

Oral Assessments at Asha Chennai Projects (Nov-Dec 2017)



Background

At Asha Chennai we have been supporting about 30 government schools spread across Tamilnadu. With this kind of scale we felt we need to develop metrics to tell us how our projects are doing and start measuring the impact we are having and fine-tune our actions so as to improve the outcome. Towards this end we started conducting assessments starting with one in late 2014-15.

Read about our rationale for the assessments and the learning from the last 3 years in [last year's oral assessment report](#).

Oral Assessments 2017-18

Click [here](#) to see all the photos from these assessments.

In Nov 2016 we had conducted oral assessments at 17 schools. This year we decided to expand this to include all our projects that support government schools and even the schools where we send

just a computer teacher once a week through the Sangamam Kanini project. The schools where we did the assessments are as follows:

Project Sangamam (Thiruvallur Dist) – 16 Schools.

Project Sangamam Kanini (Thiruvallur Dist) – 33 Schools.

Project Hyundai Steel Sangamam (Kancheepuram/Thiruvallur Dists) – 6 Schools.

Project Pearl (Thoothukudi Dist) – 4 Schools.

Project Thulasi (Viluppuram/Thiruvannamalai Dists) – 5 Schools.

Project Poorna Vidhya (Chennai) – 5 Schools.

Total – 69 Schools.

As described in the last year's report, there is a good bit of subjectiveness in the conducting of the assessments. Therefore it is important to ensure that the teachers conduct the tests consistently. The teachers at every site were trained personally by Rajaram and Rajaram also personally oversaw the conducting of the assessments at sample schools in every place. He was also assisted by Venkat in overseeing these assessments.



There have also been problems in the past with these assessments being fudged. Therefore we continued to ensure that the teachers do not participate in the conducting of the assessment at the school they go to.

The assessments were conducted from Nov 8th to 14th at the Thiruvallur Schools.



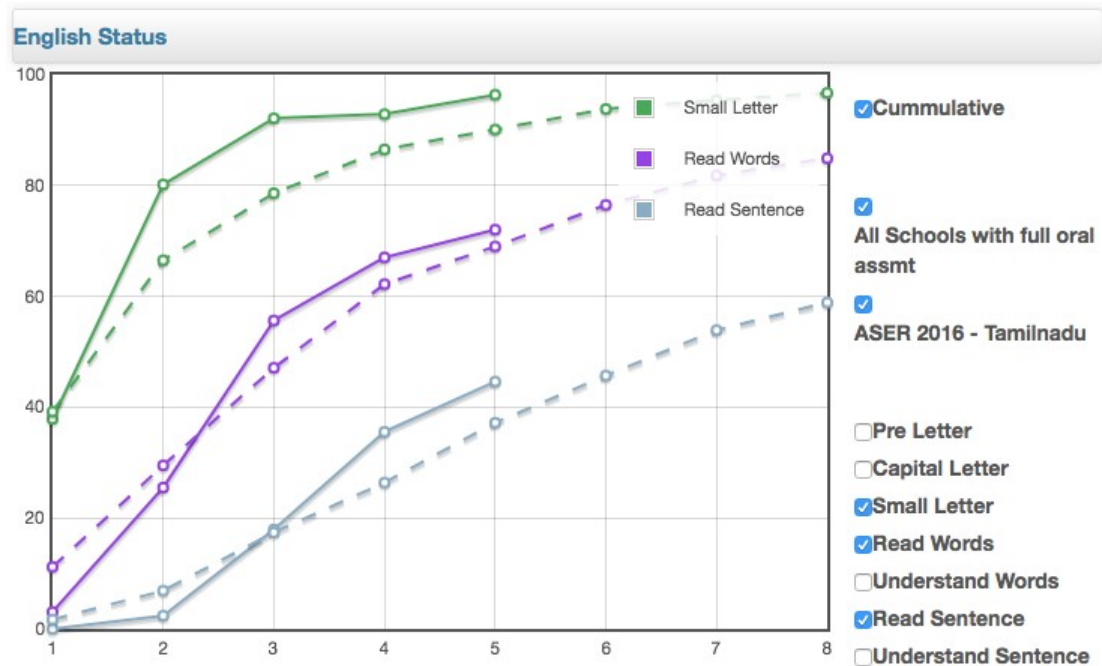
They were conducted from Nov 17th to Dec 5th at all the other schools.

