

What to do in the village

These were the instructions given to all participants in ASER 2005. The instructions have been translated into over 15 languages and executed in 28 states and union territories

TASK 1: HOW TO MAKE A MAP

- ❑ Contact Sarpanch: Introduce yourself to the Sarpanch or to other senior members of the panchayat. Tell them about ASER. Ask them for information about schools in the village and around the village. Get the approximate number of households in the village from the Sarpanch.
- ❑ Start mapping: To get to know the village, walk around and start mapping.
 - Talk to people: How many different hamlets/sections are there in the village? Where they are located? What is the estimate of households in each hamlet/section? Tell them about ASER.
 - Map: On the map, show the main landmarks – temples, mosques, river, school, bus-stop, panchayat bhavan, shop etc. Mark the main roads/streets/paths through the village prominently on the map.
- ❑ Marking and numbering sections: If the village has hamlets, then mark the hamlets on the map and number them. If the village is one continuous habitation then divide the entire village in 4 sections. For each hamlet/section, note the estimated number of households. Verify all the information on the map with people in the village as you walk around.

TASK 2: HOW TO SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS AND CHILDREN TO BE SURVEYED

- ❑ If the village consists of more than 4 different hamlets, then make chits with numbers for each hamlet. Randomly pick 4 chits. If there are 4 or less hamlets, then we will go to all hamlets. If the village is one continuous habitation, then divide the entire village into four quadrants/sections. We will visit each quadrant/section. Outline these sections on the village map.
- ❑ In each hamlet/section of the village, we need to survey all children from 5 households. Thus for the entire village, there will be information for about 20 randomly selected households.
- ❑ In each hamlet/section. Try to find the central point in that habitation. Visit every 5th dwelling in the habitation (e.g. 1st house, 6th house, 11th house ..). Get information about the household. Survey & test every child between the ages of 6 and 14 in that household. Stop after you have completed 5 households in that section. If you have reached the end of the section, go around again using the same every 5th household rule.
- ❑ Now move to the next selected hamlet/quadrant. Follow the same process.
- ❑ If the selected dwelling is closed or if there is no body at home, note that down on your survey sheet as “house closed” move to the next house. Continue until you have 5 households in which there were inhabitants, Note down information about the household. Test children from 6 up to the age of 14.
- ❑ Make sure that you go to households on a Sunday or holiday when children are likely to be home.

In each sampled dwelling:

- o Joint families: There may be a joint family, with several brothers, their wives and children. Make sure that you get all children in the age group 6 to 14 in the selected households.
- o Older children: Ask members of the household and neighbours about who all live in the household on a regular basis. (Do not survey children who are visiting). Often older girls and boys (in the age group 11 to 14) may not be thought of as children. Often such children are busy working in the household or in the fields. Ask family members to call them so that you can speak to them directly. If they do not come immediately, mark that household and revisit it once you are done surveying the other households. If there are children in the family but not in the village at present, note down the details in the survey sheet.

Children and adults are usually curious about the testing process and want to participate. Many children may come up to you and want to be included. Do not discourage children who want to be tested. You can interact with them. But concentrate on the fact that data must be noted down ONLY for children from households that have been randomly selected.

TASK 3: WHAT TO DO IN THE SCHOOL ?

Introduce yourselves to the Headmaster/mistress and teachers. Tell them about ASER.

Spend at least one hour in the school. Observe keenly what you see in the school. Both team members must agree on the observations of basic conditions of school infrastructure and functioning.

Make sure that children in the school are not nervous. Talk to them, chat with them and put them at ease.....

MAKE SURE THAT EACH VOLUNTEER IS NEATLY DRESSED, TALKS POLITELY AND IS ABLE TO TALK ABOUT ASER 2005. MOST OF ALL ENJOY YOURSELF AND MAKE SURE THAT CHILDREN ENJOY TOO.....