TLPS | Teaching Learning Practices Survey

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Teaching and Learning Practices Survey

A study to strengthen FLN teaching and learning practices in India

2025 | TAMIL NADU

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TLPS 2025

Teaching and Learning Practices Survey 2025. Tamil Nadu

December 2025

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Acknowledgements

The Teaching and Learning Practices Survey (TLPS) is the result of a collaborative effort involving institutions, practitioners, researchers and state governments committed to strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) in India.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Tata Trusts whose support made this Survey possible. Their long-standing commitment to early learning and evidence-based system reform has been instrumental in enabling research that goes beyond learning outcomes to examine teaching and learning practices at scale.

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We also thank the researchers, field observers, supervisors and data teams whose meticulous work ensured the quality, consistency and integrity of the data collected across classrooms.

About TLPS Partners

Language and Learning Foundation

Founded in 2015, Language and Learning Foundation (LLF) is an education non-profit, dedicated to improving foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) outcomes of students in primary grades at scale, in collaboration with the national and state governments in India. LLF is a system-focused and impact-driven organisation that takes a three-pronged approach for equitable foundational learning improvements through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers and mentors, District Demonstration Programmes and System Strengthening on FLN with a focus on inclusivity and equity. Since its inception, LLF has worked in 10 states, reaching 2.18 crore children and 11.8 lakh teachers and educators through State Level Technical Support and improved learning outcomes of 14 lakh children through District Demonstration Programmes and teaching-learning practices of 2.5 lakh teachers and teacher educators.

Tata Trusts

Established in 1892, the Tata Trusts are India's oldest and amongst Asia's largest philanthropic institutions. They have played a pioneering role in bringing about an enduring difference in the lives of the communities they serve, advancing equity, resilience and shared progress. Inspired by the vision of the Founder Jamsetji Tata and guided by a legacy of proactive philanthropy, the Tata Trusts work to catalyse systemic and sustainable change across diverse areas by building institutions, strengthening public systems and accelerating socio-economic development. The Trusts build meaningful solutions, bridging tradition and innovation, through collaborations that nurture grassroots efforts, empower change makers and touch lives across India.

Educational Initiatives

Educational Initiatives (EI), founded in 2001, is a pioneering education research and PedTech organisation that combines pedagogical research with technology-driven solutions to improve student learning and teaching practices. Working across diverse economies and demographics, EI's research and assessment work informs classroom practice and education policy, alongside the design of diagnostic, personalised and adaptive learning solutions.

Madhi Foundation

Madhi Foundation is a systems-focused education non-profit that partners with governments to strengthen foundational learning by aligning curriculum, teacher development, assessment, technology and monitoring to the realities of public-school classrooms. Madhi leads level-based material design, mentoring-oriented teacher support and data-driven implementation systems, while also engaging parents as learning allies. Madhi additionally advances language and oracy through strategic programmes and translation of state-level learnings into transferable models.

About the Teaching Learning Practices Survey

The Teaching and Learning Practices Survey (TLPS) was conceptualised to provide systematic and large-scale evidence on classroom practices in Grades 1 and 2 for language and mathematics. By examining what actually happens in early-grade classrooms across diverse contexts, the Survey aims to complement existing assessments and provide a direct lens into how children's learning materials, teacher training programmes and on site academic support are getting translated into classroom teaching and learning. It serves as a status report on the current state of teaching-learning practices—informing how system-level efforts translate into classroom-level pedagogical change and where further support is needed.

Importantly, the Survey aims not only to document current practices but also to identify needs for strengthening the instructional core of foundational learning. By identifying both strong practices and areas of support, the Survey contributes to building a more responsive Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) ecosystem, one in which classroom realities inform programme design, teacher support systems and academic leadership.

The Survey focused on six themes: classroom learning environment, lesson planning and delivery, language teaching practices, mathematics teaching practices, time distribution of teaching and learning tasks and perception of teachers on training, academic support, informal assessment methods and impact of NIPUN Bharat Mission. An array of tools was used to measure effectiveness of these themes, namely classroom observation, time-on-task, lesson sequence, pre- and post-observation, teacher interview questionnaire and profile of schools and children.

The Survey, therefore, plays a dual role:

- Diagnostic, by providing a detailed, evidence-based picture of what is happening inside classrooms today
- Developmental, by enabling governments and partners to shape teachers' professional development, mentoring structures and instructional materials in ways that directly respond to observed classroom needs.

The Survey elevates this often-invisible dimension, viz. teaching and learning inside classrooms to the forefront of India's foundational learning agenda.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements *ii*
About TLPS Partners *iii*
About the Teaching Learning Practices Survey *iv*
Abbreviations *vii*
Glossary *viii*
Executive Summary *xi*

CHAPTER 1 **Ennum Ezhuthum Mission: Strengthening Basic Literacy and Numeracy in Tamil Nadu** **1**
- Key design features of the mission
- Third-party evaluation and evidence-based strengthening
- Conclusion

CHAPTER 2 **Methodology** **5**
- Introduction
- Scope of the survey
- Coverage of the survey
- Survey design
- Analysis framework
- Sampling framework: Selection of districts, blocks and schools
- Training and field implementation
- Quality assurance and supervision
- Data review
- Timeline
- Challenges
- Limitations
- Conclusion

CHAPTER 3 **Classroom Learning Environment** **19**
- Overview of classroom learning environment
- Effective practices of classroom learning environment and their indicators
- Findings of classroom learning environment
- Conclusion

CHAPTER 4 **Lesson Planning and Delivery** **27**
- Overview of lesson planning and delivery
- Effective practices of lesson planning and delivery and their indicators
- Findings of lesson planning and delivery
- Conclusion

CHAPTER 5 **Language Teaching Practices** **39**
- Overview of language teaching practices
- Effective practices of language teaching and their indicators
- Findings of language teaching practices
- Conclusion

CHAPTER 6 **Mathematics Teaching Practices** 49
- Overview of mathematics teaching practices
- Effective practices of mathematics teaching and their indicators
- Findings of mathematics teaching practices
- Conclusion

CHAPTER 7 **Time Distribution on Teaching and Learning Tasks** 57
- Overview of time-on-task and instructional time
- Nature of teacher and children's activities
- Findings of time distribution of activities
- Conclusion

CHAPTER 8 **Teacher Perceptions** 61
- Teachers' awareness of BLN
- Trainings of BLN
- Frequency of academic support
- Assessment of children's learning
- Conclusion

CHAPTER 9 **Recommendations** 65
- Introduction
- Recommendations for classroom practices
- Recommendations for system-level enablers

Abbreviations

BLN	Basic Literacy and Numeracy
BRTE	Block Resource Teacher Educator
CFU	Checking for Understanding
CRO	Classroom Observation Tool
Ei	Educational Initiatives
ELPS	Experience, Language, Picture and Symbol
FLN	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
GRR	Gradual Release of Responsibility
LLF	Language and Learning Foundation
LS	Lesson Sequence
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MGML	Multigrade-Multilevel
NCF-FS	National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage
TN SEP	Tamil Nadu State Education Policy
SWB	Students Workbook
THB	Teachers Handbook
TLM	Teaching-Learning Material
TLPS	Teaching and Learning Practices Survey
ToT	Time-on-task

Glossary

- **Blending**: Orally combining individual sounds to form a spoken word (e.g., /k/ /æ/ /t/ → "cat")
- **Classroom learning environment**: The overall physical, socio-emotional, and instructional conditions of a classroom that shape learner participation, comfort and learning.
- **Classroom Teaching Practices**: Observable strategies and methods teachers use to engage students in learning. This includes the management of class time and activities, delivering instructional content and using techniques like using TLMs, monitoring, questioning, providing feedback, and differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- **Choral response**: the whole class or most students answer together verbally in unison.
- **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**: A sustained, ongoing system of teacher training, coaching support and reflection designed to improve teacher knowledge and their classroom practice.
- **Decoding**: Association between written symbols and spoken sounds and words by using symbol–sound correspondences in a given language.
- **Differentiated instruction**: Deliberately adapting instructional tasks, grouping and support based on different learner levels/ needs within the same classroom.
- **Expressive writing**: Writing where children share their own ideas and experiences rather than only copying or reproducing content.
- **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)/Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN)**: The ability of children to read with understanding, express meaning through oral and written language, and perform basic mathematical operations with conceptual understanding and application, expected to be achieved by the end of Grade 3.
- **Foundational numeracy**: Competence in early number concepts (counting, quantity, place value), basic operations and applying mathematical reasoning to everyday contexts.
- **Home language**: The language(s) that a child acquires naturally in early childhood and uses frequently and confidently for everyday communication in the home and immediate community. This may be the child's mother tongue or a local language or a regional language, that may or may not be the school's medium of instruction.
- **Independent reading practice**: Time when children read on their own (or quietly in pairs/groups).
- **Instructional Time Loss**: The instructional time during which teaching-learning activities are not effectively engaged in, due to disruptions, poor classroom management, or administrative tasks.
- **Lesson plan**: A teacher's structured preparation for a lesson, typically clarifying learning goals, sequence of activities, materials and how understanding will be checked and supported; ideally differentiated for children at different learning levels.
- **Multigrade classroom**: A classroom setup where one teacher teaches two or more grades simultaneously.
- **Ennum Ezhuthum Mission:** The foundational literacy and numeracy initiative launched by the Government

of Tamil Nadu in 2022 to ensure that all children in Classes 1–3 attain age-appropriate reading, writing, and basic arithmetic skills by the age of 8, with the goal of achieving universal foundational literacy and numeracy by 2025.

- **National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS, 2022)**: The curriculum framework for Foundational Stage (ages 3–8 years), integrating developmental goals and pedagogical guidance for early childhood and early primary education.
- **Tamil Nadu State Education Policy 2025 (TNSEP 2025):** Tamil Nadu's state-specific education policy released in 2025 that provides a comprehensive framework for equitable, inclusive, and future-ready school education. The policy prioritises foundational literacy and numeracy, strengthens the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission, and guides reforms in curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, teacher development, and student well-being, while reflecting the State's social justice and linguistic priorities.
- **Off-task**: Behaviour that is not aligned to the intended learning or teaching activity during instructional time [e.g., disruptive behaviour, inattention (for students); filling registers or reporting attendance for mid-day meals (for teachers).
- **Open-ended questions**: Questions that support comprehension and language development by requiring explanation, reasoning, or elaboration rather than a single, short answer.
- **On-task**: Student or teacher behaviours that are aligned to the intended teaching-learning activity or objective at that moment.
- **Oral language development (OLD)**: Strengthening of children's spoken language knowledge and skills, including listening comprehension, oral expression, vocabulary, verbal reasoning and discourse skills.
- **Place value**: The value of a digit based on its position (ones, tens, hundreds), which is essential for multi-digit number understanding and operations.
- **Print-Rich Materials**: Printed or visual resources that are purposefully displayed and used in the classroom to support print awareness and learning. Examples include number charts, story or poem posters, labels, children's books, word walls, and so on.
- **Scaffolded Tasks**: Educational activities that provide support and guidance to students at different levels of learning. Scaffolded tasks help students build on their existing knowledge by breaking down complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps, with more support at the beginning and less as students gain independence.
- **Sound–symbol association**: Understanding the relationship between sounds of a language (phoneme or syllable) with their corresponding symbols or written representation (grapheme/letter patterns/ *varn* or *akshara*), forming the basis for reading and writing.
- **Time-on-task (ToT)**: The proportion of observed classroom time during which learners (or teachers) are engaged in intended learning/instructional activity.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Government of Tamil Nadu launched the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission in June 2022 with the aim to ensure that every child in the State is able to read with comprehension and perform basic arithmetic operations with confidence by the age of eight. The State Government also tracks progress in student learning through the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission. TN SEP 2025 emphasises the need to sustain mission practices and further strengthen Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) skills.

The State has developed and implemented classroom observation tools for observing teaching and learning in Grades 1 to 3. The current Survey strengthens this practice by using more comprehensive tools allowing for deeper insights into how teaching and learning take place in early grade classrooms.

About TLPS 2025

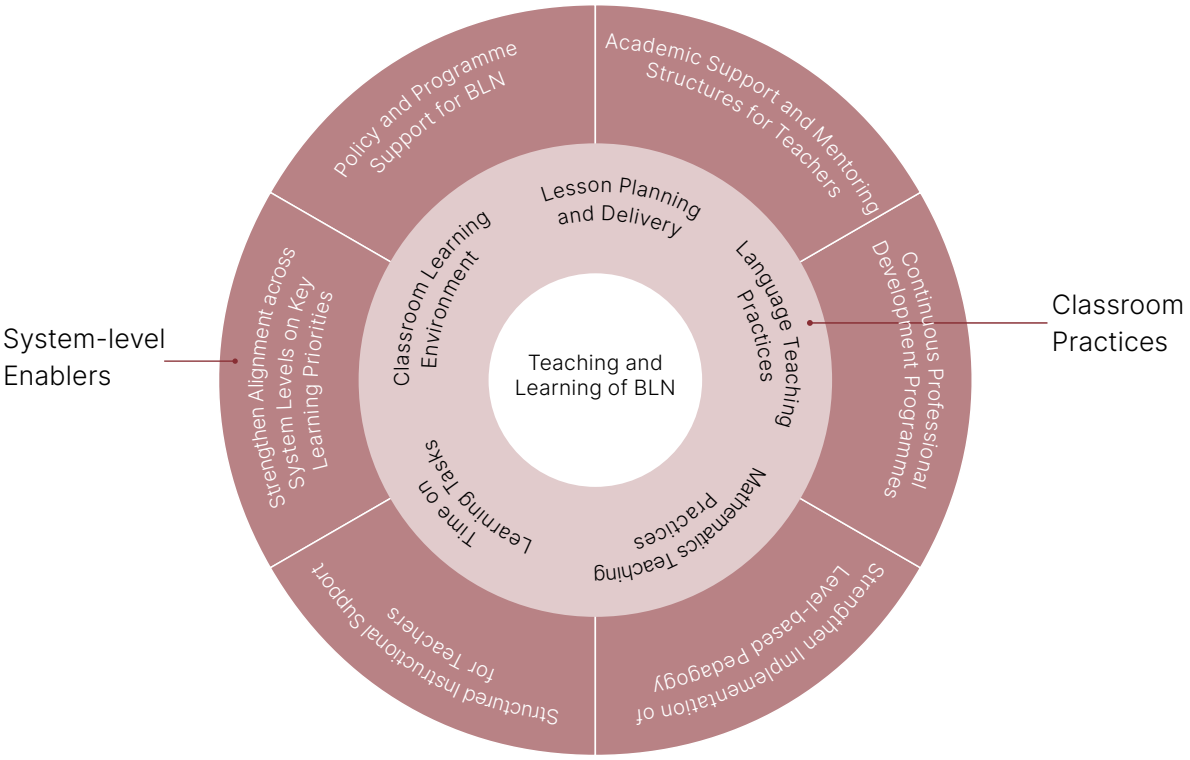
The Survey was conducted between November 2024 and March 2025 in nine states—Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh—covering 21 districts and 1050 classrooms. By capturing a wide range of contexts, the Survey provides a rich snapshot of the current teaching and learning practices for BLN.

This document serves as a status report on the current state of teaching and learning practices in the sampled schools of Tamil Nadu, informing how system-level efforts translate into classroom-level pedagogical change and where further improvement is needed. A total of 150 classrooms were surveyed across Krishnagiri, Ramanathapuram and Villupuram districts of the State.

Findings and Recommendations

The Survey presents findings under the following themes: classroom learning environment, lesson planning and delivery, language teaching practices, mathematics teaching practices, and time distribution for different classroom activities for both teachers and children. It also presents teachers' perceptions on some aspects of BLN and their professional development.

Priorities for classroom practices and system-level enablers



TLPS 2025 includes two types of recommendations:

- Recommendations for strengthening classroom teaching practices, drawing directly on the Survey's main findings. These are presented in the following section along with the related classroom-level findings.
- Recommendations for system-level changes that will enable and sustain effective teaching practices are presented in the section after the one on classroom teaching practices.

Findings and recommendations for classroom practices

Classroom learning environment

The Survey examined the following: classroom physical environment, teacher-child relationships, opportunities for children to participate, and the use of children's home languages.

Main findings

Most of the observed early-grade classrooms had a functional blackboard. Around three-fourths of classrooms displayed print-rich materials at eye level.

In over half of the classrooms, children were seated in rows and columns, and the arrangement changed in only 17% of classrooms during the observation.

In over half (60%) of the classrooms, at least a few children had opportunities to speak freely, engage in conversation with the teacher, or learn from one another. Around 43% of the teachers in observed classrooms asked questions to individual children.

Tamil is the medium of instruction at the primary school level as well as the home language for most children in Tamil Nadu. However, there were considerable pockets of children speaking other regional languages like Kannada and Telugu as well.

Recommendations

There is further scope to ensure that print materials are thoughtfully placed and actively used during instruction to support learning.

Teachers should be encouraged to adopt flexible seating and grouping arrangements to foster more interaction and collaboration among children.

There is scope to strengthen teacher-child relationships in early-grade classrooms to help children become more confident, participate in discussions, and engage meaningfully in learning.

Using children's home or most familiar languages consistently and strategically is a critical practice for improving children's self-confidence, participation, and comprehension.

Lesson planning and delivery

The Survey examined the following: teachers' use of clear instructions with children, observation and monitoring of children's independent work, feedback on writing tasks, use of check-for-understanding (CFU) strategies, and use of differentiated instruction for different learning levels in the classroom.

Main findings

Almost all the observed teachers (99%) reported planning for their lessons in advance and had documented lesson plans during the classroom observation.

Teachers in over three-fourths (79%) of the classrooms gave children instructions before or during the activity. Few teachers checked if the children understood the instructions.

In close to three-fourths (71%) of the observed classrooms,teachers did not check written work or provide feedback to help children improve.

Recommendations

In addition to giving clear instructions, teachers should model expected responses and verify that children have understood so that they can participate meaningfully and learn successfully.

Observation and feedback practices need strengthening through regular checking of children's work and giving timely support in the form of adjusting instruction, clear explanations of errors and simple steps for improvement.

In almost 70% of classrooms, teachers either did not check for children's understanding during the lesson or relied on asking questions to the whole class, which elicited a group response from the children. Few teachers checked for individual children's understanding through varied methods.

As the Survey was conducted during March-April in Tamil Nadu (which are the revision months), only around 10% teachers were seen using differentiated teaching strategies to support children at different learning levels.

Multigrade teaching was observed in 85% of the sampled classrooms.

During lessons, teachers need to use simple and varied checks for understanding, such as asking individual children to explain their thinking or giving children a quick task to demonstrate their learning.

While the multigrade-multilevel (MGML) approach in the State already introduces level-based teaching in classrooms, teachers need to provide extra attention and support to children who are struggling to learn, after proper identification.

Language teaching practices

The Survey examined the following: use of children's prior knowledge in discussions, asking open-ended questions, employing a variety of strategies for teaching decoding, use of comprehension strategies during read-aloud, opportunities to practice reading independently, and providing clear prompts for expressive writing.

Main findings

Effective use of children's real-life experiences and open-ended questions to encourage children to think and express themselves during oral language activities was observed in 29% and 8% classrooms respectively.

The teaching of decoding was prevalent in most classrooms but many teachers relied on just one activity to reinforce sound-symbol association. Encouragingly, two or more decoding strategies were used in 45% of the sampled classrooms.

Around a fourth (23%) of the observed teachers supported children's understanding of a text, but most relied on factual questions or repetitions of the text to do so.

Around a fourth of the observed teachers gave children opportunities to practice independent reading but they rarely observed or guided the process.

Recommendations

To develop oral language development and reasoning, teachers should create regular opportunities for extended discussions on a topic of interest, ask open-ended questions, connect classroom conversations to children's experiences, and ask children to respond, predict and infer in response to texts and stories.

Decoding needs to be taught more systematically and should include multiple activities that reinforce sound–symbol associations in different ways, including the use of simple teaching-learning materials (TLMs).

Teachers' read alouds of texts need to encourage greater participation from children, while offering stronger support for building comprehension.

Children need adequate opportunities to practise reading individually or in small groups, with teacher guidance and feedback. Writing activities should move beyond copying exercises to include meaningful opportunities for children to compose their own texts and express ideas and emotions.

Mathematics teaching practices

The Survey examined the following: use of TLMs by teachers and children, opportunities to practise mathematics tasks independently, use of children's real-life experiences for mathematics concepts, and use of 'why and how' questions by teachers.

Main findings

In 61% of the sampled classrooms, teachers used TLMs to explain mathematical concepts in a planned manner. Children used TLMs in three-fourths of the classrooms.

Many teachers (68%) used real-life examples to contextualise mathematical concepts and processes.

Over one-fourth (28%) of teachers posed 'why' and 'how' questions to children, but many did not wait for children's responses.

Around 39% of teachers gave independent practice tasks to children. Many of them did not consistently observe children's work and give feedback.

Recommendations

Teachers should use TLMs more consistently and in a planned manner. This includes both teacher demonstrations of mathematical concepts and processes using TLMs as well as children's use of TLMs.

