ASER: Evolution and overview

Suman Bhattacharjea & Savitri Bobde, ASER Centre, New Delhi
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पढ़ने का टेस्ट

कहानी
मैं और मेरी बहन छत पर खेल रहे थे। अचानक आसमान में बादल गरजने लगे, बिजली कड़कने लगी। बड़ी-बड़ी बूंदें पड़ने लगीं। हम जल्दी से भागकर नीचे आ गए। तभी भैया गरम-गरम समोसे और पकोड़े ले आया। हमने खिड़की के पास बैठकर समोसे-पकोड़े खाये और बारिश का मजा लिया।

अनुच्छेद
सोनू बाग में खेल रहा था। वहाँ आम के बहुत पेड़ थे। सोनू ने एक आम तोड़ा। आम बहत मीठा था।

लाभ दूध पैर चाकू फुड़ा छोटा

अक्षर
ल प स क र ट

शब्द
 letras

Simple common words

Grade 2 level text

Grade 1 level text
Overview

◆ **Background**
  - Pratham: “every child in school and learning well”

◆ **Going to scale**
  - Why scale up?
  - Key decisions: What, who, when, where?

◆ **What does ASER tell us?**
  - Every year
  - Trends over time

◆ **Impact**
  - In India
  - International impact
Pratham: “Every child in school & learning well”

- Since 1996, Pratham has worked with children who have been “left out” or “left behind”.
- It was relatively easy to bring children to school. But to add ‘value’, accelerated learning was needed.

**CHALLENGE**: At local level in communities & schools...
Do we really know our children?

- **Parents** “send” children to school and are concerned about “inputs”. Parents often over-estimate what children can do
- **Teachers** “teach” the course for the grade level. Teachers often over-estimate what children can do (SchoolTELLS)
- **Schools** usually not structured to identify or to help those who fall behind.

**Learning delayed is learning denied.** Children need to learn satisfactorily at the right time to make adequate progress through the education system to complete at least the elementary stage.
High level policy positions

**UNIVERSAL ENROLMENT**
- MDG goals refer to universal enrolment
- India’s national goals (SSA) refer to universal enrolment, retention and reduction of social and gender gaps.
- In India, from school/village level to state & national level enrolment numbers are collected frequently, published and discussed.

**UNIVERSAL LEARNING?**
- MDG goals - No definition or reference to children’s learning goals
- National (SSA) goals are broad ....“education of satisfactory quality relevant for life”....
- In India, govt measurements of learning levels come out every few years.

**Challenge:** At micro & macro level ...
How to bring learning to centre of stage? Progress, equity?
Can children read?

What can we do at ground level?

Simple assessment tool was useful for instruction. Also for engaging parents and teachers about what to do.
How effectively can the reading level of this class be “accelerated”?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading level</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Mid Point</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Story&quot; (Grade 2 level text)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Para” (Grade 1 level text)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Mallika, Balvinder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letters</td>
<td>Ashish, Ajit, Sanjay, Salim, Nuzhat, Sanjib, Farida, Meera</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginner</td>
<td>Usha, Madhav, Ron, Balaji, Chandra, Sunita, Vivek, Brij, Pushpa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher listens to each child read one by one using the simple tool. She knows where each child is beginning and also the distribution of the class. How effectively can she help to make all children to become “readers”?
What can we do at village level: Mobilizing communities

Discussion in small groups in each hamlet:

Local people help in making the hamlet report card.
Report card focuses on whether child goes to school & on whether child can read simple text and do basic arithmetic.

“Demo” class run in the village for 4-5 days to show how children can learn to read quickly.

Big meeting in village to discuss hamlet & village education report card.
Attended by parents, villagers, village committee members, headmaster and teachers:
100-150 people attend especially if the hamlet level discussions have been held well.

Agree on next steps:
On what can be done in village.

Start action.
Track measurable changes in children’s learning & in school functioning.

On what can be done in village.
From evidence to action...

