

3. South Asia

Status of Japanese-language education in South Asia

Institutions across South Asia reached 1,174 (up 51.3% from the previous survey in 2021), teachers reached 3,771 (up 52.6%), and learners reached 128,890 (up 104.3%). All figures continued to rise from the previous survey.

India had the highest number of institutions (381), followed by Nepal (318), Sri Lanka (298), Bangladesh (165), and Pakistan (9). Sri Lanka saw a significant increase of 234.8%, placing it among the top three countries in this survey. The number of teachers follows the same order: India (1,285), Nepal (1,146), Sri Lanka (650), Bangladesh (643), and Pakistan (42). Meanwhile, learners were most numerous in India (52,946, up 47.0% from the previous survey), followed by Sri Lanka (34,650, up 255.5%), Nepal (25,292, up 162.2%), Bangladesh (14,918, up 101.1%), and Pakistan (906, up 272.8%), the same order as in the previous survey. All countries saw significant growth rates, but there was no change in the rankings. Looking at the proportion of learners in South Asia by educational level, primary education accounts for 4.7%, secondary education for 21.1%, higher education for 15.9%, and non-school education for 58.3%. As in the previous survey, non-school education continues to represent a high proportion.

The online class implementation rate across South Asia stands at 53.1%, with all countries except Maldives exceeding the global rate of 30.9%.

The primary purpose for learning Japanese was study in Japan (84.6%), which saw a significant increase (up 32.3 percentage points) and ranked first. Future work in Japan (82.8%) remained in second place, consistent with the previous survey. The percentage of respondents who cited current or future work in home country (49.7%), which ranked first in the previous survey, remains significantly higher than the global average (24.9%). Similar to the previous survey, over half of respondents cited interest in the Japanese language (56.0%) and interest in anime, manga, J-POP, fashion, etc. (50.7%).

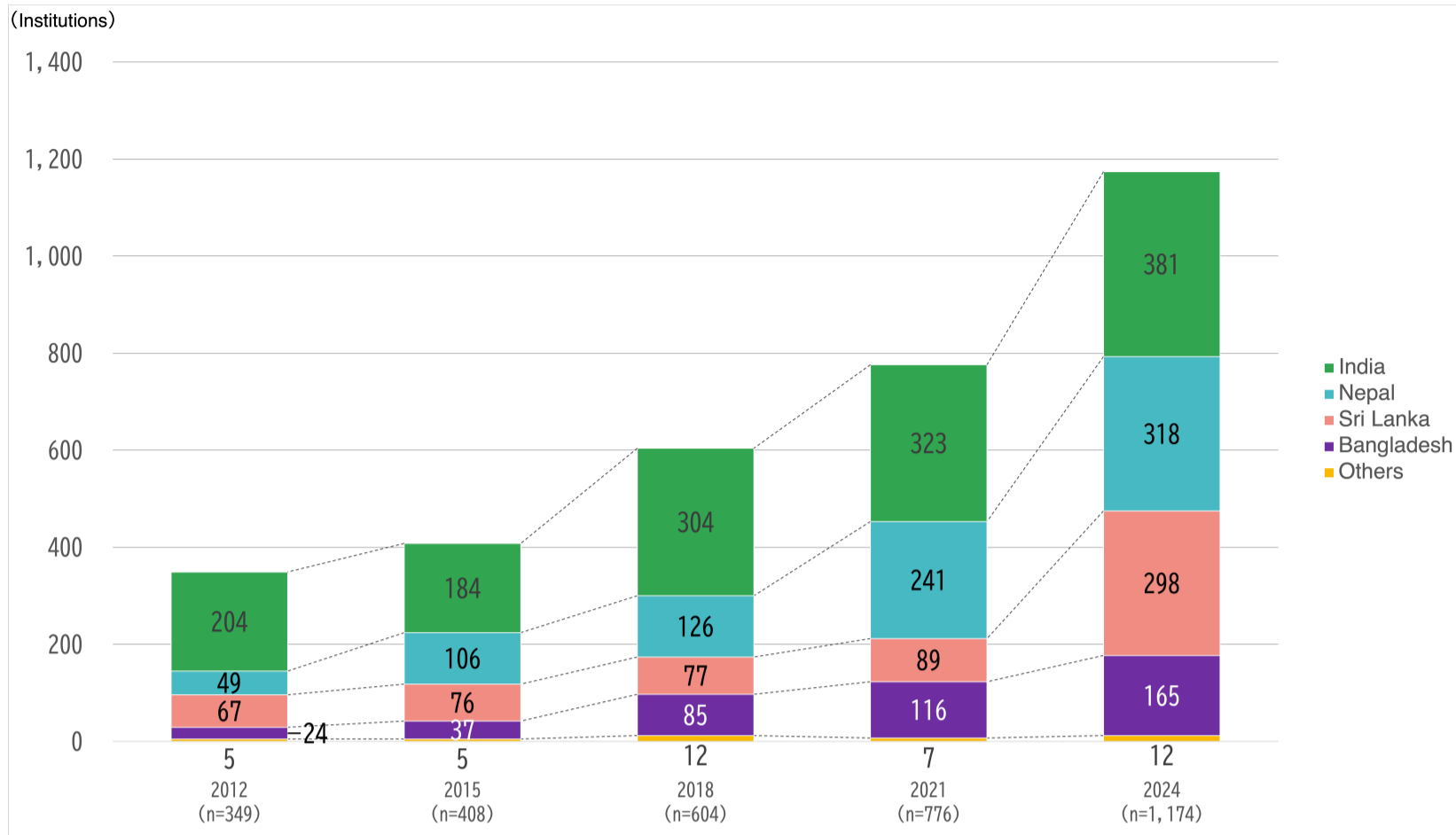
Table 2-3-1 Number of Institutions, number of Teachers, and number of Learners in South Asia

