district.

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Jalna Education Foundation (JEF), a non-profit organisation, has operated the Padho

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Jalna program over the last eight years reaching more than 30,000 students. **Padho**

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**Jalna aims to achieve foundational literacy and numeracy among all children in**

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**Jalna.** Working with local government, schools and teachers we have developed a

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comprehensive and scalable program that can achieve the goal of foundational learning

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for all. We work with schools that are interested in the program in both rural and urban

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Jalna. As part of the program, we provide custom-designed workbooks, training and

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other support to children. **Regular and systematic assessment of children's**

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**foundational skills by our staff is one of the key aspects of the program. Every**

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**student is assessed three to five times in each subject - Marathi, Maths, and**

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**English - over a six month period , i.e., over the course of the program. JEF staff**

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conducts a baseline examination in all schools prior to the start of the program to

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benchmark the level of the students. Our programs are completely free to schools and

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students. We raise funds for our programs from within the community.

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An evaluation of learning levels of **over 4,800 government school children** in Jalna

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district in Nov-Dec 2021 brings out the deep, devastating impact of the almost two year

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long school closures. **Across 61 government schools in rural and urban Jalna only**

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**a third of all children in grade 4 to 6 are foundationally literate. In other words,**

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**only one in three can do basic arithmetic and marathi at grade 2 level. In class 4,**

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**only one in three of all children can do basic subtraction, less than half can**

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understand a simple Marathi Std. 2 level paragraph. Even in class 6, less than half

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**of all children can do simple division or understand a simple English story. And**

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**one in five of all children in class 4 and 5 have no knowledge of Maths i.e. they**

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**score zero in the Maths assessment. These foundational numeracy and literacy**

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**levels have declined by more than half since before the pandemic.** Online learning

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has not reached most children and has not been effective in instilling even the most

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basic foundational skills.

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Jalna is a district in central Maharashtra in the North Marathwada region with a population of over 20 Lakhs. It's a Tier III city and relatively underdeveloped as compared to other parts of the state. There are over 4.5 Lakh children studying in over 2400 schools in Jalna.

Based on our field experiences we suggest certain steps that governments, schools,

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teachers, and communities should take to transform our schools so as to ensure that

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children are foundationally literate.

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**State and local governments should ensure schools get opened and remain**

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**open, and launch an intensive foundational literacy program. School timings**

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**should be extended and summer break eliminated for this year. Children who are**

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**not foundationally literate should complete an intensive foundational literacy**

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**course before moving to the next grade level. This will give them a chance to gain**

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**foundational skills before promoting them to next grade. Curriculum should be**

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**consolidated to cover key aspects missed in the last two years. Additional**

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**financial resources should be provided to ensure schools can remain open.**

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**Additional para-teachers from among local educated youth should be hired for**

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**the intensive foundational literacy program. Schools should monitor absences**

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**and dropouts and work towards reducing those. Communities should come**

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**together to collect independent data on learning levels to track progress and**

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**hold government, schools, and teachers accountable.**

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**Urgent and large-scale government action is required to prevent catastrophic**

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**losses for children. Foundational learning can be imparted in 4 to 6 months if**

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**backed by an intensive program and can dramatically increase lifelong outcomes**

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**for children. Let us take this moment to pledge to make government schools**

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**100% foundationally literate and let 1000s of Padho Jalna type programs**

