State of Elementary Education in Rural India 2023

For Prelims: State of Elementary Education in Rural India, Prevalence of Smartphone Usage, Entertainment over Educational Activities.

For Mains: State of Elementary Education in Rural India.

Source: TH

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Education has released the **State of Elementary Education in Rural India - 2023** report, highlighting the **Prevalence of Smartphone Usage among students.**

- The report was based on a survey conducted by the **Development Intelligence Unit (DIU)**, a collaboration between NGO Transform Rural India and Sambodhi Research and Communications.
- The survey gathered responses from **6,229 parents of schoolchildren aged 6–16 in rural communities across 21 States.**

What are the Key Findings of the Survey?

- **Smartphone Usage and Entertainment:**
  - 49.3% have **access to smartphones.** 76.7% of parents indicated that their children **primarily use smartphones for playing video games**, indicating a **preference for entertainment over educational activities.**
  - Additionally, 56.6% of students use smartphones to **download and watch movies,** while 47.3% use them to download and listen to music.
  - In contrast, only **34% of students use smartphones for study-related downloads,** and a mere 18% access online learning via tutorials.

//

Aspiring for higher education

The table shows parental expectations of a child's educational attainment. About 78% of parents aspire for their girls to attain graduation or higher degrees

Dropping out: Parents of a section of girls said their daughters dropped out of school to help out in the family's earnings R. RAGU

Expected level of education of child	Boy (%)	Girl (%)	Total (%)
Up to elementary	4.4	3.9	4
Up to secondary	2.4	2.8	3
Higher secondary	11.1	15.2	13
Graduation	49.6	50.3	50
Postgraduation/Ph.D.	32.5	27.8	30

■ About 80% of parents aspire for their children to become graduates or attain higher degrees

■ The survey included responses of 6,229 parents across 21 States of India.

- **Differential Access Based on Class:**
  - Smartphone access **varies across different class levels.** Students in higher classes (Class VIII and above) have greater access to smartphones (58.32%), while even **younger students (Classes I–III) show considerable access (42.1%).**
  - This indicates that smartphone **usage for entertainment is prevalent** across age groups, potentially impacting their educational engagement.
- **Parental Aspirations and Engagement:**
  - 78% of parents aspire for their **children to attain graduation-level education** or above, however, there is a **gap in parental engagement.**
  - Only 40% of parents **have daily conversations with their children** about their school learning, while 32% engage in such **conversations a few days a week.**
- **Reasons for School Dropout:**
  - **For girls**, 36.8% of parents mentioned that the need to contribute to family **earnings led to their daughters dropping out.**
    - Meanwhile, 31.6% attributed the **dropout to their child's lack of interest in studies,** and 21.1% believed household responsibilities played a role.
  - For boys, the primary reason for dropping out was a lack of interest in studies, cited by 71.8% of respondents, followed by **48.7% stating the need for boys to contribute to family earnings.**
- **Parent-Teacher Meetings and Learning Environment:**
  - 84% of parents reported regular attendance. Nonetheless, the two main reasons for non-attendance, are short notice and a lack of willingness.
  - Additionally, the availability of age-appropriate reading materials other than textbooks was **reported by 40% of parents,** highlighting the need for further resources to support children's learning at home.

What are the Recommendations?

- The findings emphasize the **need for targeted efforts to enhance the educational environment at home** and promote a balanced use of smartphones for both entertainment and learning purposes.