



# Parental Attitudes Towards Supplementary Education in Rajasthan

August 2024





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## Authors

Vrinda Maheshwari, Srishti Joshi and Yashaswini Chauhan

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[contactus@koanadvisory.com](mailto:contactus@koanadvisory.com) | [www.koanadvisory.com](http://www.koanadvisory.com)



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# Executive Summary

Parental involvement in education has a positive influence on children. Their attitudes towards supplementary and higher education are critical, since they make decisions for their children's life in India. They are often inadequately represented in the policy-making process and there is little existing research on supplementary education in India. Our primary survey seeks to bridge this gap and confirm whether the anecdotal drivers of supplementary education (such as dissatisfaction with schools, or low awareness of curriculum being taught in schools) are actually motivating parents.

We conducted a survey of 1060 respondents with offspring less than 19 years-old, enrolled in coaching classes in five cities in the state of Rajasthan. Our survey highlighted the following:

- Parents believe the quality of education in both schools as well as supplementary educational institutions, also known as 'coaching centres' is adequate, with parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds finding school education more favourable. Affluent parents saw coaching and supplementary education more favourably.
- Our respondent parents, most of whom were more educated and better off than the national average - see schools and coaching as interlinked. Coaching is considered a supplementary medium for enhancing education levels.
- Three in five respondents believed joining coaching classes would be an advantage for their children while 64 percent indicated they wished their children had started coaching earlier than they did.
- Most respondents said they felt the children would get the most advantage of coaching from Class VI onwards. This finding highlights the growing importance placed on early academic support and the perceived benefits of supplementary education at key developmental stages.

This recognition highlights the complementary nature of both formal schooling and supplementary coaching in providing a comprehensive and enriched educational experience for students. Coaching serves as a valuable resource for bolstering academic understanding and performance, supplementing the learning acquired through traditional schooling methods. Specifically, parents found that coaching classes instil a sense of certainty around job prospects.

Policymakers should keep such facts and beliefs in mind when regulating higher education. Efforts to overly regulate or curb coaching, while well-intentioned, do not go to the root of the complex problems in our educational system. For example, it might be unrealistic to implement the 2024 Guidelines for the Regulation of Coaching Center's suggestion that coaching for students under 16 be banned (as proposed in Rajasthan Coaching Center (Control and Regulation) Bill, 2024), given how entrenched it has become with basic K-12 schooling. We recommend much more empirical research on supplementary education be conducted in order to inform policymakers at both state and central authorities.

# Introduction

Supplementary education, or additional tutoring beyond basic schooling is a growing industry in India. A quarter of all Indian students take private coaching according to the National Sample Survey.<sup>1</sup> This prevalence has had unintended consequences and is often perceived negatively. The National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP) frequently mentions “coaching culture” and suggests reforming the existing system of Board and entrance examinations to eliminate the need for undertaking coaching classes.

Various attempts have been made in recent months to enforce the regulation of coaching classes more directly in an effort to implement the NEP’s vision of holistic and flexible education. For example, in January 2024, the Department of Higher Education (under the Ministry of Education) passed the Guidelines for the Regulation of Coaching Center,<sup>2</sup> (Model Guidelines) based on the NEP 2020. The focus of these Model Guidelines is to ensure that coaching centres provide adequate supervision and infrastructure support to students pursuing any study programmes, or preparing for competitive exams. The guidelines provide a framework for the registration and regulation of coaching centers. They also aim to promote the well-being of students and safeguard their interests via behavioural interventions. For example, they encourage the provision of career guidance and psychological counselling for the students’ mental well-being at coaching centres. The guidelines also prescribe a minimum age limit of 16 years for enrolment (or after passing the secondary school examinations). Based on the Model Guidelines, the Rajasthan government introduced ‘The Rajasthan Coaching Center (Control and Regulation) Bill, 2024 (2024 Rajasthan Bill) for consultations on July 22. It seeks to regulate the state’s coaching centers with a special focus on students’ mental well-being.

Such efforts to strictly regulate supplementary education do not account for the preference for supplementary education across Asia. Manns (2018) reports that across regions, parents feel it necessary to send their children to private tutors from as early as preschool all the way to high school to prepare for both school exams as well as competitive examinations for entry into various higher education degrees. In general, coaching serves to supplement formal schooling with many parents relying on it to bridge learning gaps in school.<sup>3</sup> Xiang (2021) writes about how private tutoring institutions influenced parents by marketing their ability to improve examination scores.<sup>4</sup> They find that parents’ drive to improve their economic condition is the main reason they constantly monitor their children’s academic

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1. NSS 71st Round on Education in India, 2014, available at [https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication\\_reports/nss\\_rep\\_575.pdf](https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/nss_rep_575.pdf).
  2. The Guidelines for the Registration of Coaching Center, January 2024 <[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/Guideliens\\_Coaching\\_Centres\\_en.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Guideliens_Coaching_Centres_en.pdf)>
  3. Mark Manns, “The Culture of testing: sociocultural impacts on learning in Asia and the Pacific”, available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261955>.
  4. Qin Xiang, “The Reasons, Determinants, and Effect of Private Tutoring in the Greater Chinese Regions”, available at <https://www.atlantispress.com/proceedings/icela-21/125969969>.



progress. In another study, Chen highlights parental occupation and education had a direct correlation with anxiety about children's educational prospects.<sup>5</sup> These trends have strong cultural drivers, too, as they are particularly widespread in Asia; this will be explored in greater detail in Sections 3 & 4.

There is comparatively less empirical literature on this topic in India. Madhu *et al* have examined parents' attitudes towards private tuition at the senior secondary level in West Bengal specifically and found that attitudes of urban and more affluent parents towards private tuitions are more favourable than that of rural or less affluent parents.<sup>6</sup> However, the study had a very small sample size. Chingthem *et al* have identified that the percentage of children being sent to private tutoring was directly related to the parents' income and socio-economic standing.<sup>7</sup> The study focussed on 100 respondents in Manipur, also highlighted causes of dissatisfaction with schools. These studies were limited in scope and sample size. The Annual Status of Education Report<sup>8</sup> along with various national surveys give information as to the number of candidates undertaking schooling/tutoring, but offer no insights on parental attitudes.

Given the important role played by parents as key decisionmakers for their children's educational journeys, this is an unfortunate research gap – one we have tried to fulfil here. Parental engagement with their children's progress is of vital importance<sup>9</sup>, and their inputs for policymaking cannot be ignored.

We surveyed parents whose children aged 19 or less were enrolled in coaching programmes in several cities in Rajasthan, an industrial hub for coaching centres in northern India. This report summarises attitudes towards the quality of education offered at schools as well as supplementary coaching programmes.

In Section 1, we explain the methodology behind the survey and discuss the respondent demographics. In Section 2, we elaborate on the reasons parents feel satisfied with Rajasthan's school education, and in Section 3 identify causes for the prevalence of supplementary education/coaching (despite their apparent satisfaction). In Section 4, we delve deeper into parental preferences for coaching, and specifically look at why they wish to start extra tutoring for their children as early as primary or middle school. Finally, in Section 5, we explore the need for involving parents' viewpoints in educational policymaking, and look at the systemic problems with Indian higher education going beyond the usual tirades against coaching. We then have recommendations and suggestions for policymakers.

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5. Huilin Chen, "Impact of Parents SocioEconomic Status on Perceived Parental Pressure and Test Anxiety among Chinese High School Students", available at <https://www.semanticscholar.org/reader/c32e3e91669b587655603c83226e367ba51e6eb5>.

6. Madhu & Bhattacharya, "A study on Parental attitudes towards Private Tuition at Senior Secondary level", available at <https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRT1705211.pdf>.

7. Chingthem and Sharma, "Attitude of Parents Towards Private Tuition: A Case Study", available at [http://www.voiceofresearch.org/doc/Jun-2015/Jun-2015\\_7.pdf](http://www.voiceofresearch.org/doc/Jun-2015/Jun-2015_7.pdf).

8. <https://asercentre.org>

9. Nokali et al, "Parent Involvement and Children's Academic and Social Development in Elementary School", available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2973328/>.

# 01

## SECTION

# Methodology and Demographic Profile of Respondents

## Methodology

We evaluated levels of parental satisfaction with schools and coaching classes, to understand the demand for supplementary education.<sup>10</sup> We then conducted a survey of 1060 respondents who are parents with children below the age of 19, enrolled in coaching in Rajasthan specifically when their ward:



a. received formal education at a government, private, national open school;



b. was enrolled in a private coaching institution for at least the last two years, and;



c. was studying between class VI to XII in school.

