

National Achievement Survey Results of Aspirational and Non-Aspirational Districts of Jharkhand: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The National Achievement Survey (NAS) is an educational assessment programme conducted by the Government of India. It aims to assess the learning outcomes of students at different stages of their education, focusing on core subjects such as mathematics, science, and language. This study aims to analyse the trend of NAS results from 2017 to 2021 in Jharkhand, focusing on class, subject, and gender, and to compare the achievement of students in Aspirational districts and Non-aspirational districts, also considering class, subject, and gender. The study is based on secondary data. The investigator used the results of NAS for Classes III and V for all the districts of Jharkhand and compared the results of aspirational and non-aspirational districts using percentages, averages and graphs. In Jharkhand, girls outperform boys in language and EVS on average, but their performance is lower in mathematics in Class V. In 2017, it was found that schools in non-aspirational districts had higher average achievement scores than schools in aspirational districts in all three Class III subjects (languages, mathematics, and EVS); however, this trend simply reversed itself in 2021, with the average score of students in aspirational districts being slightly higher than in non-aspirational districts. It was found that in NAS 2021, the average scores of students from Jharkhand had decreased. It indicates how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected education.

Keywords: National Achievement Survey, Aspirational Districts, Non-Aspirational Districts, Average Performance, and Academic Achievement

Introduction

The Govt. of India launched the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) in January 2018 under which 112 districts were identified nationwide for implementation. This initiative focused on infrastructure, skill development, healthcare, education, and agriculture. The main purpose is to expedite the development process in these districts to improve living circumstances in the nation's most underdeveloped districts

by raising them (Singh, 2021). A district is referred to as an aspirational district if it is thought to be economically and socially underdeveloped or lagging. These areas are chosen based on high poverty rates, low per capita income, insufficient access to fundamental services like healthcare and education, and other development difficulties. The words "aspirational district" and "non-aspirational district" are

used to group districts according to their state of development and potential for growth. The Government of India designated certain districts as “aspirational” districts to enhance living conditions, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and overall quality of life for the population of these districts by implementing specific development programmes, reducing regional inequities and enhancing the general well-being of the population in aspirational districts by finding and concentrating resources there. The government is also attempting to address educational issues. There are 19 aspirational districts in Jharkhand out of a total of 24 districts.

Conversely, a district that is comparatively more developed and does not meet the requirements to be labelled as an aspirational district is known as a non-aspirational district. Such districts generally have higher income levels, better access to basic services and lower poverty rates. In non-aspirational districts, government development strategies and programs could put more emphasis on maintaining and enhancing the current level of development than on meeting fundamental developmental needs. There are five non-aspirational districts in Jharkhand.

Jharkhand's education system, like that of the majority of Indian states, is divided into elementary (primary and upper primary), secondary, and higher education levels. Primary education (Classes 1–5): children between the ages of 6 and 10. The curriculum covers topics like math, science, environmental studies, and languages. The curriculum aims to give students a solid foundation in fundamental literacy and numeracy abilities. In upper

primary education (classes 6 to 8), the subjects are covered math, science, social studies, and languages. The emphasis is on developing a deeper understanding of these topics. Secondary education has classes 9 and 10 and higher secondary education has classes 11 and 12. Children can choose to specialize in a field like science, commerce, or the arts. Both public and private schools are available in Jharkhand. Although English is also widely utilized in many schools, especially at the upper levels, Hindi is the major language of instruction in government schools in Jharkhand. Depending on their curricula, private schools offer instruction in English or other languages. Jharkhand came in last place on the list of states with only a 2.1% increase in performance overall from 2015–16 to 2016–17 on the "School Education Quality Index" (SEI). For all children up to the age of 14, the Jharkhand government has implemented a free and compulsory education policy since 1st April 2010.

1.1 National Achievement Survey

India conducts a large-scale national survey called the National Achievement Survey (NAS) to evaluate the status of the nation's educational system. Data on the academic performance of pupils in classes III, V, VIII, and X is gathered through this assessment, enrolled in state Government schools, Government-aided schools, private unaided schools, and central Government schools on subjects like Language, Mathematics, and Science. This is accomplished by gathering data on pertinent background elements, such as the school atmosphere, teaching methods, teacher qualifications, and experience. It does not provide results to particular

students or schools; rather, it provides achievement scores for the country, each participating state, and specific categories such as girls, children in rural areas and other groups. It provides policymakers, curriculum specialists, researchers, principals, and teachers with a picture of what students achieve in a subject at a specific point in time (Kumari, 2018). The Ministry established a National Steering Committee for efficient monitoring and national coordination. The formulation of the Assessment Framework was given to the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), but the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) was tasked with overseeing NAS 2021. Competency-based assessment was the main focus of NAS 2021. For Classes III and V, the assessment covered language, mathematics and environmental studies.