**ENGAGE AND EVALUATE**
- Generate curiosity
- Encourage participation
- Engage via simple activities
- Use basic tools & methods
- Generate your own data

**UNDERSTAND EVIDENCE**
- Digest information as it is being generated close to the ground
- Move from anecdote or personal experience to aggregate picture

**COMPARE WITH PROVISIONS**
- Local demands for information about plans & provisions
- Push for institutional mechanisms that link govt and citizens

**THINK ABOUT SOLUTIONS**
- What can we do as citizens?
- Local strategies, common goals, collective involvement
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In 2004, the new UPA government promised to focus on outcomes, not outlays.

The same year, the 2% cess for elementary ed came into effect.

 Extract from the Budget Speech by the Finance Minister, P Chidambaram February 28, 2005

“...At the same time, I must caution that outlays do not necessarily mean outcomes. The people of the country are concerned with outcomes. (...) During the course of the year... we shall put in place a mechanism to measure the development outcomes of all major programmes. We shall also ensure that programmes and schemes are not allowed to continue indefinitely from one Plan period to the next without an independent and in-depth evaluation. Civil society should also engage Government in a healthy debate on the efficiency of the delivery mechanism.”
INPUTS ARE EASY TO MEASURE

Measurement of schools, teachers, infrastructure is relatively easy.

These are visible and do not change much over time.

Regular data collection for these variables happen annually and at every level by the government.

OUTCOMES ARE DIFFICULT TO MEASURE, especially LEARNING OUTCOMES

- What to measure: basic, grade level
- Who to measure: all or sample
- When to measure: once, periodically
- Where to measure: school, home
- Who will measure: external/internal

How to ensure data quality?

How quickly will it be available?
ASER decisions: 1. What to measure?

MANY CHOICES
- Same test to all children regardless of which standard they are in OR different tests to children in different standards?
- Which subjects? Some or all?
- Speaking, reading, writing?
- Pen & paper test/group or oral test and individual testing?

ASER DECISIONS:
- Same test to all children.
  Why? Because large number of children do not even learn the basics
- Only reading & arithmetic each year.
  Why? To keep it simple and fast
- Individual one-on-one testing (in language of child’s choice)
  Why? Reading cannot be done in a group.
ASER decisions: 2. Who to measure?

**MANY CHOICES**
- Some classes/age groups or all classes/age groups?
- Cover all clusters/ blocks or districts?
- All children in a district or block or a sample of children?
- Select from all children in a geographical area or set of schools or only from children who are in a particular program?

**ASER DECISIONS:**
- **All children tested from age 5 to 16.**
  *Why?* Because over 50% of 5 year olds are in school in India. By 14 many children have not finished Std 8.
- **Survey done in all rural districts.**
  *Why?* So that it can be useful in planning and implementation at district level.
- **Sample of children from each district.**
  *Why?* Reasonable sample can give reliable estimates & fast to do.
ASER decisions: 3. When to measure?

SEVERAL CHOICES
- Once a year?
- Several times a year?
- Once every few years?

ASER DECISIONS:
- Once a year in October or November.

Why? Middle of school year in most states and schools have “settled” down.

Done every year so that progress can be reviewed. ASER experience suggests that there can be big changes from year to year in basic learning outcomes. Since planning is done every year, review of progress should also be done every year and results available before the next year’s plans are made.

Also, annual data facilitates unrelenting focus on the issue of poor learning.
ASER decisions: 4. Where to measure?

SEVERAL CHOICES
- In school? In all government schools? And in private schools?
- In the community or in the household?

ASER DECISIONS:
- Children tested in the community or at home.

Why? Because ASER wants to get a representative sample of children in a district:
- Enrolled in govt school
- Enrolled in private school
- Not enrolled in school
- Enrolled but not attending on day of school visit

All of these kinds of children can only be found at home.

ASER does not cover children who do not live at home or are in some other place at the time of survey.
ASER decisions:  5. Who will measure?

SEVERAL CHOICES

- Internal teams... Teachers?
- Internal teams... DIET faculty, students? Cluster, block or district officials?
- External teams... Research agency? Citizens? Local organizations?

ASER DECISIONS:

- Ordinary people. Local organizations or institutions in each district.

