

# Education during COVID-19

## *Impact, Coping and Policy support*

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# Acknowledgement

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Bhattacharya, D., Altaf, N. M. and Bari, E. (2021). *Education during COVID-19: Impact, Coping and Policy Support*. Citizen's Platform Working Paper 9. Dhaka: Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh.

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# Setting the Scene: Pre-COVID-19

## Achievements

- High enrolment rates in primary schools at par with world average of 92% of male enrolment and higher than world-average 98% female enrolment.
- Decline in dropout rate at the primary level from approximately 40% in 2010 to 18% in 2019.
  - Both male and female dropout rates decreased from nearly 40% and 39% (2010) to 19% and 16% (2019) respectively.

## Challenges

- *Abysmal quality of primary school education*: more than 50% of primary school children could not read basic words while more than 60% could not recognise basic patterns in primary school.
- *Low net enrolment at the secondary level*: as of 2019, hovering at slightly above 50%.
- *Low completion rates at the secondary level*: 29% at the lower secondary and 65% at the upper secondary.
- High prevalence of child marriage, as of 2017, stood at 38% above world average (59%).

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics; 8th Five-Year Plan, sGeneral Economics Division

# Setting the Scene: Pre-COVID-19 *(contd...)*

## Policy support targeting education

- Public spending on education continues to hover around the 2% share of GDP, where the UNESCO recommendation to effectively support education in developing countries ranges from 4-6%.
- PEDP-IV targets quality of primary school education through training of teachers, introduction of ICT and up-to-date textbooks.
- PESP, a universal scheme, provides mothers of children in primary schools with BDT 100 per month.
- SESIP (2013-2023) targets quality, equitable access to and governance of secondary education.