Aspirational districts' educational development is influenced by a number of national and state-level educational programmes in addition to the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP). Programs like Samagra Shiksha and the NIPUN Bharat Mission aim to enhance infrastructure, teacher capacity, educational access, and basic literacy and numeracy at the national level. The school education system in Jharkhand has been further reinforced by educational reforms such as the Mukhyamantri School of Excellence Scheme, school digitisation initiatives, and teacher professional development programs. The implementation and results of these educational programs may be different in aspirational districts than in non-aspirational districts because aspirational districts receive

targeted resource allocation, data-driven governance, and focused monitoring under the ADP framework. Thus, studying learning results in aspirational and non-aspirational districts offers a chance to comprehend how educational attainment is impacted by policy convergence and focused developmental interventions.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What differences exist in students' NAS performance of classes III and V in language, mathematics, and EVS?
2. Is there any difference in the performance of boys and girls in language, mathematics, and EVS in classes III and V?
3. Is there any difference in the performance of students belonging to the Aspirational district and non-aspirational district?
4. How does the performance of the students vary in classes III and V in all three subjects (Language, Mathematics, and EVS) in the year 2017 and 2021?

1.3 Research Objectives

- To analyse the trend of NAS results in Jharkhand concerning class, subject, and gender.
- To compare the achievement of students of the Aspirational district and Non-aspirational district concerning class, subject, and gender.

2. Rationale of the Study

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing

an equitable and just society and promoting national development (National Education Policy [NEP], 2020). Merely expanding the educational system is insufficient; learning assessment surveys are essential for assessing children's competencies and their subsequent advancement across the grades assessed in NAS 2017.

Studies show that when teachers incorporate ongoing formative evaluations into their lessons to give students high-quality feedback, student achievement and motivation for learning rise. (Gardner, 2006; Hattie, 2016). The National Achievement Survey, which measures and assesses students' learning outcomes nationwide, is an important component of India's educational system. It is useful for determining how well children are learning different subjects at different stages of their education. This helps to highlight areas that need improvement and provides useful information about how effective the educational system is.

It assists administrators and policymakers in education in making well-informed decisions about the creation and modification of curricula. It helps identify learning gaps and disparities among pupils from various demographic groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and geographic locations is aided by it.

Several reviews revealed that the learning objectives are still not entirely fulfilled. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) statistics from 2018 showed that Jharkhand has severely low learning levels, with only 29% of Grade V students being able to read Grade II material and 15% of students being able to divide, which is far lower than the national averages of 44.2%

in reading and 22.7% in division.

The goal of the Aspirational District Programme is to enhance education. Aspirational districts have had their growth accelerated because of the program. Stakeholders noted several effective education-related initiatives being implemented in the districts and noted some significant developments (NITI Aayog). This is a positive update because these are important fields to evaluate development. The report compares Aspirational Districts (ADs) with non-aspirational districts and finds that thanks to increased focus on real-time data monitoring, convergence across government programmes and schemes, and benefits from the Aspirational Districts Program, ADs have performed significantly better than non-ADs (UNDP). Despite making significant strides, it also offers scope for further strengthening in education. In rural districts, the ADP has introduced novel strategies including the "Hamara Vidyalaya" concept. This model is centered on raising the standard of instruction and refining instructional strategies. In order to guarantee that students have successful learning experiences, teaching methods have also been improved Piyush (2024). Initiatives for digitization have been implemented by the program to improve access to high-quality education. The ADP seeks to close gaps and give instructors and students better educational materials by utilizing technology. Yadav, (2023). There has been an attempt to lower school dropout rates. Furthermore, there has been an emphasis on enhancing school infrastructure to establish surroundings that are favorable for learning. Therefore, it is imperative to compare the learning

outcomes of pupils in aspirational and non-aspirational districts within the NAS in Jharkhand (Singh, 2021).

With a three-year cycle, the Indian government has been implementing a rolling programme of sample-based NAS for Classes III, V, VIII and X. Since 2001, these surveys have been conducted regularly by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). Identifying regions with poorer learning outcomes allows policymakers to allocate funds strategically to improve education and deal with particular issues.

