



Ed Tech and Educational Opportunity during Covid-19 School Closures

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Introduction

As the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted access to education and learning across the globe, in India alone, 247 million primary and secondary-school students are impacted by the school closure, as reported by UNICEF. This pandemic situation has compelled the schools and other educational institutions to quickly adapt remote learning methods using various online tools. However, this has somehow caused inequalities in learning among girls and boys, among poor and affluent children, and across communities. To identify gaps and challenges in the use of education technology (ed tech), this study was carried out in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. To understand the educational practices of households pre-COVID-19 and during the COVID-19 school closures, phone surveys of 201 households and a total of 271 primary-school-aged children were conducted in February of 2021. The findings shed light onto the need of policies to broaden access to continuous and equitable learning opportunities across the student population



Key Highlights

- The survey data showed that access to ed tech in schools and households before the pandemic was extremely limited and differed by household socioeconomic background and the type of school (government or private) children attended.
- Students in private school, especially those from high-socioeconomic status households are more engaged in regular educational activities during COVID-19 than their peers in government schools and from low-socioeconomic status households.
- Too many children (20%) in the sample were enrolled in schools that did not offer any remote instruction during the crisis period.
- Among the children whose schools had begun remote instruction, only slightly more than half (57%) attended all the online classes and close to 1 in 5 (19%) did not attend any such classes.
- Even though girls are expected to suffer from losses in learning as they are engaged in household chores, this study found out that girls are more likely than boys to have access to digital devices for learning and to engage in more regular educational activities during school closure.
- Finally, the report suggested strategy for the Government of Tamil Nadu to help students recover learning losses. Each child's foundational literacy and numeracy skills should be assessed to help teachers and parents develop personalized interventions and ed-tech resource support should be provided to teacher to ensure teaching-learning continuity.
- Another strategy is to provide socio-economic support to educators and students as the pandemic caused emotional trauma to many households.

Read more: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Ed-tech-and-educational-opportunity-during-COVID-19-school-closures-FINAL-1.pdf>

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