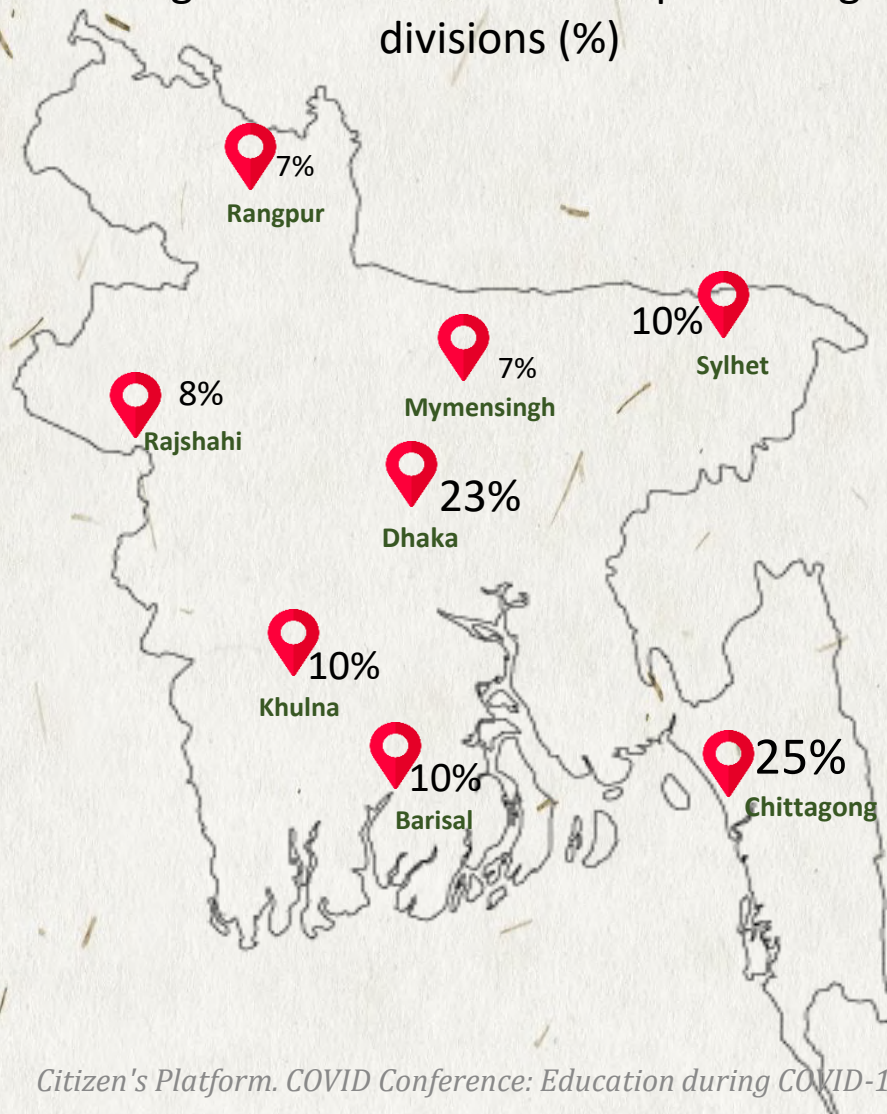
# Setting the Scene: Post-COVID19

## COVID-19 Impact: General Observations

- Since the pandemic, the number of children out of schools around the world rose by 4.8 times (Li & Lalani, 2020).
- Surveys in Bangladesh during the early stages of the pandemic reflected that higher discontinuity rates persisted at the secondary and tertiary levels of education (Rahman & Matin, COVID-19 Impact on Education Life of Children, 2020).
- Teachers surveyed during the pandemic reported that it was only partially possible for students to truly learn through distance learning (CAMPE, 2020).
- Many children, particularly from the marginalised population groups, could not afford required digital devices and internet.
- Child marriages (under age 18) rose by nearly 13% during 2020. However, only 20% of child marriages are formally reported, indicating a much more dire situation (Sakib,2021).

# Information base of the paper

Figure: Distribution of sample among divisions (%)



Within the 1,600 household surveyed, there were **1,811 students**

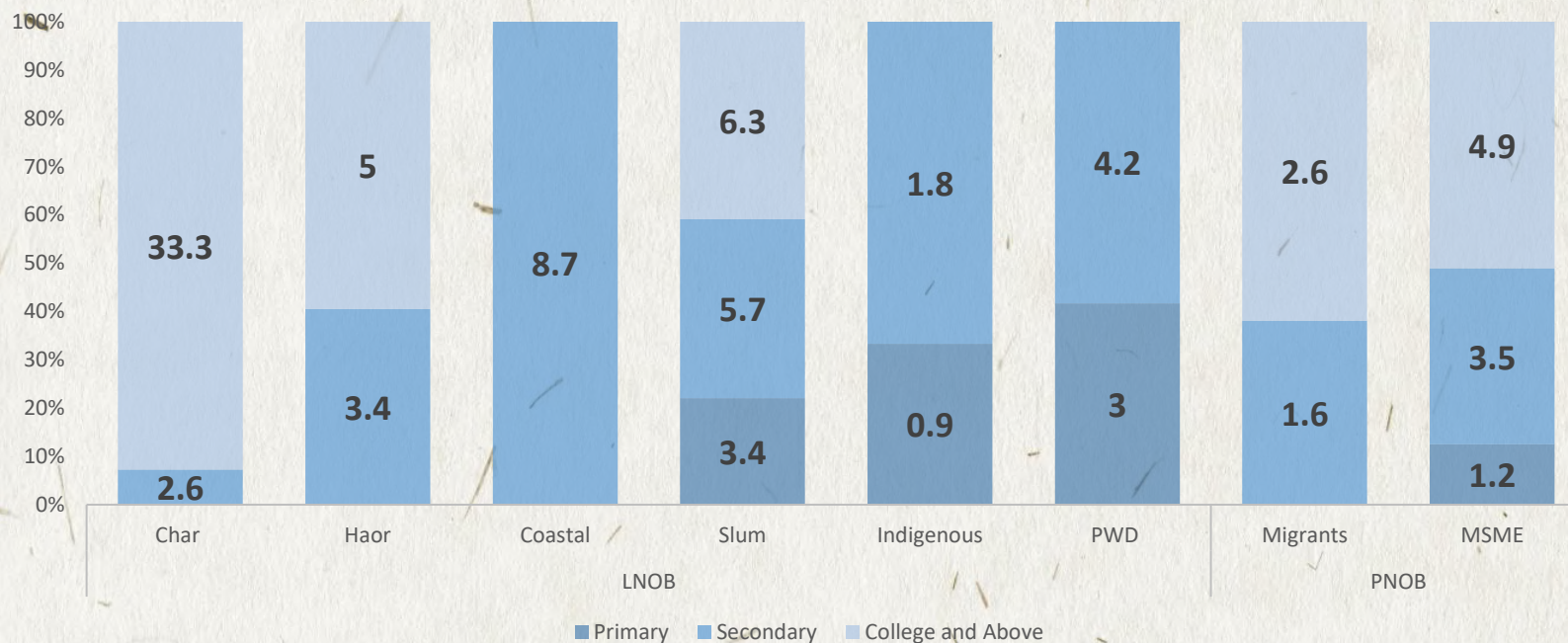
Of which there was 1:1 male to female representation.