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**blossom.**

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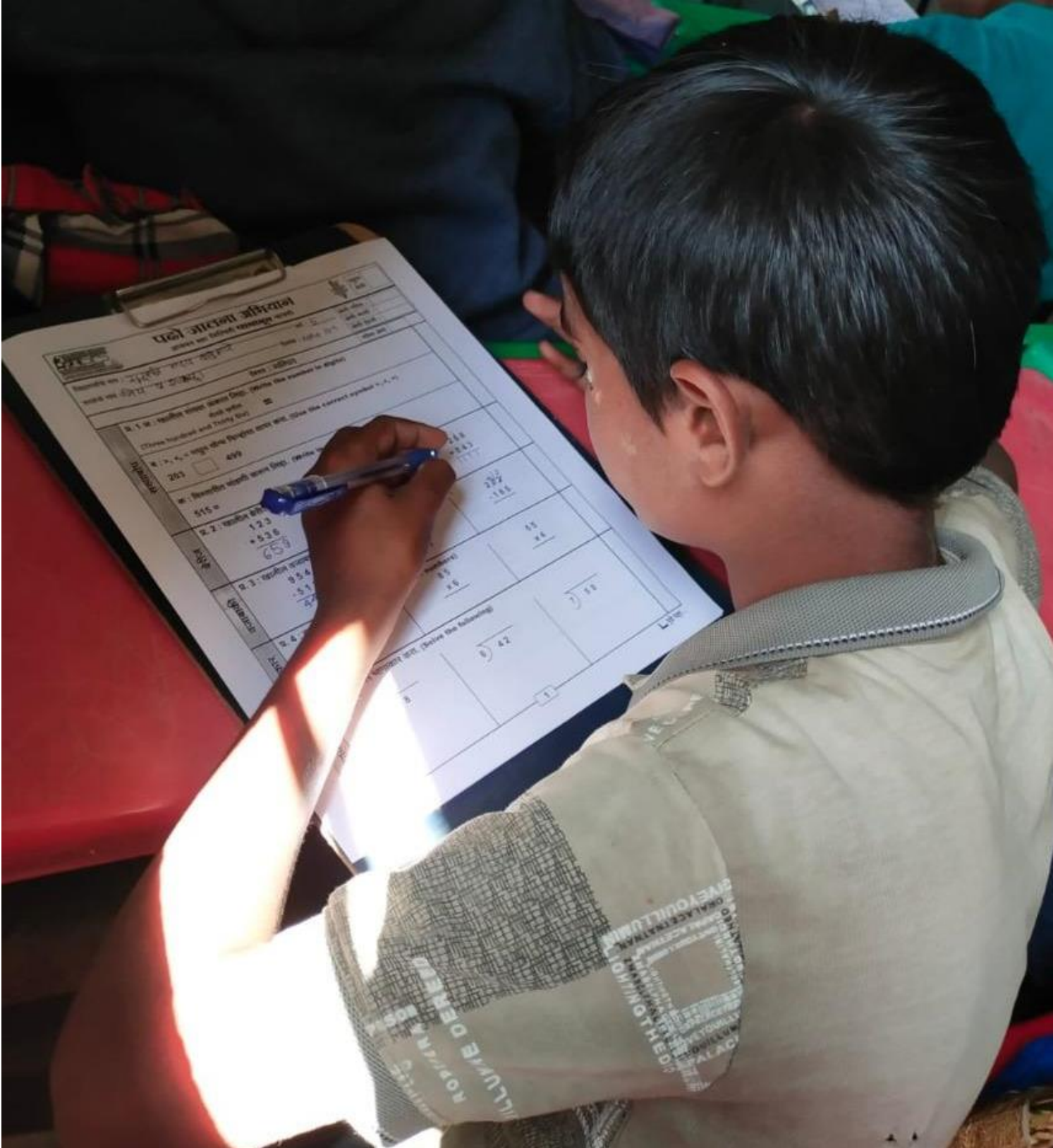
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# Key Findings



compared to other parts of the state. There are over 4.5 Lakh children studying in over 2400 schools in Jalna.

## **Our assessment of learning levels of students across rural and urban Jalna**

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schools clearly portrays the dismal situation. **Only about a third of students are**

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**foundationally literate i.e. have basic language and arithmetic skills at second**

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**grade level. The other two-thirds of children (2 in 3 children) are below second**

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**grade level even though they are in 4th grade or above. Arithmetic skills, in**

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particular, are very weak even for students in higher grades. Below we present

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details of our findings from the baseline examination. We will work with these schools

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over the next six months to improve foundational literacy and numeracy.

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We have worked with **61 (Rural: 44 and Urban: 17)** government schools in Jalna

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district in November-December 2021 to launch the Padho Jalna program. These

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schools together have more than **7000** children enrolled in classes 4th to 6th. As the

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first step, we administered baseline tests to assess the learning levels of children. This

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report documents the results of the baseline tests administered to **4814 (Rural: 1860**

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**and Urban: 2947)** children across the district. Most of the students who were

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administered the baseline examination are from 4th to 6th grade (Figure 1).

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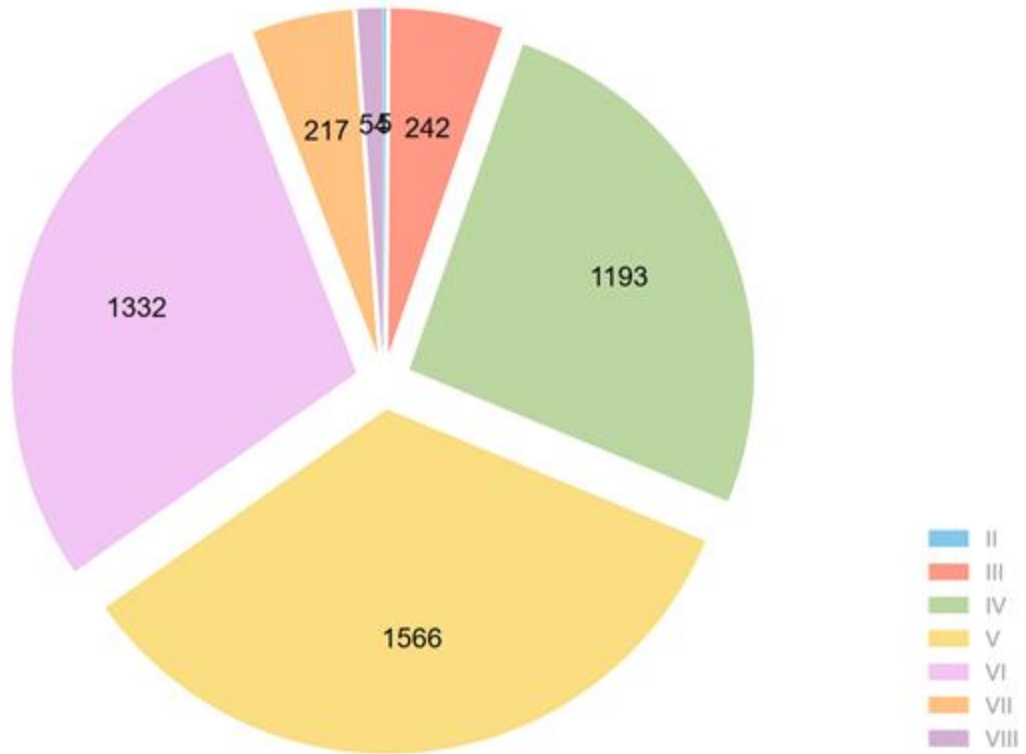
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## **Figure 1: Number of students in Padho Jalna by class**