The survey was conducted through computer-assisted in-person interviews in five tier-Y cities in Rajasthan. The cities were chosen for their well-developed online infrastructure, along with literacy rates at par with the state average. Literacy rates in Jaipur, Kota, and Ajmer are higher than the state average, at 75.5 percent, 76.6 percent and 69.3 percent respectively, while the rates in Jodhpur (65.9 percent) and Bikaner (65.1 percent) are at par with the state average of 66.1 percent.<sup>11</sup>

## Demographics

Respondent demographics were fairly evenly distributed. 70 percent of the respondents were male and the rest, female. Just more than half at 52 percent were aged between 32 and 45. 48 percent were between 46 and 55 years of age. Half sent their children to government

10. We use 'coaching classes' to mean both one-to-one and group tuitions (with two or more students) as well as coaching institutions (of batch sizes both above and below 50).

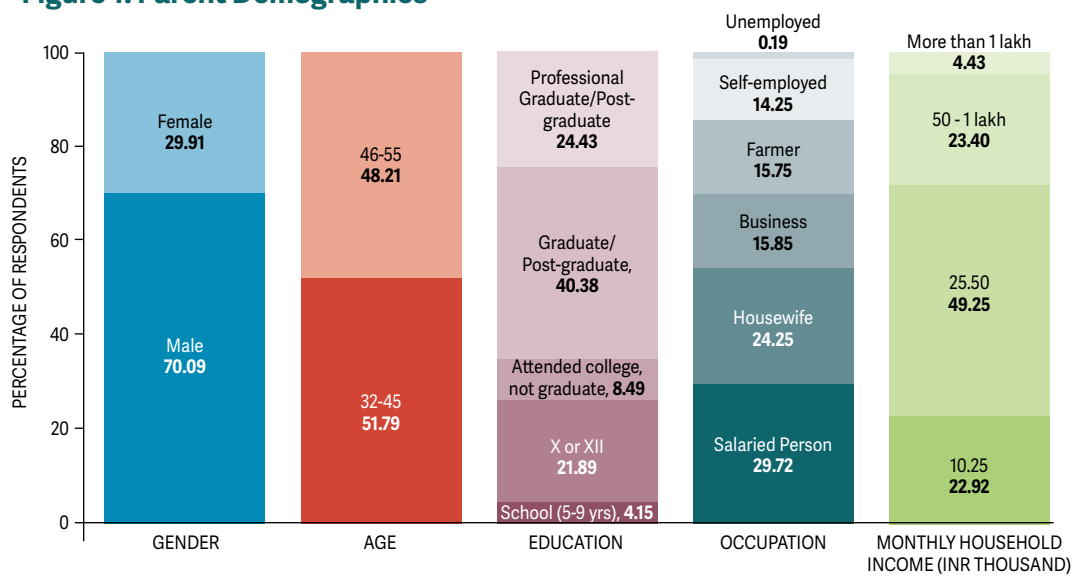
11. Source: Rajasthan Census 2011

schools and just less than a third, or 32 percent, sent them to private schools. Only 18 percent attended the National Institute of Open Schooling.

There were children in diverse age ranges, where 28 percent were in higher secondary education, and 30 percent in lower secondary classes. Around 42 percent of the children were in classes VI to VIII.

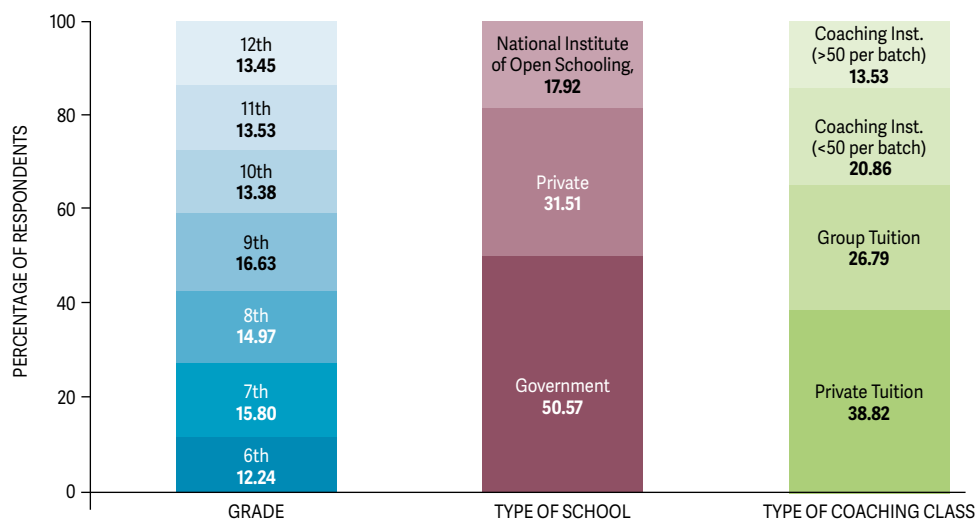
A variety of supplementary educational options were being taken up by the respondents' children. 39 percent of the sample sent their children to one-on-one private tuition. 27 percent were sent to group tuition (with more than 1 student). 21 percent were sent to coaching institutes with less than 50 students while 13 percent were sent to institutions with more than 50 students.

**Figure 1: Parent Demographics**



Note: 0.66 percent of respondents reported their education as "School (<4 years)".

**Figure 2: Children's Education**



## Parental education

Our sample comprised educated parents with varied direct experiences in higher education, as illustrated in Figure 1. Almost a quarter of the respondents had professional or vocational qualifications. 40.38 percent have completed their graduation and post-graduation. 8.49 percent have attended college without graduating. 21.89 percent have completed higher secondary education and matriculation while 4.15 percent have been to school for 5 to 9 years.

We also had a higher proportion of educated and affluent parents compared to other available Indian studies that have analysed parental attitudes towards supplementary education (Chingthem *et al* in Manipur, Madhu *et al* in West Bengal). It was seen that better educated respondents exercised greater agency in decision making. Thus, these survey results may not be generalised across India.

For example, contrary to our sample, the ASER 2021 report found that the largest increase in the share of children taking private tuition is seen in households with lower levels of education where parents have schooling only up to class V.<sup>12</sup> Over 80 percent of parents of students enrolled in class VIII have less than a decade of schooling as per ASER 2022.<sup>13</sup> Parents with relatively lower levels of formal education are increasingly in favour of supplementary education - perhaps because of their own inability to teach their children. Future studies will have to look at correlations between parental education and preference for coaching more deeply.

## Parents' income and employment status

Our survey respondents were engaged in a variety of occupations. 14.25 percent of the respondents were self-employed (Figure 1). The rest of the respondents were spread across jobs such as farming (15.75 percent) and business (15.85 percent). 24.25 percent were homemakers and 29.72 percent held salaried jobs. Studies have shown that parents' employment level has an impact on school and private tuition enrolment. Socio-economic backgrounds tend to impact perspectives on education. For instance, according to a study in Odisha, poorer parents - for example, those who were small scale farmers or day labourers - did not associate their children's education with a better future. On the other hand, fathers in salaried employment were more aware of the connection between education and future prospects, and were more likely to invest more in their children's education.<sup>14</sup> We saw this reflected as well in our survey.

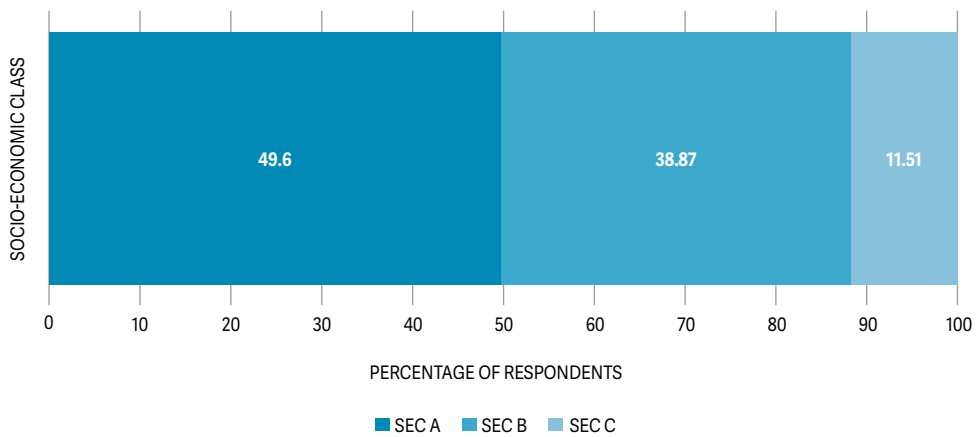
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12. ASER 2021, [https://img.asercentre.org/docs/aser2021finalreport\\_16.116.54pm1.pdf](https://img.asercentre.org/docs/aser2021finalreport_16.116.54pm1.pdf)