"The COVID-19 pandemic caused the greatest disruption to global education in history, bringing learning to a grinding halt everywhere" (UNESCO 2021). Thus, NAS 2021 provides evidence that the current system needs to be reviewed. Humanitarian crises will inevitably arise, but we can all work together to find solutions to the issues they cause (Gazta & Jadhav, 2022).

Thus, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of the educational system, identify areas for improvement, and inform evidence-based decision-making by policymakers. Specifically, this study focuses on assessing student performance in subjects like language, mathematics, and EVS in Jharkhand.

3. Methodology

This study is based on the secondary data collected and compiled by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi. Hence, the method of secondary analysis

was followed to analyse and interpret the data. The NCERT conducted the National Achievement Survey (NAS) in the years 2017 and 2021 for classes III, V, VIII, and X. The subjects covered in this survey were Language, Mathematics, and Environmental Studies (EVS) for Classes III and V for both the year 2017 and 2021. In NAS 2017 the sample was 1,10,000 government and government-aided schools across 36 States/Union Territories. Three questionnaires i.e. Pupil Questionnaire (PQ), Teacher Questionnaire (TQ), and School Questionnaire (SQ) were also developed. Both tests and questionnaires comprised multiple-choice questions. Students of Classes III and V were assessed through two test forms while test forms of Classes III and V comprised 45 questions. The NAS was administered across the nation on November 13, 2017. In all 36 States/UTs, 2.2 million pupils' learning levels were evaluated across 1,10,000 schools in 701 districts. NAS 2021 focused on competency-based assessment, and the administration of NAS 2021 was entrusted to CBSE. Out of 733 targeted districts, the NAS 2021 was conducted in 720 districts on 12th November 2021 except some districts of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

The investigator used the results of NAS for classes III and V for all the districts of Jharkhand and compared the results of aspirational and non-aspirational districts in different subjects by using percentages, averages, and graphs. Based on the analysis, the investigator has concluded as per the objectives of the study. The details of the data analysis are presented in the following sections.

4. Data Analysis

The data were analysed as per the objectives of the study. The study has two objectives, the first focuses on analysing the trend of NAS results in Jharkhand concerning class, subject, and gender and the second on comparing the achievement

of students of the Aspirational district and Non-aspirational district concerning class, subject, and gender. The researcher analysed the data using the descriptive analysis technique using percentages and graphs, with interpretations made accordingly.

Table 1
Performance of Class-III Students in 2017 and 2021: Subject-wise

Class III	Language			Mathematics			EVS		
	A.S.	Boys	Girls	A.S.	Boys	Girls	A.S.	Boys	Girls
Average Score in 2017	69.3	68.9	69.7	64.6	64.7	64.6	65.0	64.6	65.4
Average Score in 2021	57.7	57.9	57.7	53.0	52.9	53.2	53.7	53.3	54.1

Table 1 indicates that the average student performance in the language in 2017 was 69.3 while the average student performance in 2021 was 57.7, which indicates a decrease of 11.6 percent. Similarly, the average performance of boys in 2017 was 68.9 while the average performance of boys in 2021 was 57.9, which is 11 percent less. The average student performance in the language for girls in 2017 was 69.7 while the average student performance in 2021 decreased to 57.7, which is a decrease of 12 percent in 2021. In mathematics, the average student performance in 2021 was 53.0 while in 2017 it was 64.6, which indicates a decrease of 11.6 percent. Similarly, the average performance of boys in 2017 was 64.7 while the average performance of boys in 2021 was 52.9, which is a decrease of 11.8 percent. The average student performance

in Mathematics for girls in 2017 was 64.6 while the average student performance in 2021 decreased to 53.2, which is a decrease of 11.4 percent in 2021. This table also indicates that the average performance of students in the EVS in 2017 was 65.0 while the average student performance in 2021 was 53.7, which indicates a decrease of 11.6 percent. Similarly, the average performance of boys in 2017 was 64.6 while the average performance of boys in 2021 was 53.3, which is 11.3 percent less. The average student performance in the EVS for girls in 2017 was 65.4 while the average student performance in 2021 decreased to 54.1, which is a decrease of 11.3 percent in 2021. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the average performance of students in EVS, Mathematics, and language has decreased around the rate of 11- 12 percent in the year 2021.