Mathematical concepts should be introduced using familiar and everyday contexts so that young children can relate mathematics to their daily experiences and develop practical problem-solving skills

Teachers should ask questions that encourage children to explain their thinking and reasoning, helping shift learning away from rote mathematical procedures.

During independent practice, teachers need to actively monitor children's work and provide timely guidance and feedback so that practice goes beyond mechanical repetition and strengthens conceptual understanding and fluency.

Time on learning tasks

The Survey examined the time spent by teachers and children on different classroom activities.

Main findings

In sampled classrooms, children remained 'off-task' (i.e., not engaged in any learning activity) for 25% of the total class time. When they were 'on-task', mechanical or repetitive activities consumed most of their time.

Recommendations

Teachers need to create a better balance between teacher-centred instruction and learner-centred practices to enhance children's engagement with learning.

Teachers should design learning tasks that encourage participation from all children, ensuring that classroom time supports deeper engagement rather than mechanical repetition.

Other findings

- There is strong awareness among teachers (94%) about BLN goals and learning outcomes.
- Nearly 98% teachers reported that they have attended an in-person training on BLN in the 3-6 months prior to the Survey.
- Almost all teachers believe that the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission/BLN Mission is having a positive impact.
- 87% of surveyed teachers reported receiving academic support at least sometimes or regularly.

Recommendations for system level changes

Continue and extend policy support to BLN

Tamil Nadu has made significant progress in prioritising Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) learning through the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission. Continued policy emphasis on BLN, including sustained focus beyond the early grades, is important for consolidating gains and ensuring that improvements in classroom practices are sustained.

As this support is extended, there is also a need to broaden the vision of foundational learning to include critical thinking, strong oral expression, and independent writing for language, as well as problem-solving and reasoning for mathematics. Such a shift helps move classroom practice beyond mechanical skill acquisition towards meaningful application to real-life situations.

Strengthen academic support and mentoring structures for teachers

Effective classroom change requires regular, supportive academic guidance. Academic visits by cluster- and block-level academic support staff should focus more on observing classroom practices and providing constructive feedback. Teachers should receive regular mentoring

on language- and mathematics-specific pedagogy. The support system should also facilitate sharing of effective teaching practices across schools.

Strengthen teacher training and continuous professional development programmes

Teacher training programmes should place greater emphasis on practice-based pedagogical strategies, including promoting classroom discussion and student participation, systematic teaching of reading and decoding, concept-based mathematics teaching and effective monitoring and feedback during independent work.

Continuous professional development should include regular refresher workshops, with demonstration lessons, and peer learning opportunities. At the session level, greater emphasis on practice-oriented designs—prioritising demonstrations, guided practice, peer-learning among teachers, and reflection—so that teachers can apply new strategies confidently in their classrooms.

Support teaching in multilingual and multigrade classrooms

Given the diversity of children's linguistic and learning backgrounds, system-level guidance should support teachers to effectively use children's home languages as a bridge to school language learning, as well as to adopt practical approaches for multigrade classrooms.

Strengthen implementation of level-based pedagogy

Tamil Nadu has taken important steps towards supporting BLN learning through level-based approaches. Continuing and strengthening level-based pedagogy can help ensure that children who are behind in BLN skills receive targeted support. Teachers should be supported to group children based on their current learning levels and provide focused instruction that helps them progress towards grade-level competencies.

Continue structured instructional support for teachers

Providing teachers with structured instructional resources has been an important support for classroom practice. The State should continue to provide teacher handbooks, student workbooks, and TLMs that offer clear lesson guidance, activity suggestions, and opportunities for practise. Ensuring that these materials are consistently used in classrooms can help strengthen the quality and consistency of instruction.

Strengthen alignment across system levels on key learning priorities

Ensuring strong alignment between the state, districts, blocks, and schools is critical for improving learning outcomes. The system can benefit from clearly identifying and reinforcing a set of non-negotiable learning outcomes and pedagogical practices that act as BLN learning result boosters. Regular communication, monitoring, and academic support across system levels can help ensure that these priorities are consistently understood and implemented in classrooms.

Ennum Ezhuthum Mission: Strengthening Basic Literacy and Numeracy in Tamil Nadu

CHAPTER 1

The Government of Tamil Nadu launched the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission in June 2022 with a clear and ambitious objective: to ensure that every child in the State, by the age of eight, is able to read with comprehension and perform basic arithmetic operations with confidence by the year 2025.

The Mission was conceived in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to prolonged school closures of nearly 19 months and significantly widened learning gaps among primary-grade students. Recognising the urgent need for structured academic recovery and long-term strengthening of Basic Literacy and Numeracy skills, the School Education Department introduced Ennum Ezhuthum as a comprehensive, system-wide reform initiative.

Initially implemented for Grades 1 to 3 during the academic year 2022–23, the Mission was extended to Grades 4 and 5 from June 2023 to address persistent learning loss and ensure continuity in foundational skill development. Today, the Mission benefits 22,39,891 students studying in government and government-aided schools across all 38 districts of Tamil Nadu.

1.1 Key design features of the mission

The Ennum Ezhuthum Mission is built on evidence-based pedagogical principles and supported by robust academic and administrative systems. Its core components include:

1.1.1 Level-based learning

With over 85% of classrooms in Tamil Nadu functioning as multigrade settings, the Mission adopts a level-based learning approach. Students are grouped based on their current learning levels rather than strictly by grade, ensuring targeted instruction that meets each child's needs. This approach has led to improved classroom participation and enhanced engagement in BLN tasks.

1.1.2 Activity-based and experiential learning

The Mission emphasises child-centric, activity-based learning methodologies. Classroom activities such as "Speak for a Minute" encourage confidence and oral expression, while "My Journal" nurtures creative writing skills.

Experiential learning is further supported through multimodal strategies—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—ensuring inclusivity for diverse learners. Students engage with Ennum Ezhuthum kits, songs, skits, and interactive exercises that promote conceptual understanding and joyful learning.

1.1.3 Structured academic resources

Each school is provided with:

- **Teacher Handbooks (THBs)** with modular lesson plans and QR codes linking to training videos
- **Student Workbooks (SWBs)** aligned to learning levels for independent practice
- **Ennum Ezhuthum TLM** Kits to support hands-on learning

These resources minimise teacher workload, ensure uniform quality across the State, and provide structured guidance for classroom implementation.

1.1.4 Assessments for learning

The Mission replaces conventional high-stress assessments with activity-based, one-on-one, and play-based evaluations.

- Formative assessments were conducted digitally through the Ennum Ezhuthum App.
- Over 90% of students completed assessments.
- Summative assessments are conducted in pen-and-paper format, incorporating feedback from teachers and parents.

This continuous assessment model supports real-time tracking of learning progress and enables timely academic interventions.

1.1.5 Integration of technology

Technology plays a pivotal role in strengthening both academic delivery and governance:

- Student content is available through Kalvi TV and YouTube for extended learning at home.
- The Ennum Ezhuthum App supports assessment and digital report cards.
- The Tamil Nadu School Education Department (TNSED) Administrators App includes:
  - *Palli Parvai* for class observations
  - *Payirchi Parvai* for training observations

Nearly 90% of primary schools have been equipped with digital smartboards, with further expansion planned to make learning more interactive and engaging.

1.1.6. Teacher professional development

Recognising teachers as the backbone of the Mission, the Government has prioritised structured, continuous, and classroom-focused professional development. Teacher training is designed to be practical, data-informed, and directly aligned to improving student learning outcomes. Sessions focus on the effective use of THBs and SWBs, ensuring that classroom instruction remains structured, competency-based, and activity-driven.

Capacity-building efforts also strengthen classroom management practices, including strategies for multilevel classrooms, time management, student engagement, and creating inclusive learning environments.

Weekly Communities of Practice and active peer-learning platforms support ongoing reflection, problem-solving, and the sharing of best practices. In addition, regular classroom observations by district and block-level officials provide structured academic feedback, reinforcing instructional quality, and continuous improvement.

1.1.7 Parental engagement

A significant milestone has been the introduction of a detailed student report card system benefitting students and their parents. These report cards clearly communicate student strengths and areas for improvement, strengthening parent-teacher partnerships. All the School Management Committee meetings contain an active agenda item to discuss Ennum Ezhuthum activities and learning outcomes.

The “Ennum Ezhuthum Vizha” conducted in primary schools provides a platform for students to showcase their learning, further reinforcing community awareness and parental involvement in foundational education.

1.2 Third-party evaluation and evidence-based strengthening

To ensure transparency, objectivity, and continuous improvement, the Government of Tamil Nadu partnered with a third-party assessment organisation to conduct independent third-party evaluations of the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission. These evaluations were designed to assess student learning outcomes, examine the quality of classroom implementation, and provide actionable insights to strengthen the Mission. A large-scale baseline assessment covering over 61,500 students across 38 districts was conducted to establish learning benchmarks in literacy and numeracy. This was followed by process evaluations to assess classroom practices, usage of TLMs, teacher preparedness, and administrative monitoring systems.

The findings highlighted both progress and areas requiring focused attention, particularly in reading fluency, comprehension, multi-digit arithmetic operations, effective use of TLMs, and time management in classrooms. Based on these insights, the School Education Department undertook iterative improvements in THBs and SWBs, simplified academic content, strengthened teacher and Block Resource Teacher Educator (BRTE) training modules, and refined monitoring frameworks. The midline assessment conducted subsequently has demonstrated measurable 8-15% points of gains across BLN skills, validating the effectiveness of these data-driven refinements. Through this structured evaluation cycle the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission continues to evolve as an adaptive and evidence-based reform initiative.

1.3 Conclusion

The achievements of the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission reflect the collective commitment of teachers, administrators, parents, and the School Education Department. Through innovation, accountability, and sustained effort, Tamil Nadu is ensuring that no child is left behind.

With continued dedication and evidence-based interventions, the State remains firmly committed to its vision: that every child up to the age of eight will read with comprehension, perform basic arithmetic with confidence, and build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and success.

MATHS SIGNS
PRIME
2
3
13
17
RED
GREEN
2
6
38

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework used to study teaching and learning practices related to BLN in Grades 1 and 2 across three districts in Tamil Nadu. It describes the survey design and the rationale for adopting a mixed-methods approach, the sampling strategy, tool development, field procedures and the mechanism for quality assurance. The chapter also details the analytical approach used to interpret the findings generated from the different instruments used.

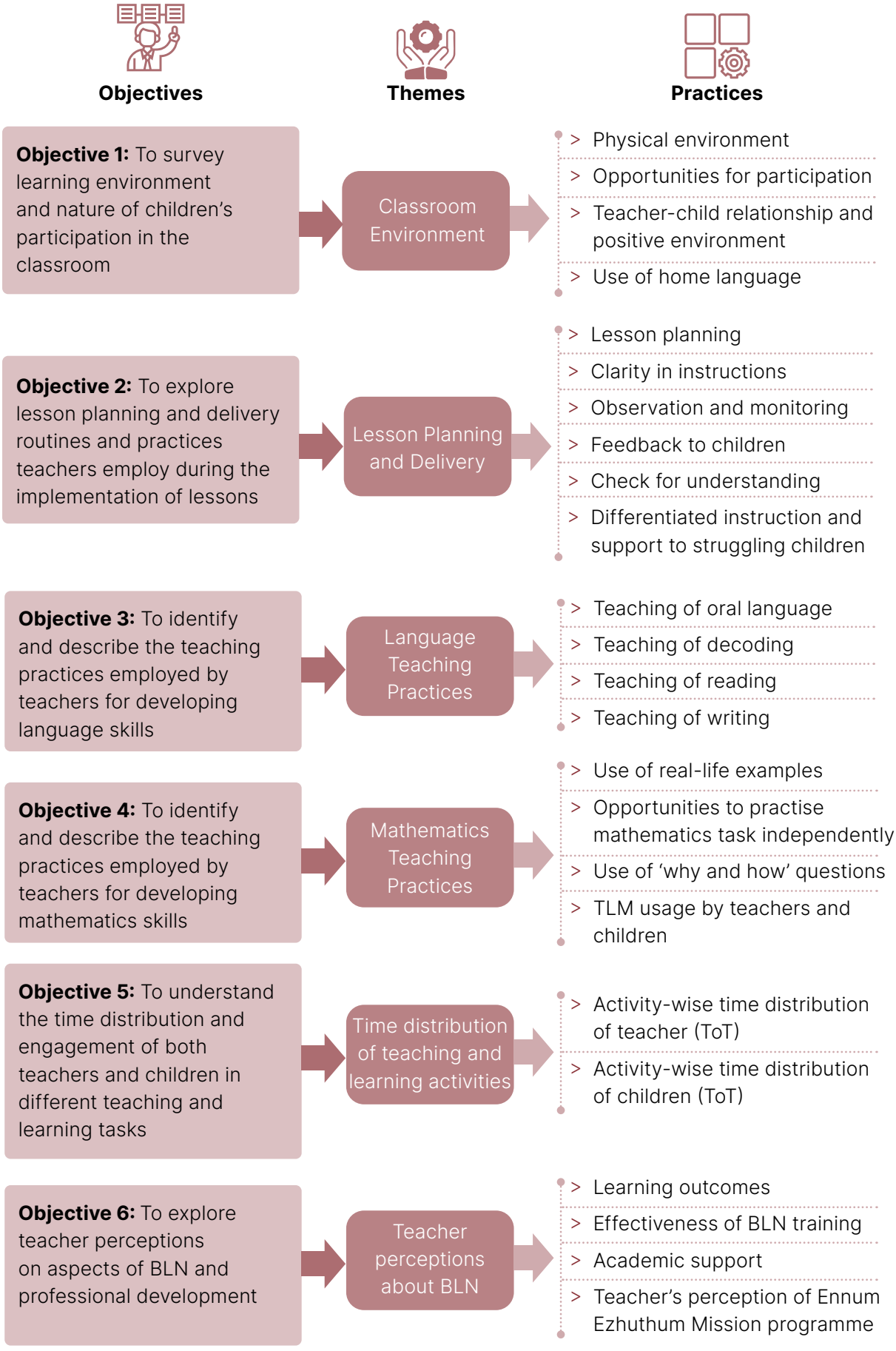
2.2 Scope of the survey

The Survey examines classroom-level teaching and learning practices related to BLN in Grades 1 and 2 across selected schools in nine states including Tamil Nadu.The focus is everyday instructional processes within classrooms, categorised into the following themes:
(i) Classroom Environment (ii) Lesson Planning and Delivery (iii) Language Teaching Practices (iv) Mathematics Teaching Practices (v) Time allocation of teaching and learning activities and (vi) Teacher perception of BLN and professional development.

The Survey draws on classroom observations, teacher interviews and ToT data to provide a detailed picture of how teaching and learning unfold in early-grade classrooms. Classroom observations were conducted during the 2024-2025 academic year.

The scope of the Survey is limited to describing and analysing instructional practices and classroom processes at a given point in time. It does not assess student learning outcomes, measure teacher subject knowledge, or evaluate the impact of specific programmes or interventions. Nor does it examine system-level inputs such as curriculum design, teacher deployment, or infrastructure beyond what is directly observable in classrooms. Figure 2.1 presents the mapping of the Survey's objectives to the themes and core practices examined under the Survey.

Figure 2.1: ***Mapping of Survey objectives to themes and practices***



2.3 **Coverage of the survey**

For the state of Tamil Nadu, the Survey examined classroom teaching and learning practices related to BLN in Grades 1 and 2 in 150 schools in six blocks of three districts. In each classroom, either a language lesson or a mathematics lesson was observed for a duration of 40 minutes to capture teaching practices and classroom interactions during regular teaching periods.

Given the sample sizes, the results of the Survey cannot be considered representative at the state level.

3 districts

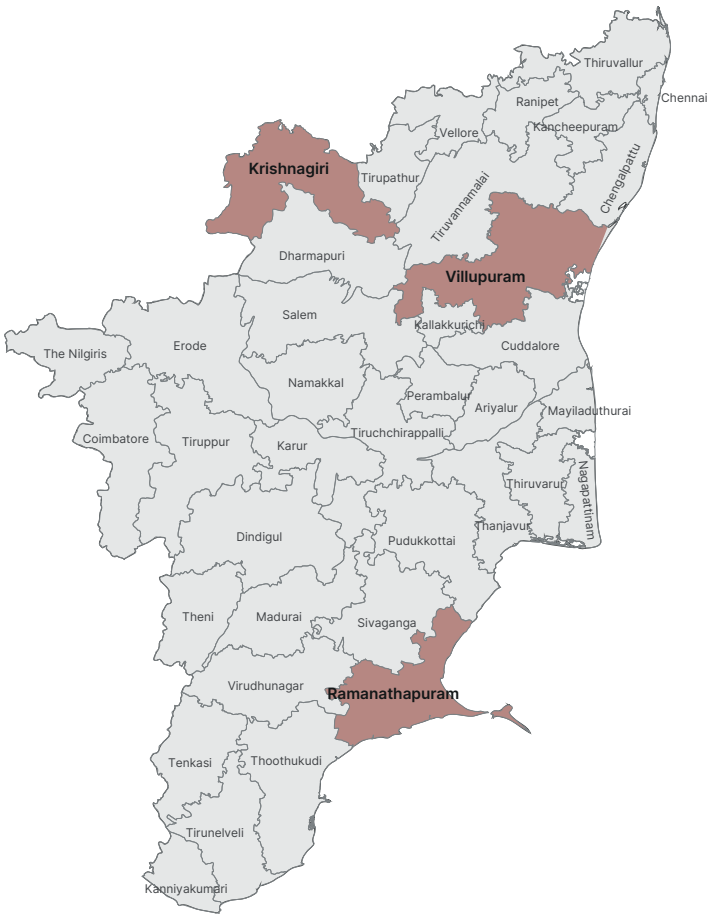
150 classrooms

150 teachers

3000+ children

Grade 1	**Grade 2**	**Language**	**Mathematics**
77 classrooms	73 classrooms	75 classrooms	75 classrooms

Number of tools	6	Number of supervisors	6	Number of field observers	14	Number of hours of observation	300+



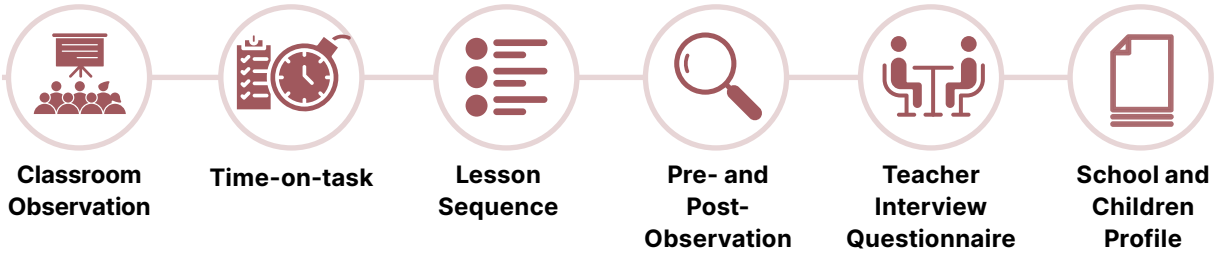
District	Block
Ramanathapuram	Tiruvadanai Ramanathapuram
Krishnagiri	Uthangarai Shoolagiri
Villupuram	Marakanam Vanur

2.4 Survey design

2.4.1 Survey tools

The Survey combined quantitative and qualitative structured data collection tools designed to capture classroom environments, teacher-child interactions and teaching practices for language and mathematics. A total of six tools were developed, each with clearly defined objectives.

Figure 2.2: ***Six key tools for data collection***



S. No.	Tool	Objective/Components
1	Classroom Observation (CRO)	The classroom observation tool has 21 indicators based on themes of learning environment, lesson planning and delivery, language teaching practices and mathematics teaching practices.
2	Time-on-task (ToT)	Teacher and children's activities are recorded after every three minutes. The objective is to record the time distribution of teaching and learning tasks.
3	Lesson Sequence (LS)	The lesson sequence for language and mathematics sessions is a structured tool to capture both the flow and nature of teaching activities during a 40-minute observation. > **Part A** provides an open-ended account of the session flow, recording how teachers organise activities and engage children. > **Part B** uses a coded list of steps teachers use in language sessions to teach decoding, letter writing, *matra*-writing and reading. In mathematics sessions, steps for number understanding, teaching of place value and operations are also included. > **Part C** identifies the skills and competencies targeted in a 40-minute session, such as vocabulary, comprehension or fluency. > **Part D** documents the TLMs used, whether teacher-prepared or provided, to support instruction. In the mathematics tool, **Part E** is also designed to record the TLMs used by children in the classroom.

