Gyanshauryam, International Scientific Refereed Research Journal
Available online at : www.gisrrj.com
OPEN ACCESS
© 2025 GISRRJ | Volume 8 | Issue 1 | ISSN : 2582-0095

Beyond Education in Rural Uttar Pradesh : A Comparative Study of Hathras and Varanasi

Praveen Kumar Gautam[1], Dr. O.P.B Shukla[2]

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Public Administration, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University
[2]Associate Professor, Department of Public Administration, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University

Article Info
Volume 8, Issue 1
Page Number : 148-153

Publication Issue :
January-February-2025

Article History
Accepted : 20 Jan 2025
Published : 05 Feb 2025

Abstract - A person can effect change within oneself with the help of education, which is a strong instrument. It's a process that helps someone grow politically, socially, economically, and personally. Education is a vital instrument for eliminating problems and obstacles from one's life. Education is the only thing that has the power to positively transform society and the country. One essential right that supports progress in both the personal and professional spheres is education. It is a vital instrument for breaking through the poverty barrier. Primary education in particular must help improve the social and economic conditions in many regions of the nation. The "Beyond Basics" report from the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) was published in January 2024. The poll, which covered 28 districts in 26 states, had 34,745 children in the 14–18 age range in total. With the exception of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, where two rural districts were included in the study sample, every major state has had one rural district examined. The findings of report are interesting to highlight the new trends in education and its beyond. The present paper purports to examine the status of education among youth in Varanasi and Hathras districts of Uttar Pradesh. The paper has been based on data compiled from ASER report 2023.

Keywords - Primary Education, Rural, Enrollment, Student, Learning, Outcome.

Introduction- Lifelong learning occurs in an organized manner during education. The multitude of habits, experiences, skills, information, beliefs, arts, laws, morals, conventions, and practices that man picks up throughout his daily existence contribute to his increased complexity. Education is fundamental to building a community and a compassionate, responsible, and civilized individual. A UNESCO research states that "the physical, intellectual, emotional, and ethical integration of the individual into a complete man/woman" should be the main objective of education. Most people are aware of the importance of education for the

advancement of society and the economy. Several studies (Haddad et al., 1990) have demonstrated that a year longer in education has more financial advantages than disadvantages. Because facilities, money generation, food delivery, and health care are less developed in rural areas, there is a high demand for education. The only reason why men and women live in rural areas without formal education is because of this. Growing amounts of evidence point to education's direct contribution to human self-awareness and capacity, as well as its instrumental value in promoting rapid national growth, as reasons for its importance in development. India is a varied country full of contradictions and glaring inequality. Education and development are connected in society; no civilization can expand and transform without investing in its populace's education. The foundation of this is primary education. Over the last five years, education in Uttar Pradesh has advanced tremendously. It is crucial to emphasize that without effective government programmes like the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA), the Universal Elementary Education scheme, and the Midday Meal scheme, this notable growth in enrolment in primary schools in Uttar Pradesh would not have been feasible. The literacy rate in the state is over 70%, and there are roughly 35 million school-age children. Every youngster has access to a top-notch education and completes the school curriculum thanks to government initiatives. The Indian constitution acknowledges education as a fundamental right and includes provisions to guarantee that children receive an education. The Right of Children to 'Free' and 'Compulsory' Education (RTE) Act of 2009 guarantees every child between the ages of 6 and 14 the right to a full-time elementary education of satisfactory and standard quality in a formal school that adheres to fundamental norms and standards as per the requirements. On April 1st, 2010, the RTE Act went into effect. According to the RTE Act, "free education" means that no child, save for a child whose parents have allowed them to enrol in a school that is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be obligated to pay any kind of fee, charges, or expenses that may prevent them from pursuing and completing elementary education. All children between the ages of 6 and 14 must be admitted to, attend, and complete primary education in accordance with "compulsory education," which requires the appropriate Government and local authorities to make this guarantee. The situation regarding access to education is explained by key metrics including literacy, enrolment, and years spent in school, and each of these indicators reveals that the level of female education in India is still poor and lagging behind their male counterpart. Because women have historically received little support for their education, their low adult literacy rates may not accurately represent current developments.

Review of Literature- Education is seen as a crucial tool for the development of human resources (Dhkar, 2012). Education is acknowledged as a vital instrument for people's growth in all areas of life, and it is equally important for boys and girls, according to Khan and Ahmad (2015). Even with this recognition, females continue to be among the most marginalized groups, unable to attend school due to a range of socio-cultural, political, and economic factors. According to Sahoo (2016), education for girls presents a significant potential for India's social and economic development. Through their work at home and in the workplace, educated girls can have a good impact on Indian society. They are to blame for the nation's and society's growing economies. Even though there are still significant gender disparities in the world, Samman and Hunt (2016) believe that investing in women's economic empowerment is crucial to achieving gender equality, eradicating poverty, increasing human development, and promoting inclusive economic growth. Ansari (2014) has highlighted that a nation's economic performance is influenced by the literacy levels of its people. In addition,