Figure 1
Performance of Class-III Students in 2017, 2021 Language, Maths and EVS

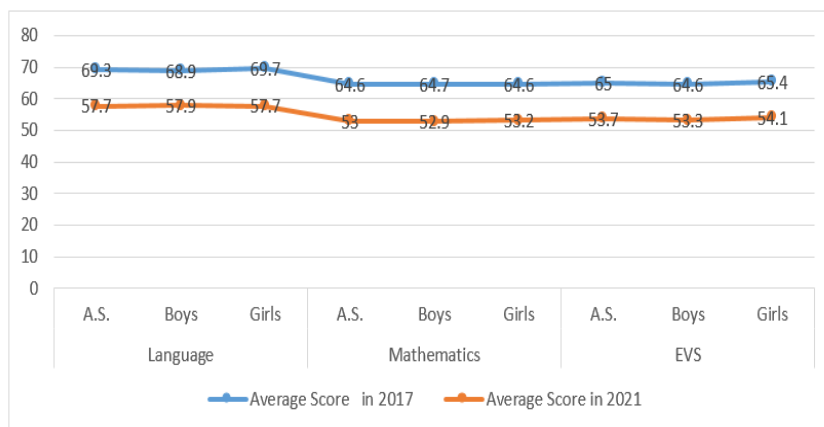


Table 2
Performance of Class-V Students in 2017, 2021 -Subject-wise

Class V	Language			Mathematics			EVS		
	A.S.	Boys	Girls	A.S.	Boys	Girls	A.S.	Boys	Girls
Average Score in 2017	61.6	60.4	61.8	56.4	55.5	56.3	63.3	62.2	63.7
Average Score in 2021	52.4	52.3	51.9	40.2	40.4	40.1	45.9	45.7	46.1

Table 2 indicates that the average student performance of Class V students in language in 2017 was 61.6 while the average student performance in 2021 was 52.4, which is a decrease of 9.2 percent. Similarly, the average performance of boys in 2017 was 60.4 while the average performance of boys in 2021 was 52.3, which is 8.1 percent less. The average student performance in the language for girls in 2017 was 61.8 while the average student performance in 2021 decreased to 51.9, which decreased by 9.9 percent in 2021. The average performance of Class V students in Mathematics in 2017 was 56.4

while the average student performance in 2021 was 40.2, which is a decrease of 16.2 percent. Similarly, the average performance of boys in 2017 was 55.5 while the average performance of boys in 2021 was 40.4, which is a decrease of 15.1 percent. The average student performance in mathematics for girls in 2017 was 56.3 while the average student performance in 2021 decreased to 40.1, which is a decrease of 16.2 percent in 2021. It also indicates that the average student performance of class V students in the EVS in 2017 was 63.3 while the average student performance in 2021 was 45.9, which is a decrease of

17.4 percent. The average performance of boys in 2017 was 62.2 while the average performance of boys in 2021 was 45.7, which is 16.5 percent less. The average student performance in the EVS for girls in 2017 was 63.7 while the average student performance in 2021 decreased to 46.1, which is 17.6 percent lower in 2021.

From the above discussion, it can

be concluded that the average performance of students in language has decreased by approximately 9 percent in the year 2021. The average performance of students in Mathematics and EVS has decreased by approximately 16-17 percent in the year 2021.