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The learning levels are extremely grim. Overall, only **34 percent** of students that were

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administered the test in Jalna district are foundationally literate. This means that they

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can perform basic mathematical operations and read and understand simple Marathi at

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second grade level. And among all students 37 percent, 61 percent and 44 percent

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are foundationally literate in Maths, Marathi and English respectively.

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Figure 2 provides information on percentage of foundationally literate students by class

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for each subject and overall. We consider a student foundationally literate if they are

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literate in both Maths and Marathi. **Only 24 percent** of children in class 4 are

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foundationally literate . In class 5 only **35 percent** are foundationally literate. Even in

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class 6 only **44 percent** are foundationally literate.

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Children are least literate in Maths and most in Marathi across all classes. **Only 27**

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**percent of children in 4th class, 39 percent in 5th class and 49 percent in 6th**

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**class are foundationally literate in Maths.** This means that on average **only one in**

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**three children in these classes know the basic arithmetic.**

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## **Figure 2: Foundational literacy in Jalna**

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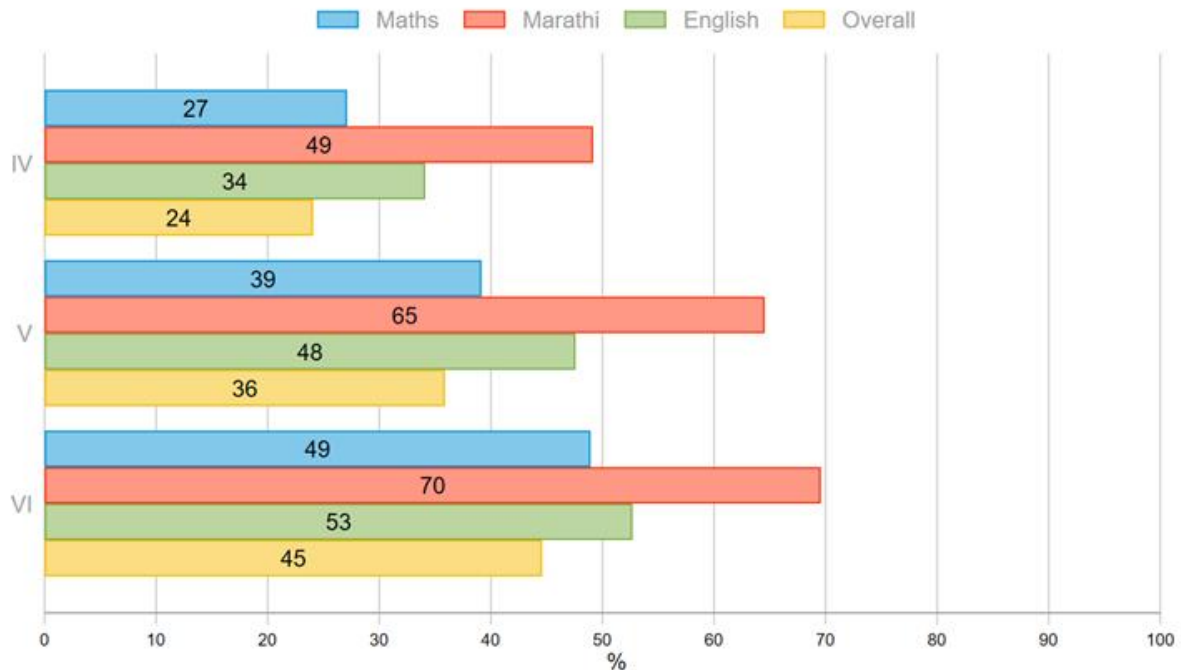
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% of students who are foundationally literate

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Note: The graph plots the percentage of students who are foundationally literate in each subject and overall. For being foundationally literate in a subject they should correctly answer three out of five sections in that subject. For being foundationally literate overall they should be foundationally literate in both Maths and Marathi.

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**In Marathi the situation is slightly better, but overall just a little above half of**

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**children can read and understand simple Marathi.** Only 49 percent in 4th class, 65

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percent in 5th class and 70 percent in 6th class are foundationally literate in Marathi.

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Jalna is a district in central Maharashtra in the North Marathwada region with a population of over 20 Lakhs. It's a Tier III city and relatively underdeveloped as compared to other parts of the state. There are over 4.5 Lakh children studying in over 2400 schools in Jalna.