13. ASER 2022, <https://asercentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ASER-2023-Report-1.pdf>

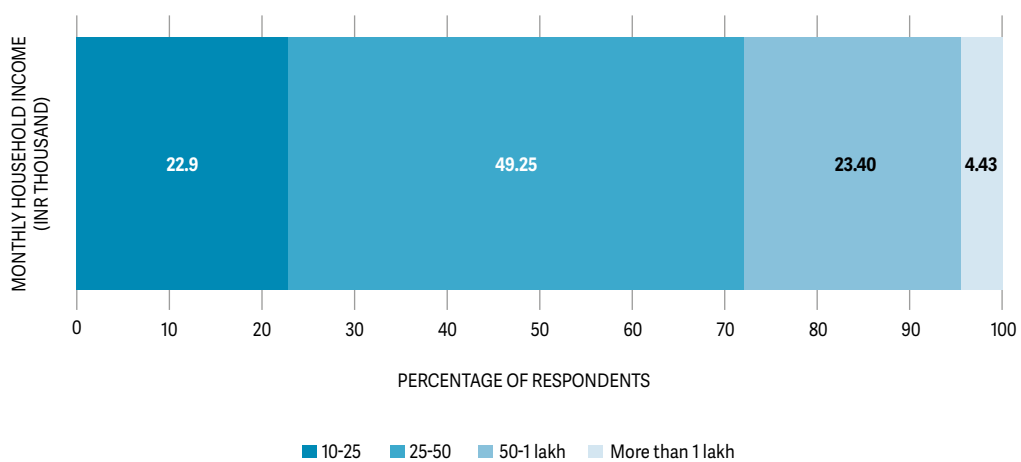
14. Rojalin Samal, "Parents' Attitude Towards Schooling And Education Of Children", <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/53188282.pdf>.

**Figure 3: Socio-Economic Class**



Note: In terms of Socio-Economic Classification (SEC)<sup>15</sup> 50 percent of the sample belongs to the SEC A category or the highest socioeconomic bracket. 39 percent are part of the SEC B category while 11 percent belong to SEC C.

**Figure 4: By SEC and Income**



Nearly half the respondents at 49.25 percent earned less than Rs 50,000 per month. The least number of respondents (4.43 percent) were in the highest earning bracket of more than Rs 1 lakh per month in the same period. This is higher than the national average; estimated by the National Statistical Office in 2023 to be around Rs 1,72,000 annually (or around Rs 14,350 per month).

The next section of the report will look at parental attitudes towards education through both formal schooling as well as through supplementary education.

15. The socioeconomic classification (SEC) groups urban Indian households on the basis of education and occupation of the chief wage earner (the person who contributes the most to the household expenses) of the household into five segments (SEC A, SEC B, SEC C, SEC D and SEC E households in that order).

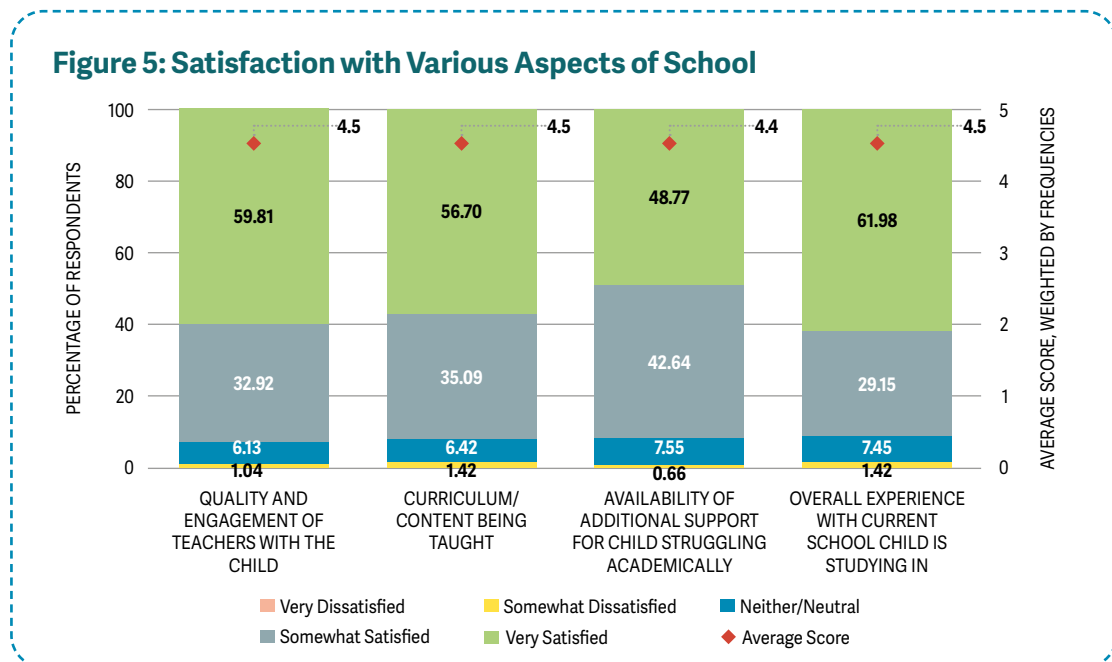
# 02

## SECTION

# Overall Satisfaction with School Education

Parents believe that the quality of education in schools as well as supplementary educational institutions is adequate. In our survey, parents from the SEC C strata were more satisfied about the quality of teaching and their engagement with their children’s education in schools as compared to parents from SEC A and B. This suggests a trend where parents from lower SECs backgrounds exhibit more positive sentiments towards their children’s formal educational experience compared to parents from SEC A and SEC B.

Parents in Jodhpur, Bikaner and Ajmer have high levels of satisfaction on various aspects of education, including the teaching quality and engagement, curriculum content, and the availability of additional support for students struggling in academics.



Note: < 1 percent of respondents reported being “Very Dissatisfied” with the above factors

16. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089e1e5274a27b20002e7/parents-views-of-school-quality-in-ap.pdf>.

There is limited research on how parents are perceiving the quality of education received by their children in India. Morrow and Wilson looked at parents' perspectives on quality of schooling in Andhra Pradesh.<sup>16</sup> Their 2017 study found that parents were mostly dissatisfied with government schools, and many parents expressed concerns with the quality of education in private schools as well. The few localised studies that try to identify the drivers for parents picking supplementary education (Chingthem *et al* in Manipur, Madhu *et al* in West Bengal) bring up factors of dissatisfaction with school education, including overcrowded classrooms and lack of individual attention in school, heavy stress on academic performance, a rigid curriculum, and an exam-oriented school culture. These findings contrast sharply with our survey, which shows parents being quite satisfied with the quality of school education.

We argue that the trend of parental satisfaction with regular schooling indicated in our survey cannot be generalised for the broader Indian context, as it reflects some local efforts. Rajasthan has undertaken a widespread State Initiative for Quality Education in order to overhaul its schools, which involves a wide cross-section of participants, including panchayats, state education departments, teachers and parents.<sup>17</sup> These efforts are reflected in improved results; for example, in the National Achievement Survey (NAS) conducted in 2017, which tests children in Classes 3, 5 and 8 for language, science, mathematics and social studies, Rajasthan scored the highest in Class 8 among all states.<sup>18</sup> There is also an increased preference for government schools. For example, nearly 48 percent of parents with a high level of education in the rural areas preferred to send their children to government schools as per the ASER 2021.<sup>19</sup>

In the next section, we will explain why despite this overall satisfaction with school performance, parents are still relying on supplementary education.

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17. Archived copy of Indian Express article "Education Renaissance in Rajasthan", available at <https://repository.education.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/education-renaissance-in-rajasthan-happy-class-and-more-child-focused.pdf>.

18. *Id.*

19. "48% highly educated rural folks prefer Rajasthan govt schools for their kids", <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/jaipur/48-highly-educated-rural-folks-prefer-rajasthan-govt-schools-for-their-kids/articleshow/87972963.cms>.

# 03

## SECTION

# Prevalence of Supplementary Education

## Parental Make Educational Decisions for Children

Parents are expected to shoulder the responsibility for their children's educational success in Asian societies. This is because education is highly valued as a path to upward mobility in such cultures.<sup>20</sup> Bray and Lykins in their overview of private supplementary tutoring in Asia highlight the role that parents play in their children's education, and how they use investments in supplementary education or coaching to bolster the inputs children receive from schools.