Figure 2
Performance of Class-V Students in 2017, 2021 Language, Maths and EVS

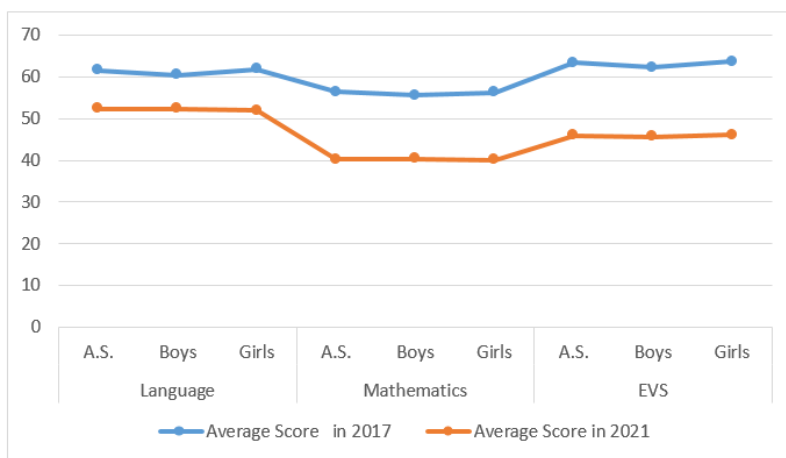


Table 3
Class III Aspirational Districts and Non-Aspirational Districts

Class III	Language			Mathematics			EVS		
	A.S.	Boys	Girls	A.S.	Boys	Girls	A.S.	Boys	Girls
Aspirational District 2017	69.3	68.9	69.7	64.6	64.7	64.6	65.0	64.6	65.4
Non-aspirational District 2017	71.3	70.9	71.6	65.0	65.0	65.1	65.7	65.6	65.8
Aspirational District 2021	57.7	57.9	57.7	53.0	52.9	53.2	53.7	53.3	54.1
Non-aspirational District 2021	55.1	54.6	57.4	52.3	52.2	53.9	52.1	51.0	55.1

Table 3 reveals that the average performance of students in the non-aspirational district in 2017 was 71.3, whereas the performance of students in aspirational districts was 69.3 which is 2 percentage points lower than that of the non-aspirational district. Similarly, in 2021, aspirational districts had an average score of 57.7 percent while non-aspirational districts had an average score of 55.1 percent, which was 2.6 percent lower. In the case of the boys' scores in 2017, it was 68.9 in the aspirational district and 70.9 in the non-aspirational district, which is 2% higher. However, in 2021, boys in aspirational districts scored 57.9 percent, compared to 54.6 percent in non-aspirational districts, a difference of 3.3 percent. In 2017 girls' scores in aspirational districts were 69.7%, while their non-aspirational district scores are 71.6 percent, which is an increase of 1.9 percent, and in 2021, girls scored 57.7 percent in aspirational districts, compared to 57.4 percent in the non-aspirational district, which is a decrease of 0.3 percent. While in Mathematics the average performance of students in non-aspirational districts in 2017 was 65.0, which is 0.4% higher than the aspirational district's 64.6 average performance. Similarly, in 2021, aspirational districts had an average score of 53.0 percent while non-aspirational districts had an average score of 52.3 percent, which was 0.7 percent higher. In the case of the Boys' score in 2017, it was 64.7 in the aspirational district and 65% in the non-aspirational district, which is an increase of 0.3%. However, in 2021, boys in aspirational districts scored 52.9 percent, compared to 52.2 percent in non-aspirational districts, a difference of 0.7 percent. Girls' 2017 aspirational district scores are 64.6 %,

while their non-aspirational district scores are 65.1 percent, which is an increase of 0.5 percent, and in 2021, girls scored 53.2 percent overall in aspirational district, compared to 53.9 percent in the non-aspirational district, which is an increase of 0.7 percent. The table also reveals that the average performance of students in non-aspirational districts in 2017 was 65.7, which is 0.7% higher than the aspirational district's 65.0 average performance. Similarly, in 2021, aspirational districts had an average score of 53.7 percent while non-aspirational districts had an average score of 52.1 percent, which was a decrease of 1.6 percent. In the case of the Boys' score in 2017, it was 64.6 in the aspirational district and 65.6 in the non-aspirational district, which is a 1% decrease. However, in 2021, boys in aspirational districts scored 53.3 percent, compared to 51.0 percent in non-aspirational districts, a difference of 2.3 percent. Girls' 2017 aspirational district scores are 65.4 %, while their non-aspirational district scores are 65.8 percent, which is an increase of 0.4 percent, and in 2021, girls scored 54.1 percent overall in aspirational district, compared to 55.1 percent in the non-aspirational district, which is an increase of 1 percent.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the average performance of non-aspirational districts is better than aspirational districts around the rate of 2 % in the year 2017 but in the year 2021, the average performance of students of the aspirational district is better than non-aspirational district around 2 % rate. In Mathematics and EVS the average performance of non-aspirational districts is better than aspirational districts by around the rate of 0.5 % in the year 2017 but in

the year 2021, the average performance of students of the aspirational district is higher than that of non-aspirational districts by approximately 0.5-1 percentage point.

Figure 3
Performance of Class-III Students in 2017, 2021 Language, Maths and EVS in both Aspirational and Non-aspirational districts.