In English, as expected, foundational literacy is below that of Marathi but slightly better

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than Maths. This might be because learning basic letters and words in English is easy in

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a rote learning environment which is not necessarily true for Maths.

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This is also reflected in the average scores of students in the three subjects. The scores

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are lowest for Maths followed by English and Marathi. Each subject has five sections

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and each correct section earns the student 100 marks. So a student can score a

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maximum of 500 marks in the subject and if she scores 400 or more marks then we

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deem her foundationally literate. Average scores in Maths are in the 210 to 305 range,

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in Marathi they are in the 323 to 388 range and in English are between 261 and 341.

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**More than 20 percent of children in class 4 and 5 score 0 marks in Maths. In other**

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**words, one in five children in class 4 and 5 have almost no knowledge of basic**

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**arithmetic.**

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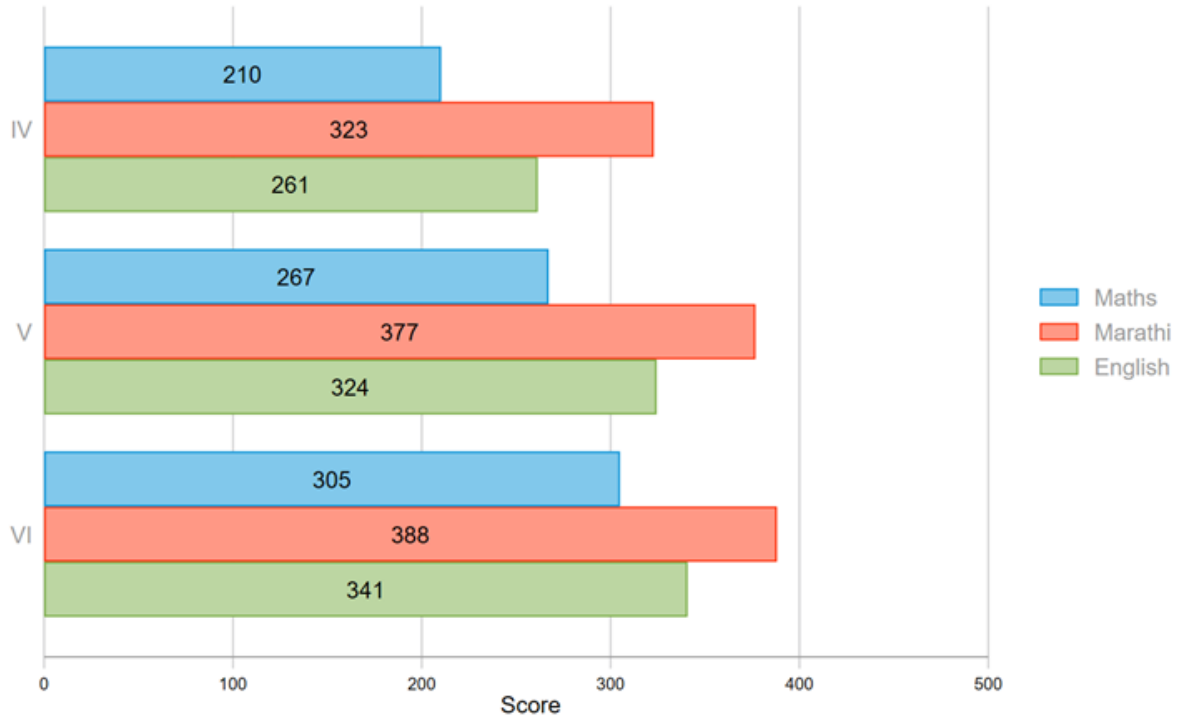
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### **Figure 3: Average foundational literacy scores in Jalna**

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Note: The graph plots the average score of students in each subject. Each subject has a maximum score of 500 marks. Each section in a subject is worth 100 marks.

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A closer look at components of each subject reveals the areas where students are weak

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(Figures 4 to 5). In Maths, children are least able to do division and subtraction. Less

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than one in three children in 4th class can do simple subtraction or division. **Only about**

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**one in three children in 4th class can do simple subtraction. Even in 6th class**

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**less than half can do simple division.** Even the knowledge of the number system is

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weak among most students as it is not taught appropriately in schools.