Parental involvement in education has a positive influence on children.<sup>21</sup> A Malaysian study showed that regardless of their income, most parents were involved in the planning and support of their child's education driven by high expectations of their children's academic attainment. The study also found that parental involvement could be a positive driving force towards their children's educational achievements. By staying informed about their child's educational progress, parents can help their children either personally or through additional support by way of supplementary education.<sup>22</sup> Parents' investments in supplementary education, understanding of the competitive educational landscape, and decision-making on the timing of educational interventions highlight their role as supporters and planners of their children's educational journey.

There is an expectation that better performance in schools and competitive examinations will lead to a better life for students. This leads to substantial investments in supplementary education, which are viewed as essential to provide an added layer of academic support. Around 17 percent of monthly expenditure on education goes towards coaching classes in our sample, or a fifth of total monthly outlay. Nearly half allocated 10 to 20 percent of their

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20. Steve R. Entrich, "The Decision for Shadow Education in Japan" Students' Choice or Parents' Pressure? *Social Science Japan Journal* Vol. 18, No. 2, pp 193–216 2015 Advance Access publication June 24, 2015 <doi: 10.1093/ssjj/jyv012>

21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.04.173>

22. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360479109\\_Responsibilised\\_parents\\_and\\_shadow\\_education\\_managing\\_the\\_precarious\\_environment\\_in\\_China](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/360479109_Responsibilised_parents_and_shadow_education_managing_the_precarious_environment_in_China)

23. [https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication\\_reports/Factsheet\\_HCES\\_2022-23.pdf](https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Factsheet_HCES_2022-23.pdf)

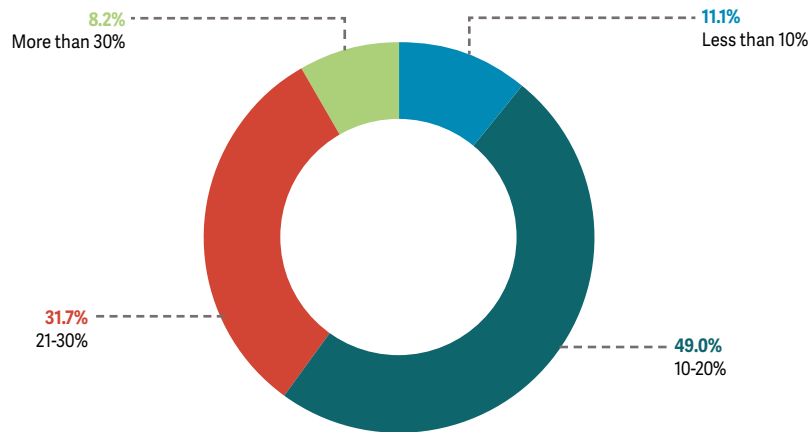
24. [https://www.niepa.ac.in/download/Publications/Occasional%20paper%2055%20\\_web.pdf](https://www.niepa.ac.in/download/Publications/Occasional%20paper%2055%20_web.pdf)



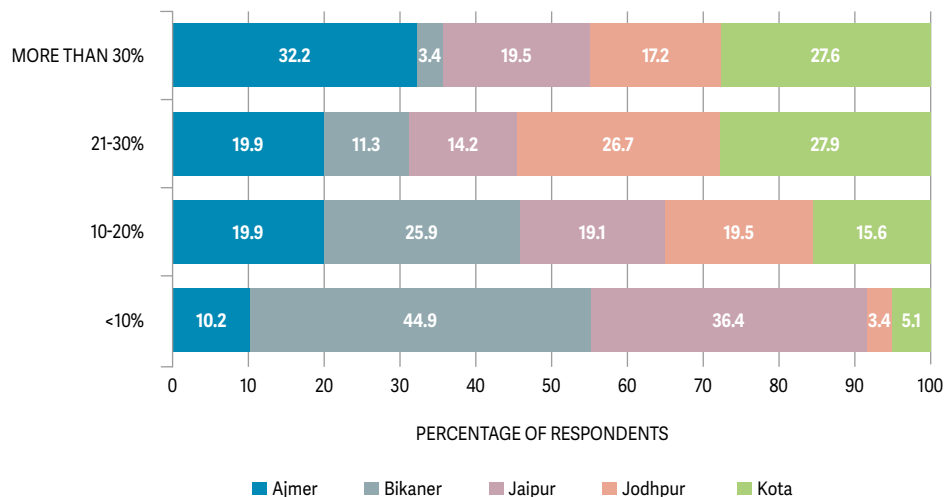
monthly education budget to coaching classes. Parents across the SEC classification seem committed to support supplementary education beyond school education.

Our sample's spending on their children's education is consistent with the national average. The NSO estimates that 5.78 percent of the monthly per capita expenditure in urban India was spent on education in 2022-23; the percentage is lower for rural India at 3.23 percent.<sup>23</sup> It is worth noting that a study by the National Institute of Education Planning and Administration found that middle income households showed the most elasticity when it came to expenditure on education as opposed to poorer houses or even the highest earning group. This is reflective of a middle class that aspires for upward socioeconomic mobility.<sup>24</sup> This also correlates to this survey's findings of SEC B spending the highest amount of their monthly budget on education.

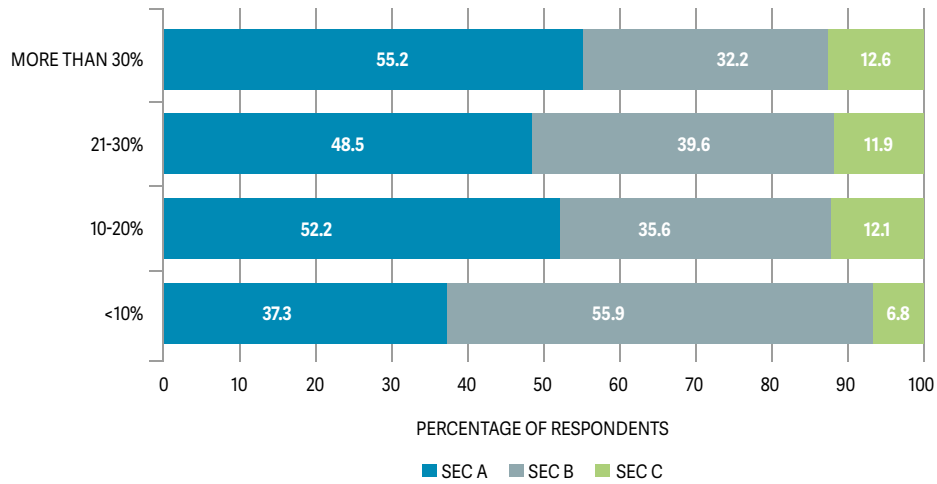
**Figure 6: Percentage of monthly expenditure on education spent on coaching classes**



**Figure 7: Percentage of monthly expenditure on education spent on coaching classes, by city**

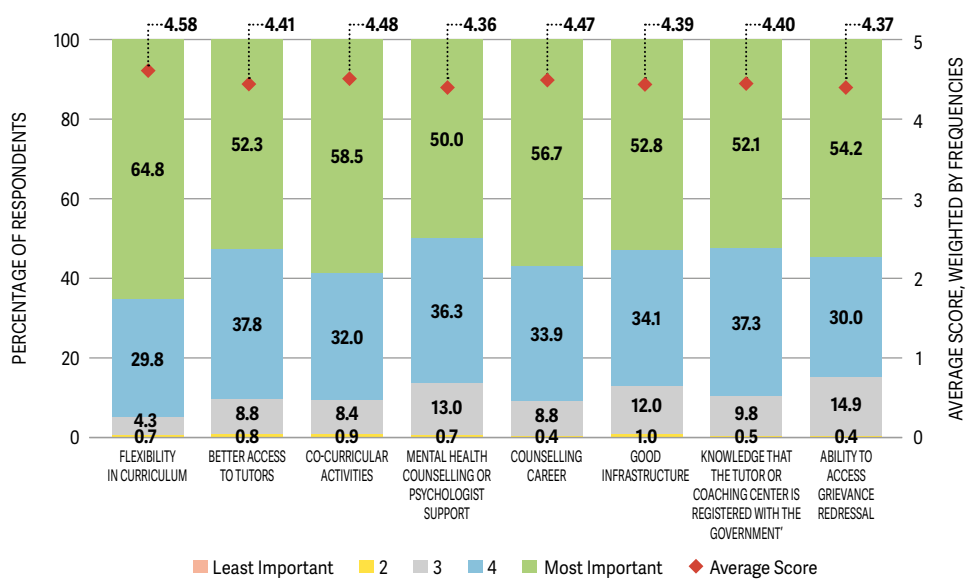


**Figure 8: Percentage of monthly expenditure on education spent on coaching classes, by socio-economic class**



The significance of informed investments by parents in their children is evident in their own educational backgrounds. 24.4 percent of respondents have completed a professional course, while 40.4 percent are graduates and post-graduates. These parents are likely familiar with the competitive nature of academic and professional realities, particularly in fields like engineering and medicine. This awareness may also influence decisions to invest in supplementary education.