Why? According to SSA guidelines, community participation is welcome and local organizations and institutions should be part of planning and review process in the district Annual Work Plan process.

Also, all Indian citizens pay 2% education cess for elementary education and so should know how their money is being spent.
Ensuring data quality

Representative sampling

- 2 stage sampling: 30 villages selected per district using PPS sampling; 20 households randomly selected per village = total sample size of 600 HH per district or ~300,000 total
- 10 villages dropped and 10 new added each year -> rotating panel of villages

Technically reliable and valid tools

- Rigorous piloting
- Standards tests for inter-rater reliability, reliability and validity. Language experts, educationists and field practitioners consulted

Stringent quality control procedures

- Comprehensive training to field teams
- Extensive field monitoring and recheck procedures
Summary

Key features of ASER:

- Covers **all** children in the age group 5-16, not just those in govt schools: >600,000 children reached each year
- Engages **ordinary citizens**. Simple to do, to analyze and to understand. ~25,000 local volunteers each year
- Comprehensive framework for ensuring data quality and representativeness. ~1/3 villages monitored or rechecked
- **No delay** between data collection and results. ~100 days from survey to report
- **Inexpensive** to conduct in terms of both money and manpower. ~US$1,500/district
- Provides **trends over time** and **comparisons** of key variables across units. 9 year time series
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◆ Impact
  ▪ In India
  ▪ International impact
Every year: data on core variables

- Children’s schooling status – all children age 3-16 in sampled HHs
- Children’s ability to read and do basic arithmetic – all children age 5-16 in sampled HHs
- Basic household characteristics (parents’ education, household assets) – all sampled HHs
- Key school characteristics – largest government primary school in each sampled village

- Data disaggregated by state, district
Assumption: Most children are at their grade specific learning levels

Reality: Most children are several years below grade level

All India, Grade 5. 2013.

47% can read at Grade 2 level

21% can read at Grade 1 level

13% can read letters or less

14% can read simple words but not more

Source: ASER 2013

Huge implications for curriculum design and textbook development

Challenging assumptions...
Assumption: Children in each grade are homogenous

Reality: Class composition is complex... Grade 4 class in Bihar

**Bihar, Grade 4**

**AGE**
Just 51% children in Grade 4 are 9 or 10 (“right age”)

**MULTIGRADE**
In 67% schools, Grade 4 children sit with at least one other grade

**LANGUAGE**
53% of children sampled in ASER 2011 in Bihar speak a different language at home from the medium of instruction in school.

Source: ASER 2011

Huge implications for teacher training
Trends over time

Is increasing expenditure leading to improved learning outcomes?

- % Std 3 children who can read a Std 1 level text
- % Std 5 children who can read a Std 2 level text

Graph showing trends in central+state government expenditure on elementary education and learning outcomes over time.
% Children in rural India who can read at Std 2 level

What are we doing to move children from their actual level towards the “desired” level of basic reading?

Source: ASER 2006-2011
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Impact in India

- Enormous media coverage - print, TV and electronic; national and regional; English and regional languages. Huge increase in visibility of the quality issue.


- Efforts by some states to rethink assessment and instructional strategies using core elements of the ASER model. Examples: Bihar instructional goals based on ASER levels. Rajasthan doing ASER type testing.
International impact

- Increasing international media coverage
- Increased visibility of the model in a variety of international education platforms and publications, for example: UNESCO’s 11th Global Monitoring Report; World Bank Symposium: Assessment for Global Learning; Brookings Institution-UNESCO Learning Metrics Task Force; Save the Children paper on The Right to Learn

The model has been adapted for use in 7 countries so far; several more may join this informal south-south network soon...

Every child counts...

The model originated in India in 2005.

In India and Pakistan, the exercise is called ASER, meaning impact.

In East Africa, it is called Uwezo, which means capability.

In Mali, it is called Beekungo, meaning we are in it together.

In Senegal, it is called Jàngandoo, which means learn together.
Thank you!

For more information ...

www.asercentre.org
contact@asercentre.org