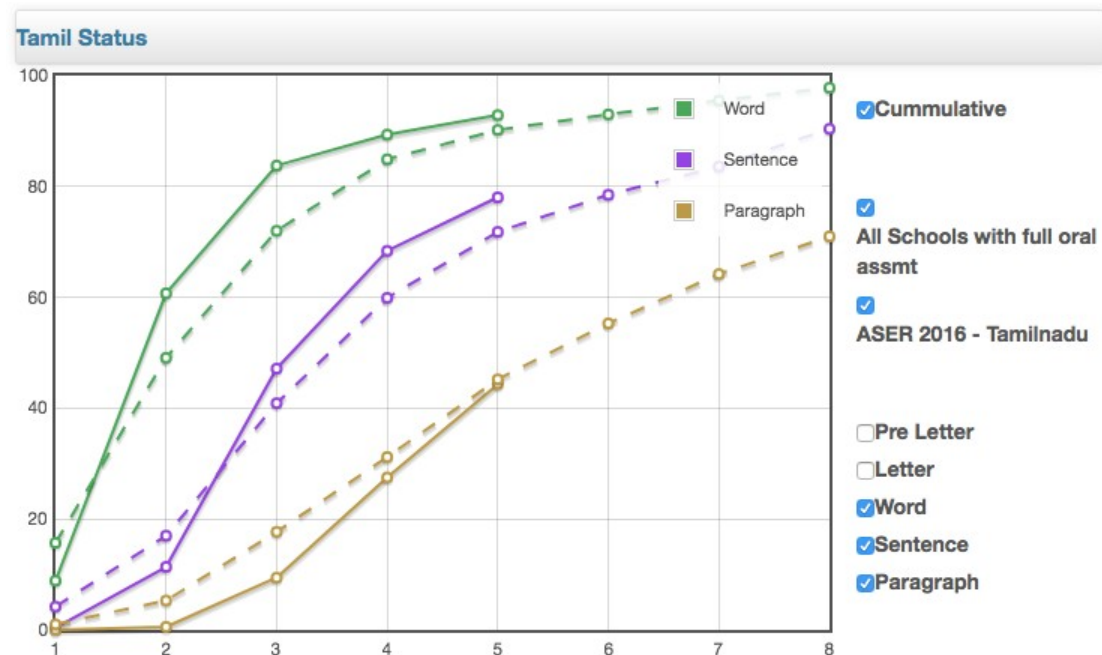
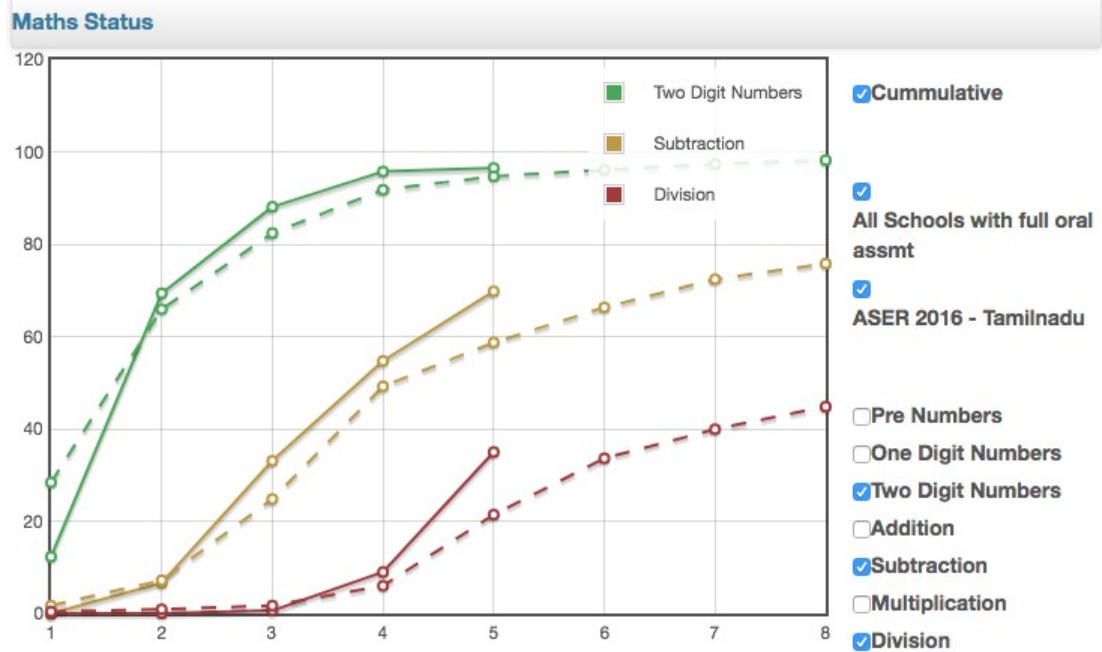


On the whole the assessments were conducted properly at all the schools. The data collected was entered into our server for analysis.

Result Analysis

See the graphs below that show the comparison between the average of all our schools and the ASER 2016 results for Tamilnadu. The full lines are our schools and the dashed lines are ASER results.





Last year the performance at our schools had lagged behind ASER in Maths. This year I am happy to report that our supported schools have indeed started performing better in Maths too. We expect this outperformance to increase over the years as our teacher training and materials we give to the schools start having their full impact.

This can also be seen in the fact that the performance at all the schools where we conducted the last year have improved this year. We computed the overall weighted average score for every school. Of the 17 schools where oral assessments were conducted last year and this year, 11 of the schools have improved on their performance. Overall average of the 17 schools has improved a little from 46.4 to 47.2.

As stated last time, some mitigating factors to be considered are,

1. We select schools with poor teacher student ratio which tend to be far away from the urban centers, in poorer pockets of the district and thus tend to perform worse in assessments.
2. Thiruvallur as a whole does a little worse than Tamilnadu but the data for Thiruvallur is not available in this format.
3. We are comparing with ASER 2016 results. ASER 2016 and 2014 saw a huge jump in the performance of Tamilnadu. Our outperformance is strong against ASER 2012 results.

More Observations and Conclusion



When we analysed the data we could further observe the following,

1. There is a good correlation in the performance of the schools from last year to this year in the Oral assessments.
2. At an individual student level also we can see good correlation between the performance last year vs this year.
3. Small schools (with about 20 to 25 children) and 2 teachers were the best performing schools.
4. Schools in tribal areas with lot of absenteeism perform badly.
5. Large schools tend to have bigger variation in performance between the stronger and weaker kids.
6. Very surprisingly and disturbingly, presence of a functioning Balwadi or Kinder-garden did not really improve the performance of the children even in the first standard. We need to understand this result better. We are also talking to another organization Maithri which runs the kinder-garden in a proper Montessori method at two of the schools that we support. We didn't see any outperformance in even these schools compared to schools in villages with no functioning Balwadi.

After the written assessments conducted in Feb/Mar 2018, we will do more correlational analysis including the Oral assessment data as well. We will publish that in a later report.