**Figure 9: Important factors related to child’s education**



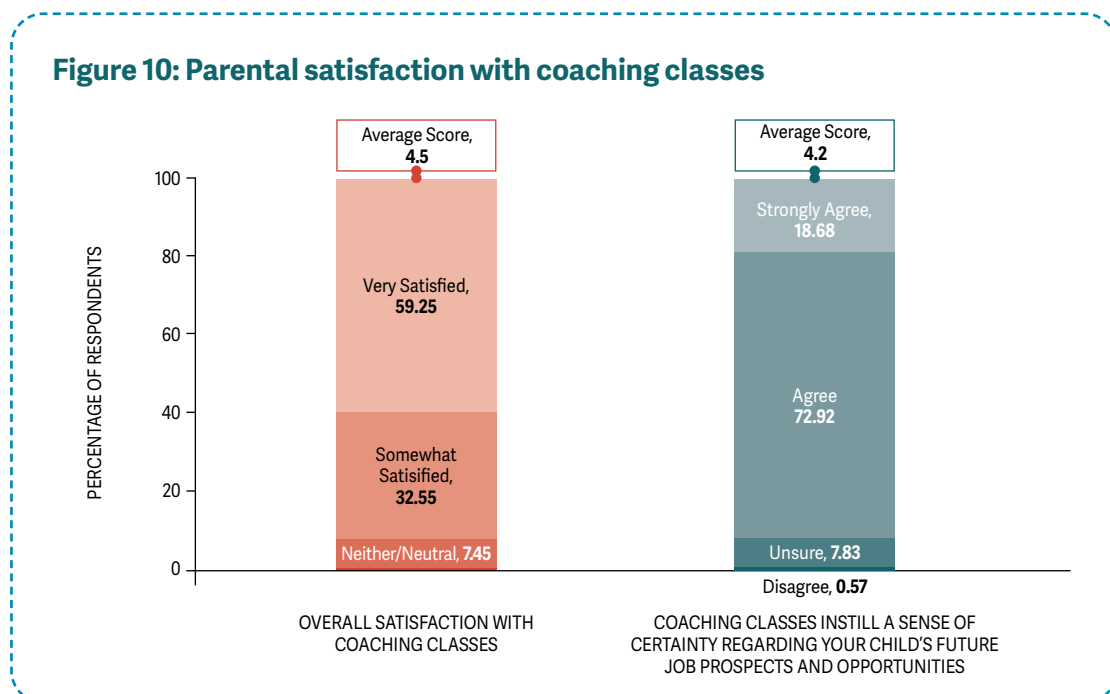
Note: For each factor, those who responded with “Not Relevant” have been excluded from the figure.

Our survey highlights that parents are looking to meet various requirements for their children's holistic scholastic development. The largest number of respondents (64.8 percent) felt strongly about the availability of a flexible school curriculum. A majority of the parents also strongly considered the provision of co-curricular activities and career counselling as important factors for their children's education. Other factors such as 'better access to tutors' and 'good infrastructure' were also important considerations. Parents are forced to meet these needs beyond basic schooling.

## Parents extensively rely on supplementary education

Supplementary education is a growing industry. The Rajasthan survey corroborates that supplementary coaching is heavily relied on by parents across socio-economic groups. 75.6 percent of parents with children in classes VI through XII reported enrolling their child in supplementary coaching classes. National surveys such as the 2021 ASER indicate that 40 percent of students from classes I to XII take paid private tuition.<sup>25</sup> The share of children in classes I to VIII taking paid private tuition classes increased from 26.4 percent in 2018 to 30.5 percent in 2022.<sup>26</sup>

Parents sign up for coaching classes (irrespective of which class their child is in) for a spectrum of reasons, as our survey identified. They cited aspects such as instruction through clear communication, preparing children for academics, future job prospects, and good tutors as reasons for enrolling in supplementary education. Nine percent of the respondents cited the need for career guidance and eight percent pointed out that coaching provides a more conducive learning environment for their child. Seven percent also considered that children received personal attention from coaching teachers, which may be lacking in schools.



Note: 0.09 percent of respondents reported being "Very Dissatisfied" and 0.66 percent reported being "Somewhat Dissatisfied" with coaching classes.

25. ASER 2021, [https://img.asercentre.org/docs/aser2021finalreport\\_16.116.54pm1.pdf](https://img.asercentre.org/docs/aser2021finalreport_16.116.54pm1.pdf)

26. ASER 2022, <https://img.asercentre.org/docs/ASER%202022%20report%20pdfs/All%20India%20documents/aser2022nationalfindings.pdf>

After enrolling, parents seemed satisfied with their experiences with coaching. A large share of the surveyed parents (59.25 percent) seemed very satisfied with coaching classes. This likely stems from the fact that coaching classes instill a strong sense of certainty in the parents regarding their child's future job prospects and opportunities, as 72.9 percent of the parents felt this way. They also specified aspects such as quality of instruction, extra support, preparation for competitive exams, proper attention, and doubt solving sessions which appealed to them.

These parental beliefs can help us understand why coaching remains popular on the ground. Cognitive and social psychologists have for long theorised that people tend to have a perseverance of beliefs and confirmation bias which drives their behaviour.<sup>27</sup> Policymakers looking to change the educational landscape in India will need to account for these biases and cannot ignore them.

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27. Joshua Klayman, Varieties of Confirmation Bias, *The Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, Vol. 32.

# 04

SECTION

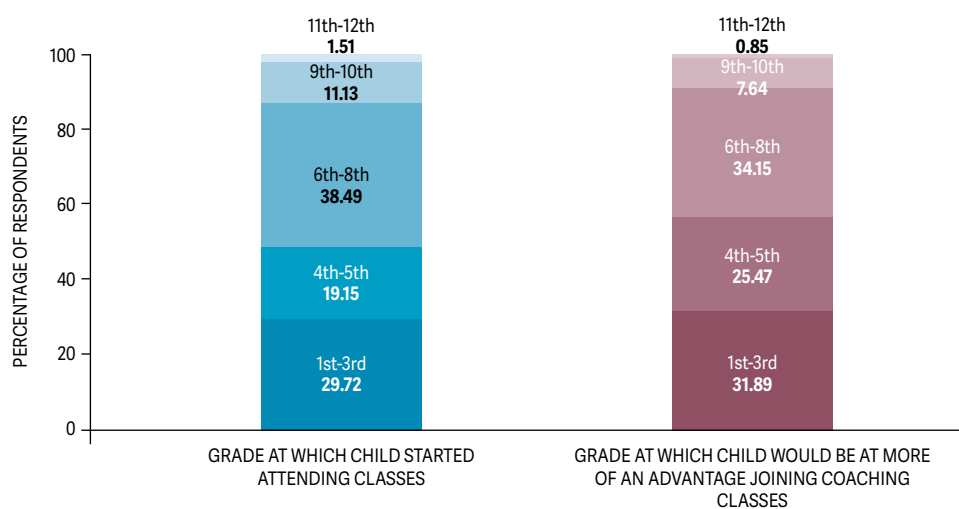
## Parental Preferences in Supplementary Education

### Strong preference for early enrolment

There is a strong belief in Indian parents that supplementary coaching bolsters academic performance, and is necessary for complementing traditional education.<sup>28</sup> The responses in our survey bear this out.

Fewer than two percent of respondents' children began coaching in class XI and XII. 11.1 percent of respondents' children began coaching in class IX and X. The largest percentage of children started coaching from class VI to VIII i.e. 38.5 percent. 19.2 percent of respondents sent their children to coaching in class IV or V. 29.7 percent of children began attending classes as early as from class I to III.