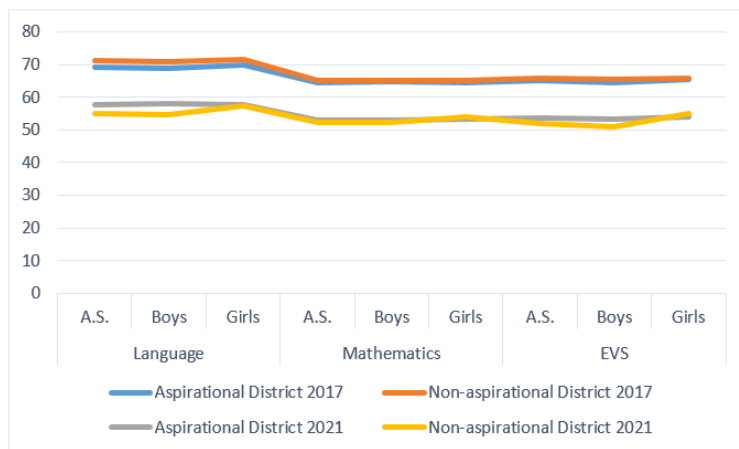


Table 4
Class V Aspirational Districts and Non-Aspirational Districts

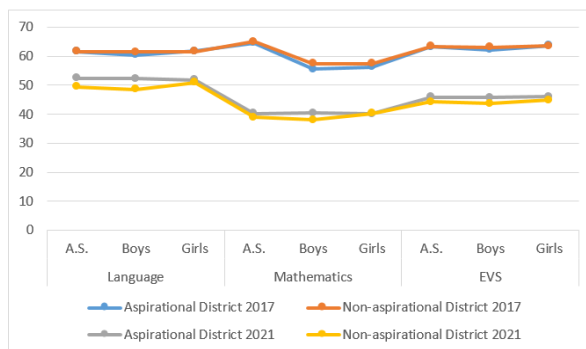
Class V	Language			Mathematics			EVS		
	A.S.	Boys	Girls	A.S.	Boys	Girls	A.S.	Boys	Girls
Aspirational District 2017	61.6	60.4	61.8	64.6	55.5	56.3	63.3	62.2	63.7
Non-aspirational District 2017	61.6	61.5	61.6	65.0	57.4	57.4	63.4	63.1	63.6
Aspirational District 2021	52.4	52.3	51.9	40.2	40.4	40.1	45.9	45.7	46.1
Non-aspirational District 2021	49.4	48.6	50.9	39.0	38.0	40.3	44.2	43.6	44.8

Table 4 reveals that the average performance of students in non-aspirational districts in 2017 was 61.6, which is the same as the aspirational district's 61.6 average performance. Similarly, in 2021, aspirational districts had an average score of 52.4 percent while non-aspirational districts had an average score of 49.4 percent, which was 3 percentage points lower. In the case of the Boys' score in 2017, it was 60.4 in the aspirational district and 61.5 in the non-aspirational district, which is 1.1 % higher. However, in 2021, boys in aspirational districts scored 52.3

percent, compared to 48.6 percent in non-aspirational districts, a difference of 2.7 percent. Girls' 2017 aspirational district scores are 61.8 %, while their non-aspirational district scores are 61.6 percent, which is 0.4 percent less, and in 2021, girls scored 51.9 percent overall in aspirational districts, compared to 50.9 percent in the non-aspirational district, which is a decrease of 1 percent. In Mathematics the average performance of boys in non-aspirational districts in 2017 was 57.4, which is the same as the aspirational district's 56.4 average performance. Similarly, in 2021, aspirational districts had an average score of 40.2 percent while non-aspirational districts had an average score of 39 percent, which was decreased by 1.2 percentage points lower. In the case of the Boys' score in 2017, it was 55.5 in the aspirational district and 57.4 in the non-aspirational district, which is 1.9 % lower. However, in 2021, boys in aspirational districts scored 40.4 percent, compared to 38 percent in non-aspirational districts, a difference of 2.4 percent. Girls' 2017 aspirational district scores are 56.3 %, while their non-aspirational district scores

are 57.4 percent, which is 1.1 percent more, and in 2021, girls scored 40.1 percent overall in aspirational district, compared to 40.3 percent in the non-aspirational district, which is an increase of 0.2 percent. The table also reveals that the average student performance of the non-aspirational district in 2017 was 63.4, which is a decrease of 0.1 % from the aspirational district's 63.3 average performance. Similarly, in 2021, aspirational districts had an average score of 45.9 percent while non-aspirational districts had an average score of 44.2 percent, which was 1.7 percent lower. In the case of the Boys' score in 2017, it was 62.2 in the aspirational district and 63.1 in the non-aspirational district, which is 0.9 % higher. however, in 2021, boys in aspirational districts scored 45.7 percent, compared to 43.6 percent in non-aspirational districts, a difference of 2.1 percent. girls' 2017 aspirational district scores are 63.7 %, while their non-aspirational district scores are 63.6 percent, which is 0.1 percent less, and in 2021, girls scored 46.1 percent overall in aspirational district, compared to 44 .8 percent in the non-aspirational district, which is a decrease of 1.3 percent.