S. No.	Tool	Objective/Components
4	Pre- and Post-Observation	The Pre-Observation Sheet captures key school-level information, including the grade and subject observed, enrolment and attendance for the grade. The Post-Observation Sheet records details about the classroom environment, such as seating arrangements, presence of print-rich materials and availability of instructional materials.
5	Teacher Interview Questionnaire	Questions are included from the themes of lesson planning and delivery, language teaching practice and mathematics teaching practice. It also includes questions on teachers' beliefs and perceptions about grade-appropriate learning outcomes, academic support, trainings and impact of Ennum Ezhuthum Mission.
6	School and Children Profile	The profile includes information about schools' total enrolment, number of teachers and distance of the school from city centre. It also includes children's socio-economic details like age, religion, category, economic status and home language.

2.4.2 Teaching-learning practices, indicators and rating scale

For each indicator, a rating scale was developed based on a clearly defined framework for the effectiveness of teaching-learning practices. These rating scales were designed for classroom learning environment, lesson planning and delivery, language teaching-learning practices, and mathematics teaching-learning practices.

Keeping the objectives of the Survey in mind, various terminologies such as practice, indicator, and rating scale were defined as follows:

Definitions

Practice

A specific, observable set of teacher actions that represents an identified part of a recommended pedagogical process.

Indicator

A specific, observable behaviour that provides evidence of a practice implemented in the classroom. (A practice can have more than one indicator)

Rating Scale

Each indicator was rated on a 4-point rating scale. Rating 1 indicated least effective practice, 2 – partially effective practice, 3 – effective practice and 4 – most effective practice.

An example of a practice with its indicator and rating scale from language teaching practices can be seen in the diagram below:

Practice

Teaching of oral language development

Indicator

The teacher relates the discussion to children's experiences.

Rating Scale

- No space for inclusion of real-life experiences or prior knowledge.
- Limited inclusion of real-life experiences or prior knowledge.
- Sometimes includes real-life experiences or prior knowledge.
- Frequently uses a wide range of real-life experiences and children's prior knowledge.

The indicators for each practice have been selected to include key behaviours and teaching activities.

The Survey included key practices for the learning environment and teaching of language and mathematics in early grades. Constraints such as a single 40-minute observation visit by a field observer with limited training necessitated keeping the indicators to a limited number.

2.5 **Analysis framework**

The analysis was guided by the Survey's objectives, which were further organised into specific practices and indicators to structure the inquiry. Indicators drawn from the CRO, ToT, pre- and post-observation, LS and teacher interview tools were systematically mapped to each objective to ensure analytical coherence and consistency. Triangulation across tools strengthened the robustness of interpretation and reduced the potential influence of field observer bias.

During the analysis, data from Grades 1 and 2 was found to be broadly similar with no significant differences. Accordingly, the findings presented in the report combine data from both grades to provide a consolidated picture of early-grade classroom practices. To refer to grade-wise disaggregated data, please see the QR code given in the end.

An example of how relevant indicators from different tools were mapped to answer a specific question:

Practice	Indicator	Tools
Use of TLM	Were TLMs available in the classroom?	Pre- and post-observation
	Were TLMs displayed at children's eye level?	Pre- and post-observation
	Did children get an opportunity to practise with TLMs?	CRO

The analytical approach followed a mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The table gives a detailed overview of the type of analytical approach with a description of the methods used.

S. No.	Tool	Type of analysis	Description
1.	Classroom Observation	Quantitative & Qualitative	Quantitative data were analysed descriptively (frequencies, averages) to identify patterns in classroom practices. Qualitative field observer notes were thematically analysed to capture nuances of teaching-learning interactions and classroom environment.
2.	Teacher Interview Questionnaire	Quantitative & Qualitative	Thematic analysis was applied to understand teachers' beliefs, perceptions and instructional strategies, complementing classroom observations.
3.	Lesson Sequence	Quantitative	Time-stamped sequencing of instructional steps was analysed to highlight the common steps followed for teaching of language and mathematics.
4.	Pre- and Post-Observation	Quantitative	Descriptive analysis of classroom context, including physical setup, enrolment, seating arrangements and availability of teaching-learning resources, was recorded both before and after observation.
5.	Time-on-task	Quantitative	The proportion of instructional time devoted to various activities was analysed descriptively to assess engagement and efficiency of classroom processes.

2.6 Sampling framework: Selection of districts, blocks and schools

The Survey adopted a multi-stage sampling design. The sampling strategy was designed to balance methodological rigour with on-ground feasibility, while enabling a credible examination of classroom-level BLN teaching and learning practices.

Stage 1 – District selection

District selection was guided by:

- Representation of the State's different geographic and socio-cultural regions.
- Districts where partner organisations were actively implementing BLN-focused interventions were deliberately excluded. This allowed the Survey to capture routine classroom practices without the influence of external programme support.

Stage 2 – Block and school selection

In this stage, blocks and schools were selected within each sampled district.

- Two blocks were randomly selected within each district.
- The sampling aimed to cover 50 schools per district.
- To balance methodological rigour with field feasibility, around half of the required schools (approximately 12-13 per block) were selected through random sampling. The remaining schools were selected based on geographic proximity to sampled schools to minimise travel time.

Within each sampled school

- Classrooms were selected to ensure an approximate balance between Grade 1 and Grade 2 observations.
- Observations were evenly distributed across language and mathematics lessons within each district.
- Schools were included in the sample only if they had an enrolment of more than seven children, and classroom observations were conducted only when at least five children were present at the time of observation.

2.7 Training and field implementation

A structured, multi-tiered training and implementation strategy was adopted to ensure consistent, reliable and high-quality administration of survey tools across the state. The training approach was designed to strengthen both conceptual understanding of BLN processes and the practical skills required for systematic classroom observation using multiple data collection instruments.

Field observers underwent intensive training and worked under close supervision throughout the data collection period. Daily debriefs, ongoing validation of observations, and systematic monitoring processes were integral to field implementation. This integrated design enabled

a robust, evidence-based understanding of classroom-level instructional practices in government schools. Across all states, supervisors were directly supported by LLF's educational advisors and the TLPS core team, who maintained a continuous field presence and provided real-time support and clarifications to ensure standardisation and quality across diverse contexts.

1

A five-day national orientation workshop, including two days of field visits, was conducted to orient consultants, supervisors and partner organisations to the Survey methodology, tool architecture, indicators and rating scales, particularly for the CRO instrument. The workshop was designed and facilitated by LLF's core TLPS team and combined detailed technical sessions with live classroom observations, enabling participants to apply the tools in real instructional settings and reflect collectively on their use. The team also visited government schools during the workshop to pre-test tools through real-time classroom observations. Structured debrief sessions followed each field visit during which observations were reviewed in detail, interpretations were discussed, and rating scales were systematically resolved. Insights from these field trials and discussions directly informed the refinement of tools.

2

A dedicated two-day supervision training was conducted at national level to strengthen field level quality assurance and supervision mechanisms for supervisors' adherence. Experienced consultants were deployed as supervisors. Each state had a minimum of two supervisors, ideally one for each district. In case of more districts, additional supervisors were also oriented in this workshop.

3

A five day training workshop was conducted in Chennai in order to achieve reliability across the assessors, supplemented by five-day district-specific training in Villupuram. The field evaluators who undertook classroom and interviews with the teachers had at least one year of experience in teaching at the BLN level and were given a thorough grounding in the theoretical and practical aspects of the BLN mission along with the unique Multi-Grade Multi-Level (MGML) context of Tamil Nadu classrooms.

The training structure included: Detailed tool walkthroughs with real-time CROs; practice sessions in actual school settings (two full days); hands-on data entry exercises with immediate feedback; indicator interpretation discussions using video recordings; and mock debrief sessions to prepare teams for daily review protocols. LLF supervisors continued providing on-ground support to field teams throughout the entire data collection period, ensuring adherence to Survey protocols.

The Tamil Nadu training team included 14 field observers, including one monitoring and evaluation (M&E) member and two supervisors.

Each observation team typically consisted of two field observers, supported by a supervisor who shadowed visits and monitored implementation adherence and provided on-site feedback.

4

Observer 1

- CRO Tool
- LS Tool
- Teacher Interviewer

Observer 2

- ToT Tool
- Pre- and Post-Observation Tool
- Note-taking of Teacher Interview

Before the lesson
Field observer 2 documented in relevant sections the pre- and post-observation tool.

During the lesson
Field observer 1 administered CRO and LS together for 40 minutes. At the same time, field observer 2 noted in ToT.

After the lesson
Field observer 1 asked questions from interview questionnaire. Field observer 2 made notes of the interview.

Field observers spent around two hours in each school following the protocol for CRO, note-taking, interviewing the teacher and collecting the school and children profile. The team then moved to the second school for the day to follow the same process for another grade or subject. The number of grades and subjects observed were recorded daily by the supervisor to maintain balance between the sample size. Field supervisors validated a sample of observations through shadow visits. Quality assurance was embedded into daily field routines.

Data Digitisation: Data in paper-pencil was daily digitised on an Application by the field observers. Random checks were conducted by the supervisors to identify missing data, incomplete survey forms and gaps in supporting evidence.

Across all data collection sites, daily debrief sessions of 2-3 hours were conducted during active fieldwork. These sessions, facilitated by supervisors with support from LLF consultants and in coordination with the Survey central core team, served as a space for validating interpretations and resolving ambiguities in ratings.

5

These sessions operated as intensive quality assurance checkpoints where:

> Every completed observation tool was reviewed in detail.

> Field observers read examples aloud for group discussion.

> Rating interpretations were validated against the established framework.

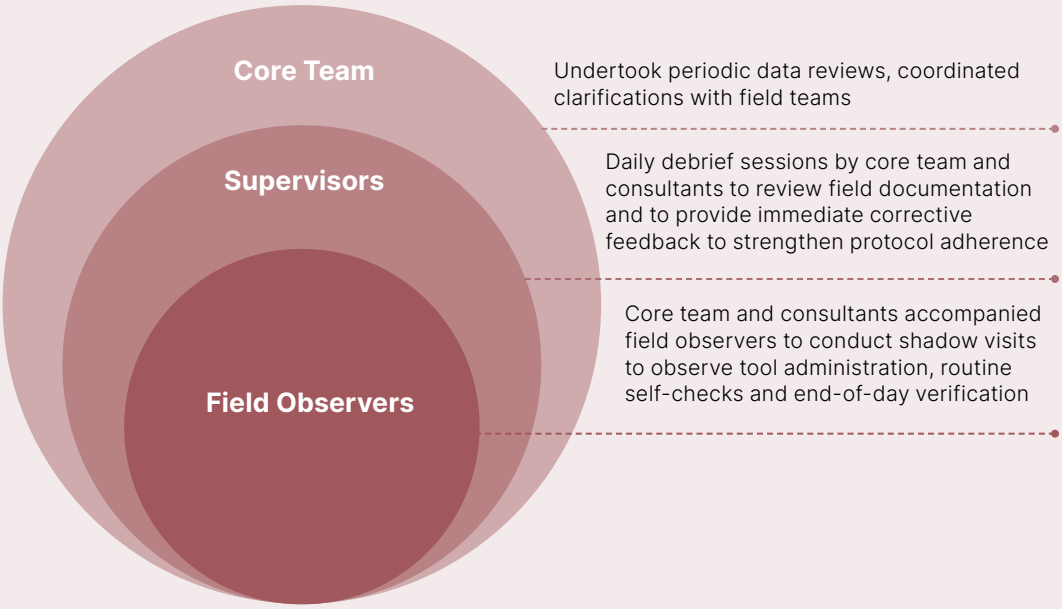
> Doubts about ratings were identified and corrected before digitisation.

Following these rigorous debriefs, field observers digitised their data. All digitised entries underwent random verification by LLF supervisors and M&E team members to ensure accuracy between paper tools and digital records.

2.8 **Quality assurance and supervision**

To ensure the quality of the survey, an intensive monitoring system was established. Quality-checking procedures were included at every stage of data collection so that the reliability of all digital data entries could be ensured and the impact of errors in assessment and potential observer bias could be minimised.

The monitoring system was designed at three levels: at the observer level, at the supervisor level, and at the level of LLF's TLPS team and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) team.



A digital monitoring dashboard allowed real-time tracking of data completeness, tool usage and inconsistencies

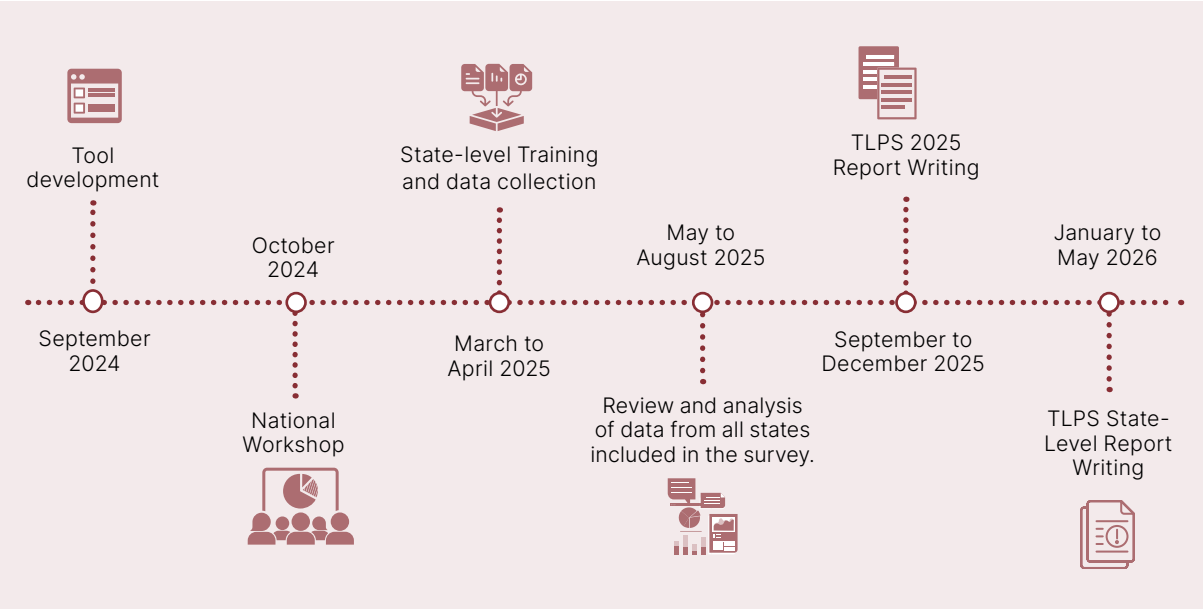
2.9 **Data review**

Following the completion of data collection, LLF and Ei implemented a structured, multi-stage data review protocol to ensure completeness, accuracy and cross-state consistency.

- After initial validation at the state level, consolidated datasets underwent centralised cleaning, duplication checks and review of score distributions.
- An in-house data review workshop enabled joint examination of outliers and alignment of coding interpretations across partners.
- Discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensus to ensure that the final dataset reflected genuine variation in classroom practices rather than procedural or coding artefacts.

2.10 **Timeline**

The Survey's major milestones and timelines are given below.



2.11 **Challenges**

- Student absenteeism in some schools necessitated adjustments to the planned school visit schedule. This, in turn, worsened logistical issues related to travel times between the school locations.
- Environmental factors such as unexpected rainfall led to temporary school closures, and local holidays caused minor delays in the data collection timeline.
- As the Survey took place near the end of the school term, evaluators noted that many teachers were conducting revision classes rather than standard classroom transactions.

2.12 **Limitations**

The scope of the Survey was limited to describing and analysing classroom teaching and learning practices at a given point in time. It did not assess children learning outcomes, measure teachers' content knowledge, or evaluate the impact of specific programmes or interventions. Aspects like the curriculum design, teacher deployment, or infrastructure were also not part of the inquiry, apart from what was directly observable in classrooms.

The Survey findings should be interpreted in the light of the following methodological constraints.

- The districts were selected to ensure diversity in geographic location, social groups and learning outcomes, rather than being a statistically representative sample for a state. The selection of schools within a district was based on a random sampling for half the schools, the remaining half being chosen based on proximity to the randomly selected schools.
- Classroom observations were limited to a single 40-minute language or mathematics lesson on one day. As for all such observations, the presence of observers could influence teaching practices during the period of observation. For example, many teachers may have repeated a lesson or activity which they had already done with children earlier.
- The practices and indicators selected for observation are not exhaustive; rather, they were chosen because they are both important for effective teaching in the early grades and observable in a reliable manner within the limited scope of a single observation.

These limitations do not diminish or undermine the value of the evidence but underscore the need for cautious interpretation and the need for complementary research.

2.13 **Conclusion**

The Survey methodology provides a rigorous and coherent framework for the study of classroom teaching and learning practices at scale. Through the use of standardised observation and interview tools and by combining quantitative measures with qualitative insights, the Survey generates evidence that is both comparable across states and grounded in classroom realities. The multi-tiered approach to training, supervision and quality assurance ensured consistency in data collection and analysis, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings. From tool development and piloting to field implementation and data review, methodological rigour was embedded at every stage of the Survey.

By foregrounding classroom processes and employing high-rigour methodology, from tool development to data analysis, the Survey offers a replicable model for studying foundational BLN teaching and learning practices at scale. The tools of this Survey (QR code at the end) can be used by government and other organisations to conduct similar surveys.

To facilitate the smooth and successful completion of the data collection process, a WhatsApp group was created for observers and the state TLPS team. Members of LLF's TLPS team were also included in this group, which enabled immediate resolution of field-level queries, inconsistencies, and contextual challenges.

Quality checks were integrated into the daily field implementation process. A systematic end-of-day review ensured that the completeness and consistency of observations were verified before digitisation, thereby preventing possible data-entry errors.

Classroom Learning Environment

CHAPTER 3

Summary and interpretation

Classroom observations were conducted in 150 classrooms on their learning environment, covering 77 Grade 1 and 73 Grade 2 classrooms.

This chapter presents the TLPS 2025 findings related to classroom environment, drawing on quantitative and qualitative insights gathered primarily through classroom observation and qualified by data from teacher interviews, pre- and post-observation and ToT tools.

A total of four indicators were assessed to generate insights on classroom learning environment: physical environment, teacher-child relationship, opportunities for participation and use of home language.

The Survey included key aspects of classroom learning environment in early grades. Constraints such as a single 40-minute observation visit by a field observer with limited training necessitated keeping the indicators to a minimum.

Consolidated summary of findings from sampled classrooms across four indicators

- Print-rich materials were displayed in **77%** of sampled classrooms with them being at eye level in about three-fourths **(76%)** of these classrooms.
- In **60%** of classrooms, at least some children looked comfortable or felt confident in the teacher's presence and expressed themselves freely.
- In **43%** of the classrooms, teachers included multiple children in discussions by asking them individual questions. In a third **(33%)** of the classrooms, teachers gave sufficient time to children to process and respond to those questions.
- **83%** of the interviewed teachers reported knowing children's home language and **79%** reported that children in their classrooms fully understand the medium of instruction (Tamil).
- Over half **(55%)** of classrooms had a row-and-column seating style; seating was changed in a smaller number **(17%)** of classrooms to suit teaching-learning activities.

Overall, most sampled classrooms in Tamil Nadu had print-rich materials displayed to support learning. Encouragingly, teachers provided opportunities for children to speak, express themselves, or learn from one another. As many teachers reported knowing children's home languages, in regional pockets where children do not understand Tamil, strategic use of children's home or familiar language can support comprehension and build confidence in early school years.

bench

CHAPTER 3

Classroom Learning Environment

3.1 Overview of classroom learning environment

The classroom environment plays a crucial role in shaping children's learning experiences and overall development. A positive, accepting, well-organised, and stimulating environment not only enhances academic performance but also fosters social and emotional growth.
A supportive classroom is where children feel safe, motivated, and encouraged to explore, engage, question, and collaborate. It holds the power to transform learning into an engaging and meaningful journey. NCF-FS 2022 recommends that a safe, secure, comfortable and happy classroom environment can help children to learn better and achieve more.

3.2 Effective practices of classroom learning environment and their indicators

The Survey focused on four critical environment-building practices: physical environment, teacher-child relationship, opportunities for participation and use of home language. These components were examined through multiple indicators of effective practice (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 ***Practices and indicators of classroom learning environment***

Practices	Indicators of Effective Practice
Physical Environment	Physical space and sitting arrangement
	Availability of a functional blackboard
	Availability and accessibility of print-rich material
Teacher-child relationship	Children feel confident and express freely with the teacher and each other
Opportunities for participation	Teacher asks questions to individual children
	Teacher gives time to children to respond when asking individual children
Use of home language	Teacher accepts the use of home language by children and uses it in teaching

3.2.1 Physical environment

The physical space and arrangement of a classroom significantly influence children's engagement, behaviour, and teaching and learning processes. Beyond basic infrastructure, seating arrangements that allow for flexible grouping are more effective in encouraging better interactions, teacher monitoring, and supporting learning objectives through both small-group and whole-class activities.

Another enabling factor is the display and use of a variety of classroom print material during teaching and learning. Children who are exposed to books and other print material at home often pick up basic concepts about print easily. For children who lack such exposure—a reality for many Indian children—it is even more important that classrooms have a print-rich environment at school. In a print-rich environment, children get many different opportunities to interact with different forms of print in meaningful contexts. This shows children that print carries meaning and that reading and writing serve real, everyday purposes. Over time, children become motivated to try to read and write themselves.