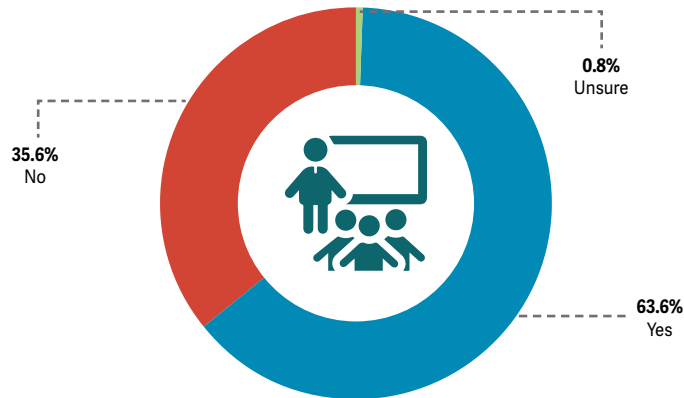
**Figure 11: Parental Preferences for early initiation of supplementary education**



28. See Bray and Lykins discussion on the work done by Amartya Sen through Pratichi Trust in evaluating the need for private tutoring in Bengal in "Private Supplementary Tutoring and its Implications for Policy Makers in Asia", available at <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29777/shadow-education.pdf>.

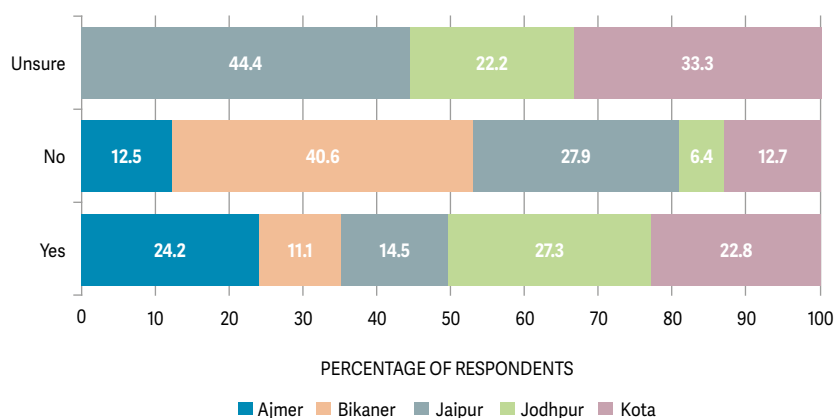
In our sample, it seems clear that parents start supplementary education for their children as early as primary or middle school itself. This finding challenges the assumption in the NEP that coaching is intertwined only with secondary school examinations or higher education.<sup>29</sup> We believe it is important to take into account this ground reality and parental preference even while approaching early childhood care and education, as the NEP aims to do.

**Figure 12: Would you have enrolled your child in coaching classes earlier?**



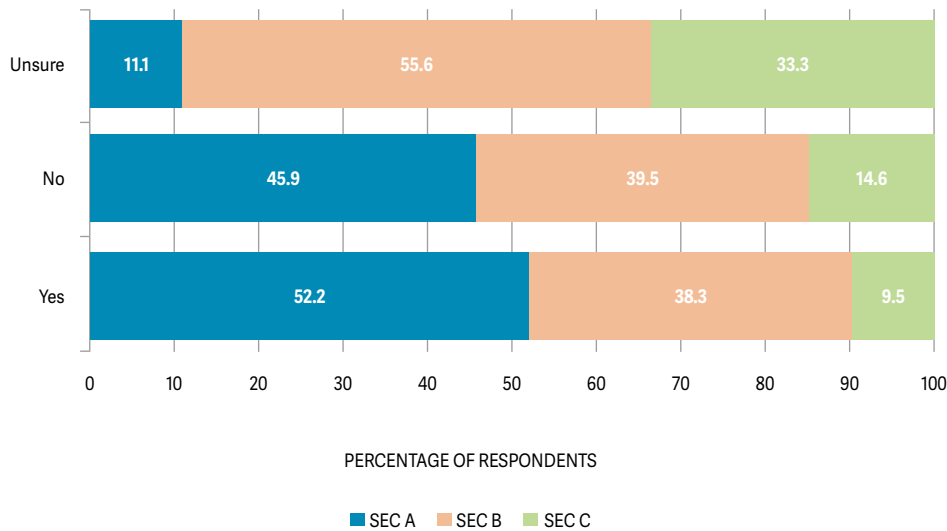
Additionally, there was a marked preference amongst parents (almost 64 percent) to start supplementary education even earlier. The majority (91.5 percent) believe they gain an advantage by enrolling children before or during middle school (before class IX). This highlights the growing importance placed on early academic support and the perceived benefits of supplementary education at these key developmental stages. However, the age bar under the 2024 Rajasthan Bill would deprive younger age groups from the benefits of supplementary education. It may also undermine predominant parental preferences.

**Figure 13: Breakdown of parental preferences for early initiation of supplementary education, by city**



29. Paragraphs 4.36 – 4.42 of the NEP, when addressing the issues with coaching classes, restrict their scope to secondary school “Board” examinations as well as university entrance examinations.

**Figure 14: Breakdown of parental preferences for early initiation of supplementary education, by socio-economic class**



Most parents who agreed that children should start coaching earlier came from the highest socio-economic bracket within the sample. This is not an India-specific trend. For instance, better-educated Singaporean parents with higher incomes tend to adopt a more proactive interventionist parenting style by paying more for both academic and non-academic enrichment classes, according to research on private supplementary tutoring in Singapore (Tan 2017).<sup>30</sup>

### Complementarity between school and coaching

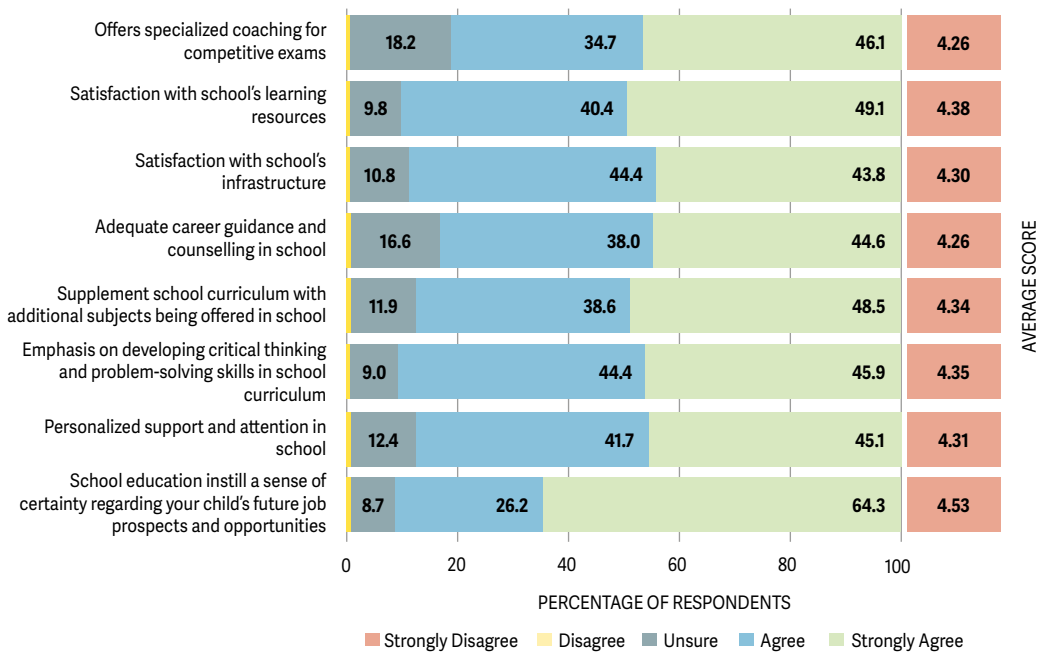
Formal school education and coaching education are complementary in nature. School education is considered foundational for a child's learning and development. Increasingly, however, school education is seen as one amongst many components of a comprehensive academic foundation for a child – where supplementary education is also a crucial component.

In our survey, when parents are asked to reflect on school performance, they expressed general satisfaction but were less certain about some aspects: the ability of schools to offer specialised coaching for competitive examinations, the adequacy of career guidance and counselling and, personalised support and attention. Coaching classes are uniquely situated to address this gap.

Hybridisation is a reality. Respondents consider a flexible curriculum, co-curricular activities, career counselling, and better access to tutors to be particularly important in relation to their child's education. These are all aspects that are fulfilled by a combination of school education and supplementary education.

30. Tan, "Private Supplementary Tutoring and Parentocracy in Singapore", [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313733247\\_Private\\_Supplementary\\_Tutoring\\_and\\_Parentocracy\\_in\\_Singapore](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313733247_Private_Supplementary_Tutoring_and_Parentocracy_in_Singapore).