women's education contributes significantly to raising living standards in the state. Research indicates that increasing the educational attainment of girls positively impacts the health and economic prospects of young women, hence improving the possibilities for their community as a whole.The goal of the current study is to determine the level of female literacy in different districts of Uttar Pradesh. According to study conducted by Ramanaik (2018) socio-economic conditions in households have a significant impact on whether or not people adhere to discriminatory gender norms such limiting girls' mobility. The emphasis parents have on education clearly distinguishes regular school attendees from absenteeism and dropout rates. According to the Bysiewicz (2018) report, 95 percent of the 28.5 million children who do not attend primary school reside in low- and lower-middle income nations. 55 percent of these kids are girls. Studies conducted in 2014 found that the average annual return rate to school across all economies is 9.6%. According to Kulkarni (2020), we cannot develop if we do not receive an education. Ensuring that future generations have access to high-quality higher education is one of the most important things we can do.

Objectives and Methods- Present paper aims at examining status of education in rural areas of Hathras and Varanasi districts in Uttar Pradesh. The data has been compiled from ASER Report , 2023 released in January 2024. One rural district was surveyed in each of the major states (except for Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, where two rural districts were surveyed), and a total of 34,745 youth in the 14–18 age group were reached by the ASER 2023 "Beyond Basics" survey, which was conducted in 28 districts across 26 states.Data was collected regarding youths' current activity and their ability to do basic and applied tasks. Special focus was paid to youth access to digital devices and skills to do digital tasks. Youth aspirations about the future were also explored. However, present paper is based on data related to Hathras and Varanasi districts of Uttar Pradesh, A comparative analysis of data has been ensured besides graphical presentation of data.

Main Findings of ASER 2023 - As per Report of ASER, 2023, there are roughly 25 million children in schooling age in India. In 2005-2006, all India Std VIII enrollment was 11 million. By 2020-21, this number was close to 22 million. Transition rate from Std VIII to Std IX is at 88.81 percent at national level. India has more children of schooling than ever before. 86.8% of people between the ages of 14 and 18 are enrolled in school overall. While there are slight disparities in enrollment by gender, there are considerable differences by age. It is more common for older youth to not be enrolled. For 14- and 18-year-olds, respectively, the percentage of unenrolled youth is 3.6% and 3.9%, respectively. Merely 5.6% of the young people polled say they are now enrolled in courses connected to vocational training or other courses. Youth at the college level are the most likely to be taking vocational training (16.2 percent). A higher percentage of males (40.3 percent) than females (28 percent) report doing work other than household work for at least 15 days during the preceding month. Among both males and females, most youth who are working in activities other than household work tend to be working on family farms.

The pupils' foundational reading and math skills were evaluated using a household survey that also covered the activities they participate in, their basic and applied math and reading skills, and their digital awareness and skills.Of those between the ages of 14 and 18, 86.8% are enrolled in school.

Regarding skills like basic reading, math, and English comprehension; applying fundamental knowledge to routine calculations; reading and comprehending written instructions; and performing financial calculations

that are necessary in daily life, roughly 25% of students still struggle to read a Class II-level text fluently in their native tongue. Additionally, over half of students struggle with division problems (3-digit by 1-digit); only 43.3% of students between the ages of 14 and 18 can complete such problems correctly. Data on four of these are outlined below: basic reading, math and English abilities; application of basic skills to everyday calculations; reading and understanding written instructions; and financial calculations that need to be done in real life. Youths' performance on digital tasks is summarised in a separate section on digital awareness and aptitude. For nearly two decades, ASER reports have consistently pointed to the fact that many children in elementary school need urgent support for acquiring foundational skills like reading and basic arithmetic. Given that this year's focus is on an older age group, it's critical to comprehend youths' basic skill levels and readiness for jobs that go "beyond the basics." Nearly 90% of all youth have access to and knowledge of using a smartphone in their home, according to the report. "Males (43.7%) are more than twice as likely as females (19.8%) to own their own smartphone among those who can use one. Compared to men, women are less likely to know how to operate a computer or smartphone.Across all tasks using mobile phones, males outperformed females. "Performance on digital tasks improves with education level. The ability to do digital tasks increases with basic reading proficiency,"

Discussion of Results - Table 1 displays the enrollment of students in class 10 or below who are between the ages of 14 and 18. In Hathras and Varanasi, the percentage of students enrolled in class 10th or below was reported to be 46.2% and 58.7%, respectively. The enrollment of students across various age groups has been higher in Varanasi city than in Hathras district.