Nearly **50%** of the students were from **public schools** and **39%** were from **private schools** and the remaining from 'others' comprising madrasas and NGO schools.

Of the sample, **45%** were primary school students, **38%** were from secondary and **16%** were in college and above.

# Education during COVID-19: impact

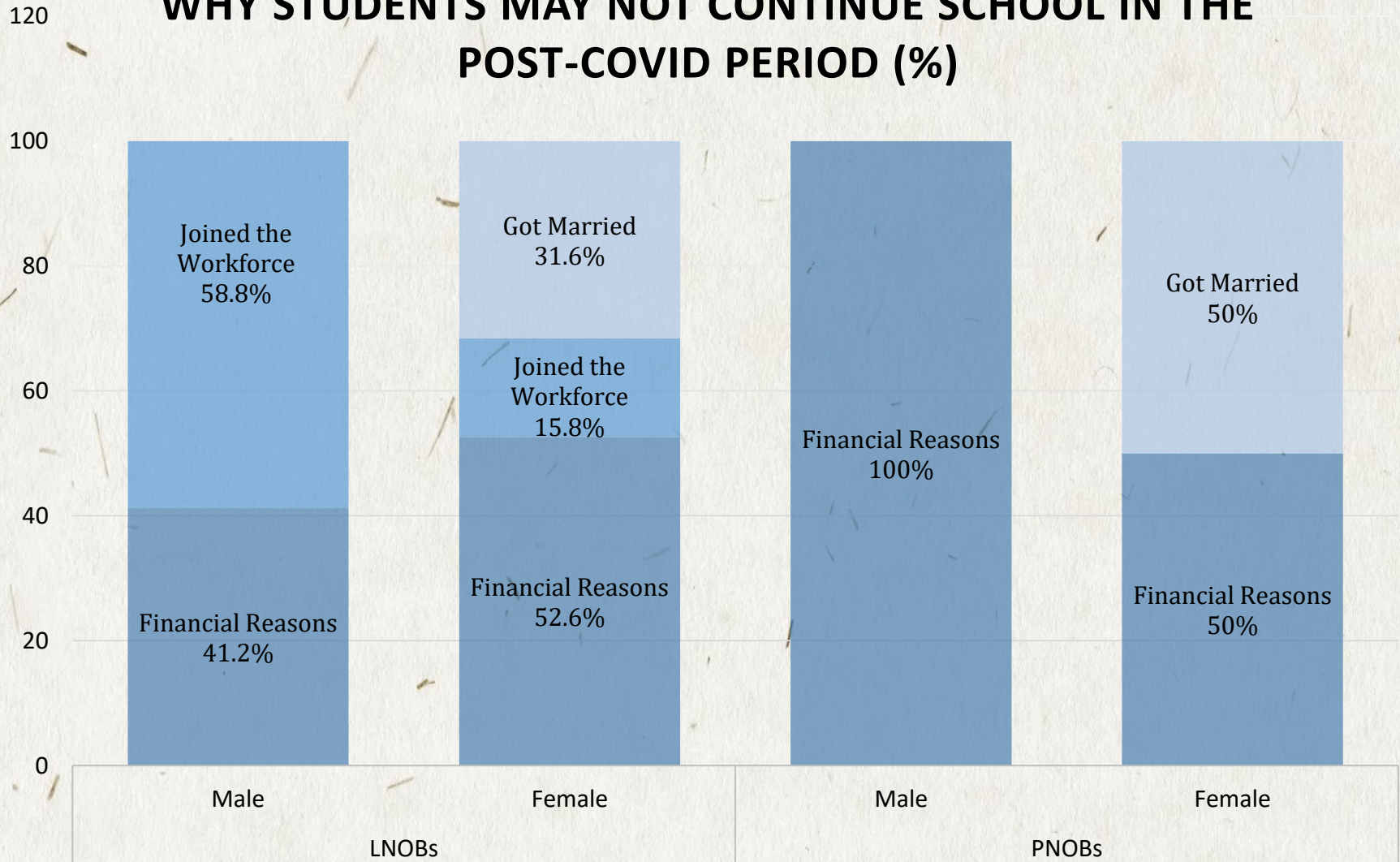
POTENTIAL DISCONTINUATION OF EDUCATION (%)