**Figure 15: Parental attitudes towards school in Rajasthan**



Note: Less than 1 percent of respondents responded with “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” for each factor.

Research suggests that parentals generally perceive supplementary education as positive; many see it as complementing schools. Bray suggests that the growth of supplementary education might be welcomed as a way to “extend the provision of education and build human capital”.<sup>31</sup> In another recent paper, he highlights that the main driver of supplementary tutoring is a strong impression among parents that investing in their child’s education will reap long term benefits by way of good scores in critical exams.<sup>32</sup> Parents in China try to maximise their cultural capital through supplementary education and its assistance in putting children on successful academic strategies in a highly competitive environment.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time, it is important to remember that coaching is often less about remedial help for students in order to maintain academic levels, and more about “competition and creation of differentials”<sup>34</sup> since competitive exams are often the means to socio-economic mobility. For this reason, parents will continue to look to supplementary education as a way to give their children a competitive edge. For example, despite the high quality of national schooling in East Asian countries like South Korea, Singapore and Japan, there is still a proliferation of supplementary education systems. We will explore this more in the next Section.

31. Mark Bray and Chad Lykins, “Private Supplementary Tutoring and its Implications for Policy Makers in Asia”, available at <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29777/shadow-education.pdf>.

32. Mark Bray, “Shadow Education in Asia and the Pacific: Features and Implications of Private Supplementary Tutoring”, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/375784876\\_Shadow\\_Education\\_in\\_Asia\\_and\\_the\\_Pacific\\_Features\\_and\\_Implications\\_of\\_Private\\_Supplementary\\_Tutoring](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/375784876_Shadow_Education_in_Asia_and_the_Pacific_Features_and_Implications_of_Private_Supplementary_Tutoring).

33. Wei Zhang, “Shadow education in the service of tiger parenting: Strategies used by middle class families in China”, available at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343145120\\_Shadow\\_education\\_in\\_the\\_service\\_of\\_tiger\\_parenting\\_Strategies\\_used\\_by\\_middle-class\\_families\\_in\\_China](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343145120_Shadow_education_in_the_service_of_tiger_parenting_Strategies_used_by_middle-class_families_in_China).

34. *Supra* 40.



# 05

## SECTION

# Discussion on Educational Policymaking

Our survey illustrates how parents in Rajasthan feel about school and supplementary education. We urge that this data be used as a guiding input for crafting policies related to education. In India, any national level policy on education warrants extensive consultations as it is under the Concurrent List of the Constitution of India. Policies on education need careful planning, joint monitoring and collaborative implementation between the Centre and States.

### **Multistakeholder involvement in educational policy making**

The formulation of the NEP in 2020 witnessed an unprecedented consultative process involving stakeholders from the grassroots levels upwards. As the country's first national education policy of the 21st century, it has been reported that finalising the NEP involved 2 lakh suggestions from 2.5 lakhs Gram Panchayats, 6600 Blocks, 6000 Urban Local Bodies, 676 Districts.<sup>35</sup> The responses from the public which involved parents, teachers, schools and over 300 institutions were reportedly incorporated into the framework of the NEP.<sup>36</sup> These extensive consultations and their systematic incorporation help ensure that the federal and secular nature of our Constitution is reflected in the NEP 2020.

Following the approval of the NEP, in 2022 the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) was devised to implement the NEP. The efforts of the Ministry of Education to include parents in the consultation process of the NCF were commendable. A tech platform was developed to help in district-level consultations, mobile-based surveys from the grassroots level onwards.<sup>37</sup> This prompted stakeholders like parents, Anganwadi workers, teachers, educators and students to actively voice their views and opinion about the state of education and the implementation of the NEP. Notably, the online survey on the NCF were initiated in about

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35. Press Information Bureau, National Education Policy 2020 Announced (July 2020), <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1642061#:~:text=NEP%202020%20has%20been%20formulated,consultation%20process%20from%20January%202015>

36. Nistula Hebbar and Pricilla Jebaraj, 'Rigorous consultations done before framing new National Education Policy, says Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank' The Hindu (1 August 2020), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/rigorous-consultations-done-before-framing-new-national-education-policy-says-ramesh-pokhriyal-nishank/article32243060.ece>.

37. Press Information Bureau, Public Consultation through citizen-centric Survey for Formulation of NCF as part of Implementation of NEP-2020 (July 2022), <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1838953>.

23 languages.<sup>38</sup> The motivation behind conducting this survey was to ensure that given the diversity of the country and to provide every stakeholder with the opportunity to be heard, including non-parents or non-primary caregivers of the child.

Engaging with parents is an effective way to understand community needs and priorities central to a child's learning and development. It is essential for advancing better education policies. For instance, the draft NEP 2019 which was put through the rigours of an extensive consultation process resulted in over 2.5 lakh responses with 85 percent favouring it.<sup>39</sup> We recommend that similar consultations should be conducted while drafting and implementing State laws related to supplementary education.

Education systems and policies are increasingly recognising the need to involve parents and families in policy and program development. India can take an example from the United States, where 20 states include student members in their state Boards of Education (which are tasked with setting school policies).<sup>40</sup> While often non-voting members with limited influence, they are still able to make their points of view known. The Centre for American Progress, for example, has advocated for more inclusion of students in educational policy making.<sup>41</sup> This view should also extend to parents. People should have a meaningful say in policies that will affect them, and evidence shows that parents are key stakeholders in their children's educational decisions.

When parents are left out of the decision-making processes, their views and lived-experiences are also excluded from policies and programs, impacting their effectiveness. Educational reforms that sought to weaken supplementary education across East Asian countries such as China, South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan often had the opposite effect. Students in these societies suffer from immense pressure caused by the high-stakes competitive exams. The reforms only made cosmetic changes without addressing the underlying issue and so parents began taking recourse to shadow education in order to maximise their child's academic edge.<sup>42</sup>

## Complex Issues with Secondary and Higher Education in India

Efforts to overly regulate or curb coaching, while well-intentioned, do not go to the root of the problem. India's competitive exams were meant to birth a meritocracy as a counter to society's class and caste biases. This dream has fallen short of being realised; the reason parents and children are facing incredible amounts of stress for competitive examinations is the low number of seats in the already scarce number of good quality higher educational institutes in India. Policy-makers must address this supply gap in order to holistically address the mental health issues facing students in India today.

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38. Ibid

39. 'NEP 2020 underwent extensive consultation process, says Kasturirangan', *The Hindu* (25 November 2023), <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/nep-2020-underwent-extensive-consultation-process-says-kasturirangan/article67573023.ece>.

40. National Association of State Boards of Education, "Involving Students in State Education Governance" (Alexandria, VA: 2018), available at <https://www.nasbe.org/involving-students-in-state-education-governance/>

41. "How Students Can Help Better Education Policy", <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/students-can-help-build-better-education-policy/>.

42. Zhang & Yamato, "Shadow Education in East Asia: Entrenched but Evolving Private Supplementary Tutoring", [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324603317\\_Shadow\\_education\\_in\\_East\\_Asia\\_Entrenched\\_but\\_evolutionary\\_private\\_supplementary\\_tutoring](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324603317_Shadow_education_in_East_Asia_Entrenched_but_evolutionary_private_supplementary_tutoring).

In most Asian countries, competitive examinations are an intrinsic part of the education system. Traditionally, academic competition is seen as an efficient way of sifting through the academic capabilities of a large population. But, an increasing number of studies evidence that it can cause considerable mental health concerns amongst students.<sup>43</sup>

Education is a fiercely competitive area in India, with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields considered to be the toughest.<sup>44</sup> Admission to prestigious institutions like NITs, IITs and government medical colleges in India is highly competitive and done through standardised tests. IITs for example accept only one in 50 applicants;<sup>45</sup> this can hardly be compared with leading international admission rates of one in 19 (Harvard University)<sup>46</sup> or one in six (Oxford University).<sup>47</sup> With millions of students applying every year, these exams are designed to eliminate large numbers of candidates. Losing a mark or two can mean dropping thousands of ranks down the pecking order.

### Case study – Candidates to Seat Ratio for National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET-UG)

NEET-UG is a highly competitive examination attempted by around 1.5 million Indian students each year for admissions to about 101,043 MBBS seats in 681 medical colleges (split between government and private institutions). To illustrate the growing competition in NEET-UG, the table below lists year-wise figures of candidates to seats in the examination.