3.2.2 **Teacher-child relationship**

A warm, trusting teacher-child relationship is the cornerstone of a positive classroom environment. Young children who experience caring, respectful and responsive relationships with their teachers are more excited about learning, more positive about coming to school, more confident, and achieve more in the classroom. Such relationships help children feel safe to express ideas, ask questions, make mistakes, and take learning risks. This not only supports academic progress but also nurtures emotional growth, resilience, and motivation in learners. Simply put, a positive teacher-child relationship is the critical foundation affecting children's learning and progress in school, without which refinements in pedagogy, curricula and TLMs may be largely meaningless. The NCF-FS 2022 recommends that classrooms must offer inclusive and enabling learning environments that provide every child freedom, acceptance, meaningfulness, belonging and challenge.

3.2.3 **Opportunities for participation**

An inclusive classroom environment is one in which every child, irrespective of ability, language, gender, or socio-economic background, feels valued, heard, and able to participate meaningfully in the learning process. Such environments foster a sense of belonging and promote collaboration, empathy, and equity. Creating this environment means more than physical access to schooling; it requires classroom practices that cultivate participation, dialogue, and respect. In the Survey, two indicators were used as proxies to assess whether teachers were taking steps towards such inclusivity: first, whether they made efforts to engage individual children in discussions, and second, whether they provided adequate wait time for children to think and respond. Allowing adequate wait time after asking a question is just one strategy. Other examples include giving children the option to pass and return to the question later, or incorporating 'turn-and-talk' routines (or variations like think-pair-share and write-share). These approaches enable all children to engage with the question, while also tempering the dominance of those who are quick to respond, thus creating more balanced opportunities for participation.

Both of these practices are central to an inclusive classroom environment because they ensure that children are not only present, but are genuinely involved in learning—offering ideas, processing information at their pace, and developing confidence through supported participation.

3.2.4 **Home language use**

Using children's home languages in early schooling is essential for building a strong foundation in learning. When children's familiar language is used in the classroom, they understand better, they are able to express ideas, ask questions, and connect new concepts to what they already know. Language is not just a tool for instruction; it shapes children's thoughts, enhances engagement, participation and understanding. Using children's most familiar language strengthens early literacy

and numeracy while affirming children's cultural identities. TN SEP 2025 recommends using a child's home language as the medium of instruction, wherever possible, and to bridge the gap between home and school languages.

3.3 Findings of classroom learning environment

3.3.1 Physical environment

Source	Indicators
Pre- & Post-observation Survey	Physical space and seating arrangement
	Availability of a functional blackboard
	Availability, nature and accessibility of print-rich material

Functional blackboards were available in almost all (99%) classrooms. Around 55% of classrooms had a row-and-column seating style. A small set of schools (18%) followed a C-shape or U-shape seating style and 11% had a circle arrangement. Seating arrangements were changed in a few classrooms (17%) as the session progressed, either to suit the nature of activity being conducted or to support peer-learning—both strong pedagogical reasons to vary seating.

Print-rich material was displayed in 77% of the surveyed classrooms—higher than the TLPS 2025 average of 48%. This material was displayed at children's eye-level—a basic requirement for making them accessible—in three-fourths of such classrooms.

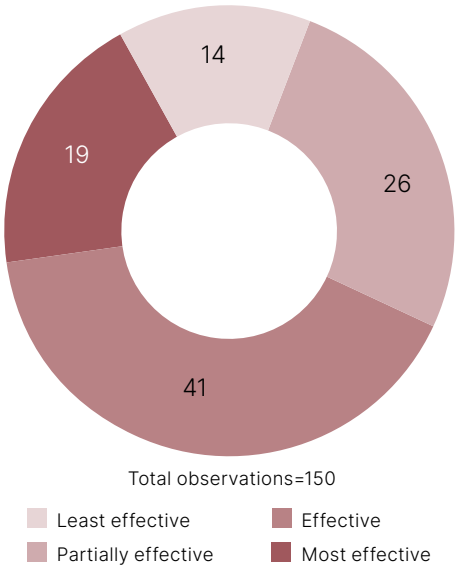
Overall, the picture that emerges is that while basic infrastructure (such as blackboards and print-rich material) is widely available, and a large proportion of primary schools may even have digital smartboards, there is much scope for the physical space to be better leveraged to support teaching and learning. With very few teachers changing seating arrangements during lessons, they are missing opportunities to support peer learning, facilitate movement, and enable small-group or whole-class interactions aligned with lesson goals.

To create truly enabling classroom environments, teachers need to design flexible seating arrangements that suit the lesson objectives and the nature of the task. Ensuring that classroom print material is accessible, age-appropriate, and regularly used during lessons—and not just meant for decoration—would go a long way in supporting early language learning.

3.3.2 Teacher-child relationship

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Children feel confident and express freely with the teacher and each other	Children are quiet throughout the period and do not talk to the teacher or other children	Only a few children talk/ ask questions amongst each other or to the teacher	Some children look comfortable in teacher's presence and talk or ask questions freely with others and the teacher	Most children are comfortable in the teacher's presence and talk freely or ask questions with others and the teacher

Figure 3.1: ***Percentage of classrooms where children felt confident and expressed freely with teachers and each other***



In a fifth (19%) of classrooms surveyed, most children appeared comfortable, spoke freely, and engaged openly with others. In these classrooms, most children actively asked and answered questions, shared personal experiences, interacted confidently with both teachers and peers (including helping one another), showed willingness to participate in activities and were unafraid to make mistakes. In 41% of the classrooms, some children looked comfortable in the teacher's presence and engaged openly in the class.

In contrast, in 40% of the classrooms, children either remained silent throughout the lesson or only a few children participated in discussions. In these settings, children quietly followed instructions or stayed largely silent, often because teachers did not provide opportunities to speak, scolded children or engaged with only a small group of children.

The findings on effective (41%) and most effective practice (19%) for teacher-child relationship are encouraging as they are much higher than the TLPS 2025 average of 27% and 8% respectively. They highlight significant progress made in strengthening teacher-child relationships in early grade classrooms of Tamil Nadu. Strong teacher-child relationships support children's academic and socio-emotional growth, and form the foundation for the success of any pedagogical and curricular reforms.

3.3.3 Opportunities for participation

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher asks questions to individual children	Teacher does not ask individual children	Teacher occasionally asks individual children	Teacher sometimes asks individual children	Teacher mostly asks individual children
Teacher gives time to children to respond when asking individual children	Teacher does not wait for responses	Teacher occasionally waits for children's responses	Teacher sometimes waits for children's responses	Teacher mostly waits for children's responses

In about 43% of the surveyed classrooms in Tamil Nadu, teachers asked questions to individual children at least sometimes, whereas in 28% of classrooms teachers did not direct questions to individual children at all. In these latter classrooms, teachers relied on children's choral responses to their questions rather than engaging children one-on-one.

A gap in following effective practice also emerged in the provision of adequate wait time, defined as allowing at least 3-10 seconds after posing a question for children to think and

respond. Among the classrooms where teachers asked questions to individual children, in only 18% of them did the teachers consistently wait for children's answers, while in 32% of the classrooms, teachers did not wait at all and instead supplied the answers themselves. This practice severely limits children's opportunities to think, participate, and express their ideas, particularly for learners who already struggle to keep pace.

Figure 3.2: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers asked questions to individual children***

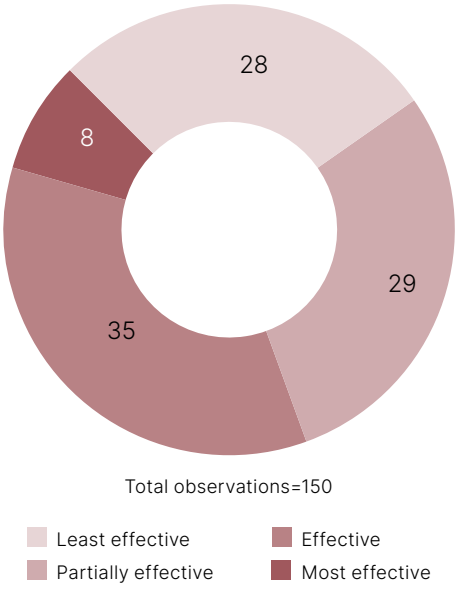
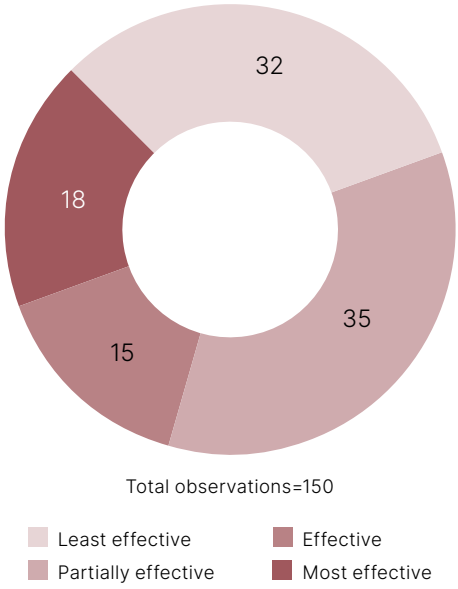


Figure 3.3: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers gave time to children to respond when asking individual children***



The findings suggest that a considerable proportion of classrooms fall short of creating an inclusive environment where every child is encouraged to think, participate, and express themselves. When teachers do not actively engage individual children or allow them sufficient time to respond, children cannot contribute to shared meaning-making, weakening the foundations of an inclusive classroom environment that values every learner's voice.

3.3.4 **Use of home language**

Some insights about home language usage were drawn from teacher interviews as related to the following questions:

> Do all the children of your class fully understand and speak the medium of instruction?

> Do you understand and speak the children's home language(s)?

Tamil is the most commonly spoken language in Tamil Nadu. However, there were significant pockets of the surveyed population speaking regional languages from adjoining states. Telugu was reported as children's home language by 21% of the teachers and Kannada by 18% of the teachers. Sub-regional trends within the State on use of home language for teaching warrants further examination.

Around 83% of the interviewed teachers reported knowing children's home language and 79% reported that children in their classrooms fully understand the medium of instruction (Tamil).

In Tamil Nadu, exposure to Tamil is likely to be widespread. However young children in some areas—like inter-state borders—may not fully understand Tamil. Extensive use of children's home language or familiar language in early childhood education and early school years is crucial to support children's active participation, self-confidence and learning. Further, when teachers dismiss or reprimand the use of home language, they inadvertently signal that children's linguistic and cultural identities are not valued, reducing their confidence and willingness to participate.

3.4. **Conclusion**

The findings from this chapter indicate that many observed classrooms in Tamil Nadu have made progress in establishing basic physical infrastructure and print-rich environments. However, some of these features are not yet being consistently used to support active learning. At the same time, the findings point to clear opportunities for strengthening classroom practices in ways that are both practical and contextually-grounded. More intentional organisation of classroom spaces to support learning goals, greater attention to nurturing supportive teacher–child relationships, and guided opportunities for every child to speak and participate can significantly enhance inclusion and engagement. In regional pockets (e.g. inter-state borders) where children do not understand Tamil, strategic use of children's home or familiar language in early school years can support comprehension, build confidence, and encourage greater participation in classroom discussions.

CHAPTER 4

Lesson Planning and Delivery

Summary and interpretation

Classroom observations were conducted in 150 classrooms for lesson planning and delivery practices, covering 77 Grade 1 and 73 Grade 2 classrooms.

This chapter presents the TLPS 2025 findings related to lesson planning and delivery. These findings draw on quantitative and qualitative insights gathered primarily through classroom observation, teacher interviews, and pre- and post-observation tools. The following indicators were assessed to generate insights into lesson planning and delivery practices: planning for the lesson, use of clear instructions, observation and monitoring of independent tasks, feedback on writing tasks, use of CFU strategies, use of differentiated instruction for children at different levels of learning, and engagement in multigrade, multilevel situations.

The Survey included some key teaching practices for lesson planning and delivery in early grades. Constraints such as a single 40-minute observation visit by a field observer with limited training necessitated keeping the indicators to a minimum.

Consolidated summary of findings from the sampled classrooms across six indicators

- Almost all the teachers **(99%)** in the observed classrooms reported planning for the next day's lessons and had written lesson plans during classroom observation.
- In **79%** of the observed classrooms, teachers gave instructions before or during an activity. However, they ensured that all children understood their instructions at each and every stage of an activity in a small number of classrooms.
- In a third **(33%)** of the observed classrooms, teachers observed and monitored independent and group activities of children at least sometimes.
- Teachers in around **15%** of classrooms checked at least some children's work and identified the mistakes they had made. In around **71%** of classrooms, teachers did not check children's written work during the observed lesson.
- In a third of the classrooms **(33%)**, teachers used questions, prompts or other strategies to check children's understanding at least sometimes during the session. In almost half **(47%)** of the surveyed classrooms, however, teachers relied mostly on choral responses to confirm children's understanding.
- In two-thirds of the classrooms **(66%)**, teachers did not use any differentiated instruction to support children at different learning levels. This might be due to the time of the year when observations were conducted.

Overall, while almost all the surveyed teachers in Tamil Nadu have lesson plans for their sessions, lesson delivery practices present a different picture. Key aspects of lesson delivery— such as giving clear instructions, monitoring children's work, checking individual children's understanding, and offering meaningful feedback—are used consistently and effectively by only a small proportion of teachers. As a result, children often participate in activities without sufficient clarity, guidance or support, and individual children's learning needs remain largely unidentified. Strengthening these core teaching practices offers substantial potential to improve learning and prevent gaps from widening in the early grades.

CHAPTER 4

Lesson Planning and Delivery

4.1 Overview of lesson planning and delivery

Thoughtful lesson planning and purposeful lesson delivery form the bedrock of effective teaching. They are central to creating meaningful learning experiences for young children. When teachers plan with intention, communicate expectations clearly, observe how children engage with tasks, and respond to their needs through timely guidance and support, they create classrooms where every child has a genuine chance to learn. These practices help teachers understand what children know, where they struggle, and how to adjust instruction so that all learners can progress.

Just as a supportive classroom environment is essential, strong lesson planning and delivery practices form the foundation for more specific teaching strategies that build early language and mathematics skills.

4.2 Effective practices of lesson planning and delivery and their indicators

Classroom observation during the Survey focused on the following indicators for lesson planning and delivery practices: lesson planning, use of clear instructions, observation and monitoring of children's tasks, giving feedback on written work, CFU, as well as use of differentiated instruction for children at different learning levels (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: ***Practices and indicators of lesson planning and delivery***

Practices	Effective practice indicators
Lesson planning	Teacher plans for the lesson
Clarity in Instructions	Teacher provides clear instructions before, during, and after the activity
Observation and monitoring	Teacher observes and monitors independent and group activities of children
Feedback	Teacher gives feedback/support on written work done by children
Check for understanding	Teacher uses questions, prompts or other strategies to check children's understanding
Differentiated instruction and support to struggling children	Teacher employs differentiated instruction or support for children at different levels

Additionally, data was taken from teacher interviews on the following questions:

Lesson planning

> Do you plan the lesson you will teach the next day? If yes, how do you plan for the lesson? If no, why?

Differentiated instruction

> Do you have children who have not learnt some of the basic skills that have been taught? What do you think could be the reasons for some children not being able to learn well?
> How do you support children who have not yet learnt?

4.2.1 Lesson planning

Planning for a lesson is an essential part of teaching practice. It helps to ensure that teaching is purposeful, coherent and aligned with children's developmental and learning needs. When teachers plan, they are better able to select and sequence activities, anticipate challenges, and create meaningful learning experiences that build on what children already know. The NCF-FS 2022 highlights that planning includes developing and organising classroom tasks as per target competencies and outcomes, pedagogy to be followed, resources to be used and assessment to be carried out. Planning also includes practice activities for children, home assignments, and displays in the class relevant to what is being taught.

4.2.2 Clarity of instructions

Clarity of instructions is a key part of good teaching, especially in the early years of schooling. Many young children take time to learn how school works and may not understand the expectations of formal, classroom-based learning. When teachers give clear, step-by-step instructions, children know what they are supposed to do, how to do it, and what a good result looks like. In addition to giving clear directions, teachers also need to show examples and model the task for young children. When teachers give clear instructions and reinforce them through modelling, children are more likely to stay focused, complete tasks, and learn better.

4.2.3 Observation and monitoring

Observation and monitoring are essential parts of good lesson delivery. When teachers watch how children work, both on their own and in groups, they gain valuable insights into what children understand, how they think and apply new learning and where they need help. Such information helps teachers adjust their explanations, change activities, or provide extra support when needed. In this way, observation not only helps identify learning gaps but also guides teachers in making timely decisions that improve classroom learning.

4.2.4 Providing feedback

Providing feedback on children's work is an important aspect of effective lesson delivery. When teachers comment purposefully on children's work, they not only acknowledge children's efforts but also help them understand how and why their responses can be improved. Timely, balanced and specific feedback enables children to recognise what they have done well and what needs further attention. The NCF-FS 2022 also recommends that feedback be constructive and focused on effort and growth rather than merely evaluating outcomes. By directing children's attention to strategies, concepts or steps they may have missed, effective feedback guides learners to reflect on their work, improve their skills, and take ownership of their learning over time.

4.2.5 Check for understanding

Regular CFU is vital to effective lesson delivery, especially in the early years, when children are still building basic literacy and numeracy skills. CFU helps teachers know whether children have understood key ideas before moving on, allowing them to identify misconceptions and provide support when needed. Simple strategies, such as asking questions, using quick tasks, or observing children's responses, give teachers real-time insight into children's learning.

Choral responses can help build participation but they often mask individual differences. A few confident voices may lead, while other children simply repeat without understanding. Relying only on group responses does not show teachers what individual children understand. Thus, consistent and varied CFU practices are required to ensure that teaching remains clear, inclusive and responsive to all learners.

4.2.6 Differentiated instruction and support to struggling children

Differentiated instruction is essential for effective lesson planning and delivery. In the foundational years especially, classrooms include learners with varied backgrounds and developmental levels, making it important for teachers to adjust their teaching so all children can participate meaningfully. This means planning lessons that modify content, methods, or activities to support those who struggle as well as those who are ready to move ahead. As highlighted in the NCF-FS 2022, teachers are expected to use multiple pedagogical approaches so that no learner is left behind and every child can access learning successfully.

4.3 Findings of lesson planning and delivery

4.3.1 Lesson planning

Source	Indicators
Teacher Interviews	Do you plan the lesson you will teach the next day?
	If yes, how do you plan for the lesson? If no, why?
Pre- and Post-observation Tool	Teacher has a documented lesson plan/strategy for the period. (Yes/No with explanation and comments)

In teacher interviews, almost all (99%) teachers reported planning for the lesson they would teach the next day. Documented plans were also observed with 99% of the teachers, much higher than the TLPS 2025 average of 75% and 51% respectively.

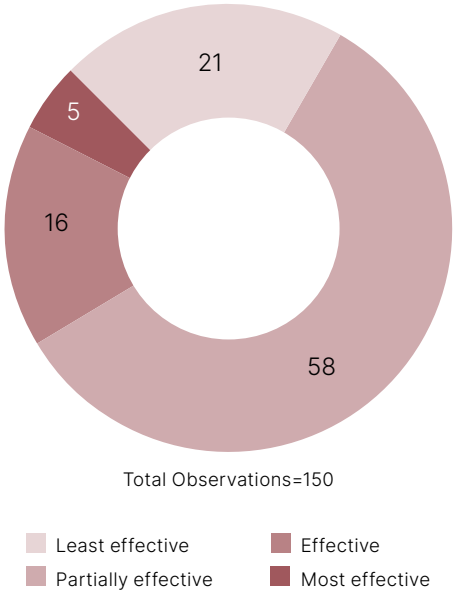
Teachers reported using various resources to plan lessons, such as textbooks, teacher handbooks, and online platforms like YouTube. A small number of teachers said they adapt their plans based on children's learning levels. However, because field observers did not examine the quality of these plans, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of planning practices.

Overall, the findings suggest that most teachers recognise the importance of lesson planning. The fact that almost all of them had written lesson plans during classroom observation indicates that planning has become a consistent and formalised practice in Tamil Nadu.

4.3.2 Clarity in instructions

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher provides clear instructions before, during and after the activity	Teacher begins activity without giving any instruction (before, during or after)	Teacher gives instructions before or during an activity but does not confirm if all children understand them	Teacher gives instructions before or during an activity, and confirms with some children if they have understood them	Teacher clearly communicates instructions to ensure all children understand them at each stage—before, during, and after every activity

Figure 4.1: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers provided clear instructions before, during and after the activity***



In the majority (79%) of the observed classrooms, teachers gave instructions before or during an activity. In 21% of the classrooms, teachers also confirmed with at least some children whether they understood what was expected of them. Notably, in a fifth of the surveyed classrooms, teachers did not give any instructions before, during or after an activity.