Figure 4
Performance of Class-V Students in 2017, 2021 Language, Maths, and EVS in both Aspirational and Non-aspirational districts.



Findings

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the average performance of non-aspirational districts and aspirational districts in Language and EVS was somewhat similar in the year 2017, but in the year 2021, the average performance of students of the aspirational district is higher than that of non-aspirational districts by approximately 3-4 percentage points. But the average performance of non-aspirational districts and aspirational districts was approximately 1 percentage point higher in the year 2021. In Mathematics the average performance of non-aspirational districts and aspirational districts is a 1 % increase in the year 2017. but in the year 2021, the average performance of students in the aspirational district is somewhat similar to the non-aspirational district.

The targeted execution of educational policies and developmental initiatives in aspirational districts may have contributed to their comparatively better performance in 2021. Districts in the Aspirational Districts Program benefit from the convergence of resources from several programmes and are continuously monitored through key performance metrics. Programs like Samagra Shiksha, the NIPUN Bharat Mission, and state-level programs targeted at enhancing school infrastructure, digital learning resources, and teacher efficacy may have strengthened educational outcomes in addition to ADP interventions. Learning losses during and after the COVID-19 pandemic may have been lessened if aspirational districts had prioritized educational development and given it more administrative attention. These results imply that intensive district-

level monitoring in conjunction with coordinated execution of federal and state educational programs may be crucial to raising student attainment.

5. Result and Discussion

The primary objectives of the teaching-learning process are the enhancement of student learning and the development of necessary subject and class-specific competencies (Kumari,2018). The necessity for a reassessment of the current system is demonstrated by the NAS 2021 which can improve students' performance and the educational system by working together with parents, community members, and educators (Jadhav & Gazta, 2022) but it has been seen that the average student performance in the disciplines of language, mathematics, and EVS, was observed to decline as pupils advanced from Class III to Class V (NAS 2021) compared to NAS 2017. The COVID-19 pandemic is the main driver behind this regulation revision. Students' learning levels have been affected by school closures and the switch from traditional classrooms to online learning (Jadhav & Gazta, 2022). This is contrast to what was said by (NAS 2017) Students in Classes III and V underwent language, math, and environmental studies assessments on student accomplishment of learning outcomes, at the district level "We are aiming to support states and UTs in enhancing the ability of their teachers to narrow gaps in learning outcomes by implementing need-based pedagogies that are suitable for the requirements and environments of young learners." NAS (2017) and the effectiveness of these strategies in raising student learning

outcomes will be demonstrated in the upcoming NAS (2021).

Girls outperformed boys in the majority of disciplines, including language and EVS, according to a study that looked at performance by gender; this finding is similar to the study of Kumar (2008). The annual growth rate of the female literacy rate has been higher than that of the male literacy rate and also for Jadhav & Gazta, (2022), in Jharkhand, girls' average achievement scores are higher than boys' scores on average. Girls score much higher on average in academic achievement when they move from Class III to Class V, compared with boys

In all Class III subjects (languages, mathematics, and EVS), the average achievement scores of schools in non-aspirational districts were found to be higher than those of schools in aspirational districts in the year 2017; however, this trend simply reversed itself in the following year, with the average score of students in aspirational districts being slightly higher than those in non-aspirational districts, similar to the findings of recent National Achievement Survey (NAS) report, Ministry of Education (2020), Government of India (2022), in it a significant learning gap has been found among students in the nation, Held in over 720 districts of India, rural and urban, The "COVID-19 pandemic caused the most severe global education crisis, halting education across the board." a historical upheaval" (UNESCO, 2021). The average accomplishment score of Class III pupils at schools in the state of Jharkhand was significantly lower than that of Class V students as the students advanced from Class III to Class V. The gender-wise results

show that girls perform better in a number of primary-level topics, which is positive. However, prior research indicates that socioeconomic limitations, gender norms, household obligations, early marriage, and safety-related concerns frequently cause girls' enrollment, retention, and learning results to drop at higher educational levels. As a result, the encouraging patterns seen in Classes III and V should be regarded with caution and necessitate additional research at the upper-primary and secondary levels.

