



Appeal to participate, in order to IMPACT education in India

As citizens of India, each one of us the right to monitor the work of the government and we also have the responsibility to help to make our society *equitable, efficient, and effective*. Every Indian man, woman and child deserves a vibrant democratic society based on *Izzat, Imandari, and Insaaf*.

Every Indian wants India to be not only a literate but also an educated country. Every Indian child deserves an equal opportunity to build a good life. Every Indian pays regular taxes to provide elementary education to the children of India. Every Indian also pays 2% cess levied by the Government of India on all central taxes.

Pratham appeals to individuals, organizations, institutions, and businesses to join an effort to create a citizens' Annual Status of Education Report for India. In August 2004, with the help of citizens and NGOs, we led a survey of 19 districts in 17 states of India. We found that percentage of children enrolled in schools is very high (85-90%+) in most states especially in the 6-10 age group. But, in many states, 50% children in Std 2 and above, going to government schools, cannot read even simple sentences. 60% children cannot do simple subtraction, leave alone multiplication and division. For the first time, a number was put to status of basic learning in the country. Pratham did not stop at this analysis, but has been actively working with various state governments to change this reality. We are willing to do more.

ASER is not a negative idea, it is linked with a constructive *satyagraha* to insist on the right of the citizens to participate in the functioning of the government. We believe that good work done by governments, and there is a lot of it, deserves to be applauded. But governments must also take outcome oriented steps to improve performance of schools.

ASER is an annual effort. It will go on until December 2010 – the deadline for achieving quality universal elementary education declared by Government of India.

What you can do

- Participate in the survey. Nearly 18,000 villages will be surveyed across 600 districts of India.
- Take charge of surveying a district – about 20-30 randomly selected villages.
- Collect minimum Rs. 10,000 towards cost of survey of one district.
- Contribute Rs. 500 towards survey of one village.
(Every contributor will get a receipt with an 80G tax exemption certificate and a Village/ District Report Card of a survey she/ he supports).
- Spread the word, before, during, and after the survey.
- Help in any other way.

See www.pratham.org for details or write us at aser@pratham.org or info@pratham.org



Plan

The first ASER will survey only rural areas.

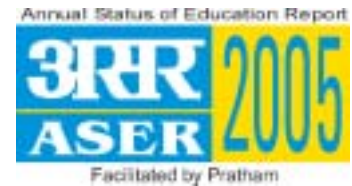
Preparatory, mobilization period: Oct 2 – 30.

Training and survey: Phase I: Nov 6 – 25, Phase II: Nov 26 – Dec 10.

Analysis and writing: Dec 11 – Dec 30.

Simultaneous release: in Delhi and state capitals, Jan 12 – 16.

- A. ASER will attempt to rank every district, and every state, based on some basic indicators such as:
- What percentage of children can read, write, and do basic arithmetic?
 - What percentage of villages have a primary school?
 - What percentage of villages have easy access to an upper primary school?
 - Are enough teachers appointed? Are they in school? Are they teaching?
 - What is the status of school infrastructure including rooms, toilets, drinking water etc. for which government sanctions funds?
 - Do children get textbooks? On time?
 - Is a hot cooked mid-day meal served every day?
 - Have teachers received funds for teaching learning materials?
 - Are these funds being used?
 - Is a village body (education committee, parent teacher association etc.) active in managing the school?
- B. There will be a National Report. There will also be a State Report for every state. State reports will be made available in regional languages. Simple one-two page summaries of district level reports will be widely disseminated through participating partners.
- C. Every year attempt will be made to track the progress of each district against previous years.
- D. Other indicators may be added in later but the simple and rapid nature of the survey will be maintained in order to encourage maximum participation of people.



Execution

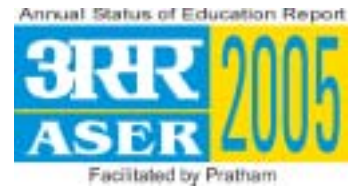
A. Sampling: A team of sampling experts will decide the best scientific random sampling method and sample size to use to generate a representative sample of a district. Villages to be surveyed will be selected centrally. In case a substitution of villages to be surveyed is needed, the central team will have to be consulted.

B. Preparation:

- **National:**
 1. Common survey forms in English to be prepared and dispatched by Oct 20 – 23. Detailed survey instructions included.
 2. **Three day workshop in Bhopal Oct 20 – 23.** Two-three persons per state (including state partners).
- **State:**
 1. Identification of district personnel and block personnel: Oct 2 – Oct 20 (continue if needed).
 2. Translations of forms and instructions in regional languages: Oct 20 – Oct 25.
 3. Training of district resource persons including practice survey: Oct 26 – Oct 31 (BEFORE Diwali).
- **District:**
 1. Identification of block and village level volunteers: Phase I – Oct 10 – Oct 25. Phase II – Nov 6 – Nov 20.
 2. Training and practice at district for district and block level personnel close to identification dates – almost simultaneous.