The findings reveal wide variations in how teachers communicate instructions during classroom activities. Although some teachers provide directions before or during classroom activities, very few do so in a structured and complete way. As a result, many children may be engaging in tasks without fully understanding what they are expected to do or why. In early-grade classrooms where children are still developing familiarity with classroom routines and academic language, unclear or incomplete instructions can cause children to become confused, go off-task and lose learning time. These gaps highlight the need for teachers to give clear, step-by-step instructions, model expected responses, and verify that children have understood so that they can participate meaningfully and learn successfully.

4.3.3 **Observation and monitoring**

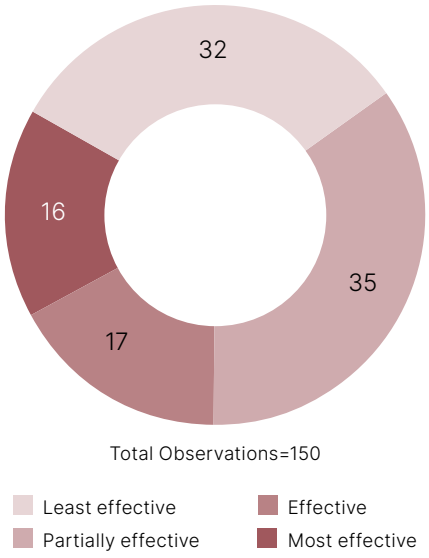
Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher observes and monitors independent and group activities of children	Teacher does not observe or monitor during independent or group activities of children	Teacher occasionally observes and monitors a few children	Teacher sometimes monitors during independent/ group activities of some children	Teacher mostly observes and actively monitors the group activities or independent work of most children

In a third (32%) of the surveyed classrooms, teachers did not observe or monitor children at all during independent or group activities, and in an additional 35% of them, teachers did so only occasionally and with a small number of children.

In only 16% of the observed classrooms, teachers actively and consistently observed and monitored most children during classroom tasks. Data from ToT observations show that, on an average, teachers spent 8% of lesson time (40 minutes) supervising group or individual work of children.

These findings show that regular and purposeful observation is not a common part of classroom practice, though there has been some progress on this indicator. When teachers do not closely monitor children's work, they miss important information about what children understand and where they struggle. With only a few teachers actively monitoring most children, there are very limited opportunities to adjust instruction, offer timely feedback, correct errors, or provide other forms of support that strengthen learning.

Figure 4.2: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers observed and monitored independent and group activities of children***

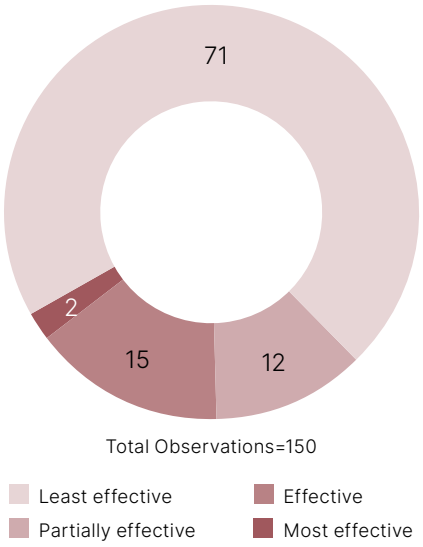


4.3.4 **Providing feedback**

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher gives feedback/ support on written work done by children	Teacher does not check any children's work	Teacher checks a few children's work and corrects it himself/herself but does not share the feedback	Teacher checks some children's work and defines the mistake	Teacher gives constructive feedback to most of the children based on the mistakes, explains the concept again, asks to rework and re-checks

Classroom observations reveal that in close to three-fourths (71%) of the observed classrooms, teachers did not check children's written work at all. In another 12% of them, teachers checked a few children's work and corrected errors themselves. In a further 15%, teachers went a step

Figure 4.3: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers gave feedback/support on the written work done by children***



ahead by identifying mistakes for some children but did not provide sufficient guidance on how to correct them. In just a few (2%) of the sampled classrooms did the teachers demonstrate effective feedback practices—reviewing most children's work, explaining errors, revisiting the concept where needed, and asking children to redo and resubmit their work.

These findings suggest that constructive feedback practices, central to reinforcing learning, are largely absent in most classrooms. When teachers do not check children's work at all, and many others only identify or correct errors without explanation, children miss the support they need to learn from their mistakes. Without timely and specific feedback, children continue to complete tasks without fully knowing how to improve or deepen their learning.

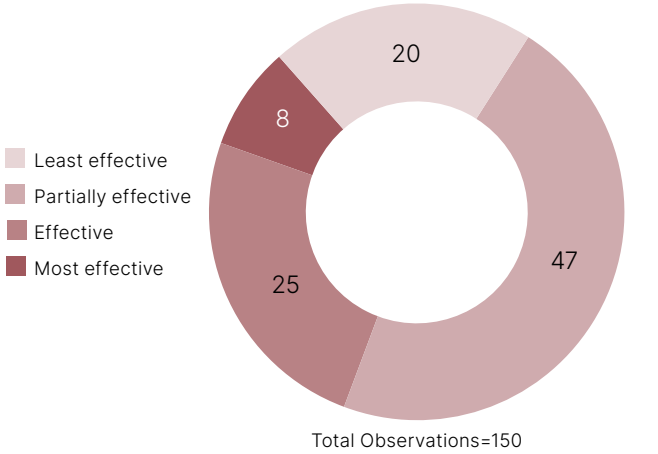
Teachers can strengthen feedback practices by regularly checking most children's work, clearly explaining why an answer or approach is incorrect, and providing simple steps to improve. Encouraging children to reflect on, correct, and resubmit their work helps them apply the feedback and see their own progress.

4.3.5 Checks for understanding

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher uses questions, prompts or other strategies to check children's understanding	Teacher does not use any question or other strategies to check children's understanding	Teacher accepts choral response to confirm children's understanding	Teacher sometimes confirms through questions, prompts or other strategies for children's understanding	Teacher mostly confirms children's understanding through questions, prompts and other strategies

In a fifth (20%) of the observed classrooms, teachers did not use any questions or strategies to check whether children had understood the lesson. In just under half (47%) of the classrooms, teachers relied mainly on choral responses, which do not show what individual children understand. In a very small proportion (8%) of the observed classrooms, teachers regularly used questions, prompts, or other strategies to check for children's understanding actively.

Figure 4.4: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers used questions, prompts or other strategies to check children's understanding***



In most of the observed classrooms, teachers asked questions that focused on recalling facts from the recently covered content. Very few went beyond this. In such classrooms, teachers posed questions that required children to explain their reasoning, assigned individual and group practice tasks, invited children to solve problems on the board, or checked classwork during the lesson. In a few classrooms, teachers also used hands-on activities, such as showing numerical reasoning with bundles of tens and ones or sequencing story pictures, to see whether children had understood concepts or story events correctly.

These findings reveal an inconsistent use of CFU in classrooms. Many children are not getting enough opportunities to show what they have understood during a lesson. When teachers do not check for understanding or rely only on choral responses, they cannot see which children are confused or need extra help. As a result, lessons may continue even when key ideas are not clear to many children.

To improve this, teachers can use a few simple checks during the lessons, such as asking individual children to explain their thinking, to demonstrate how they solved a problem, to give a quick task, or to observe how children complete a step. Using different types of questions and short activities helps teachers notice misunderstandings early and respond before moving ahead, ensuring that all children are learning, not just the more confident ones.

4.3.6 Differentiated instruction and support for struggling children

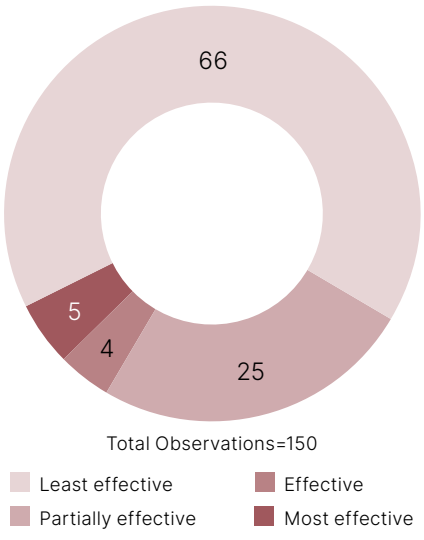
Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher employs differentiated instructions or support for children at different levels	Teacher does not know children's learning needs and does not use any differentiated instructions	Teacher knows the learning needs of children but does not have a plan to use differentiated instructions	Teacher knows the learning needs of the children but can apply differentiated instructions on only some children	Teacher knows the learning needs of the children, forms group/groups based on the needs and gives level- based instructions and need-based support to most children

Additional insights were drawn from teacher interviews as related to the following questions:

- Do you have children who have not learnt some of the basic skills that have been taught?
- What do you think could be the reasons for some children not being able to learn well?
- How do you support the children who have not learnt yet?

In two-thirds of the observed classrooms, teachers did not use any differentiated strategies in their teaching. In yet another 25% of them, teachers appeared to recognise that children had varied needs but they did not plan or implement any differentiated instruction either. Teachers in

Figure 4.5: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers employed differentiated instructions or supported children at different levels***



just 5% of classrooms demonstrated full awareness and practice by grouping children according to ability and offering targeted support, such as guided reading, individualised writing tasks, or graded mathematics activities tailored to children's learning levels. These findings may suggest that teachers have adopted the State-mandated MGML programme but find it difficult and are not very proficient with level-based teaching. However, it should be noted that the Survey was conducted in Tamil Nadu during March-April when revision is the main instructional focus and for which the teacher handbook does not specify level-based activities or inputs. This could also explain the observed findings.

Teacher interviews reveal another important gap. While 83% of teachers reported having children who struggled with basic language and mathematics skills, almost all attributed these learning gaps to factors outside the classroom, such as a lack of parental support (45%) or children's absenteeism (36%), rather than to limitations in teaching and learning processes.

Among teachers who attempted to support children lagging behind their peers, most reported giving them additional work for practice (40%) or separate or remedial tasks while continuing instruction for the rest of the class (37%). Encouragingly, around 31% of the teachers also reported giving special attention to these children and reconfirming if they have understood the assigned work or activity.

Overall, while most teachers recognise that some children are struggling, they either do not recognise their role in offering support to these children or are not equipped to accurately diagnose their specific learning needs and adapt instruction accordingly. To improve, teachers would need to understand children's learning levels, plan for varied needs, and use simple differentiated strategies. Even small shifts like flexible grouping, guided practice in level-based groups, or providing scaffolded tasks during regular lessons, can help ensure that all children are meaningfully included.

4.3.7 **Multigrade teaching**

Multigrade teaching situations, where children of two or more grades sit together, were found in 127 (85%) of the 150 sampled schools, higher than the TLPS 2025 average of 66%. Children of Grades 1 and 2 were seated together in the same classroom in about 67% of the schools. Separately, Balvatika children were present in 3% of the multigrade classrooms.

The classroom observation tool included an indicator about 'teacher engaging both the grades in meaningful learning' with performance ranging from 'the teacher giving no attention to any grade' to 'effectively engaging both grades in a meaningful way'. In Tamil Nadu, this was interpreted in the context of its MGML pedagogy. Teachers in around 40% of the observed classrooms were able to engage multilevel groups to some degree of effectiveness, while teachers in 13% of observed classrooms could not engage any of the multiple groups meaningfully and, as a result, children were largely distracted.

Given that MGML is a deliberate pedagogical reform adopted by Tamil Nadu to leverage multigrade realities, the State already offers capacity building inputs for multilevel teaching and strategies for classroom management. But, as the findings suggest, there is a need to strengthen specific guidance and pedagogical support for teachers to manage these classroom realities effectively.

4.4 **Conclusion**

The findings from the indicators of lesson planning and delivery suggest that lesson planning has become a routine practice among teachers in Tamil Nadu. However, core lesson delivery practices in classrooms leave much to be desired. Limited monitoring of children's work, infrequent checks for understanding, and minimal use of individual responses reduce teachers' ability to gauge learning progress during lessons. Feedback, central to strengthening learning, is provided infrequently, leaving many children without guidance on how to improve.

Giving clear, step-by-step instructions for tasks and activities, modelling the expected responses, and regular observation of children's work can help teachers respond more effectively to learners' needs and offer specific feedback to them. While broad level-based grouping is a key part of the recommended MGML pedagogy in Tamil Nadu primary schools, dedicated identification and support to struggling children appears to be limited. Deliberate planning of instructional inputs and providing guided practice or scaffolded tasks can help ensure that all children are meaningfully included in learning.

CHAPTER 5

Language Teaching Practices

Summary and interpretation

Language teaching practices were systematically observed in 75 Grade 1 and Grade 2 classrooms.

This chapter presents the TLPS 2025 findings related to teaching language, drawing on quantitative and qualitative insights gathered primarily through classroom observation, teacher interviews and lesson sequence tools. A total of six indicators were assessed to generate insights into language teaching practices, including children's prior knowledge in discussion, asking open-ended questions, employing variety of decoding strategies, use of comprehension strategies during read-aloud, opportunity to practise reading independently, and providing with clear prompts for expressive writing.

The Survey included some key practices for language teaching in early grades. Constraints such as a single 40-minute observation visit by a field observer with limited training necessitated keeping the indicators to a minimum.

Consolidated summary of findings from the sampled classrooms across six indicators:

Due to the small sample sizes for the individual indicators, the findings given here are indicative and not statistically representative.

- In the **59** classrooms where oral language instruction was observed, the majority (**71%**) of teachers had much scope for improvement in relating discussions and themes to children's real-life experiences or prior knowledge and even more so in asking open-ended questions during language instruction.

- In the **62** classrooms where decoding instruction was observed, close to half the teachers (**45%**) used two or more decoding activities to build children's sound-symbol association.

- In **20** of the **26** classrooms observed for teaching of reading, teachers asked factual questions or simply repeated the text by way of supporting children's understanding of the text.

- In **19** of the **26** classrooms observed for teaching of reading, teachers gave children opportunities for independent reading but there is scope for improvement in teachers actively observing and giving input in most of these classrooms.

Of the **21** classrooms where writing was observed, teachers in **20** of them did not give any activities or prompts where children could write in their own words. The focus was on copying from blackboards or textbooks and on handwriting practice.

Overall, the classroom routines were teacher-led, with a focus on teacher talk, choral repetition, and without much support to build children's comprehension. Children's tasks and practice had limited scope for free expression, either orally or in writing. This is also supported by data on ToT. On an average, teachers spent 67% of their time on teacher-centred activities, compared to 11% on learner-centred activities.

CHAPTER 5

Language Teaching Practices

5.1 **Overview of language teaching practices**

Language is the medium of all learning. Talking, thinking and reasoning, reading and writing—all involve the use of language. Developing higher-order comprehension skills like reasoning, analysing and forming opinions in the early years is critical to all future learning. The basic purpose of early language teaching is to enable all children to read fluently with comprehension, respond to questions about what they read, and express themselves with clarity, both orally and through independent writing. In addition, children should develop an interest in the habit of reading.

A balanced approach to early language and literacy requires teaching to focus on all the four blocks of oral language development, decoding, reading and writing, as recommended in NCF–FS 2022.

Figure 5.1: ***Four components of language teaching***

Source – NCF-FS 2022, page 114

5.2 Effective practices of language teaching and their indicators

The Survey examined language teaching across the four practices using six indicators of effective practice: two for oral language, two for reading, and one each for decoding and writing (Table 5.1).

Language teaching was observed across 75 classrooms. Within the sampled language classrooms, different sub-indicators were observed in different classrooms. As a result, the sample sizes of the sub-indicators are smaller and varied.

Table 5.1: ***Language practices and indicators of language teaching***

Language practices	Indicators of effective practice
Teaching to develop oral language	Teacher relates the discussion or theme to children's prior and contextual knowledge and experiences
	Teacher asks open-ended questions during language instructions, for example oral language sessions, or reading lessons
Teaching of decoding	Teacher uses a variety of activities to help children develop sound-symbol association and blending
Teaching of reading	Teacher reads aloud and supports comprehension of the text
	Children are given opportunities to practise reading independently
Teaching of writing	Teacher provides prompts that encourage children to write in their own words

5.2.1 Teaching to develop oral language

Oral language development is the foundation for learning to read and write. Classroom activities such as conversations, storytelling, interactive read-alouds, narration, retelling, and role-play help develop skills such as vocabulary, listening comprehension, verbal thinking, reasoning, and oral expression.

When teachers relate discussions to children's real-life experiences, it enhances children's participation and engagement. It provides opportunities to construct knowledge with reference to their familiar contexts and to move from the known to the unknown. For example, during a lesson on seasons, the teacher could include the impact of seasons on children's food, daily routines and clothing.

Similarly, when teachers ask open-ended questions (for example, 'Why?' 'How?' or 'What do you think?') during oral discussions and interactions for any theme or lesson, and build the discussion by including children's responses, it improves comprehension, reasoning and other higher-order thinking skills.

5.2.2 **Teaching of decoding**

Decoding is a foundational reading skill that helps children convert written text into spoken language. It begins with learning sound-symbol associations and progresses to blending—the ability to combine individual sounds to form meaningful words. For example, reading words like "பறவை" ('bird' in Tamil), "கதவு"/"வாசல்" ('door' in Tamil).

The teaching of decoding should be systematic and explicit. It is effective if teachers use a variety of decoding activities to strengthen the association between symbols and their sounds. A combination of activities like: (a) Identify the letter in the print material and pronounce it, (b) Pick a letter-card (*varnamala*/flash card) and tell the letter to your friend, (c) Find the letter and encircle, (d) Bingo, (e) Trace the letter on floor, (f) Make the letter with pebbles, (g) Blend the sound of two symbols on a letter or *akshara* grid and say it aloud; and (h) Using TLMs like letter wheel, dice or grids for practise by children.

Providing varied, guided practice—especially for children who need additional help—can strengthen decoding fluency and prevent early reading difficulties. Using a variety of activities to teach decoding ensures that all children, irrespective of background or learning style, develop fluent decoding skills.

5.2.3 **Teaching of reading**

Reading is a complex process of constructing meaning from written texts. It requires understanding of oral language, phonological awareness, decoding skills, reading fluency and comprehension. Simply put, the two broad dimensions of skilled reading are (a) fluent decoding and (b) strong language comprehension. Effective teaching and learning of reading could follow the gradual release of responsibility (GRR) process of 'I do it' followed by 'We do it', and then 'You do it together' and later 'You do it alone'. Many important reading routines roughly map on to this sequence. Thus, the teaching of reading would begin with interactive read-aloud by the teacher followed by shared reading by teacher and children together, followed by guided reading where children read in small groups, pairs or individually under the guidance of the teacher and, finally, opportunities for independent reading by children. Across all these reading routines, comprehension should be at the heart of the process.

During the interactive read-aloud process, the teacher must use various strategies to promote comprehension before, during and after the read-aloud process by activating background knowledge, asking factual and open-ended questions, and encouraging children to make predictions.

Reading skills improve by reading. Children who read more are better readers. Children must get opportunities to practise their reading skills in groups, pairs and individually, with support from the teacher as needed.

5.2.4 **Teaching of writing**

Writing is the process of expressing thoughts and ideas through written symbols in a structured, meaningful way that others can understand.

The focus of instruction for writing in the early grades has to be both on: (a) basic writing skills, viz. letter shapes, spellings, grammar, syntax, and (b) composing skills including thinking and drafting in a logical manner. By the end of Grade 2, children should be able to write short, simple sentences to express their thoughts (NCF-FS 2022).

Early writing requires extensive support from the teacher. Teachers should share their writing samples, discuss the writing task with children and jointly compose the main points to be written. It is important for the teacher to generate prompts that are meaningful and engaging for children and to support children with feedback during the writing process.

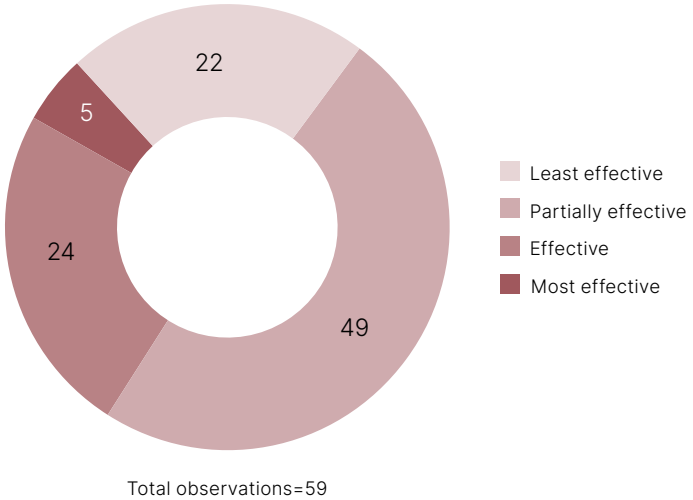
5.3 Findings of language teaching practices

5.3.1 Teaching to develop oral language

Oral language development was observed across 59 schools in Tamil Nadu.