- **More than half** of student respondents who perceived to be **at risk of dropping out** in the post-COVID19 era were **female**.
- Students at the **secondary and college level** of education were **2.6 times** more likely to drop out of schools in the post-COVID-19 period.
- Among the primary school respondents, students from **slums** were most at risk of losing out on education post-lockdown.

# Why?

## WHY STUDENTS MAY NOT CONTINUE SCHOOL IN THE POST-COVID PERIOD (%)



# Education during COVID-19: the Digital Divide

## Coping Mechanisms

- Interventions for education continuity around the world took shape in the forms of online platforms, e.g. Zoom, Google classroom, or bespoke e-learning platforms such as China's Tencent.
- In Bangladesh, there have been both electronic media and online platforms:



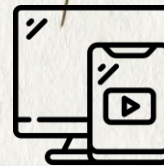
Broadcat via Sangsad TV in partnership wit A2i;  
Total Reach: 2,100 classes  
reaching approx. 13.6 million  
students



E-learning platforms include  
Muktapaath offering more than  
180 courses as well as  
virtualclass for a tailored  
approach.



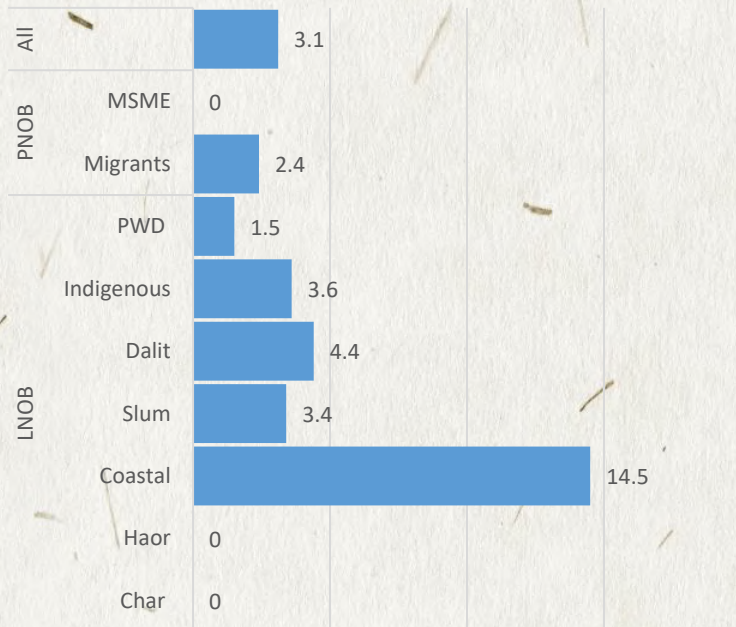
Radio-based classes via one state-  
run and 16 community-run  
stations;  
Total estimated reach: 0.5 million



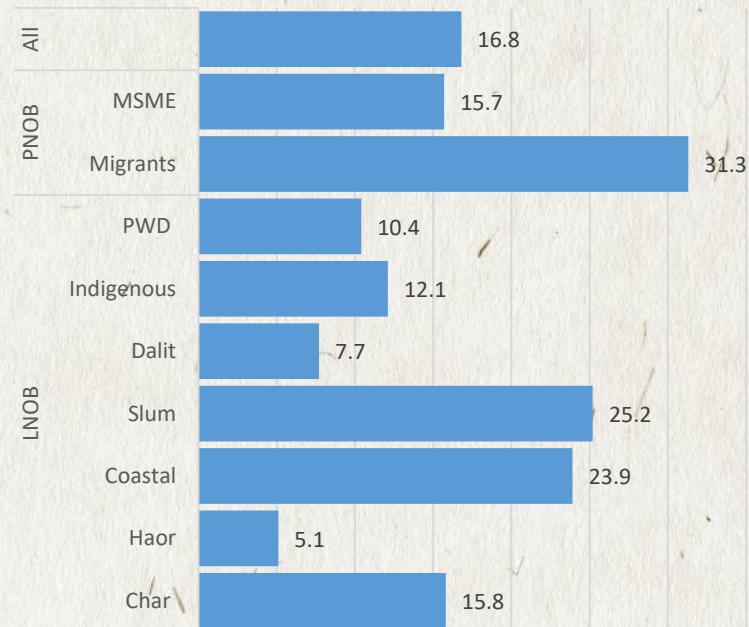
Online video platforms:  
Youtube, Zoom, Google  
Classroom