C. Survey - period:

- The villages will be surveyed on two consecutive days: Sunday and Monday (or another working day).
- On Sunday : the volunteers test children's reading, writing, and arithmetic learning in the community.
- On Monday : the volunteers will visit the school, preferably with the Sarpanch or members of the Village Education Committee.
- Volunteers MUST involve villagers in the testing and survey. Involving sarpanch and/or members of village education committee (or equivalent body) is essential.
- Survey dates possible are:
 1. Phase I : Nov 6, 7, Nov 13, 14, Nov 20, 21.
 2. Phase II: Nov 27-28, Dec 4-5, Dec 11-12.
- All Survey data should be back at state capitals within one week of survey so that data entry can begin immediately.
- All data-entry completed within one week of securing data.



Structure

Organization:

- Pratham will be the lead organization in all states except J&K, North-Eastern States, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Goa. In these states, Pratham will attempt to find state-level partners to organize and execute surveys and provide technical assistance. If possible, an assistance of Rs. 10,000 per district will be made available depending upon success of Pratham's fundraising. Partners at district and state level shall be encouraged to raise own funds if possible.
- A team of at least two persons will be created at each district, who will in turn find about 6-8 persons located at 3-4 blocks spread around the district so that they can organize and execute surveys in the randomly selected villages.
- The block-level teams will be critical and will have to be trained through some actual practice on how to survey. These teams will need to mobilize another 2-3 volunteers per block per person so as to cover 20-30 villages. Of course, the block team may itself decide to split and survey the villages.
- It is very crucial to keep the costs down and level of local ownership of the survey high. It is hoped that this organisation structure will help in this regard.

Pratham leaders coordinating surveys in different states:

Usha Rane: Maharashtra@pratham.org
Mumbai-Pune: Maharashtra, MP, (with partners Orissa)

Vijay Kulkarni: ideascom@yahoo.com
Karnataka (with partners in AP and Tamil Nadu)

Rukmini Banerji: rukmini@pratham.org
Delhi: UP, Bihar, Haryana, Punjab, J&K, Uttaranchal, Himachal, (with partners in WB, Jharkhand, North East)

Aditya Natraj: aditya@pratham.org
Ahmedabad – Gujarat, (Jaipur) Rajasthan

Write: aser@pratham.org

www.pratham.org
info@pratham.org



Finance and Accounts

A. Financing:

- All financial requirements at the national and state level to be met by Pratham units through their rural program budgets and NOT through donations received from individuals for ASER. Donations of Rs. 10,000 per district or Rs. 500 per village are to be strictly used for district and sub-district expenses only.
- **The rough division of Rs. 10,000 per district could be as follows:**
 - i. Travel cost for village survey volunteers @ Rs. 100 per village for about 30 villages = Rs. 3,000.
 - ii. Travel and out of pocket cost for block level persons (about 6-8 per district) @ Rs. 500 per person = Rs. 4,000.
 - iii. Travel and out of pocket cost for district level persons including any expense for photocopying, phones, etc. = Rs. 1,500.
 - iv. Travel and out of pocket expenses for Pratham (or state-level partner) resource/training person(s) going to district = Rs. 1500.
 - v. As far as possible volunteers traveling to districts should stay with local hosts and avoid all hotel and such costs.
- The financial needs and schedule of payments to be made to partner organizations (state level or district level) will be discussed with each partner by state or national level units of Pratham. These discussions should be over by Oct 25.

B. Accounting:

- Payments made to partner organizations are grants or donations given by Pratham and a receipt in return is enough along with the survey data in prescribed forms. Pratham does not need detailed vouchers or expenditure reports. The individual organizations may maintain these for their records in case a question arises at a later date.
- Where Pratham units are also handling the district level organization, money needed to reimburse travel etc for block and village level participants should be made available at the time of the survey. Payments should be made to village surveyors as soon as they hand in data and it is scrutinized at the block level. The block level persons should have cash and vouchers so that they can take signatures of people who receive funds.
- The district level expenses related to photocopying, and snacks/food for training meetings need to be accounted for with bills. However, tickets or bills for travel, tea etc are difficult to keep and often not available. Hence, a simple voucher for out of pocket expenses should do.
- Each state office will maintain a separate account of expenses incurred for ASER. If possible, we shall publish the accounts as a part of the report.