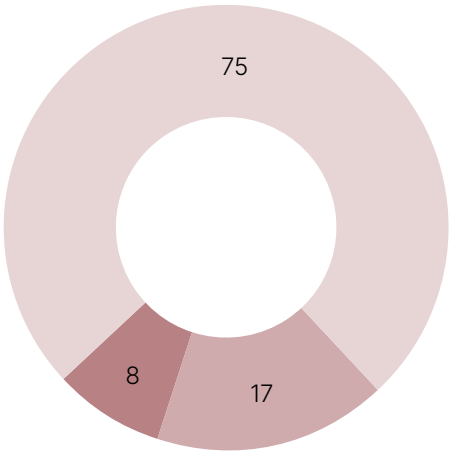
Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher relates discussion to children's experiences	No space for inclusion of real-life experiences or prior knowledge	Limited inclusion of real-life experiences or prior knowledge	Sometimes includes real-life experiences or prior knowledge	Frequently uses a wide range of real-life experiences and children's prior knowledge
Teacher asks open-ended questions during lessons	Does not ask open-ended questions	Asks a few open-ended questions without waiting for children's responses	Asks a few open-ended questions and includes some responses	Builds discussion through children's responses to open-ended questions

Figure 5.2: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers related discussion to children's experiences***



Total observations=59

Figure 5.3: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers asked open-ended questions during lessons***



Total observations=59

Teachers struggled to relate classroom discussions to children's prior knowledge or real-life experiences. In nearly three-fourths (71%) of the 59 observed classrooms, teachers either did not do so at all or did so to a very limited extent. In about a quarter (29%) of the classrooms observed, teachers incorporated children's real-life experiences at least sometimes.

A similar pattern was seen for teachers asking open-ended questions during oral conversations and discussions around texts. In three-fourths of the classrooms observed, teachers did not ask any open-ended questions during the session. In another 17% of classrooms, teachers asked some open-ended questions but did not wait for children's responses, which defeats the purpose of encouraging children to share elaborately on a theme. None of the observed teachers could build an extended discussion by inviting and including children's responses to open-ended questions. This indicates a pattern in which oral language development activities were largely dominated by teacher talk and literal questions that require yes/no or one-word responses, to which children usually responded in unison.

A shift is needed in the nature of oral language activities in early-grade classrooms to include activities that encourage active engagement of children by relating what is being taught to their immediate contexts and experiences, and by asking them to predict, think, infer in response to open-ended questions.

5.3.2 **Teaching of decoding**

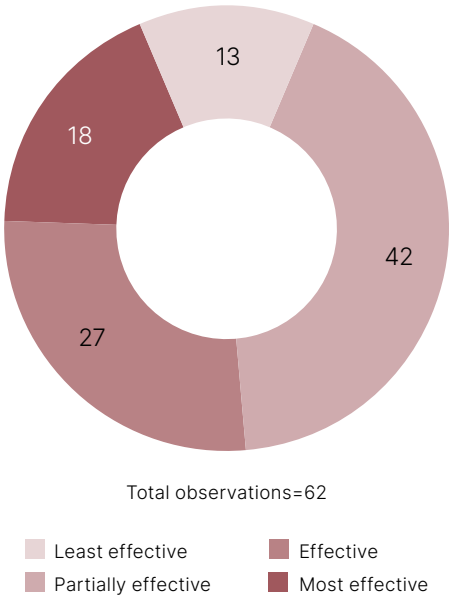
Decoding was observed across 62 schools in Tamil Nadu.

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher uses varied activities for sound-symbol association or blending	Children copy letters from the board only	Uses one activity type	Uses two activity types	Uses more than two activity types

In over half (55%) of the 62 classrooms observed for decoding, teachers either asked children to copy letters from the board or used one activity to reinforce sound-symbol associations and blending. In the remaining 45% of the classrooms, teachers used two or more decoding strategies. The proportion of classrooms following this effective practice in the Tamil Nadu sample is much higher than the TLPS 2025 average of 22%.

Key principles of teaching decoding include systematic teaching of sound–symbol relationships, ensuring that words are meaningful to children and using multiple activities that allow children to apply their emerging decoding knowledge to become active "word solvers". When decoding is

Figure 5.4: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers used varied activities for developing sound-symbol association***



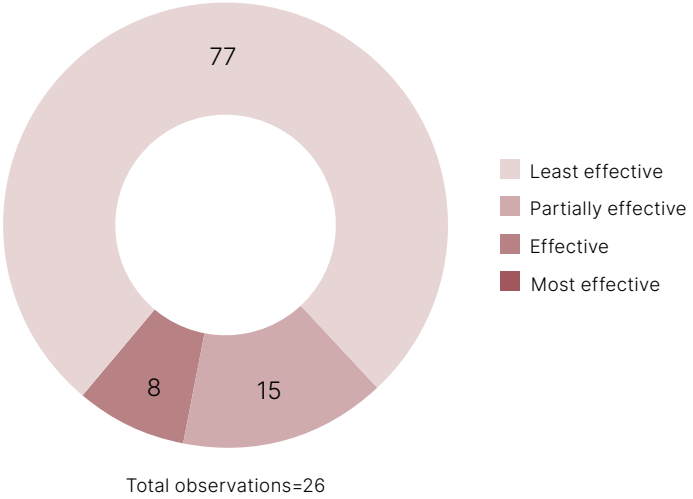
reduced to rote copying, children may learn to read and spell those particular words but may not develop the strategic skills needed to read unfamiliar words independently and become confident readers.

5.3.3 **Teaching of reading**

Reading was observed across 26 schools in Tamil Nadu. Due to the small sample size, the findings given here are indicative rather than statistically representative. However, these findings suggest some general trends in teaching of reading that merit further consideration.

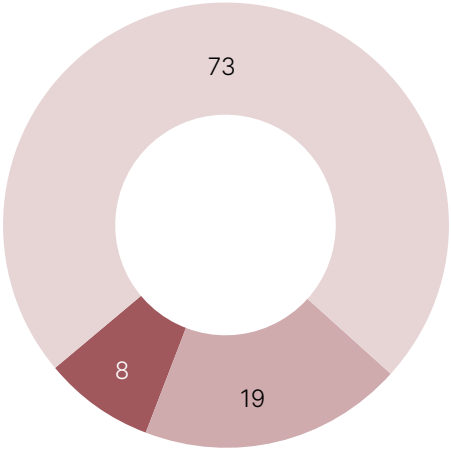
Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher reads aloud and helps comprehension	No strategy for comprehension	Only factual questions or repetition	Limited factual and open-ended questions at the end of reading	Builds context before reading, asks prediction and open-ended questions throughout
Children practice reading independently	No opportunities for practice	Reading independently without observation	Paired reading with limited teacher input	Independent reading with teacher feedback and correction

Figure 5.5: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers read-aloud and helped comprehension***



Total observations=26

Figure 5.6: ***Percentage of classrooms where children practised reading independently***



Total observations=26

In 20 of the 26 observed classrooms, teachers did not use any strategy to support children's comprehension of the text during or after a read-aloud. In another four classrooms, teachers asked some factual questions at the end or simply repeated the text to support children's understanding. None of the observed teachers used diverse comprehension strategies during the read-aloud.

Further, in 19 of the 26 classrooms, teachers did not provide any opportunities for children to read independently during the observed session. Of the remaining classrooms, only two had teachers who supported children with feedback and correction during the independent reading practice.

Overall, teachers' read-alouds were focused on modelling of fluent reading or sentence-by-sentence reading followed by choral repetition by the children. There was very limited focus on engaging children in the meaning-making process. Even when teachers attempted to engage children with the text, they mostly relied on factual questions. They rarely used a wider set of comprehension strategies to support collective sense-making, such as activating children's prior knowledge and setting the context before reading, asking prediction and inferential questions as the text progressed, or posing open-ended questions to encourage children to share their thinking and interpretations. The process of reading aloud to children needs to become more interactive, with engaged participation of children and a strong focus on building their listening comprehension and verbal expression.

Equally important, to strengthen reading proficiency, teachers must not only provide regular time for individual, paired, and group reading but also actively support children with feedback and guidance during these sessions.

5.3.4 **Teaching of writing**

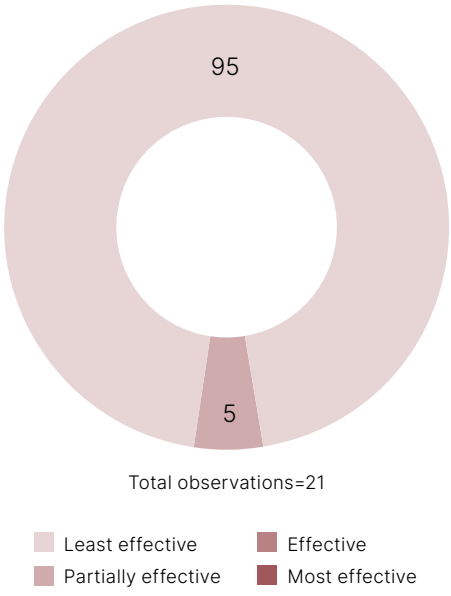
Writing was observed across 21 schools in Tamil Nadu. Due to the small sample size, the findings given here are indicative rather than statistically representative. However, these findings suggest some general trends in teaching of writing that merit further consideration.

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Specific prompts to children writing in their own words	No writing in own words	A few unplanned prompts	Specific but inconsistent prompts	Clear prompts with examples and feedback

In most of the observed classrooms (20 of 21), children did not receive any prompts for writing in their own words. Copying from blackboard or textbook was the most common form of writing seen in the sessions. Only in one classroom did the teacher support children with a few unplanned prompts suggesting that this is a highly neglected dimension of early literacy in Tamil Nadu.

When writing is largely reduced to copying, it offers children little opportunity to express their own ideas or meanings. This mechanical approach neglects a crucial aspect of early literacy: children need guided opportunities to think, plan, and put meaning into their writing, and not just to practise letter shapes, copy "correct" answers and improve their handwriting. To address this situation, teachers must play an active role in giving meaningful writing prompts and modelling writing

Figure 5.7: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers gave specific prompts to children writing in their own words***



processes—sharing examples, discussing tasks, and co-developing ideas and structure with children—along with giving feedback on their written work.

Equally important is recognising that young children progress through phases of writing development, where they use unconventional spellings early on as natural steps towards more conventional writing. When teachers provide meaningful writing tasks and respond to what children are trying to say rather than only how correctly they write, children learn to use writing to communicate and eventually develop into confident, independent writers.

5.4 **Conclusion**

The analysis of language teaching practices shows that while a balanced approach, covering oral language development, decoding, reading, and writing, has been introduced in many classrooms, its implementation seems uneven. Across the observed classrooms, oral language and reading activities are mostly teacher-led and children tend to be passive. Further, writing to express one's thoughts, ideas and feelings emerged as a highly neglected area of BLN instruction. Overall, there is a need to strengthen early language teaching practices to enable the shift from teacher-led routines to practices that actively engage children in meaning-making.

Mathematics Teaching Practices

CHAPTER 6

Summary and interpretation

Classroom observations were conducted in 150 classrooms, of which mathematics teaching practices were systematically observed in 75 classrooms, including 40 Grade 1 and 35 Grade 2 classrooms.

This chapter presents the TLPS 2025 findings related to teaching mathematics, drawing on quantitative and qualitative insights gathered primarily through classroom observation and lesson sequence tools. A total of five indicators were observed to generate insights into mathematics teaching practices: use of TLMs by teachers and children, opportunities to practise mathematics tasks independently, use of children's real-life experiences for teaching mathematics concepts, and use of 'why and how' questions by teachers.

The Survey included some key teaching practices of mathematics, while constraints such as a single 40-minute observation visit by a field observer with limited training necessitated keeping the indicators to a minimum.

Consolidated summary of findings from the sampled classrooms across five indicators

- In **61%** of the classrooms, teachers planned the use of TLMs at least sometimes. Of these, **21%** of classrooms had teachers who used TLMs effectively and regularly to explain mathematics concepts and processes.
- At least some children had the opportunity to use TLMs in three-fourths (**77%**) of the sampled classrooms. Of these, most children were given opportunities to use TLMs in a fourth of the classrooms.
- In **35%** of the classrooms, teachers used real-life examples at least sometimes to explain mathematical concepts.
- Over one-fourth **(28%)** of teachers posed 'why' and 'how' questions to children, but many did not wait for children's responses.
- In a fourth (**24%**) of the classrooms, children were seen working independently on mathematics tasks under teacher observation.

Overall, mathematics teaching in Tamil Nadu shows an encouraging trend towards the use of TLMs and real-life examples as compared to the TLPS 2025 average, indicating a gradual shift away from abstract teaching to instruction that is connected to children's lives in early grade classrooms. But there is scope for improvement in both these aspects still. Moreover, there is limited use of deeper questioning and insufficient opportunities for children to independently engage with mathematical tasks.

CHAPTER 6

Mathematics Teaching Practices

6.1 Overview of mathematics teaching practices

In early mathematics teaching, it is important to develop both conceptual understanding and procedural fluency in BLN skills. NCF-FS 2022 defines the curricular goal for mathematics as enabling children to develop mathematical understanding and to make sense of the world through quantities, shapes, and measures. Specifically, this includes competence in counting, numbers, basic operations, shapes and spatial relations and measurement.

NCF-FS 2022 recommends effective approaches such as developing mathematical abstract ideas through the concrete Experience, Language, Pictorial, and Symbol (ELPS) progression, connecting learning to children's real-life experiences and prior knowledge, promoting mathematical talk and reasoning, and developing a positive attitude towards mathematics.

The ELPS sequence begins with the use of concrete materials, enabling learners to construct deep and robust conceptual understanding. Encouraging children to explain their thinking using mathematical language strengthens reasoning, communication, and procedural fluency. Purposeful questioning, particularly through 'why and how' questions, and meaningful problem-solving tasks further help children see mathematics as relevant and useful, deepening learning and engagement. Children also require ample opportunities to practise numeracy skills, both teacher-supported and independent.

6.2 Effective practices of mathematics teaching and their indicators

The Survey focused on four key teaching practices: the use of TLMs to teach mathematical concepts, such as counting, numbers, basic operations, the use of real-life examples, asking 'why and how' questions, and giving opportunities for independent practice. These components were examined through five indicators of effective practice (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: ***Effective practices of mathematics teaching and their indicators***

Practices	Indicators of effective practice
Use of TLMs	Teacher uses appropriate TLMs/manipulatives to explain mathematical concepts and processes
	Children use TLMs/manipulatives to understand mathematical concepts and processes
Independent practices by children	Children are given independent mathematics tasks for practice

Practices	Indicators of effective practice
Use of real-life context	Teacher uses examples from children's life to explain mathematical concepts and processes
Asking 'why and how' questions	Teacher asks 'why and how' questions to deepen mathematical thinking of children while teaching mathematical concepts and processes

6.2.1 Use of teaching learning materials

The use of TLMs is a core pedagogical practice for developing conceptual understanding in early-grade mathematics. In Grades 1 and 2, appropriate TLMs may include objects such as beads, ice-cream sticks, *ganitmala*, counters, bottle caps, dice, place-value cards, number cards, shape cards, etc. Teachers use these materials to demonstrate concepts such as addition with counters, modelling tens and ones with bundled sticks, or illustrating shapes with classroom objects. Children, in turn, use the manipulatives themselves to practise counting, composing and decomposing numbers, solving addition or subtraction tasks, exploring shapes, or representing quantities. Such hands-on engagement helps make abstract ideas concrete, visible, and easier to understand.

NCF-FS 2022 reinforces this through the ELPS approach, which emphasises guiding children from hands-on experiences to pictorial and symbolic representation of numbers and problems. Both teachers and children must actively engage with TLMs—teachers to model concepts and processes, and children to explore and practise. This shared engagement not only strengthens procedural fluency but enables children to internalise mathematical ideas with confidence and clarity.

6.2.2 Use of children's real-life experiences

Real-life examples are the everyday situations, objects, and experiences that children already know and understand. Teachers use them to make mathematical ideas meaningful and connected to children's lives rather than abstract or disconnected. Since solving real-life problems is a core goal of mathematics, this helps children make sense of abstract symbols and develop practical problem-solving skills.

In Grades 1 and 2, such examples may include counting objects in the classroom, comparing the water in two bottles to understand 'more' or 'less', bundling sticks to explore tens and ones, identifying shapes such as plates (circle) or books (rectangle), or using play money for simple transactions. These contexts help children grasp abstract ideas by seeing mathematics at work in everyday situations.

NCF-FS 2022 emphasises the use of real-life examples to deepen understanding and support problem-solving, noting that mathematical symbols become meaningful only when linked to everyday experiences.

6.2.3 Asking 'why and how' questions

Teacher's use of purposeful questioning—especially 'why and how' questions—promotes reasoning, explanation, and deeper understanding of mathematical ideas. In early mathematics, 'why' questions prompt children to justify their answers and strengthen numerical reasoning.

For example, "Why is 8 bigger than 6?" or "Why do we add these numbers?". 'How' questions help children explain the steps they used, such as "How did you get 7?" or "How did you count on from this number?", supporting procedural clarity and communication skills. The use of such questions also encourages children to think about their own reasoning and explore alternative strategies, rather than simply recall and apply procedures.

6.2.4 Providing opportunities for independent practice

Independent and repeated practice is essential for helping children consolidate mathematical learning. Such practice supports the transfer of knowledge from working memory to long-term memory, improving accuracy and automaticity. After demonstration and guided practice, children therefore need adequate time and space to practise on their own for learning to take hold. During this phase, teacher support through observation and timely feedback remains crucial to reinforce correct understanding and address errors.

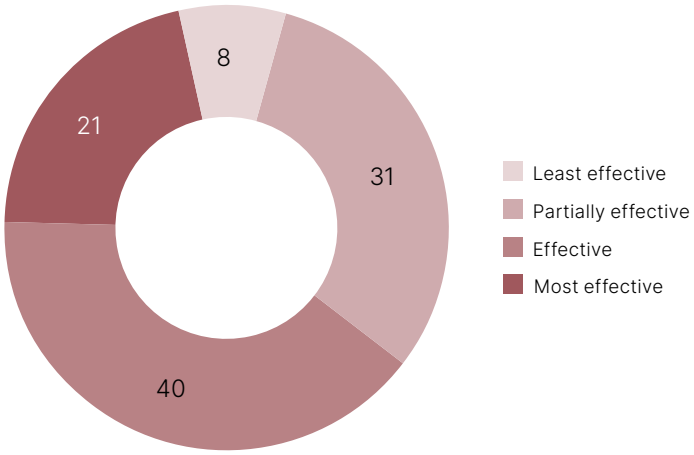
In Grades 1 and 2, opportunities for independent practice may take different forms. These include answering oral questions individually, completing short written tasks, solving problems from workbooks or textbooks, using worksheets, practising independently with manipulatives such as *ganitmala* (string beads), and engaging in simple real-life tasks, such as counting objects or making amounts with play money. Such activities allow children to apply what they have learned, build procedural fluency, and gain confidence in solving problems independently, thereby deepening and internalising mathematical understanding through active engagement.

6.3 Findings of mathematics teaching practices

6.3.1 Use of TLMs

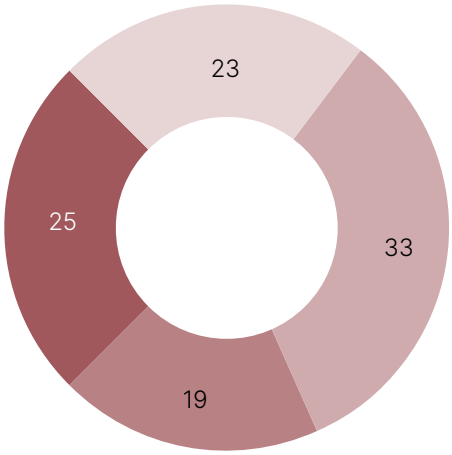
Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher uses appropriate TLMs/manipulatives to explain mathematical concepts and processes	TLMs are not used	TLMs are used in an unplanned manner	TLMs are used in a planned manner but are not used every time	TLMs are used in a planned way to explain the concept several times
Children use TLMs/ manipulatives to understand the mathematical concepts and processes	TLMs are not used by children	A few children use TLMs	Some children use TLMs	Most children get opportunity to practise with TLMs

Figure 6.1: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers used appropriate TLMs/manipulatives to explain mathematical concepts and processes***



Total observations=75

Figure 6.2: ***Percentage of classrooms where children used appropriate TLMs/manipulatives to understand mathematical concepts and processes***



Total observations=75

Teachers were observed to use TLMs in mathematics teaching in most (92%) of the observed classrooms in Tamil Nadu. Of these, teachers used TLMs effectively and several times to explain a concept or process in only a fifth (21%) of the observed classrooms. In the remaining classrooms, teachers used TLMs in an unplanned manner or when it was not really needed. Children used TLMs in nearly three-fourths (77%) of the observed classrooms to varying extents. In only a fourth (25%) of the classrooms observed, most children got opportunities to use TLMs consistently.