# Education during COVID-19: Coping mechanisms

Virtual School Attendance (Primary)



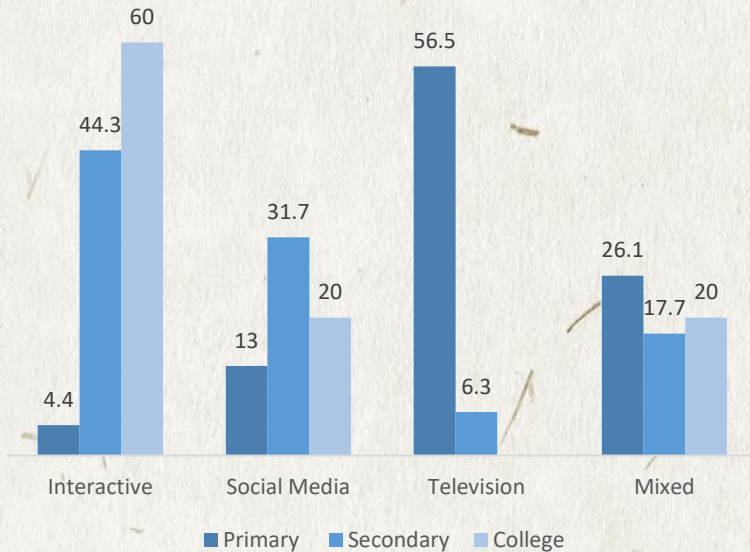
Virtual School Attendance (Secondary)



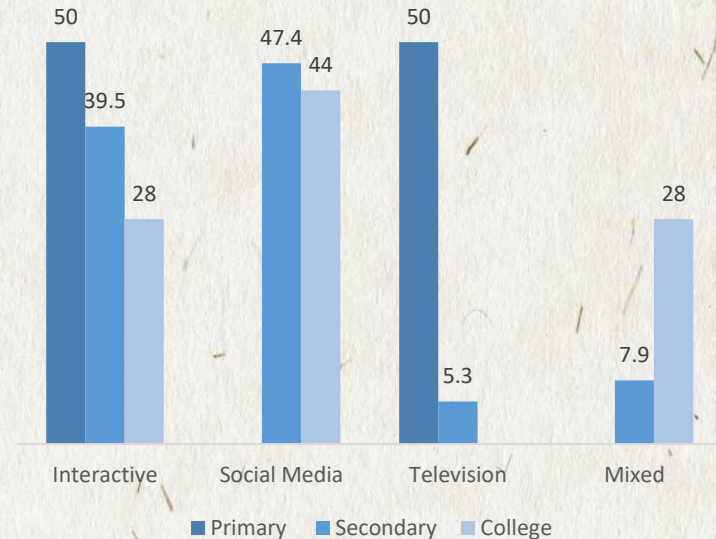
- Overall attendance rate in virtual primary school was lower (3.1%) in comparison to secondary (16.8%).
- These findings corroborate the findings of a much larger survey by BANBEIS in 2020.
  - Only 6% of students from rural areas in Bangladesh were able to attend school online.
  - 24% of students from rural areas accessed classes via TV

# Education during COVID-19: the Digital Divide

Modes of virtual attendance by LNOB  
across levels of education (%)



Modes of virtual attendance by PNOB  
across levels of education (%)



- Nearly 41% of all students virtually attended schools via interactive e-learning platforms, such as Zoom and Google Classroom.
- Across the board, the least used mode of virtual participation was through television (less than 10%).
- Between LNOBs and PNOBs, the smartphone was the most preferred mode. This is true across education levels.

# Education during COVID-19: the Digital Divide *(contd...)*

- Out of pocket expenditure on education have increased 12 times between June 2020 and March 2021(Dhaka Tribune, 2021).

