

ASER 2017 kicked off on September 20 with a preparatory national workshop in Jaipur. Close to 100 ASER team members who will lead the effort in their respective states are attending the workshop to understand and practice the tools and processes to be used in ASER 2017 'Beyond Basics'. As always this residential training had classroom sessions plus three days of field practice. The national workshop will be followed by training workshops for district partner organizations.

ASER Centre, the autonomous research and assessment unit of Pratham, is leading the Annual Status of Education (ASER) effort for 2017, 'Beyond Basics'.



Speaking at the inaugural event Dr Rukmini Banerji, CEO of Pratham Education Foundation said, 'we are doing ASER differently this year, we are targeting youth aged between 14 and 18, of our country'.

Dr Wilima Wadhwa, Director of ASER Centre highlighted the main aims of ASER 2017 – Beyond Basics. She said 'ASER 2017 aims to understand and shed light on the youth of India on their:

- Activity - what are these youth doing? Are they in school, college, vocational training or part of the workforce?
- Ability - Can they perform simple calculations such as calculating the discount at a shop? Can they read simple instructions on a medicine packet?
- Awareness – Can they use a mobile or laptop? Have they been to a bank? Have they been outside of their village?
- Aspirations – What do the youth aspire to become? Do they know how to realize their aspirations and dreams?'



With the exception of 2015, ASER has been conducted across rural India every year since 2005. ASER has reported annually on children's schooling status and their ability to do basic reading and arithmetic tasks. Year after year, ASER has highlighted the fact that although almost all children in

the 6-14 age group are enrolled in school, they are not acquiring even the foundational skills that could help them propel themselves forward, both in school and in life.

In 2017, ASER will focus on a different but related set of issues, taking a longer, deeper look at older children (in the age group 14-18). In addition to recording their schooling and foundational learning status, we will collect information in several other areas related to their preparedness to lead useful and productive lives as they move beyond the elementary school age and prepare to enter adulthood.

ASER 2017 will thus look ‘beyond basics’: it will use the tried and tested ASER methodology (sample based household survey, local participation, simple tools) to explore a wider set of domains with an older age group – those just beyond the elementary school age. The survey will be conducted in 27 districts in 23 states, unlike the previous editions of ASER which reached almost all rural districts each year. 60 villages in each district will be surveyed by volunteers from local partner institutions. The majority of partners for ASER 2017 comprise reputed institutions of higher education located in or near the survey districts.

As always, the national release of the ASER report will be in mid January, 2018 in New Delhi.

For more information about ASER 2017 ‘Beyond Basics’, and its progress please see:

<http://www.asercentre.org/Keywords/p/305.html>