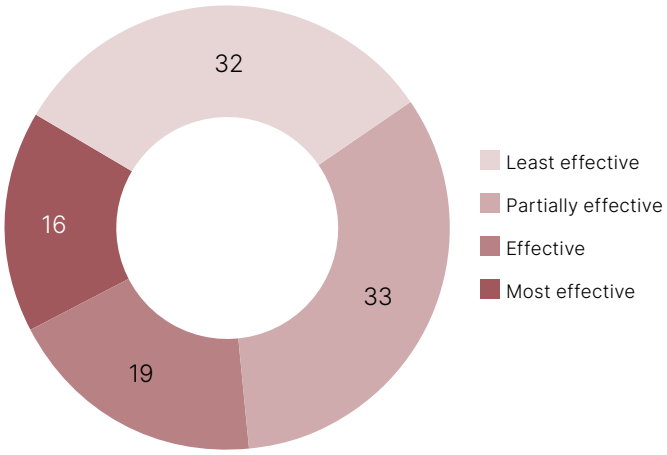
The planned use of TLMs by teachers (61%) and children's use of TLMs (77%) were both seen in a considerably larger proportion of observed classrooms in Tamil Nadu, as compared to the TLPS 2025 averages of 28% and 47% respectively. This is encouraging as regular engagement of children with TLMs can build strong foundational concepts and help them make sense of abstract ideas more effectively in early-grade classrooms.

6.3.2 Use of children's real-life experiences

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher uses examples from children's life to explain mathematical concepts and processes	Teacher uses no examples from real life to explain mathematical concepts and processes	Teacher seldom uses examples from real life to explain mathematical concepts and processes	Teacher sometimes uses examples of real life to explain mathematical concepts and processes	Teacher mostly uses examples from real life to explain mathematical concepts and processes

Teachers' use of real-life examples to explain mathematical processes shows a positive trend. Overall, teachers used real-life examples at least sometimes during the observed lessons in 35% of the classrooms. This was higher than the TLPS 2025 average of 13%. With regard to best practice, teachers in 16% of the observed classrooms effectively used examples from children's real life to explain mathematical concepts and processes.

Figure 6.3: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers used examples from children's life to explain mathematical concepts and processes***



Total observations=75

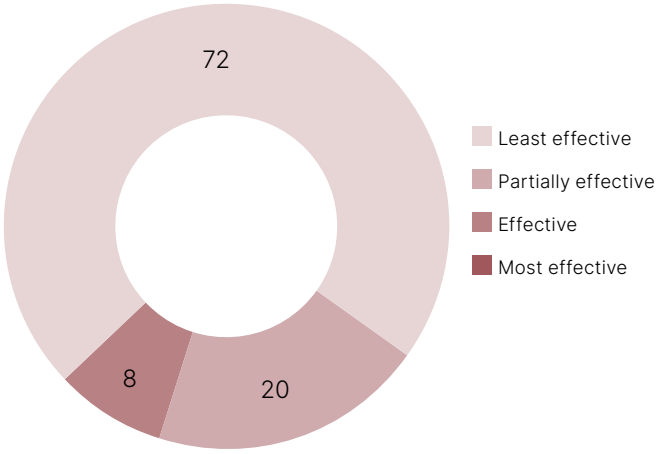
The findings suggest that while there is a positive trend, there is scope for improvement in teaching mathematical concepts such that they do not remain abstract and disconnected from children's lived experiences. The use of familiar contexts can help young children, in Grades 1 and 2, see the relevance of mathematics in their daily lives, aiding the development of practical problem-solving skills and meaningful understanding.

6.3.3 Asking 'why and how' questions

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Teacher asks 'why and how' questions to deepen mathematical thinking of the children	Teacher does not ask 'why and how' questions	The teacher asks 'why and how' questions but does not wait for children's responses	Teacher asks a few 'why and how' questions and includes some children's responses	Teacher asks some 'why and how' questions and includes children's responses to build the discussion

It was observed that in a majority (72%) of the sampled classrooms, teachers did not ask any 'why and how' questions. In a small proportion (8%) of classrooms, teachers asked a few probing 'why and how' questions or included some children's responses in building the discussion around the concept, indicating some focus on reasoning-oriented questioning within early mathematics teaching.

Figure 6.4: ***Percentage of classrooms where teachers asked 'why and how' questions to deepen mathematical thinking of the children***



Total observations=75

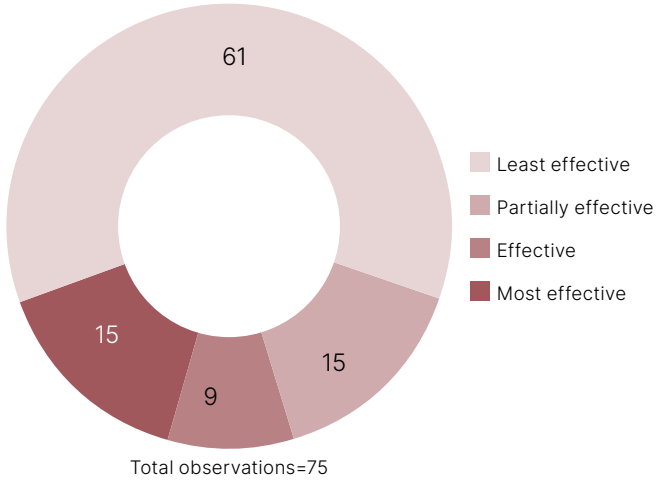
Encouraging teachers to use simple probing questions—such as "How did you get this answer?" or "When there are more than nine ones, why do we regroup them into tens?"—could move children's focus beyond rote procedures towards deeper reasoning and meaningful engagement with mathematical concepts and processes.

6.3.4 **Providing opportunities for independent practice**

Indicator	1	2	3	4
Children are given independent mathematics tasks for practice	Children are not given any opportunity to practise independent mathematics tasks	Children are doing Independent mathematics tasks, but the teacher does not observe the practice	Children are doing independent mathematics tasks and the teacher observes them without any inputs	Children are given opportunities to practise independent mathematics tasks; and the teacher observes mistakes, corrects and models; and asks the child to solve again

In a majority (61%) of the observed classrooms, children did not get any opportunities to practise mathematics tasks independently. In another 15% of the observed classrooms, children were given independent practice tasks but teachers did not observe or guide the process at all. Only in 15% of observed classrooms did teachers show the best practice of observing children's work during independent practice, correcting mistakes and modelling the appropriate processes.

Figure 6.5: ***Percentage of classrooms where children were given independent mathematics tasks for practise***



These findings highlight that while some teachers allocate time for independent practice, few of them actively observe children's work and provide timely feedback, so that practice moves beyond mechanical repetition and effectively strengthens conceptual understanding, fluency, and confidence.

6.4 **Conclusion**

Overall, classroom practices in the sampled classrooms in Tamil Nadu show an encouraging trend toward the use of TLMs and real-life examples, indicating a gradual shift away from abstract teaching to instruction that is connected to children's lives in early-grade classrooms. However, there is limited use of deeper questioning and insufficient opportunities for children to independently engage with mathematical tasks. Strengthening early mathematics instruction will require sustained support to help teachers further contextualise concepts, encourage reasoning, design meaningful practise tasks, and create consistent opportunities for children to explore and practice independently, making learning more meaningful and grounded in their lived experiences.

Time Distribution on Teaching and Learning Tasks

CHAPTER 7

7.1 Overview of time-on-task and instructional time

ToT is the proportion of instructional time during which the teacher and children are actively engaged in meaningful activities related to teaching and learning. It was observed that instructional activities constituted significantly less proportion of time than the allocated teaching time. To ensure quality learning, teachers should plan and structure lesson routine to maximise children's 'ToT'. A high ToT does not by itself ensure that learning will occur, but it is a basic condition for effective teaching and learning. Children's time on learning can be enhanced by better classroom management as well as by including activities that increase children's active engagement.

7.2 Nature of teacher and children's activities

The ToT analysis presented below has two main strands related to observations of a 40-minute class, viz. (a) Time distribution of teachers' activities and (b) Time distribution of children's activities.

The Survey observed classroom activities of every teacher and five children in each classroom by recording "snapshots" every third minute, e.g., at the 0, 3rd, 6th minute and so on in each classroom over a 40-minute period of observation.

A set of 21 teaching activities were identified through analysis of other ToT studies and modified for an BLN focus through several rounds of field work by LLF and partner organisations. A list of 18 such activities, arrived at by combining a few activities can be seen in Table 7.1. These have been further clubbed into four major categories, viz. 'teacher-centred', 'learner-centred', 'classroom management', 'non-teaching' or 'off-task'. Classroom activities were classified into 'on-task' (teacher/child was "on some task") and 'off-task' (teacher/child was "not engaged in any teaching/learning tasks") activities.

A set of 21 children's classroom activities were identified through a similar process. A truncated list of nine activities, by combining a few similar activities can be seen in Table 7.2. The 'on-task' list included both 'mechanical' activities like copying from the blackboard, choral repetition and some clearly more 'learning' activities like working in small groups, and doing a class assignment.

7.3 Findings of time distribution of activities

7.3.1 Time distribution of teachers' activities

Teacher activity was observed 13 times in each classroom at intervals of 3 minutes (each period of observation was 40 minutes). A total of 1950 observations of teachers' activities were noted across 150 classrooms in Tamil Nadu.

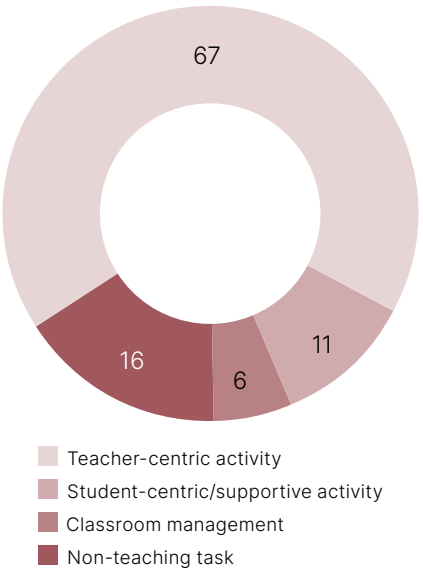
Table 7.1 ***Percentage of time distribution of teachers' activities***

TEACHER-CENTRIC ACTIVITY	%
Explaining the concept/topic to children orally or by using TLMs	21%
Teacher asking questions to the whole class or individual child(ren)	18%
Giving homework/assignment/test/dictation or any other tasks	4%
Teaching a topic by writing on blackboard	10%
Correcting homework or test papers or class work	3%
Instructing children to engage in the classroom activities	8%
Reading from a textbook or workbook or other material	3%
Total	**67%**
CHILDREN-CENTRIC/SUPPORTIVE ACTIVITY	**%**
Supervising group work or children's individual work	8%
Replying to questions/providing clarifications and giving feedback	2%
Conversation with children without lesson's context	0%
Encouraging and motivating students to become involved learners	1%
Total	**11%**
CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT	**%**
Class management for teaching-learning—dividing groups, giving instructions like - forming queue, take a break, helping students in transition activity	3%
Teacher scolding/reprimanding child/children	0%
Teacher is looking at the planning for the next topic	3%
Total	**6%**
NON-TEACHING TASK/OFF-TASK	**%**
In classroom, but no activity	3%
Using mobile during teaching time or talking with parents/school staff/PRI members.	0%
In other class (multigrade) or with another levelled group	12%
Teacher is not in the class	1%
Total	**16%**

Of the teacher-centred activities observed (67%), the most prevalent were:

- Explaining the concept/topic to children orally or by using TLMs (21% of the time)
- Teacher asking questions to whole class or individual child(ren) (18% of the time)
- Teaching a topic by writing on blackboard (10%)

Figure 7.1: ***Percentage of time spent by teachers at an average in different classroom activities***



This indicates that when teachers explain concepts to children, they are also making an effort to engage children by asking questions. However, the questions mostly tend to be of literal/factual type that elicit a choral yes/no or one word response from the children (see Chapter 5-Language Teaching Practices). The ToT analysis generally corroborates the findings from the 'classroom observation tool' for Language and Mathematics, which showed that much of the classroom process is teacher-led.

Analysis of the children-centred activities conducted by the teachers (11% of the teaching time) shows that the most prominent activity in this category is teachers supervising group work or children's individual work for 8% of the total class time.

Teachers are engaged in 'non-teaching' tasks or 'off-task' activities for 16% of the observed class time. A major activity in this category was teachers attending to another group in the multigrade classroom (12%), which is not an ineffective practice by itself but it meant that the teacher was not attending to the observed group for this proportion of the time.

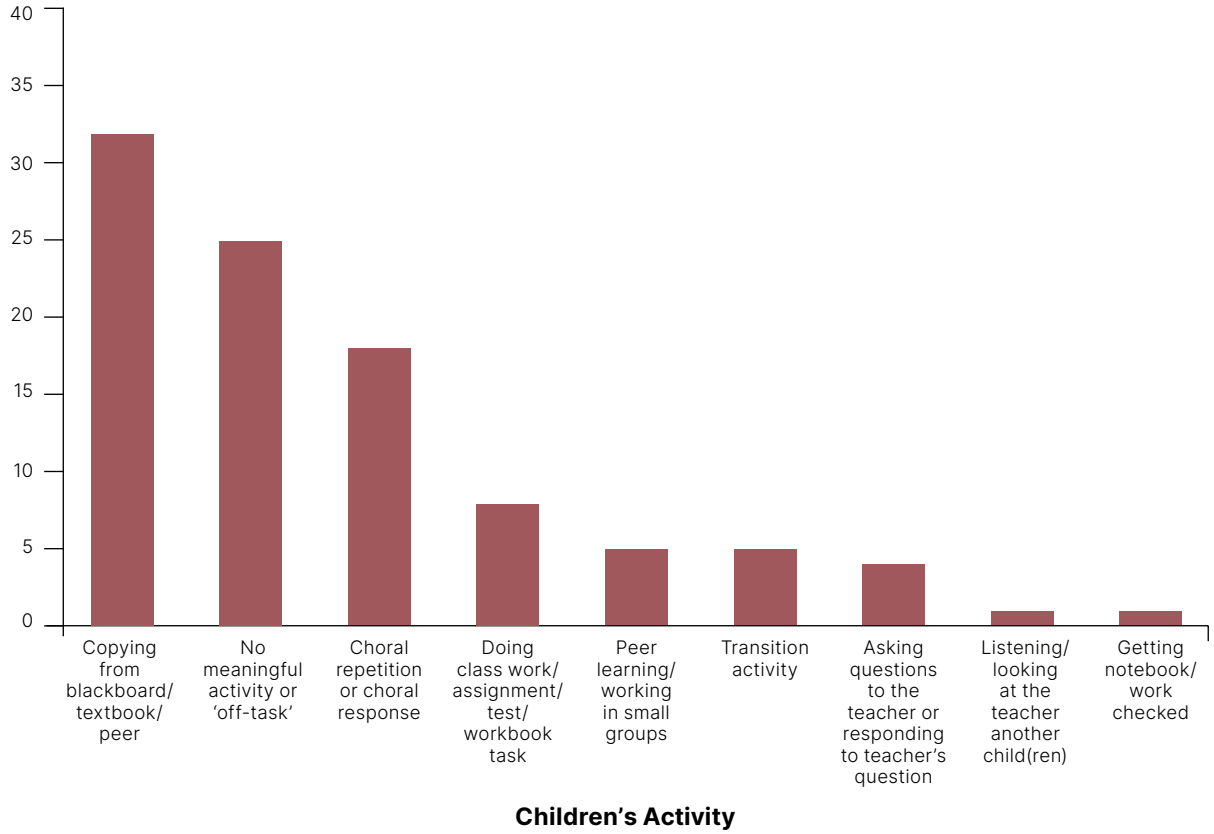
7.3.2 Time distribution of children's activities

Five children were observed in each classroom 13 times each, every 3 minutes during each period of observation of 40 minutes. A total of 9,738 children' observations were made.

Table 7.2: ***List of activities***

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES	%
Copying from blackboard/textbook/peer	32%
No meaningful activity or 'off-task'	25%
Choral repetition or choral response	18%
Doing class work/assignment/test/workbook task	8%
Peer learning/working in small groups	5%
Transition activity	5%
Asking questions to the teacher or responding to teacher's question	4%
Listening/looking at the teacher/another child(ren)	1%
Getting notebook/work checked	1%

Figure 7.2: ***Percentage of time spent by children at an average in different classroom activities***



The analysis of children's activity in observed classrooms reveals that children remained 'off-task' for 25% of the class time. This is a significant finding because it indicates that an average child might not be engaged in learning for about one-fourth of the class time on a regular basis in the observed classrooms.

When children were 'on-task,' they spent a lot of the class time in activities like copying from blackboard (32% of class time) and giving choral responses (18% of class time) which require minimal engagement in learning.

7.4 **Conclusion**

When children remain 'off-task' for a considerable part of the teaching-learning time, or spend time on activities that are not learning-centred, their active learning time gets reduced. A major shift is needed to organise and enhance classroom activities that are more 'learner-centred' as well as 'learning-centred.' Children's active learning time can also be enhanced through clear guidance to teachers on strategies of multigrade teaching, which is a structural reality in many classrooms.

CHAPTER 8

Teacher Perceptions

This chapter presents findings from TLPS 2025 related to teachers' perceptions of BLN. The analysis draws on quantitative and qualitative insights gathered primarily through structured teacher interviews in all 150 schools. Classrooms of all interviewed teachers were also observed using the CRO tool, allowing teacher reported perceptions to be examined alongside classroom practices.

Teachers' perceptions offer valuable insights into teachers' awareness of grade-appropriate BLN learning outcomes for language and mathematics, their experiences and perceived usefulness of in-person BLN training, the nature of regular academic support they receive at the cluster and block level to improve teaching practices and assessment methods teachers use to track children's learning.

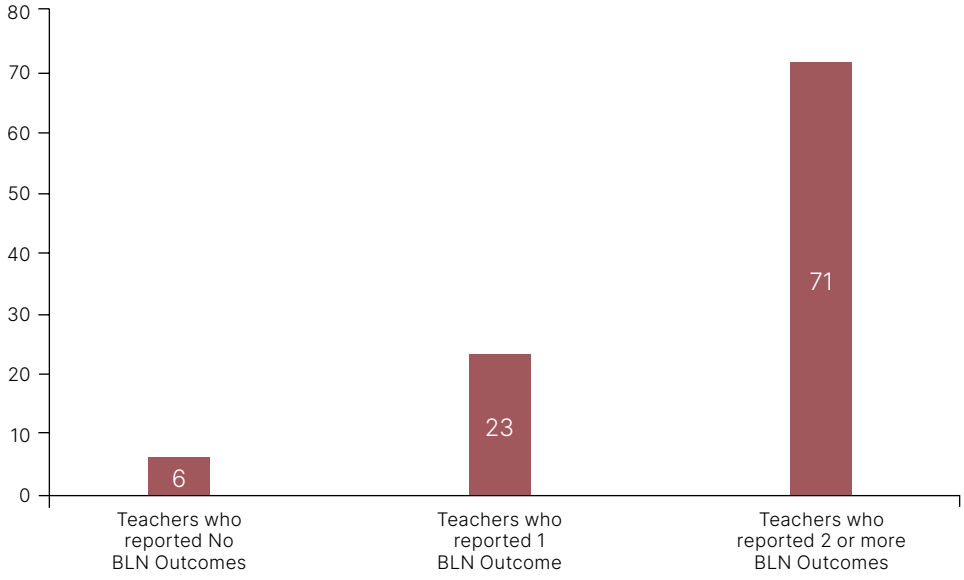
Teacher perceptions were explored on four key dimensions:

- Teacher awareness of BLN learning outcomes for language and mathematics
- Reported effectiveness of BLN training
- Academic support received by teachers from cluster and block personnel
- Assessment methods followed and maintenance of record by teachers

Findings from teacher interviews

8.1 Teachers' awareness of BLN

Figure 8.1: ***Percentage of teachers by their awareness of BLN outcomes***

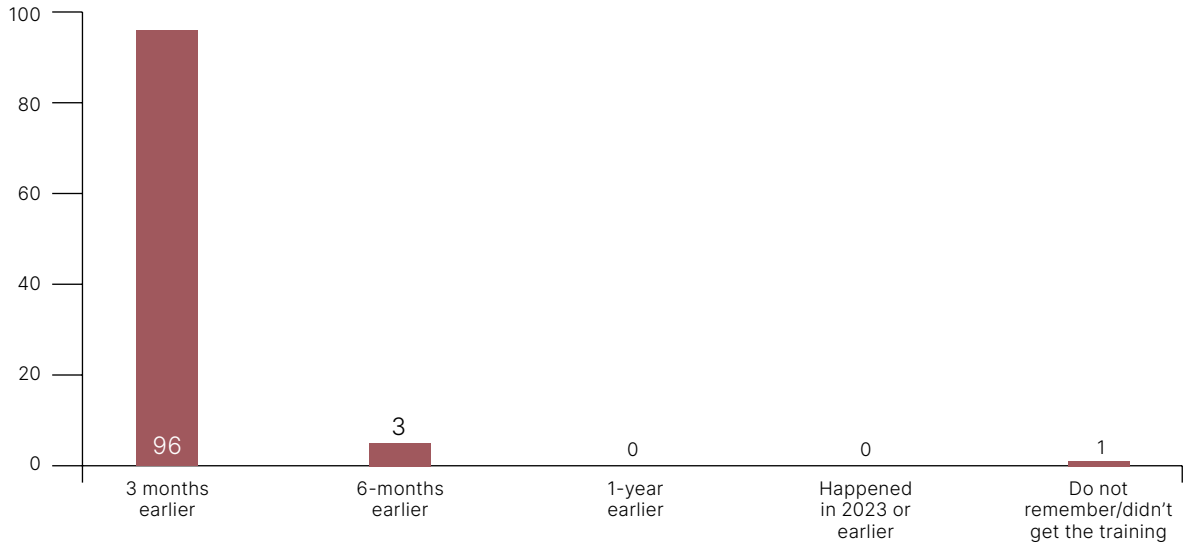


> Most (71%) of the surveyed Grade 1 and 2 teachers were able to recall and articulate at least two grade-appropriate BLN learning outcomes.