The score of Jharkhand in Class III and V is not significantly different from the national average for all three subjects i.e. Language, EVS, and Mathematics. But in 2021 the average achievement score of Jharkhand is significantly below that of the overall achievement score in all three subjects at both class III and V. Beyond the direct effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of contextual factors may be responsible for the drop in accomplishment levels in Language, Mathematics, and EVS between 2017 and 2021. Students may have experienced learning loss as a result of extended school closures, restricted access to digital learning tools, uneven internet connectivity, and differing degrees of parental support, especially in rural and socioeconomically disadvantaged areas. It appears that topics needing ongoing practice, instructor direction, and conceptual understanding were more negatively impacted than language learning, as evidenced by the more pronounced loss seen in mathematics and EVS at the elementary level.

By shifting the emphasis from material to competencies through learning outcome-oriented evaluation, teachers

can modify their pedagogy and guarantee high-quality instruction for the community, parents, and members of the school management committee. Taking into account background characteristics, the State Learning Report (SLR) also identifies low-performing and high-performing learning outcomes (Kumari,2018).

6. Conclusion

Assessment is an essential phase in the teaching-learning process. The study's findings shed light on pupils' learning capacities and the learning gap. Surprisingly, Jharkhand students' average score and level have declined in NAS 2021. The average language, mathematics, and EVS score for classes 3 and 5 in Jharkhand is less than the state's total performance score for 2021. Both teachers and students had to continue their work at home while instruction was delivered online during quarantine and lockdown. Students' regular schedules were disrupted, and they lost touch with their fellow students and friends who experienced the loss of fundamental abilities, and a lack of formal education for more than a school year. The unplanned shift to online education created greater challenges for female pupils mostly because of the gendered and stereotyped behaviours when performing housework. In Jharkhand, girls' average success scores in Class III are higher than boys, but they are lower in language and maths. In Jharkhand, girls' average success scores in language and EVS are higher than boys', while in math Class V, they are lower. Class V's EVS score is higher than the national average, while Class III's score is the same as the national average. Language

and mathematics in classes 3 and 5 are on par with the national average. In Jharkhand, girls outperform boys in language and EVS for classes 3 and 5, while in mathematics, there is no difference between the sexes in Class III. According to the gender-specific results, girls outperformed boys in Language and EVS. Higher levels of classroom involvement, more awareness of girls' education, and increased engagement of girls in language-based learning activities could all be linked to this trend. The necessity for interventions targeted at boosting mathematical confidence and lowering gender-related prejudices in STEM education is highlighted by the comparatively lower performance of girls in mathematics in Class V.

These results highlight the need of putting remedial learning programmes into place, bolstering basic reading and numeracy, improving teacher support networks, and guaranteeing fair access to educational materials. Students from underprivileged families should receive extra attention because they may have had more learning disruptions during the pandemic. Policymakers can detect learning gaps and create evidence-based measures to improve educational quality and equity with the help of ongoing monitoring of learning outcomes using large-scale assessments like NAS.

The Aspirational Districts Program's targeted interventions may have contributed to the notable improvement in aspirational districts' performance in 2021. Learning losses during the epidemic may have been mitigated in these districts through increased administrative attention, infrastructure development, targeted

educational activities, and increased monitoring. The very slight accomplishment score discrepancies between aspirational and non-aspirational districts, however, show that educational disparities still exist and require ongoing policy attention. The discovery of learning gaps across all of the districts was not the main focus, thus efforts must be supported through strategic planning to assist schools in operating at the intended level. Children's education was impacted by the pandemic's financial strain on numerous households as well and the lack of income prospects affected the learning of students after Covid-19. So it is necessary to institutionalise appropriate support systems and create suitable policy frameworks for improving the learning achievement of students in the preparatory stage.

7. Educational Implications

This study will help policymakers formulate policies for improving the learning

outcomes of students. This study will assist schools in performing at the desired level. It will be beneficial for the stakeholders to act accordingly to achieve the goals. This study will help to identify the learning gaps and address them and minimise them. This study can be applied across all of the nation's districts. As this study is limited to Class III and Class V only further study can be conducted with classes VIII and X. This study focuses mainly on aspirational and non-aspirational districts so different dimensions can also be seen like rural or urban groups. Different subjects can also be taken for further research like Science as this study only focuses on three subjects that is Language, EVS, and Mathematics. Getting sponsorships for these students will also help to keep them in the classroom and ensure that their learning improves. Ultimately, the research aims to furnish policymakers with actionable insights to ameliorate educational achievements and policies on a national scale.

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