Table: 1. Enrolment of Students in Class 10th Or Below in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh

Age Group	No. of students enrolled in 10th or Below in Hathras	No. of students enrolled in 10th or Below in Varanasi
14-16	64.7	79.8
17-18	13.4	17.9
14-18	46.2	58.7

Source : ASER 2023 Beyond Basics – Rural, Report, 2024

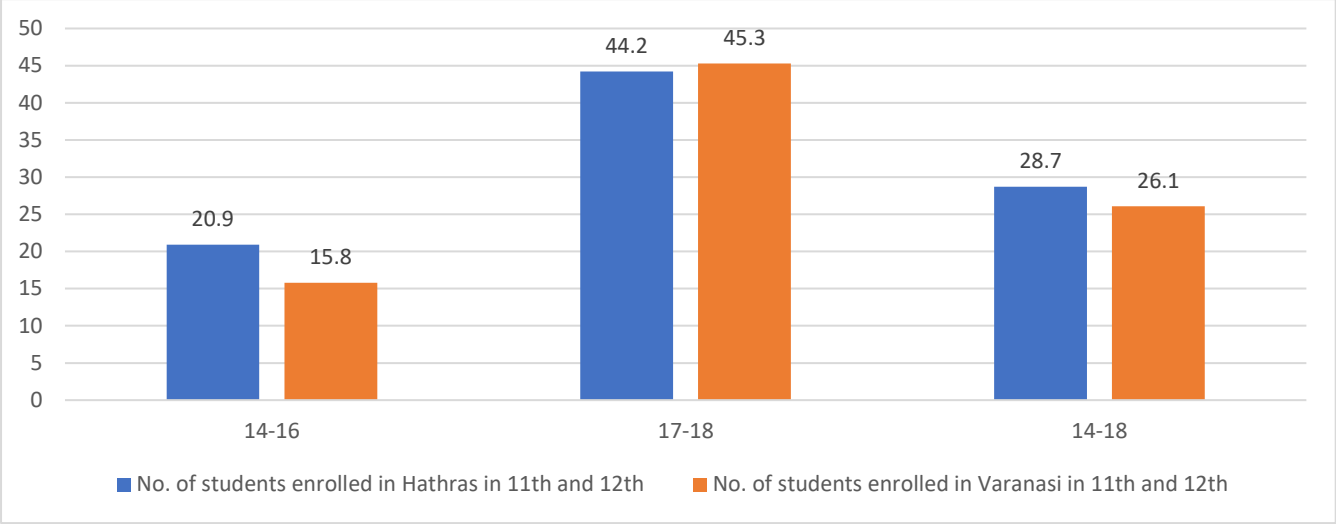
The enrolemenent of students from different age gropus in secondary educatuional institutions is shown in table 2. The enrollment of pupils in Varansi's secondary education level between the ages of 14 and 18 has been marginally lower than that of Hathras. Nonetheless, in both districts, slightly more than one-fourth of the kids were found to be enrolled in second-ray education.

Table: 2. Enrolment of Students in Class 11th and 12th in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh

Age Group	No. Of Students Enrolled In Hathras In 11th and 12th	No. Of Students Enrolled In Varanasi In 11th and 12th
14-16	20.9	15.8
17-18	44.2	45.3
14-18	28.7	26.1

Source : ASER 2023 Beyond Basics – Rural, , Report, 2024

Chart 1: Enrolment of Students in Class 11th and 12th in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh



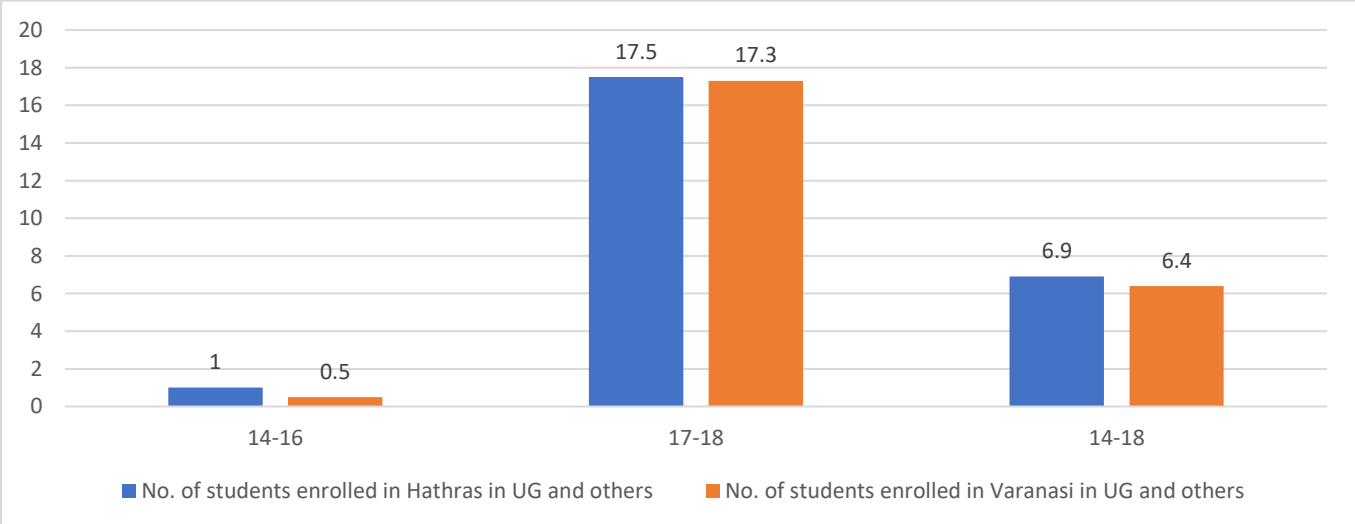
Overall, 6.9 percents students in Hathras and 6.4 percent students in Varanasi were enrolled in under gradation courses. The enrollment of students in under graduation courses has been reported high in Hathras as compared to Varanasi (Table 3). .