**Table: Incremental cost of online class participation (in BDT)**

Groups	Primary	Secondary	College and Above
Char	0.0	258.3	500.0
Haor	0.0	216.7	483.3
Coastal	187.5	303.0	340.9
Slum	250.0	260.7	351.1
Dalit	300.0	300.0	333.3
Indigenous	285.0	309.8	378.4
PWD	0.0	270.0	353.3
Migrants	100.0	340.6	395.8
MSME	0.0	322.2	380.8
<b>All</b>	<b>227.7</b>	<b>296.0</b>	<b>374.8</b>

Source: Citizen's Platform Household Survey, 2021

- Overall, the highest monthly increment was incurred by the college and higher educated students from Char areas.
- The rural area based tertiary level students' clocked in one of the lowest virtual attendance rates, yet experienced nearly 1.3 times the average increase in cost.

# Education during COVID-19: the Digital Divide *(contd...)*

- Overall share of incremental cost (resulting from virtual schooling) for the household was approximately 2.5% of total monthly income.
- This share is higher for PNOBs (2.7%) compared to LNOBs' average share(2.4%).
- There is a statistically significant difference between the monthly incomes of households where children participate in school virtually and where the children do not.
  - Specifically for LNOB household incomes: Haor, Slums, Female HH and PWD households.

# Education during COVID-19: the Digital Divide *(contd...)*

- There is a higher share of LNOB students (89%) not participating in virtual schools compared to PNOB students (85%)

## Reasons driving down virtual school participation

- For both LNOB and PNOB students, the primary reason was the *lack of institutional arrangement*, especially in primary schools.
- The other important reason was the *lack of laptops, smartphones or even a TV*.
  - Where 1 in every 14 PNOB households could not participate due to a lack of device compared to 1 in every 6 LNOB households.

# Public Policy Support for education

- According to the National Budget Speech for FY21-22, education was allocated 11.9% of the budget.
- This is lower than the previous 12.3% in FY20-21 during a time when students are experiencing a schooling gap of nearly 2 years.
- 2 out of every 11 marginalised households were enrolled in education-related SSNPs and received support during the pandemic.
- Female students received at least 1.3 times the education-specific support received by male students.
- 1 in every 5 LNOB households received education-specific support through SSNPs during the pandemic compared to 1 in every 8 PNOB household .

# The likelihood of virtual class participation during COVID-19

- The study carried out two models to understand the likelihood of virtual class participation from the perspectives of the LNOB and PNOB experiences:

Explanatory variables:

- (i) Age (ii) Gender (iii) Level of education (iv) type of institution (v) Rural/Urban households (vi) reduction in household expenditure
- **Model 1** considered the enrolment of students of a household in cash-based or in-kind based SSNPs.
- **Model 2** considered whether that household received support through these programs during the pandemic in 2020.

# The likelihood of virtual school participation during COVID-19

1. The likelihood of a secondary school student attending classes virtually was higher compared to a primary school student.
2. LNOB students in urban areas were more likely to attend virtual classes than their rural counterparts.
3. Students from public schools were more likely attend virtual classes compared to private school students.
4. PNOB students from madrasas were more unlikely to attend virtual classes compared to their private school peers.
5. LNOB students who were in cash-based SSNPs were more likely to attend virtual classes.

# Summary findings

- Students, of marginalised households, in higher than primary levels of education are far more likely to discontinue their education in the “post-COVID-19” period.
- However, the likelihood of virtual class participation was higher in levels of education above primary school.
- Students from coastal areas have the highest risk of being dropped out of education completely.
- More female students perceived stated to be discontinuing their education even when the schools return to normal.
- Financial distress has emerged as one of the critical factors endangering education of the LNOB and PNOB.
- Increased child marriages disproportionately impact girls and are likely to throw girls out of education.

# Way forward

## For institutions

Flexible infrastructure that allows for both offline and online teaching methods : established e-learning platforms and obligatory online availability and accessibility of study materials.

Educating primary and secondary school children on effectively using the internet and technological devices to access study materials, classes and assessments online.

## For teachers

Training for online delivery of classes and assessment taking into context the ages of the students.

## For students

A cash-based transfer program that sufficiently addresses the needs and requirements of adapting to distance learning.

Government should provide support to NGOs to provide education to marginalised children in remote areas.

Making available laptops, smartphones or other devices available to children from LNOB and PNOB families.

# Thank You



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