

## Comparison of ASER 2008 results for TamilNadu with results from Project Sangamam\* schools

We at Asha Chennai wanted to administer the same evaluations that ASER administers in the schools we work with in order to assess the students' basic reading and arithmetic levels and to compare the numbers with the ones from ASER 2008 survey. The ASER team was kind enough to give us the ASER 2008 toolkits along with instructions on how to conduct the evaluations. We administered the Reading (Tamil) and Arithmetic tests in several government schools during March-April of 2009. We tried to follow the ASER methodology to the extent possible but some factors were different. Please refer to the table below for the differences in methodology.

Differences in methodology		
Criteria	Asha Chennai Survey	ASER 2008 Survey
Sample set	Eight government schools in Thiruvallur district; total of 458 students	All states & districts; 20 households each in 30 villages in each district; approx. 36 students per village
Place administered	Government schools	Houses of children
Profile of children	Only children studying in government schools. Classes 1-5.	Includes children going to private & government schools and children not attending schools as well. Classes 1-8.
Administered by	Asha Chennai teachers working in these schools and volunteers	Paid staff of Pratham or local NGOs collaborating with Pratham
When	March 2009 for about 380 students and in April 2009 for the rest	December 2008

Below are the tables that compare numbers for reading & arithmetic levels and also at district-level.

### READING LEVELS (TAMIL)

Asha Chennai – 8 schools in Thiruvallur District, TamilNadu						
CLASS-WISE % CHILDREN WHO CAN READ						
Std.	Nothing	Letter	Word	Std I Text	Std II Text	Total
I	11.1	39.7	49.2	0.0	0.0	100
II	1.3	18.2	76.6	3.9	0.0	100
III	0.0	0.0	6.3	32.8	60.9	100
IV	2.8	0.9	6.6	18.9	70.8	100
V	2.7	0.0	4.1	11.5	81.8	100
<b>Total</b>	3.3	8.7	23.4	13.3	51.3	100

ASER 2008 results for all of TamilNadu**						
CLASS-WISE % CHILDREN WHO CAN READ						
Std.	Nothing	Letter	Word	Std I Text	Std II Text	Total
I	63.9	25.9	7.9	1.1	1.2	100
II	27.2	38.6	27.4	5.3	1.6	100
III	12.8	26.1	37.3	17.0	6.9	100
IV	5.1	14.6	35.5	29.0	15.8	100
V	3.2	7.7	25.1	35.6	28.4	100
<b>Total</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

**Note:** Each cell shows the highest level of reading achieved by a child. Thus a child who can read Std II level text can read letters, words, and Std I level text.

## ARITHMETIC LEVELS

Asha Chennai – 8 schools in Thiruvallur District, TamilNadu						
CLASS-WISE % CHILDREN WHO CAN						
Std.	Nothing	Recognize Numbers		Subtract	Divide	Total
		1-9	10-99			
I	1.6	57.1	38.1	3.2	0.0	100
II	0.0	32.5	62.3	5.2	0.0	100
III	4.7	1.6	17.2	57.8	18.8	100
IV	1.9	0.0	29.2	54.7	14.2	100
V	2.7	0.7	8.1	52.0	36.5	100
<b>Total</b>	2.2	13.8	27.5	38.9	17.7	100

ASER 2008 results for all of TamilNadu**						
CLASS-WISE % CHILDREN WHO CAN						
Std.	Nothing	Recognize Numbers		Subtract	Divide	Total
		1-9	10-99			
I	53.8	31.1	13.3	0.9	0.9	100
II	21.5	34.1	38.6	4.7	1.2	100
III	9.4	20.7	52.1	15.4	2.5	100
IV	3.5	11.4	52.5	27.0	5.6	100
V	2.3	5.3	38.1	42.1	12.2	100
<b>Total</b>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

**Note:** Each cell shows the highest level of arithmetic achieved by a child. Thus a child who can do division can do subtraction, can recognize numbers 1 to 99.

## THIRUVALLUR DISTRICT COMPARISON

Survey conducted by	Where	Std 1-2: Learning Levels		Std 3-5: Learning Levels	
		% Children who CAN READ letters, words or more	% Children who CAN RECOGNIZE NUMBERS or more	% Children who CAN READ Std I text or more	% Children who CAN DO SUBTRACTION or more
ASER 2008**	All of Thiruvallur	61.3	74.3	48.5	34.7
Asha-Chennai	8 schools in Poondi block of Thiruvallur	94.3	99.3	92.5	79.6

### Summary

- The results indicate that the reading and arithmetic levels of students in the eight government schools in Poondi block of Thiruvallur district are way better than levels of students across all of TamilNadu.
- The results are in-line with the reading and arithmetic levels that several Asha Chennai volunteers have observed across the state, which is certainly never as bad as ASER survey has consistently indicated.
- Asha Chennai has been working with these eight schools for a few years now. While we believe that this could have contributed to higher levels, we do not think such a huge difference in learning levels between ASER's and our survey can be explained by our involvement alone.
- Some difference could be attributed to the fact that we conducted these evaluations 3-4 months after ASER did but again, this would not explain more than 5-10% of the difference.
- The best way to explain the difference would be to compare the raw data from ASER for villages in this block/district against the ones we have.

\* Read about Project Sangamam at <http://www.ashanet.org/projects/project-view.php?p=555>

\*\* Numbers taken from <http://asercentre.org/asersurvey/asero8/pdfdata/tn-08.pdf>