(Listed in order of the number of Learners in 2024)

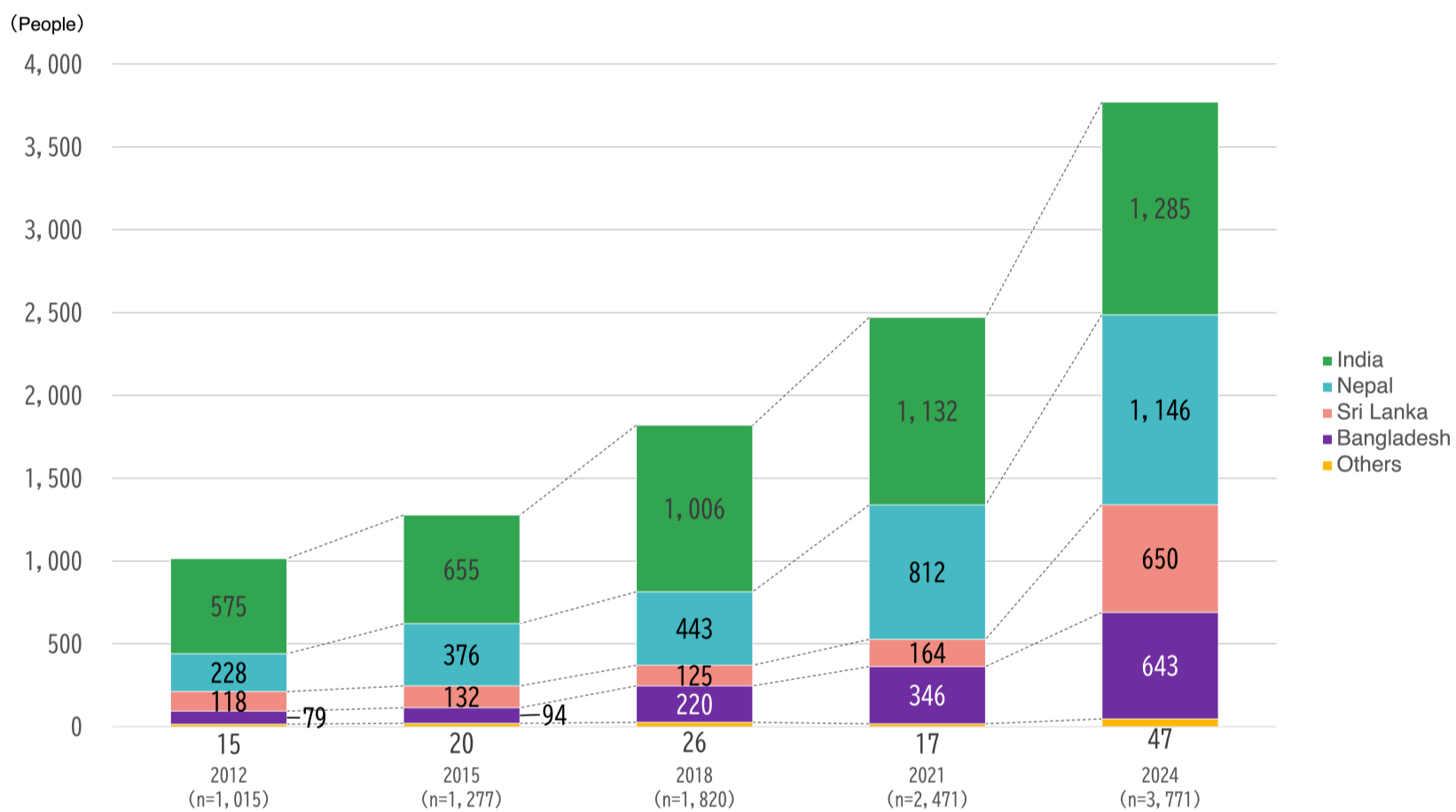
Country and Region	Number of Institutions in 2024 (institutions)	Number of Teachers in 2024 (people)	Number of Learners in 2024 (people)	Learners per 100,000 population (people)	Number of Learners in Primary education 2024 (people)	Number of Learners in Secondary education 2024 (people)	Number of Learners in Higher education 2024 (people)	Number of Learners in Non-school education 2024 (people)	Population* (people)	Number of Institutions in 2021 (institutions)	Number of Teachers in 2021 (people)	Number of Learners in 2021 (people)
India	381	1,285	52,946	4.4	4,288	10,365	15,710	22,583	1,210,854,977	323	1,132	36,015
Sri Lanka	298	650	34,650	170.2	1,239	16,702	3,350	13,359	20,359,439	89	164	9,746
Nepal	318	1,146	25,292	86.7	0	107	339	24,846	29,164,578	241	812	9,646
Bangladesh	165	643	14,918	8.8	500	28	898	13,492	169,828,911	116	346	7,418
Pakistan	9	42	906	0.4	0	0	195	711	240,458,089	5	13	243
Bhutan	2	4	156	21.5	0	0	0	156	727,145	1	3	18
Maldives	1	1	22	4.3	0	0	0	22	515,132	1	1	7
South Asia overall	1,174	3,771	128,890	—	6,027	27,202	20,492	75,169	—	776	2,471	63,093