Year	2023	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
No. of Registered students	1519375	1614777	1597435	1519375	1326725	1138890
No. of Students passed	797042	870074	771500	797042	714562	611539
No. of Seats	101,043	89875	85025	80312	70433	67523

Source - RAJYA SABHA SESSION - 256 UNSTARRED QUESTION No 2981.<sup>48</sup>

While the number of seats available has been increasing over the years, the competition for these coveted seats has also been increasing.

The ratio of seats available to the number of students appearing for the exams is only five to six percent, contributing to the rigorous nature of these exams and resulting stress for students. Exam anxiety is fuelled by high stakes, unrealistic expectations, fear of failure, and pressure from parents and peers.

43. Hsu, C.-S. (2017). "The effect of academic competition and coping strategy on students' psychological distress", *Bulletin of Educational Psychology*, 49:43–68; Barbayannis, G., Bandari, M., Zheng, X., Baquerizo, H., Pecor, K. W., and Ming, X. (2022), "Academic stress and mental well-being in college students: Correlations, affected groups, and covid-19", *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13; Alsulami S, Al Omar Z, B. M. e. a. (2018), "Perception of academic stress among health science preparatory program students in two Saudi universities", *Advances in medical education and practice*, 9:159–164.

44. Vikas Ponnnavolu, 'How India's Competitive exam-prep treadmill ground to a halt' BBC (22 December 2020) <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20201214-why-indias-competitive-testing-treadmill-never-stops>.

45. Ibid

46. Data from <https://college.harvard.edu/admissions/admissions-statistics>.

47. Data from <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/facts-and-figures/admissions-statistics>.

48. Year-wise National Testing Agency (NTA), Total Number of Students Registering for and Passing National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET-UG) Exam from 2017 to 2021.

In India, students' social capital is linked to success in competitive exams. This can be evidenced through the tussle for seats in prestigious institutions, academic and parental pressure to excel and the high stakes associated with academic performance. The considerable focus on excellence to secure the coveted academic capital creates significant mental health concerns for students. We acknowledge the link between academic pressure and stress in students. But it is essential to broaden the scope of inquiry and investigate other significant stressors that contribute to mental health concerns among aspirants of competitive examinations, such as parental pressure.

A study which looked at the sources of stress experienced by competitive exam aspirants attending medical and engineering coaching institutes in Delhi found that the majority of the respondents (39 percent) reported parental stressors as a key source of stress.<sup>49</sup> Test preparation can be a challenging phase in a child's life and the need for a supportive and nurturing familial structure is crucial. Absence of supportive parents in students' life can be detrimental to a child's well-being and academic performance. Factors such as forced career choices and the inability of children to speak up about the pressure, especially with their parents can also be a major stressor for children. In fact, significant mental health disorders have been found in those children having non-supportive parents and teachers.<sup>50</sup>

Research indicates that adolescence represents a difficult development period where onerous demands are imposed on adolescents by themselves, their families and their extended social groups.<sup>51</sup> In the context of preparation of competitive exams, high pressure for success and expectations from parents is a significant contributor of stress amongst students. Poor family environments in terms of parental pressure, rejection, and inconsistencies have been found to significantly contribute to psychological problems like anxiety, stress, neuroticism and depression amongst students.<sup>52</sup> These pressures have also been found to result in changes in sleeping habits, negative feelings towards self and fear of failure amongst students.<sup>53</sup> So, mental health concerns are the offshoots of inadequate interaction with the social environment, amongst which family is the most significant unit. Educational policies that seek to reduce burdens on students must keep all these complex factors in mind.

## The Way forward

Supplementary education has been a cornerstone of education in Asian countries, and has developed uniquely in different regions based on local requirements. These systems have identified the value of personalized attention and tailored learning to offer students an academic edge through coaching or tutoring. These institutions are constantly evolving to meet future student needs as technology and career options evolve. Beyond standardised testing, the world is getting tougher for children to navigate without some added support.

49. Vanita Mann, Dr. G.N. Tiwari, Prof. Loknath Mishra, 'Study of Stress and Coping Strategies in Competitive Entrance Exams Aspirants Attending Medical and Engineering Coaching Institutes in Delhi, IT in Industry, Vol. 9 No. 2 (2021), <http://www.it-in-industry.org/index.php/itii/article/view/413/364>.

50. Aditya Thakur, "A study to explore patterns and factors of depression and stress among students", [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Aditya-Thakur-4/publication/369617317\\_A\\_study\\_to\\_explore\\_patterns\\_and\\_factors\\_of\\_depression\\_anxiety\\_and\\_stress\\_among\\_students\\_preparing\\_for\\_competitive\\_exams\\_in\\_central\\_india/links/6424700892cfd54f8439e53a/A-study-to-explore-patterns-and-factors-of-depression-anxiety-and-stress-among-students-preparing-for-competitive-exams-in-central-india.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Aditya-Thakur-4/publication/369617317_A_study_to_explore_patterns_and_factors_of_depression_anxiety_and_stress_among_students_preparing_for_competitive_exams_in_central_india/links/6424700892cfd54f8439e53a/A-study-to-explore-patterns-and-factors-of-depression-anxiety-and-stress-among-students-preparing-for-competitive-exams-in-central-india.pdf)

51. Tung, Suninder, and Damanjit Sandhu. "Healthy psychological development of adolescents in context to family." *J Indian Health Psychol* 3 (2008): 1-11.

52. Kamlesh Singh, Mohita Junnarkar, and Soumya Sharma, "Anxiety, stress, depression, and psychosocial functioning of Indian adolescents" (2015), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4711236/>.

53. Ibid.

The high burden of expectations on children must come down; till it does, they must have the best opportunities to excel. In this context, supplementary education can play an important role for parents and students.

Technology is likely to play an important role in the evolution of supplementary education. The abrupt shift to digitalisation of services necessitated by the coronavirus pandemic has prompted educators to shift their focus online.<sup>54</sup> Online test preparation and coaching services are becoming popular. The Department of Higher Education itself has made arrangements for online learning for competitive exams through portals such as IITPAL and E-Abhyas.<sup>55</sup> Private enterprises which offer supplementary education services have already begun expanding their product lines to include online material and training, with newer formats of content delivery evolving continually. Hybrid educational solutions which rely on technology are becoming an important tool for private supplementary educators in India. They will have to work closely with Central and state governments to determine how best to deploy these solutions for students in an effective manner.

Policymakers in India might have to adapt their attitudes towards supplementary education. Recent efforts are commendable; for example, a new generation of state legislations as well as the central guidelines related to coaching devote attention to students' mental health and ensuring that adequate physical infrastructure is made available. Going forward, it is also important to ensure data-driven decision-making when it comes to educational policies. Our survey highlights that more fieldwork is required before making policy recommendations on supplementary education. It is also important that ground realities and specific state contexts should be taken into account. Additionally, it is important for there to be uniformity in application as well as long term planning when rolling out state specific guidelines and laws.<sup>56</sup>

Lawmakers involved in all levels of policy-making related to education should have an aligned approach in implementing not just the letter but also the spirit of guidelines aimed at regulating coaching. For example, in response to a question raised in the 16th session of the Rajasthan Legislative Assembly, it was clarified that modalities for registration and regulation of coaching institutes in line with the model guidelines are underway, and information about the guidelines had been sent to all District Collectors in the state. However, there has been no indication about any open consultations on this matter, including from parents or organisations on the ground which can provide data or evidence essential for formulating educational policies. This must be rectified.

Over-regulation of this sector will lead to the mushrooming of smaller and more ill-equipped classes which parents will be forced to take recourse to. In this survey itself, we found that nearly 70 percent of the households are opting for private tuition, either in one-to-one sessions or group settings, rather than attending coaching institutions. Such tuitions have to follow none of the norms or safeguards prescribed for regulated coaching classes, and are therefore more likely to cause harm to students. It is therefore incumbent upon policymakers to ensure more empirical fieldwork is conducted before the creation and implementation of policies.

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54. Pimlott-Wilson H, Holloway SL. "Supplementary education and the coronavirus pandemic: Economic vitality, business spatiality and societal value in the private tuition industry during the first wave of Covid-19 in England." *Geoforum*. 2021 Dec;127:71-80. doi: 10.1016/j.geoforum.2021.09.009. Epub 2021.

55. "Online Coaching for Competitive Exams", <https://pmevidya.education.gov.in/online-coaching.html>.

56. The Model Guidelines function as a template for states to adapt based on their local requirements. It should be noted that several states have already passed regional legislation to regulate coaching, showing diversity in perspective and actions at district and lower levels.







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[contactus@koanadvisory.com](mailto:contactus@koanadvisory.com) | [www.koanadvisory.com](http://www.koanadvisory.com)