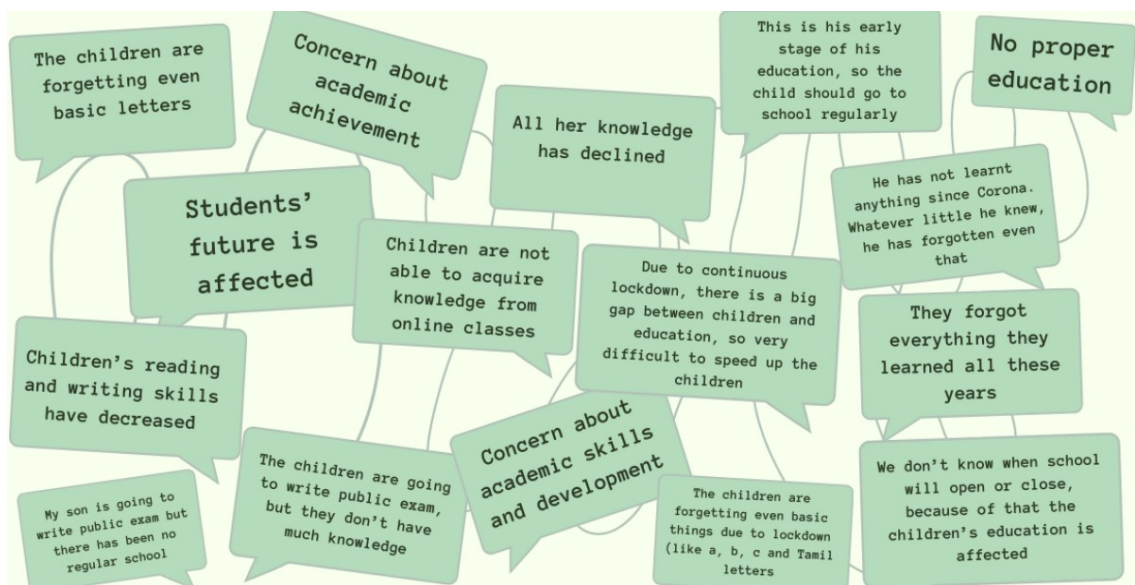


## Cries of Anguish – Report Summary

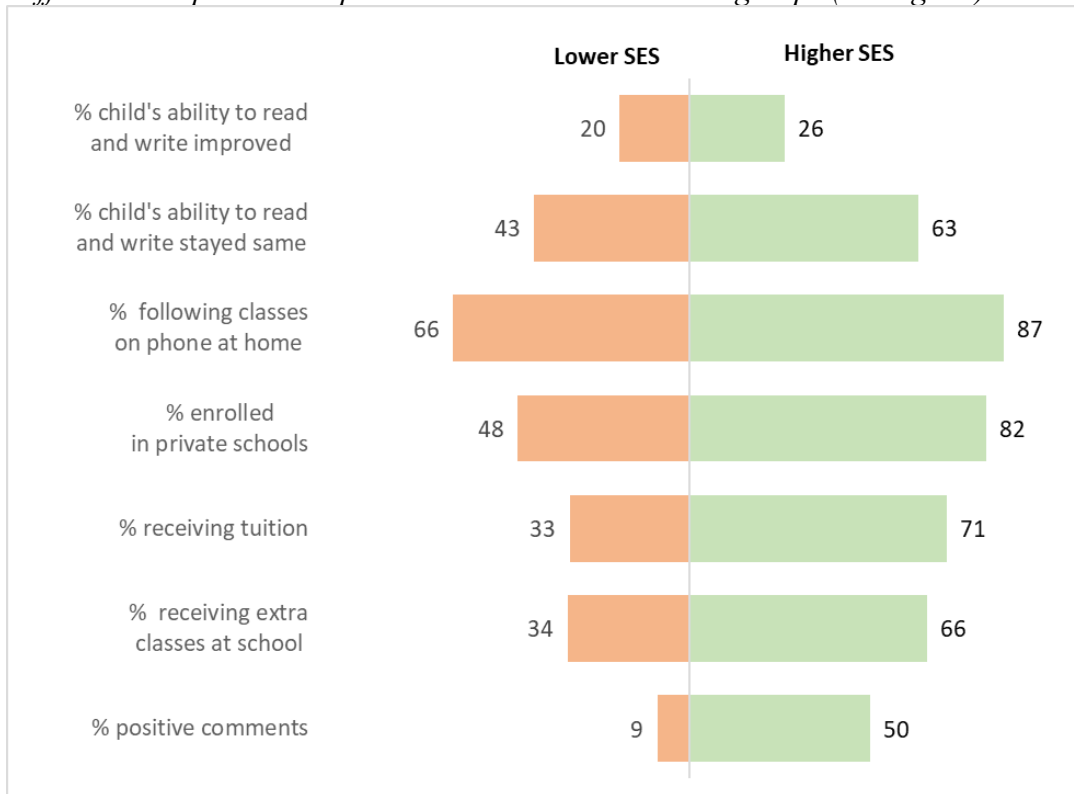
The main finding of this study of households in Karnataka, Telangana and Tamil Nadu is the following: Poor parents are desperate about the education future of their children and fully conscious of the devastating toll that prolonged school closure has taken on the learning, socio-emotional development and behaviour of their children. This is the first study, to our knowledge, of parents' experiences and perceptions, after the opening of schools. It is our hope that policy makers and administrators will also reflect this level of deep understanding about the critical situation on the ground while developing their policies and programmes.

We urge readers of [the report](#) to go through the individual testimonies of parents, apart from the quantitative data. Together they represent the “cries of anguish”, the motivation for the title of this report. Often these feelings are not fully captured by statistics and summary call outs. It is important to recall that these testimonies are from parents in states that are relatively advanced. Multiply them by the number of parents of the 200 million or so school-aged children who have had virtually no meaningful education for close to two years.



Between 70 and 80 percent of households felt that their children's ability to read and write had declined or stayed the same (or they were unable to assess). Parents highlight the changed behavior, lack of focus and attention and the addiction to mobile phones amongst the children. They recognize that these changes in the socio-emotional development of children will impact their learning. The opinions about online education are unequivocal: that children learnt virtually nothing. Parents are overwhelmingly in favour of keeping schools open for in-person learning, while health and safety are important. In addition, online education posed additional burdens on parents to pay for devices and internet. The study also highlights that the period of school closures deepened inequality in the system: those parents who could support their children's online education felt that their children had made academic progress, even during the pandemic.

*Differences in parents' responses across socio-economic groups (Telangana):*



In this sample of households in these three states, which have historically had high levels of enrolment, formal enrolment of children in school is relatively high. However, attendance data from Telangana show that only two thirds of the students attended on all days in the previous week. These three states have also ensured provision of mid-day meals and textbooks. Our survey highlights the high levels of awareness and participation in Tamil Nadu's innovative community based program of re-engaging with children, called *Illam Thedi Kalvi*.

However, many schools are not engaging in regular communication with parents. Very few are providing extra learning support (through after school or weekend classes) to children. The use of television and radio, which had been used to broadcast lessons during the pandemic, and which could be used creatively to support children's learning, has been all but abandoned.

The surveys were done under the auspices of the National Coalition on the Education Emergency. The questionnaire design was based on the framework for a meaningful school re-opening, encapsulated in the publication "[A Future at Stake- Guidelines for School Opening](#)"