*Source: *Population and Vital Statistics Report (as of 3 January 2025)*, by United Nations

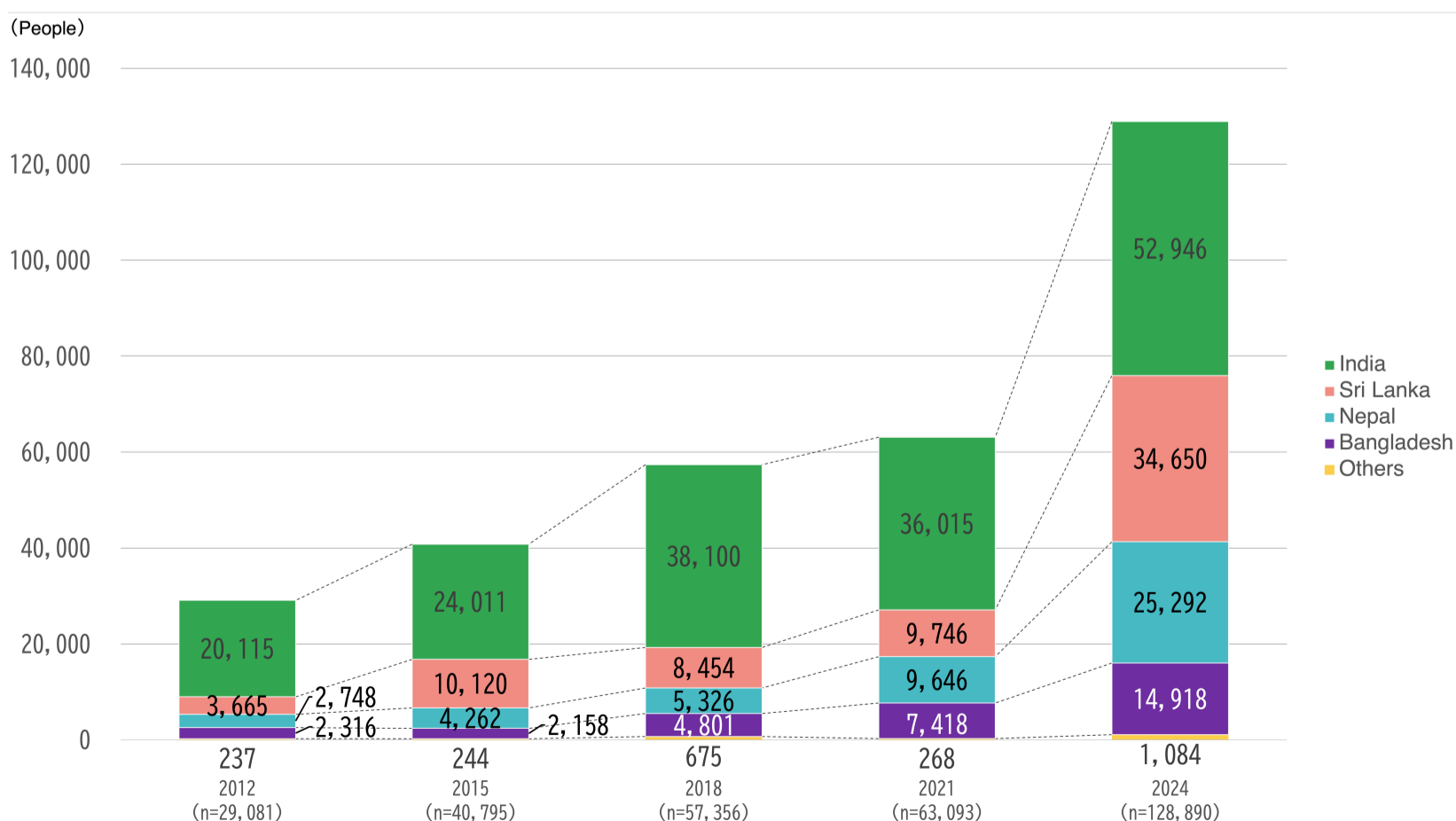
Graph 2-3-1 Number of Institutions in South Asia