Table: 3. Enrolment of Students in Under Graduation Courses Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh

Age Group	No. Of Students Enrolled In Hathras In UG And Others	No. Of Students Enrolled In Varanasi In UG And Others
14-16	1.0	0.5
17-18	17.5	17.3
14-18	6.9	6.4

Source: ASER 2023 Beyond Basics – Rural, , Report, 2024

Chart 2: Enrolment of Students in Under Graduation Courses Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh



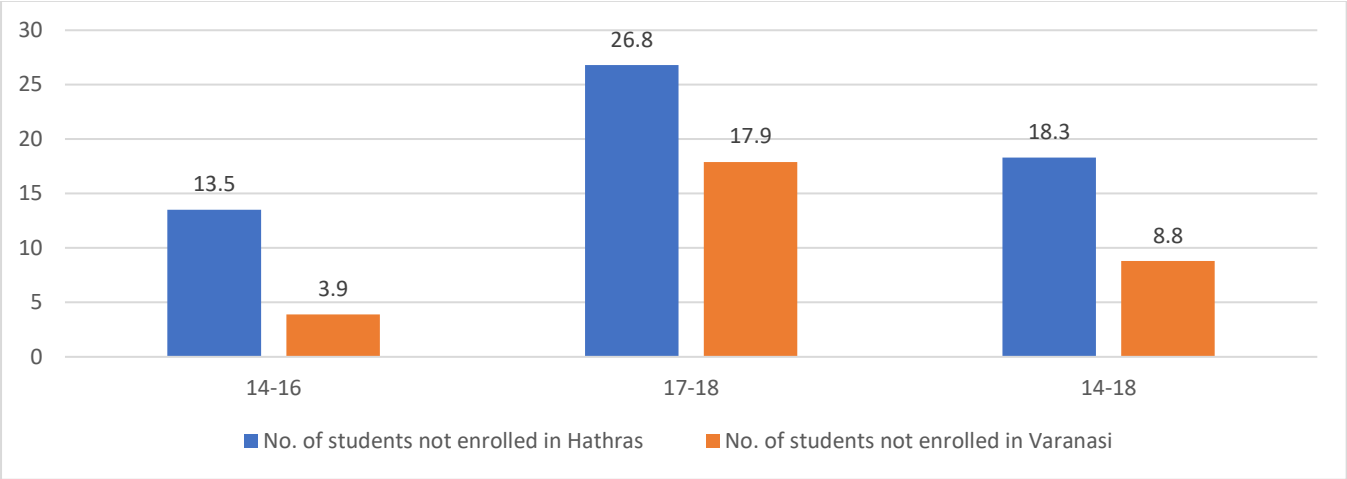
In Hathras, a significant fraction of young people (18.3%) were not registered in any kind of school. In Varanasi district, it was reported to be as low as 8.8%. In both districts, there was a significant reported percentage of youth (17–18 years old) who were not enrolled in school (Table 4).

Table: 4. Non Enrolment of Students in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh

Age Group	No. of Not Enrolled Students In Hathras	No. of Not Enrolled Students In Varanasi
14-16	13.5	3.9
17-18	26.8	17.9
14-18	18.3	8.8

Source: ASER 2023 Beyond Basics – Rural, , Report, 2024

Chart 3: Non-Enrolment of Students in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh



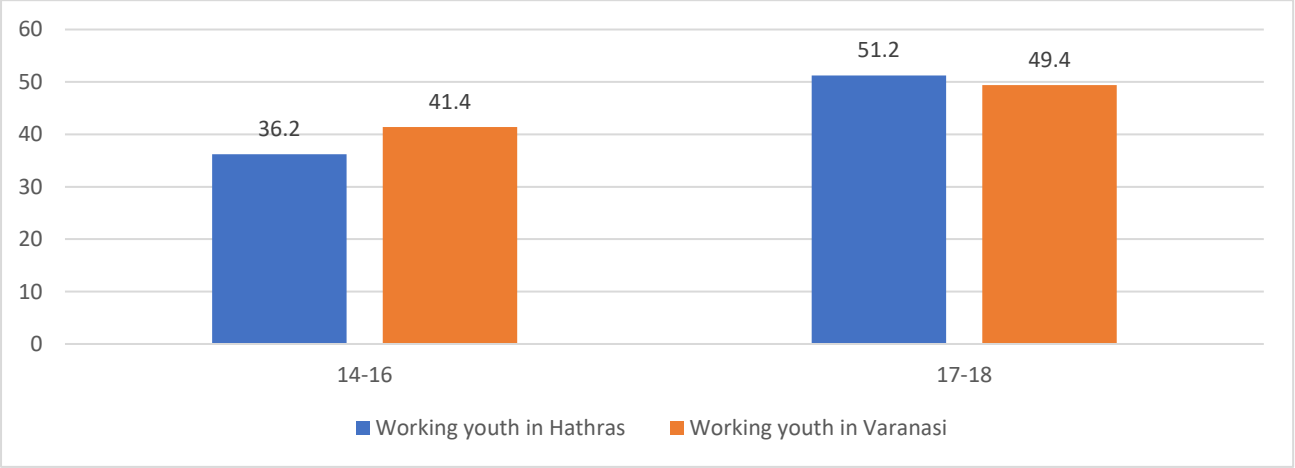
The youth in the 14–15 and 17–18 year old age groups were questioned if they had worked for at least 15 days in the previous months, either at home or somewhere else. About half of the youth accepted that they are performing house and beyond level work tasks (Table 5).