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## **Figure 4: Maths foundational literacy by class**

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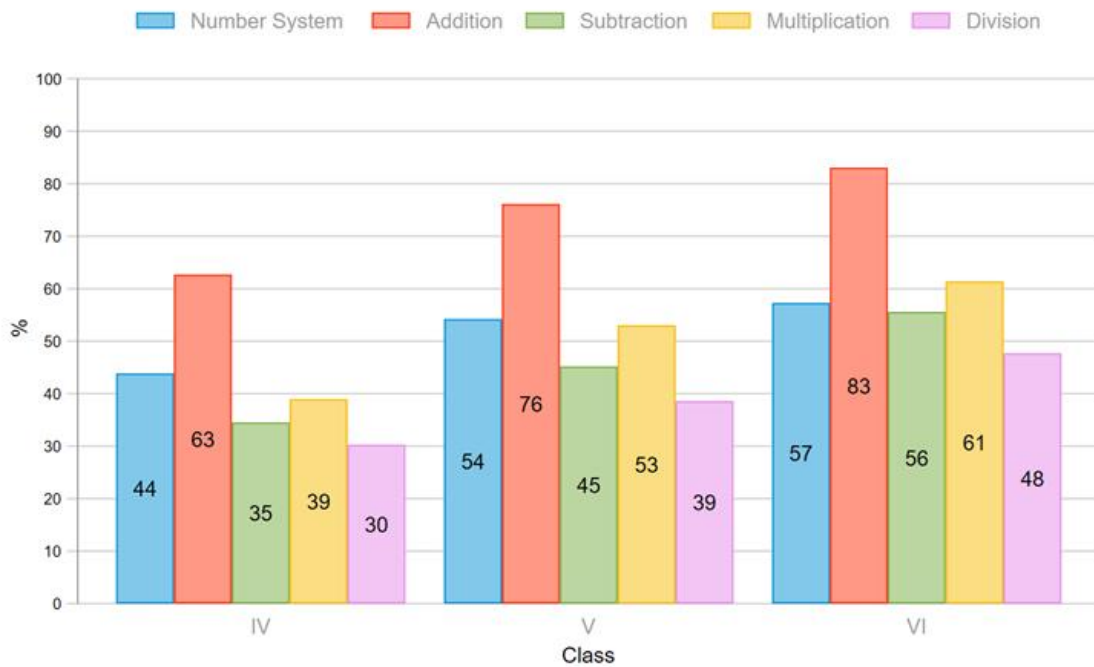
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% of students who can do basic arithmetic operations

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Note: The graph plots the percentage of students who can do various basic mathematical operations by class.

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## **Figure 5: Marathi foundational literacy by class**

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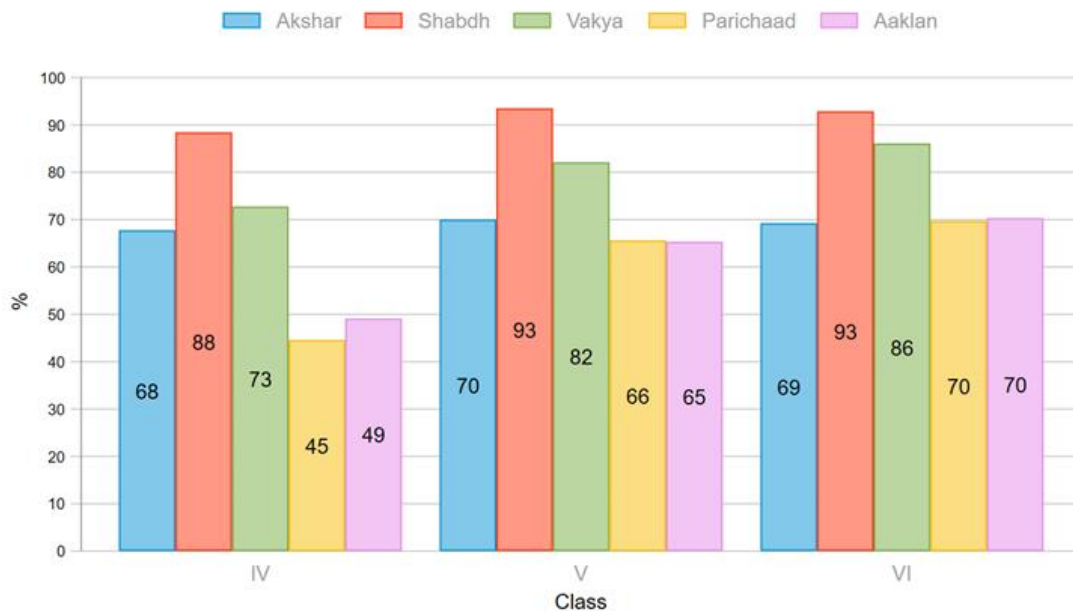
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% of students who can read-write at various levels in Marathi

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Note: The graph plots the percentage of students who can identify missing Marathi letters (Akshar), read and match words with pictures (Shabdh), understand written sentence (Vakya), understand a written paragraph (Parichaad) and comprehend a simple story (Aaklan).