Graph 2-3-2 Number of Teachers in South Asia



Graph 2-3-3 Number of Learners in South Asia



Graph 2-3-4 Percentages of Learners by educational stage in South Asia

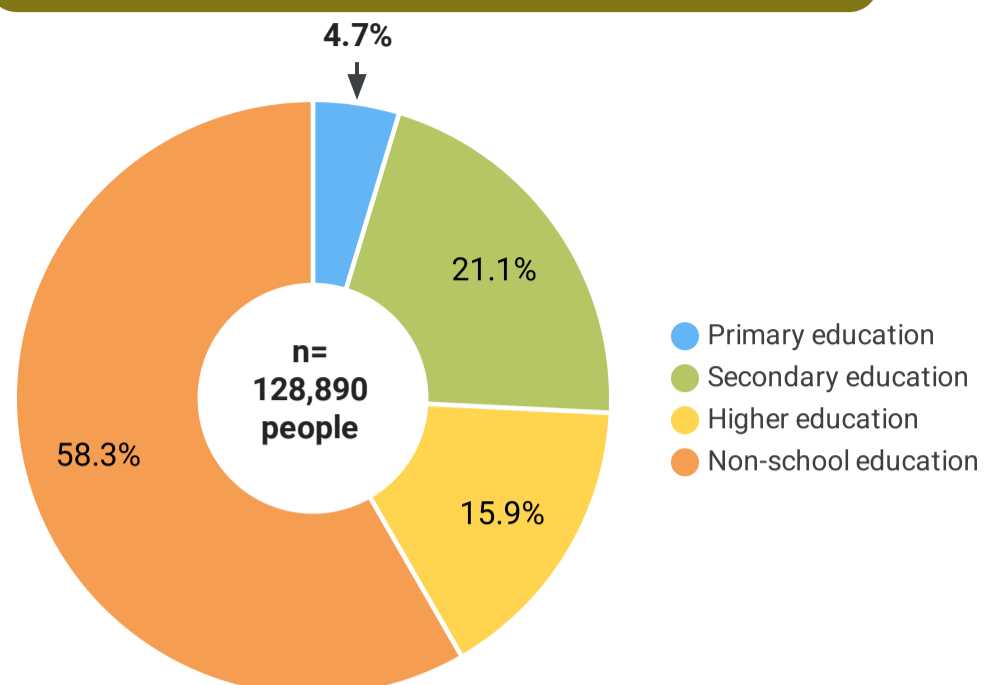
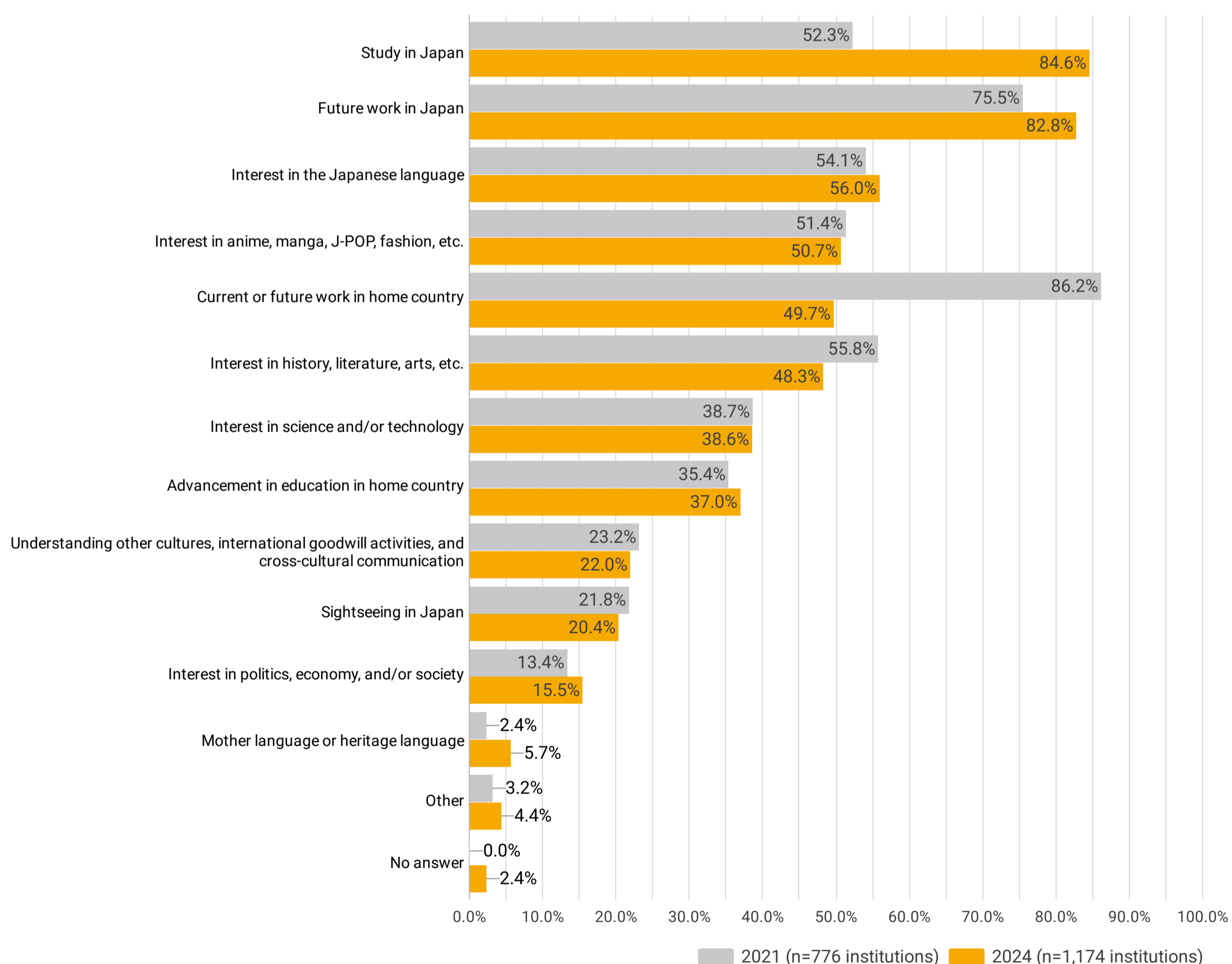


Table 2-3-2 Online class implementation ratio in South Asia

Country and Region	Number of Institutions in each Country and Region	Online class implementation (institutions)	Online class implementation (%)
India	381	261	68.5
Sri Lanka	298	104	34.9
Nepal	318	133	41.8
Pakistan	9	7	77.8
Bangladesh	165	117	70.9
Bhutan	2	1	50.0
Maldives	1	0	0.0
South Asia overall	1,174	623	53.1

Graph 2-3-5 Objectives of Japanese-language learning in South Asia



Trends in each country and region

[India]

In India, compared to the previous survey (2021), the number of learners increased at all educational levels. However, while institutions and teachers increased overall, decreases were observed at some educational levels.