Table: 5. Youth Who Worked For 15 Or More Days in Last Month in Hathras and Varanasi

Age group	Working Youth in Hathras	Working Youth in Varanasi
14-16	36.2	41.4
17-18	51.2	49.4

Source: ASER 2023 Beyond Basics – Rural, , Report, 2024

Chart 4 : Youth Who Worked For 15 Or More Days in Last Month in Hathras and Varanasi



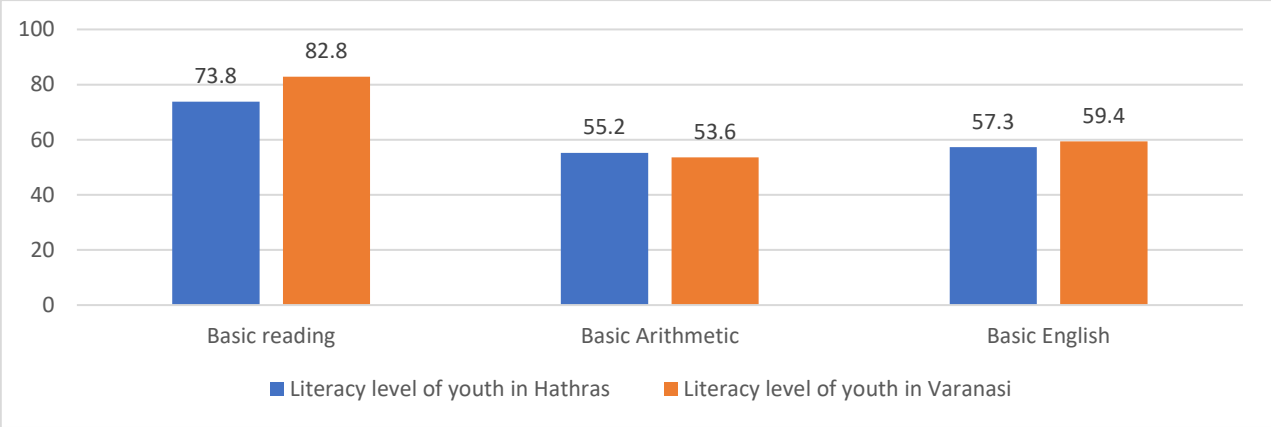
The literacy levels of students are shown in table 6. Overall, literacy levels were recorded slightly high in Varanasi as compared to Hathras. A higher proportion of students had basic reading ability, however ability of arithmetic was recoded low which shows poor educational standards in math in a large proportion of students .

Table : 6. Literacy Level of Youth in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh

Literacy Level	Literacy Level of Youth In Hathras	Literacy Level of Youth In Varanasi
Basic Reading	73.8	82.8
Basic Arithmetic	55.2	53.6
Basic English	57.3	59.4

Source: ASER 2023 Beyond Basics – Rural, , Report, 2024

Table 5 : Literacy Level of Youth in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh