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In Marathi the understanding of a small paragraph or comprehension of a simple story is

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quite low. **In 4th class less than half of children can comprehend a simple story.** In

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English the comprehension of stories is even lower. **Less than one in five children in**

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**4th class can understand a simple English story. Even in 6th class less than half**

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**can understand a simple English story.**

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## **Figure 6: English foundational literacy by class**

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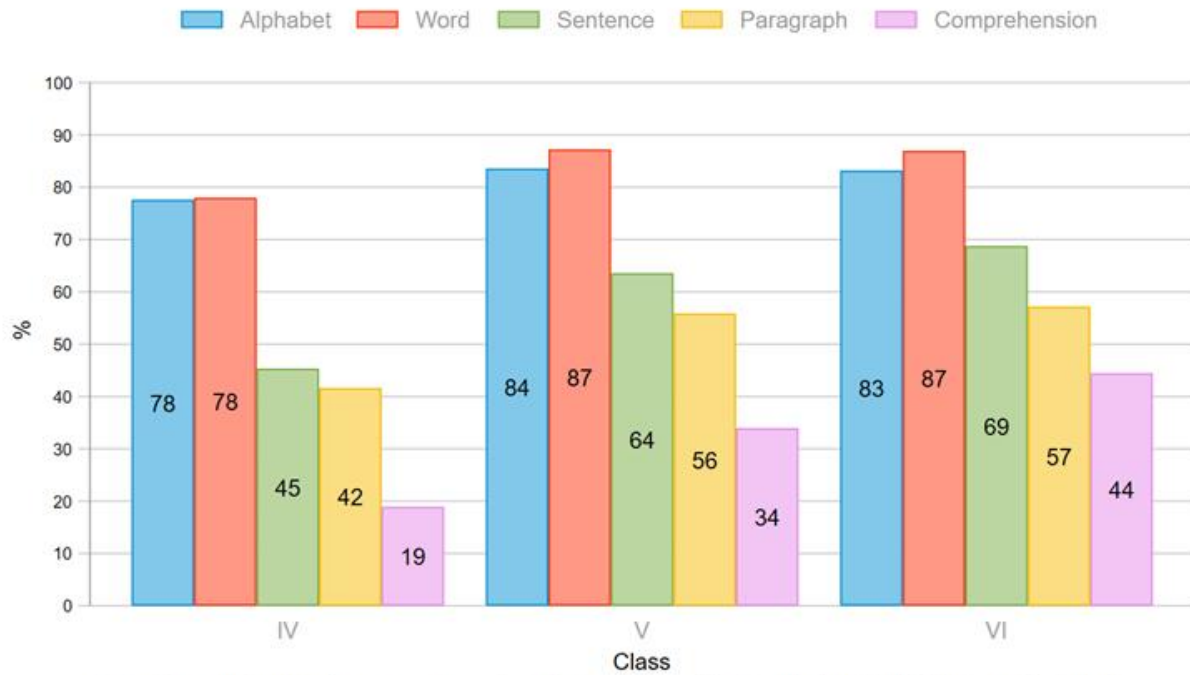
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## **% of students who can read/write at various levels in English**

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Note: The graph plots the percentage of students who can identify missing English letters (Alphabet), read and match words with pictures (Word), understand written sentence (Sentence), understand a written paragraph (Paragraph) and comprehend a simple story (Comprehension).

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## **2018 Comparison**

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Comparing the results in the pandemic period as compared to pre-pandemic period

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shows that the proportion of foundationally literate children have reduced substantially.

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**When we compare schools where we conducted the baseline test in 2018 and**

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**also in 2021, we find that the proportion of foundationally numerate children in**

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**Maths has reduced by half or more in the ten schools where we ran the program**

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**in both periods.** For example, in one of the better run government-aided schools in

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Jalna district the proportion of foundationally literate in Maths has dropped from 53

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percent to only 28 percent. In schools that were performing poorly before the decline

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has been larger. In another school the percentage of children who are foundationally

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literate in Maths has dropped from 28 percent in 2018 to 9 percent in 2021.

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## **Other Evidence**

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Evidence from other surveys done in other states in India also presents a similar

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catastrophic impact of the school closures. Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER)

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survey in Karnataka<sup>1</sup> conducted in March 2021 found a 16 percentage point rise in class

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1 student who was unable to read letters, and a 12 percentage point increase in class

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1 students who were unable to recognise numbers as compared to before the

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pandemic.

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ASER in Chattisgarh<sup>2</sup> conducted in October-November 2021 in 28 districts of

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Chhattisgarh surveyed 46,021 children. They found that the proportion of primary school

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children who cannot recognize letters of the alphabet has doubled since 2018, and

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fewer students can now do basic subtraction or division.

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A survey of nearly 1,400 school children in underprivileged households in 15 states and

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union territories found that in rural areas only 8% of sample children are studying online

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regularly, 37% are not studying at all, and about half are unable to read more than a

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few words<sup>3</sup>.

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A study carried out by Azim Premji University<sup>4</sup> in 1,137 public schools across

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Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttarakhand in January

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2021 had found that 92% of primary school students had lost at least one language

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ability from the previous year, and 82% of students in classes 2-6 had lost at least one

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mathematical ability during the same period.

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# Recommendations

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We should convert the crisis to an opportunity and focus our efforts on ensuring all our

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children are foundationally literate. Based on our field experiences we suggest certain

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steps that governments, schools, teachers and communities should take to transform

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our schools so as to ensure that they are centres for learning not just for a few but for

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all.