Learners in primary education were on a downward trend during the previous survey, as many schools suspended or canceled classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in this survey, learners began to increase as secondary education institutions already providing Japanese-language education resumed or newly introduced programs at the primary level. It should be noted that learners are increasing particularly in Gujarat and Maharashtra. This is thought to be due to education professionals who are promoting Japanese-language education locally and actively working to introduce it into schools. Currently, many primary education institutions position Japanese-language instruction as an extracurricular activity or hobby class, with lessons (including online) held once a week or several times a month.

In secondary education, increases were observed in institutions, teachers, and learners. This is largely due to the introduction of Japanese as an extracurricular subject in Delhi's public schools. Furthermore, similar to primary education, the presence of education professionals promoting Japanese-language education in some states has led to an increase in institutions.

Numbers of institutions, teachers, and learners in higher education also increased. The number of universities offering degrees in Japanese studies has increased since the previous survey, and it was confirmed that more universities are offering Japanese-language courses as electives or open courses.

In non-school education, institutions decreased, but learners increased. While many institutions primarily offer preparatory courses for the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) N2 to N5, Japanese-language education for Indians aiming to work in Japan through programs such as the Highly-Skilled Professionals and Specified Skilled Worker systems is also becoming increasingly prevalent. Additionally, there are a certain number of individual teachers and learners studying Japanese online in India, which may also be one reason for the decline in the number of private Japanese-language educational institutions.

[Sri Lanka]

Sri Lanka saw significant growth compared to the previous survey (2021), with institutions increasing by 209 (up 234.8%), teachers increasing by 486 (up 296.3%), and learners increasing by 24,904 (up 255.5%). It recorded the highest growth rate in all survey items within the South Asia region. Japanese-language education is expanding in Sri Lanka, with a trend toward increases across secondary education, higher education, and non-school education. A major factor behind the significant increase is believed to be the rise in learners aiming to work in Japan through the Specified Skilled Worker and Technical Intern Training programs.

[Nepal]

Nepal had the highest growth rate in learners in South Asia in the previous survey (2021), and this survey also showed a continued upward trend. Overall, institutions, teachers, and learners increased, likely due to a rise in learners aiming for Japan for study or work purposes. Consequently, the number of non-school education institutions also increased significantly. Furthermore, while many people previously studied Japanese at Japanese-language schools in Kathmandu, this survey confirmed that Japanese-language schools are increasing in number in regional cities such as Pokhara and Chitwan.

[Other Countries and Regions]

In Pakistan, institutions, teachers, and learners are all increasing. This is thought to be due to the growing number of Japanese-language learners driven by the increasing popularity of the Specified Skilled Worker and Technical Intern Training programs. On the other hand, the rapid increase in learners has created a challenge, as the number of Japanese-language teachers has not kept pace.

In Bangladesh, the number of institutions, teachers, and learners all increased from the previous survey (2021), with a particularly significant rise observed in non-school education. The increase in institutions and teachers in non-school education is attributable to the increase in private educational institutions targeting learners who are aiming for employment in Japan through the Specified Skilled Worker and Technical Intern Training programs. It is also estimated that learners aiming to study in Japan are increasing, not just those seeking employment.

In Bhutan, learners increased by 138 (766.7%) since the previous survey, and institutions also increased from 1 to 2. This is due to the launch of the Japanese-language course under the De-suung Skilling Programme starting in April 2022. This Programme was established in 2021 as a division of De-suung, a royal-led volunteer organization, with the aim of providing practical skills to young people. Japanese-language education is positioned as part of this initiative.

In the island nation of Maldives, many people have developed an interest in Japan and Japanese culture due to the influence of anime, manga, and similar media. Consequently, there is likely demand for Japanese-language learning even on outlying islands where resorts are located. However, since there are no Japanese-language teachers outside Malé, which is the capital of Maldives, classes are currently limited to being within that city.