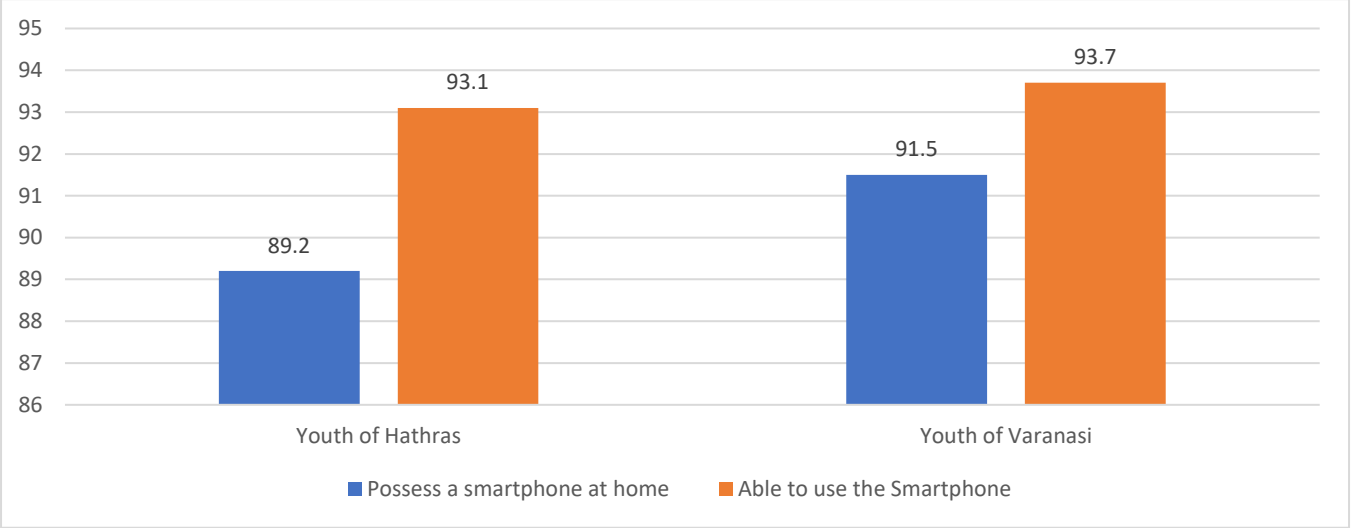
The world's dependence on technology has grown since the COVID-19 epidemic. ASER 2023 set out to explore the current scenario of digital awareness and ability among rural Indian youth. The exploration of digital connectivity and skills in ASER 2023 had two components – a self-reported questionnaire capturing youths' access to digital devices and their online habits, and an assessment of their digital skills – actually doing a set of tasks in front of the survey team using an available smartphone. About 90 percent youth have smartphones . They have also ability to use the smartphones as well (Table 7).

Table 7. Access and Ownership of Smartphones in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh

Areas	Possess A Smartphone At Home	Able To Use The Smartphone
Youth of Hathras	89.2	93.1
Youth of Varanasi	91.5	93.7

Source : ASER 2023 Beyond Basics – Rural, , Report, 2024

Chart 6: Access and Ownership of Smartphones in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh



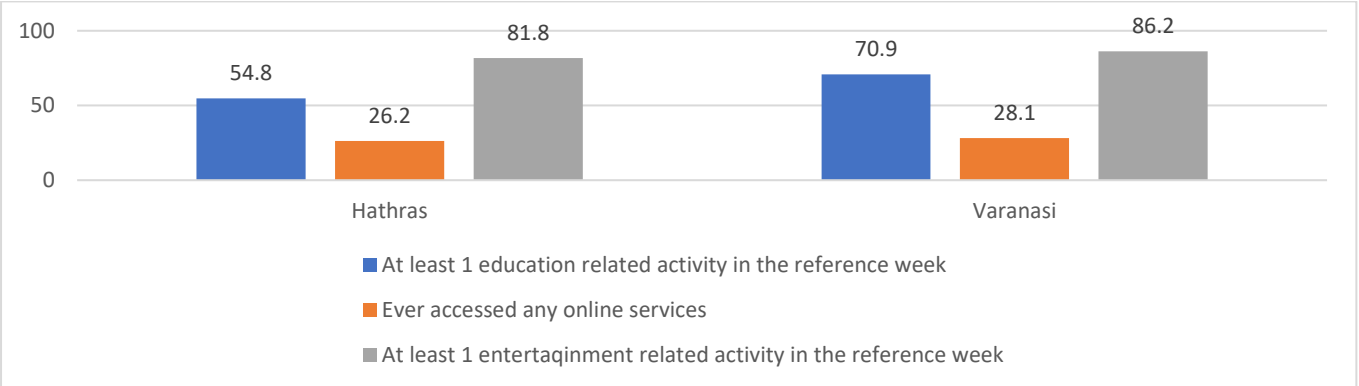
The vast majority of young people in Varanasi who have access to smartphones said they have used them for educational purposes throughout that week. These activities include watching study-related films online, clearing up questions, and sharing notes. The majority of them did concede, though, that they use their smartphones for amusement. Approximately 20% of the participants reported using their smartphones to access internet services (Table 8).

Table 8. Percentage of Youth who Used Smartphones for Education in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh

District	At Least 1 Education Related Activity In The Reference Week	Ever Accessed Any Online Services	At Least 1 Entertainment Related Activity In The Reference Week
Hathras	54.8	26.2	81.8
Varanasi	70.9	28.1	86.2

Source: ASER 2023 Beyond Basics – Rural, , Report, 2024

Chart 7: Percentage of Youth who Used Smartphones for Education in Hathras and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh