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**State and local governments should ensure schools are open and remain open,**

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and launch an intensive foundational literacy program. Children who are not

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**foundationally literate must complete an intensive foundational literacy course**

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**before moving on to the next grade. This will give them a chance to gain**

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**foundational skills before taking on a more complex curriculum. School timings**

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**should be extended and summer break eliminated for this year. Curriculum**

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**should be consolidated to cover key aspects missed in the last two years.**

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**Additional financial resources should be provided to ensure schools can remain**

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**open. Additional para-teachers from among local educated youth should be hired**

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**for the intensive foundational literacy program. Schools should monitor absences**

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**and dropouts and work towards reducing those. Communities should come**

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**together to collect independent data on learning levels to track progress and**

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**hold government, schools and teachers accountable.**

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**Ensure schools remain open**

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School closures hurt all students, but students from government schools and those

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without adequate support systems at home are impacted the most. Closing schools also

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has been shown to have a negative impact on children's nutrition and mental health. As

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opposed to closure of the economy, the losses from school closure are hard to recover

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and their impacts are long term. So all efforts should be made to prevent any more

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school closures. **Utilising outdoor spaces and appropriate social distancing**

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**measures schools in India can certainly remain open even if another pandemic**

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**wave arrives.** The central government has also recently given more leeway to states in

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making choices on school openings.

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## **Launch an intensive foundational literacy program**

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As documented in this report, the impact of school closures are disastrous and a vast

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majority of students in class 4th to 6th do not have any foundational skills that they

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should have acquired in class 2. Without immediate action to rectify this, the learning

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losses among students will be lifelong. We recommend the government launch an

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intensive foundational literacy program in schools. **Till the next academic year,**

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**including the summer, teachers, educated youth in villages and towns can be**

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**used to execute this program. Teachers should focus only on foundational**

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**teaching.** The government already has various key elements of the program like

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teaching and evaluation material, but a big push needs to be made to sustain it over the

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next six months. Target of 100 percent foundational literacy among children in 4th grade

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and higher can be achieved through this.

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**Successful completion of a foundational literacy course should be a requirement**

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**before moving to the next class**

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Even after learning losses, due to the automatic promotion policy of RTE, children have

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been promoted two classes above what they were before the schools closed. So a child

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who was in 1st grade in March 2020 when the pandemic started will be automatically

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promoted to class 4 in June 2022. **We recommend that children who are not**

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**foundationally literate should successfully complete an intensive foundational**

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**literacy course before moving to the next class level.** The assessment of

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foundational skills must be done by a body independent of the government or schools.

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**According to our estimates about two-thirds of students should be made to take**

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**such a foundational literacy score. This will prove immensely useful for children**

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**and teachers in the long term.**

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## **Extend school time**

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We have already lost two years in school closures and children have lost a lot.

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Government should work with schools **to extend school timings and eliminate**

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**summer break.** This can be done by hiring additional para-teachers to reduce load on

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regular teachers and ensuring that teachers are given no non-teaching responsibilities

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over the next six months.

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## **Consolidate the curriculum**

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Children have missed two years worth of instruction and in many cases have lost what

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they knew before the school closures. Schools and teachers should adjust the

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curriculum and prioritise essential materials that students have missed in the last two

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years, instead of focussing on completing the current syllabus. The goal should be on

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ensuring the acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy skills by all children.

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## **Additional resources**

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Government should provide additional financial resources to schools to extend school

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hours, hire para-teachers and to provide additional learning resources. This investment

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in education at this juncture is very essential and can prove highly effective in

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recovering the learning losses and ensuring 100 percent foundational literacy.

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## **Monitor absences and dropouts**

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Such long school closures lead to detachment from schools and attachment with work

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and other activities for many children, especially among those in the adolescence years.

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Girl child marriages have also been reported to increase substantially. We have

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observed absences in the range of 30 to 50 percent during the first month of school

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openings. Schools should monitor absences and dropouts and persuade children and

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parents to return to school by door-to-door canvassing and community meetings.

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## **Independent monitoring and data collection**

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Communities with the help of non-profit groups should come together and set up a

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mechanism to independently assess and monitor learning levels of students. This will

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ensure independent monitoring and can be used to keep government, schools and

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teachers accountable. Let 1000s of Padho Jalna type programs blossom.

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**Urgent and large-scale government action is required to prevent catastrophic**

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**losses for children. Foundational learning can be imparted in 4 to 6 months if**

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**backed by an intensive program and can dramatically increase lifelong outcomes**

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**for children. Let us take this moment to pledge to make government schools**

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**100% foundationally literate and follow it up with the needed action.**

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Jalna is a district in central Maharashtra in the North Marathwada region with a population of over 20 Lakhs. It's a Tier III city and relatively underdeveloped as compared to other parts of the state. There are over 4.5 Lakh children studying in over 2400 schools in Jalna.