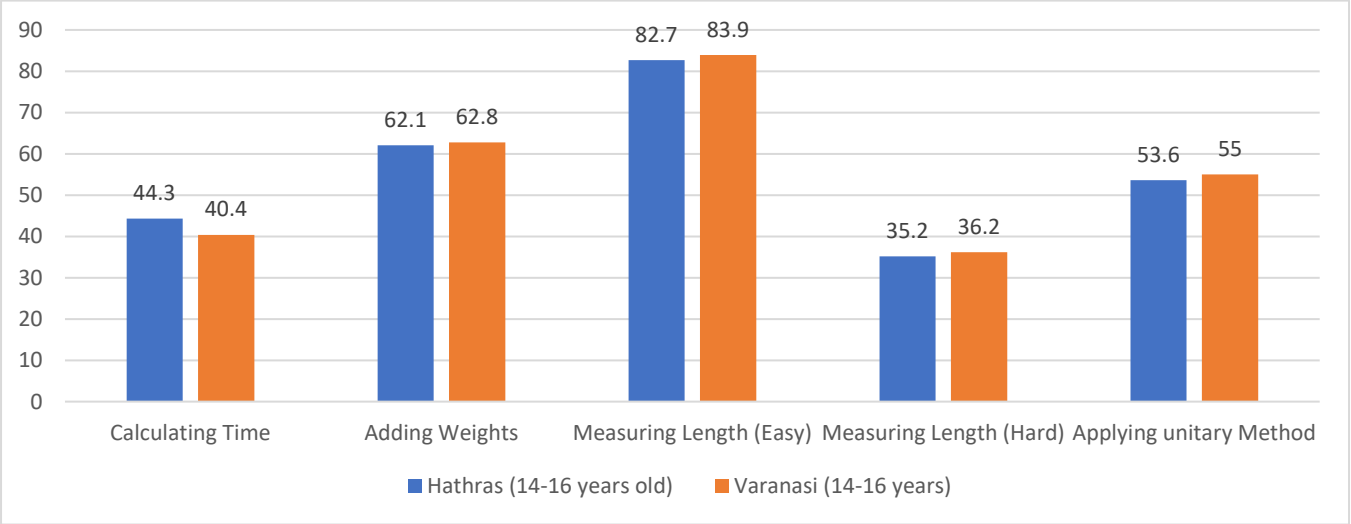
People are expected to perform numerous tasks involving the application of numeracy in their daily lives. ASER 2023 explored a variety of such common calculations relevant to the daily life of youth. These included calculating time, adding weights, measuring length using a ruler and applying the unitary method. When it comes to calculations, students in Varanasi's 14–16-year-old age group performed at a higher level than those in Hathras (Table 9).

Table : 9. Percentage Of Students Who Can Do Calculations In Hathras And Varanasi In Uttar Pradesh

Task	Hathras (14-16 years)	Varanasi (14-16 years)
Calculating Time	44.3	40.4
Adding Weights	62.1	62.8
Measuring Length (Easy)	82.7	83.9
Measuring Length (Hard)	35.2	36.2
Applying unitary Method	53.6	55.0

Source: ASER 2023 Beyond Basics – Rural, , Report, 2024

'Chart 8: Percentage of Students (14-16 Years) Who Can Do Calculations In Hathras And Varanasi In Uttar Pradesh



Youth who could do at least subtraction on the ASER arithmetic test were asked to do some commonplace financial calculations. These chores consist of loan payback calculations, discount applications, and budget management. In comparison to Varanasi, Hathras has a greater degree of skill among youth in the 17–18 age group when it comes to calculations (Table 10).

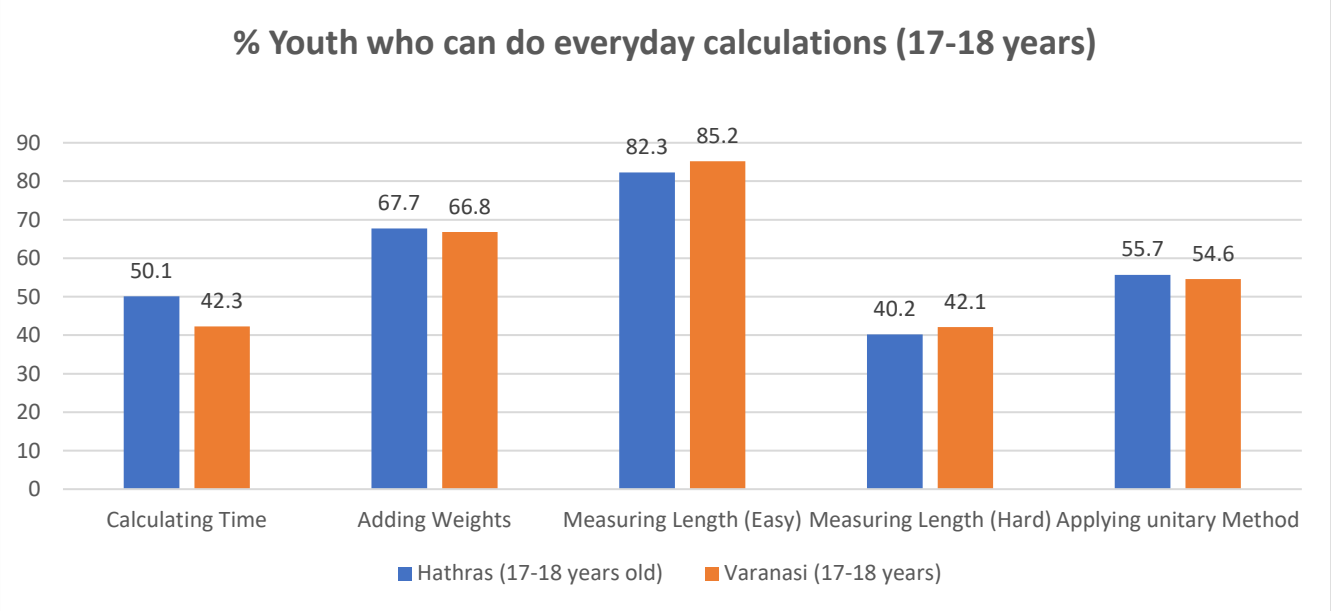
Table : 10. Percentage Of Students(14-16 Years) Who Can Do Everyday Calculations In Hathras And Varanasi In Uttar Pradesh

Task	Hathras (17-18 years)	Varanasi (17-18 years)
Calculating Time	50.1	42.3
Adding Weights	67.7	66.8
Measuring Length (Easy)	82.3	85.2
Measuring Length (Hard)	40.2	42.1
Applying unitary Method	55.7	54.6

Source: ASER 2023 Beyond Basics – Rural, , Report, 2024

The overall patterns in the" ability" domain indicate that having basic foundational skills like reading and arithmetic are very helpful for activities like everyday calculations and understanding instructions. Not everyone with these fundamental abilities, nevertheless, is able to carry out these responsibilities correctly. Compared to men, women do poorly on practically every task. These findings demonstrate the need for significant improvement in the application of skills in everyday life.

Table : 10. Percentage Of Students(14-16 Years) Who Can Do Everyday Calculations In Hathras And Varanasi In Uttar Pradesh



Conclusion- Since independence, the educational system has grown quickly in terms of enrolment, institutions, growth rate, etc. The transition from an elitist to an egalitarian system has taken place in a singular way. As a result, the system's expansion has benefited every segment of the population. Marginalised, disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged groups are continue to experience inequities. Due consideration and opportunities must therefore be extended to those who have traditionally been marginalized in a democratic society such as ours, which places a strong focus on egalitarianism, social justice, and economic development for all facets of society. In light of this, the Indian constitution sets forth "equality of opportunity" as one of its goals. To guarantee that disadvantaged groups have more access, provisions for free cruises, scholarships, and reservations have been included. Enrollment, literacy, gender inequality, time out of school, and dropout rates all show general tendencies that point to some progress. Even states with weak economies have made impressive progress. The distance between the countryside and the cities has lately shrunk. Despite the fact that enrolment trends have not kept pace with improvements, the statistics are still depressing: gender, caste, and rural/urban gaps continue to be significant indicators of both effective learning and high levels of educational inequality between states. In comparison to other private schools, government schools perform the least well. Both in urban and rural regions, the dropout rate is still very concerning. The supply of teachers is growing slowly, which raises the student-teacher ratio. Furthermore, teachers' absences—these teachers, whose salaries are even 10 times higher than those of a private school teacher in a rural area of India—have been identified as one of the main problems with the Indian educational system. As a result,

efforts in teacher training are not having the expected impact and are not the sole way to improve school quality. ICT adoption and use has a favourable effect on teaching, learning, and research in higher education. ICT has the potential to change how education is delivered and increase access to it. Additionally, it will provide flexibility so that students can access the education despite limitations related to time and location. It may have an impact on how students are taught and learn.

Declaration of conflicting Interests- The Author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding - The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD- Praveen Kumar Gautam https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6162-3048

References :

1. Ansari, S.N., & Nasreen, N. (2014). Status of Female Literacy in Various Districts of Uttar Pradesh. International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies, 2(2), 24-30, ISSN 2202-9478 Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1149648.pdf
2. Dhakar, I. (2012). Education of girls in Jantia hills district of Meghalaya. (Unpublished doctoral thesis). North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya
3. Haddad, W.D, Carnoy, M, Riniddi, R; and Regel, O. (1990) "Education and development: Evidence for New Priorities", World Bank Discussion, Paper No. 95, Washington D.C., World Bank.
4. Khan, S. R., and Khan, S. R. (2016). Microcredit in South Asia: privileging women's perceptions and voices. Prog. Dev. Stud. 16, 65–80. doi: 10.1177/ 1464993415608083
5. Khatri, R. (2016).'The Role of Education towards Women Empowerment in India.' International journal of Advance Research, 4(11) pp-550-555. 2
6. Kulkarni, M.N. (1994). Child Marriages and State. Economic and Political Weekly, vol.29, no. 29, pp. 1884-1884.
7. Sahoo, S. (2016). Girls' Education in India: Status and Challenges. International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences (IJRESS), 6(7), 130-141,
8. Samman and Hunt (2016) Women's economic empowerment: navigating enablers and constraints, ODI, UK