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**पढो जातना अभियान**  
 आनंदनगर वार विद्यार्थी संघाच्या माध्यमातून (मासिक अंक)

विद्यार्थीचे नाव: \_\_\_\_\_ अर्क: \_\_\_\_\_ अर्क: \_\_\_\_\_  
 शाळेचे नाव: \_\_\_\_\_ पत्ता: \_\_\_\_\_ अर्क: \_\_\_\_\_  
 विषय: अंग्रेजी

प्र. 1: खालील संख्या अंकसार लिहा. (Write the number in digits)  
 तीनशे वीस = 300  
 302 > 300  
 302 < 300  
 302 > 300

प्र. 2: खालील बेरीज करा. (Find the sum)

1 2 3 + 4 3 4 ----- 5 5 7	2 4 + 2 6 ----- 4 0	7 4 + 2 6 ----- 1 0 0
------------------------------------	------------------------------	--------------------------------

प्र. 3: खालील वजाबाकी करा. (Subtract and write the answer)

9 4 8 - 4 9 2 ----- 4 5 6	5 0 - 9 9 ----- 5 9	0 9 2 - 4 3 4 ----- 6 5 8
------------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------------

प्र. 4: खालील गुणाकार करा. (Multiply the numbers)

4 x 9 ----- 3 6	5 0 x 6 ----- 3 0 0	5 4 x 8 ----- 4 3 2
--------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------

प्र. 5: खालील भागाकार करा. (Solve the following)

1)  $\frac{6}{2} = 3$   
 2)  $\frac{6}{2} = 3$   
 3)  $\frac{6}{2} = 3$

विषय: अंग्रेजी

प्र. 1: अनुक्रमे केवलेरी मुद्रासारी लिहा व खालील बसवणी पूर्ण करा.

त थ द ह न प फ र भ म

प्र. 2: चित्रावली योग्य शब्द लिहा.

चित्रे: बगळा, मंडप, उट, मंडप, उट, बगळा

प्र. 3: वाक्य वाचा व प्रश्नाची उत्तरे लिहा.

कपिला गाव आहे.  
 कपिला गाव मोठ्यात आहे.  
 कपिला गाव मोठ्यात असली आहे.

प्र. 4: खालील परिच्छेद वाचा व प्रश्नाची उत्तरे लिहा.

**स्वच्छतेचे प्रसारक संत गाडगे बाबा**

बाबा गाडगे स्वच्छतेचा जय व प्रसार करिताच ते स्वच्छतेची कुरखी उभारले. असे - खालील लोकांचे नावे लिहा. (3) (सुम 3)

बाबा गाडगे स्वच्छतेचा जय व प्रसार करिताच ते स्वच्छतेची कुरखी उभारले. असे - खालील लोकांचे नावे लिहा. (3) (सुम 3)

बाबा गाडगे स्वच्छतेचा जय व प्रसार करिताच ते स्वच्छतेची कुरखी उभारले. असे - खालील लोकांचे नावे लिहा. (3) (सुम 3)

प्र. 1: खालील चित्रावली वाचून चित्रावलीवरील प्रश्नांची उत्तरे द्या व नीट पूर्ण करा.

चित्रे: (1) (2) (3) (4)

प्रश्न 1: चित्रावलीवरील प्रश्नांची उत्तरे द्या व नीट पूर्ण करा.

प्रश्न 2: चित्रावलीवरील प्रश्नांची उत्तरे द्या व नीट पूर्ण करा.

प्रश्न 3: चित्रावलीवरील प्रश्नांची उत्तरे द्या व नीट पूर्ण करा.

विषय: अंग्रेजी (English)

प्र. 1: Fill in the blanks. (चित्रावली वाचून घ्या)

LETTER: A B C D E F G H I J

Q. 2: Write the correct word for the picture. (चित्रावली योग्य शब्द लिहा)

चित्रे: Cat, Rose, Lion

WORD: Lion, Cat, Rose

Q. 3: Answer the following. (उत्तरेची उत्तरे लिहा)

Q. A: Who is Kapila?  
 Ans: Kapila is a cow.

Q. B: What is the colour of Kapila?  
 Ans: Kapila is white.

Q. C: Where is Kapila sitting?  
 Ans: Kapila is sitting under the tree.

Q. 4: Read the passage and tick correct (✓) or wrong (X)

(Use clean towel. Wear clean clothes after bath. Comb your hair daily. Tidy your nails. Sit up straight.)

Q. A: Use dirty towel after bath.  ✓  X  
 Q. B: Wear clean clothes after bath.  ✓  X  
 Q. C: Comb your hair once a week.  ✓  X

Q. 5: Write the correct option. (योग्य पर्याय लिहा)

**Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar**

Dr. Bhabasaheb Ranaji Ambedkar was born on 14th April 1891 in Mhow town of Madhya Pradesh. He was the son of Ranaji Dalpat, Maloji, and Bhabasaheb. Bhabasaheb Ranaji Ambedkar is popularly known as 'Bhabasaheb'.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a very brilliant student. He was awarded doctorate in economics from both Columbia University & London School of Economics.

Q. 1: When was Dr. Bhabasaheb Ranaji Ambedkar born?  
 (14 January 1940, 25 March 1988, 14 April 1891)  
 Ans: 14 April 1891

Q. 2: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was awarded Doctorate in Economics from which University?  
 (Bombay University, Delhi University, Columbia University)  
 Ans: Columbia University

Q. 3: By which name was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar popular?  
 (Bhabasaheb, Bapu, Titaji)  
 Ans: Bhabasaheb

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