> Almost all teachers believe that the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission/BLN Mission has had at least some positive impact.

8.2 Trainings of BLN

Figure 8.2: ***Percentage of teachers by their attendance of BLN Training***



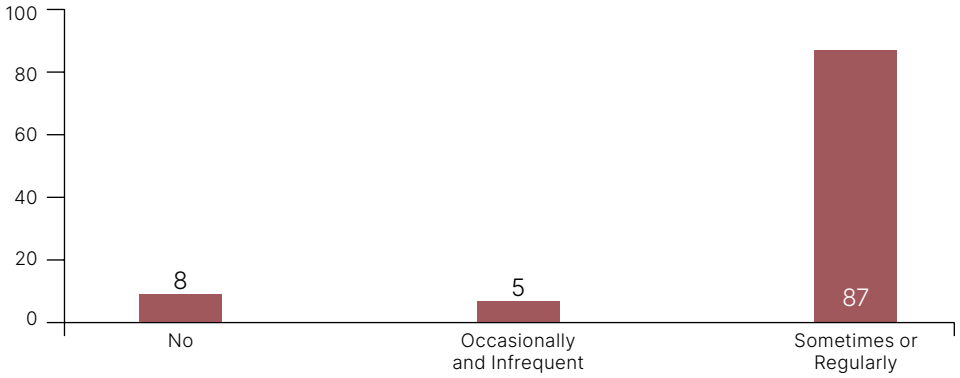
> Almost all (99%) of the surveyed teachers reported attending in-person training within the past year, of whom an overwhelming majority (96%) had attended the BLN training within the three months preceding data collection.

> Most (95%) of surveyed teachers attended BLN trainings of two days.

> Nearly three-fourths (75%) of the surveyed teachers found the BLN training to be very useful.

8.3 Frequency of academic support

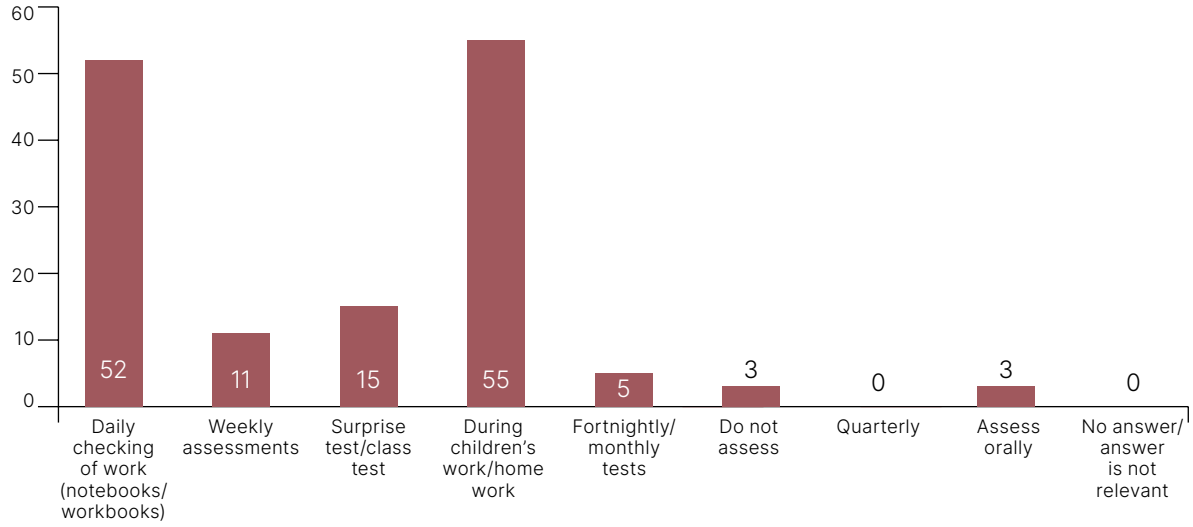
Figure 8.3: ***Percentage of teachers by their reported frequency of receiving academic support***



- 87% of surveyed teachers in Tamil Nadu reported receiving academic support at least sometimes or regularly, surpassing the TLPS 2025 average of 52%.
- Encouragingly, 71% of the surveyed teachers reported academic support to be very useful.
- Support is provided primarily through Block Resource Persons (BRP/BRC/BRT), with 86% of teachers reporting regular academic support from these coordinators, while 29% also reported support from BEO/BSA/ABSA/CBEO/ACBEO.

8.4 **Assessment of children's learning**

Figure 8.4: ***Percentage of teachers by different assessment methods followed***



- Almost all (97%) the teachers interviewed reported assessing children's learning.
- A majority (55%) teachers interviewed reported maintaining records of children's assessment to track their learning, including entering in a register, filling in a tracker in a teacher handbook or a teacher's diary, maintaining a diary etc.

8.5 **Conclusion**

Overall, teacher perception findings indicate a strong awareness of BLN learning outcomes and the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission. Cascade training of teachers for BLN seems to be well established, though there is some variation in the duration of the training programmes.The frequency and quality of academic support received by teachers was reported to be higher than the TLPS 2025 average.

CHAPTER 9

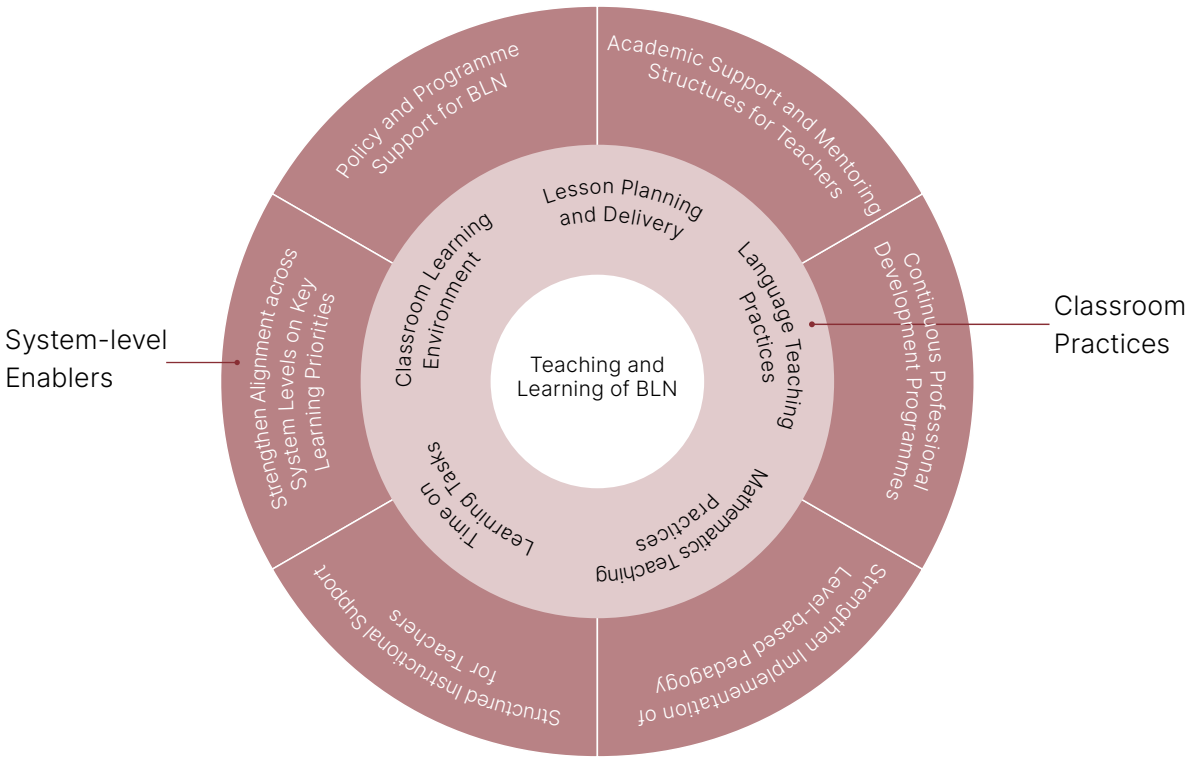
Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

The Survey was conceptualised to provide systematic evidence on teaching practices for language and mathematics from observed Grade 1 and 2 classrooms for the state of Tamil Nadu. Beyond documenting existing practices, the Survey identifies critical gaps and areas for strengthening the instructional core of BLN. The recommendations of the Survey are divided into two main sections:

- Section 9.2 presents key recommendations for strengthening classroom teaching practices, drawing directly on the Survey's main findings.
- Section 9.3 outlines recommendations for system-level changes that will enable and sustain the actions proposed in the first section.

Priorities for classroom practices and system-level enablers



9.2 Recommendations for classroom practices

This section presents theme-wise actions to strengthen teaching and learning of BLN, based on the Survey. These actions are not meant to be uniform prescriptions; their effective use requires decentralised and context-sensitive approaches that respond to local linguistic, cultural, and institutional realities.

9.2.1 **Classroom learning environment**

Classrooms can become places where every child feels seen, heard, and confident to participate by changing how classrooms are organised, building stronger relationships with children, and including children's home languages.

- Tamil Nadu has made commendable progress in establishing print-rich environments and in ensuring that print materials are accessible to children (for example, by displaying them at children's eye level). The next step is to ensure that print-rich materials—such as poems and story posters, children's picture books, number and *akshara* charts, labels for things, word cards and place-value cards—are actively and meaningfully used during instruction to support learning of reading, vocabulary, uses of print and extended conversations.
- Teachers should be further encouraged to use flexible seating arrangements and small group configurations to improve children's participation, peer interaction, collaboration as well as the alignment between classroom activities and learning goals.
- As compared to the overall TLPS average, classrooms in Tamil Nadu perform better on the indicator of teacher-child relationship. However, there is still much scope to strengthen this crucial aspect in early-grade classrooms such that all children feel comfortable and confident, participate in discussions, and engage meaningfully in learning.
- Teachers need to strengthen opportunities for individual student participation during instruction and discussions and allow them sufficient time to respond. This helps children participate in shared meaning-making and helps teachers get a sense of children's understanding.
- Tamil is the primary medium of instruction at the primary level in Tamil Nadu schools, and it was the home language for most children in the sampled classrooms. However, there were significant pockets of the surveyed classrooms where children spoke regional languages from adjoining states. The State could consider identifying such regional pockets (likely in the inter-state border areas) and actively supporting the use of children's majority home language for primary education in those schools, before moving to Tamil or English as the medium of instruction. Using children's home or familiar language strategically can support comprehension, build confidence and encourage greater participation in classroom discussions.

9.2.2 **Lesson planning and delivery**

Teachers recognise the importance of planning and supporting children's learning, but there is significant scope for more systematic and effective use of key lesson planning and delivery practices.

- As teachers follow the Teacher Handbook, they should give clear, step-by-step instructions, model expected responses, and verify that children have understood so that they can participate meaningfully and learn successfully.
- During independent or group tasks, teachers should actively observe children's work, identify errors or gaps in understanding, and provide timely feedback and guidance. Encouraging children to reflect on and revise their work helps them apply the feedback and see their own progress
- Teachers should use simple CFU strategies during lessons to monitor children's learning and adjust instruction where necessary. Examples of such strategies include asking individual children to explain their thinking or giving children a quick task to demonstrate their learning.

- Tamil Nadu already supports a level-based instructional programme, but the actual classroom implementation of this programme could include more opportunities for targeted support for children who require additional assistance in reading, writing, or basic numeracy. Teachers should be supported through regular training to identify these children and provide them level-based remediation support.

9.2.3 Language teaching practices

Language teaching practices can be strengthened by providing children with more opportunities to speak, read, and write meaningfully. In general, the norm needs to shift from teacher-dominated routines to practices that actively engage children in meaning-making.

- Teachers should create regular opportunities for oral language development by encouraging extended discussions on a topic of interest, asking open-ended questions, connecting classroom conversations to children's experiences, and by asking children to predict and infer in response to texts and stories. Teachers need to give children enough time to think and respond more fully to open-ended questions.
- Even though teaching of decoding was widely observed in Tamil Nadu, many teachers simply asked children to copy letters from the board as the main strategy. Decoding instruction needs to be a more systematic and active process that includes multiple instructional activities to reinforce sound-symbol associations.
- Teacher read-alouds should be conducted regularly in early grades. They need to be more interactive with greater participation from children and a stronger focus on building comprehension. Also, teachers should provide guided support during independent or paired reading, helping children decode unfamiliar words and understand text meaning.
- Supporting writing for expression should be a clear priority area for early-grade classrooms in Tamil Nadu. Writing tasks should move beyond copying from the board or textbook and include simple expressive writing activities such as writing about their own experiences, describing pictures, writing about their favourite character from a story, etc. Teachers can support this process for young children in many ways such as by showing them writing samples, giving a structure or format to the writing activity, and by composing the text together as a class before children attempt their own versions.

9.2.4 Mathematics teaching practices

Strengthening early mathematics teaching requires moving beyond procedural routines towards practices that support conceptual understanding and reasoning.

- Tamil Nadu has made significant progress in the use of TLMs in instruction.Teachers could use TLMs more consistently so that children can better understand mathematical concepts and procedures. This includes both teacher demonstrations using TLMs as well as children's use of TLMs, instead of children only observing teacher demonstrations.
- During independent practice, teachers need to actively monitor children's work and provide timely guidance and immediate feedback, helping children correct errors and strengthen their understanding.
- Mathematical concepts should be introduced using familiar and everyday contexts so that young children can relate mathematics to their daily experiences and develop practical problem-solving skills. This was a gap observed in the sampled classrooms in Tamil Nadu.

- There is still some gap in the use of reasoning-focused questioning in observed classrooms. Teachers should ask more 'why and how' questions that encourage children to explain their thinking and reasoning.

9.2.5 Time on learning tasks

A better use of classroom time can help make classroom processes more interactive, responsive, and learning-focused.

- Teachers should create a better balance between teacher-centred instruction and learner-centred practices to enhance children's engagement with learning. This includes strengthening active monitoring of children's work to provide timely clarification and feedback, and moving beyond questions that elicit factual responses towards approaches that make children's thinking visible.
- Classroom time should include more opportunities for children to work in pairs or small groups, discuss ideas, and practise tasks collaboratively.
- Activities that require active engagement—such as reading practice, discussion, problem-solving, and use of learning materials—should be increased.
- Teachers should design learning tasks that encourage participation of all children, ensuring that classroom time supports deeper engagement rather than mechanical repetition.

9.3 Recommendations for system-level enablers

Teachers' ability to adopt and sustain effective classroom practices depends on strong system-level support. Strengthening the following enablers can help translate policy priorities into classroom practice.

9.3.1 Continue and deepen policy support for BLN

Tamil Nadu has made significant progress in prioritising BLN learning through the Ennum Ezhuthum Mission. Continued policy emphasis on BLN, including sustained focus beyond the early grades, will be important for consolidating gains and ensuring that improvements in classroom practices are sustained.

As this support is extended, there is also a need to broaden the vision of foundational learning to include critical thinking, strong oral expression, and independent writing for language, as well as problem-solving and reasoning for mathematics. Such a shift helps move classroom practice beyond mechanical skill acquisition towards meaningful application to real-life situations.

9.3.2 Strengthen teacher training and continuous professional development programmes

Teacher training programmes should place greater emphasis on practice-based pedagogical strategies, including:

- promoting classroom discussion and student participation
- systematic teaching of reading and decoding

- concept-based mathematics teaching
- effective monitoring and feedback during independent work

The Survey findings suggest that the current once-a-year, presentation- or talk-dominated in-service trainings—often focused on textbook coverage or teacher guide orientation—are insufficient to support sustained improvement in teaching practices. Continuous professional development should include regular refresher workshops with greater emphasis on practice-oriented designs—prioritising demonstrations, guided practice, peer-learning among teachers, and reflection—so that teachers can apply new strategies confidently in their classrooms.

9.3.3 Strengthen academic support and mentoring structures for teachers

Effective classroom change requires regular, supportive academic guidance. Cluster- and block-level academic support staff play an important role in supporting teachers to adopt improved practices.

- Academic visits should focus more on observing classroom practices and providing constructive feedback.
- Support structures should facilitate sharing of effective teaching practices across schools.
- Teachers should receive regular mentoring on language- and mathematics-specific pedagogy.

9.3.4 Address multilingual classrooms and differentiated instruction

Given the diversity of children's linguistic and learning backgrounds, system-level guidance should support teachers to:

- effectively use children's home languages as a bridge to school language learning
- implement differentiated instruction strategies to support children at different learning levels
- adopt practical approaches for multigrade and multilevel classrooms

9.3.5 Strengthen implementation of level-based pedagogy

Tamil Nadu has taken important steps toward supporting BLN learning through level-based approaches. Continuing and strengthening level-based pedagogy can help ensure that children who are behind in BLN skills receive targeted support. Teachers should be supported to group children based on their current learning levels and provide focused instruction that helps them progress toward grade-level competencies.

9.3.6 Continue structured instructional support for teachers

Providing teachers with structured instructional resources has been an important support for classroom practice. The State should continue to provide teacher handbooks, student workbooks, and TLMs that offer clear lesson guidance, activity suggestions, and opportunities for practice. Ensuring that these materials are consistently used in classrooms can help strengthen the quality and consistency of instruction.

9.3.7 **Strengthen alignment across system levels on key learning priorities**

Ensuring strong alignment between the state, districts, blocks, and schools is critical for improving learning outcomes. The system can benefit from clearly identifying and reinforcing a set of non-negotiable learning outcomes and pedagogical practices that act as BLN learning result boosters. Regular communication, monitoring, and academic support across system levels can help ensure that these priorities are consistently understood and implemented in classrooms.

"I am happy to see the release of this Survey, the Teaching and Learning Practices Survey (TLPS). The findings provide a strong evidence base. Given the scale of the sample, the insights emerging from this can be seen as reflective of teaching and learning practices across the country. Classrooms must move beyond one-way teaching. Education thrives when children are encouraged to question, explore and keep their curiosity alive."

- Shri Sanjay Kumar, IAS, Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India

"Children learn best when learning is joyful and rooted in their real experiences. As the National Curriculum Framework reminds us, play must remain at the core of early learning. When children learn in familiar languages and meaningfully use teaching-learning materials, classrooms become spaces where every child can truly engage. My best wishes to LLF for the study, we will take inputs from it."

- Smt. Archana Sharma Awasthi, Additional Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India

"TLPS is a significant study for its sharp focus on understanding teaching-learning practices of language and mathematics in Grades 1 and 2. The findings provide vital pointers for improving instruction in early grades by keeping meaning-making at the centre. It is time for us to join hands to support teachers in bringing about the much-needed shifts in classroom practices."

- Ms. Amrita Patwardhan, Head, Education, Tata Trusts

"We are really happy to have completed India's first large-scale survey of teaching and learning practices for foundational learning in partnership with several other organisations. Student learning can improve only when children are actively engaged in learning. We hope this report can trigger a nation-wide discourse on the need for transforming teaching and learning for young children in early grades in primary schools in India."

- Dhir Jhingran, Founder & Executive Director, Language and Learning Foundation

About TLPS 2025

The Teaching and Learning Practices Survey (TLPS) 2025 provides systematic, large-scale evidence on teaching practices for language and mathematics in Grades 1 and 2. The Survey was conducted between November 2024 and March 2025 in nine states—Assam, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh—covering 21 districts and 1,050 classrooms. By capturing a wide range of contexts, TLPS provides a rich snapshot of the current teaching and learning practices for foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN).

Anchored by Language and Learning Foundation (LLF) and supported by Tata Trusts, the survey has been implemented in collaboration with a consortium of organisations: Centre for microFinance, Educational Initiatives, Madhi Foundation, QUEST, and Vikramshila Education Resource Society.

The TLPS 2025 Report presents findings that describe and analyse the classroom learning environment, lesson planning and delivery, selected teaching practices for language and mathematics, and time on learning tasks for both teachers and children. It also explores teachers' perceptions of some aspects of FLN and their professional development. The recommendations of TLPS suggest how classroom teaching practices can be improved and the system-level changes that can enable and sustain this change in FLN teaching and learning practices.

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Tools for TLPS 2025 and grade-wise data-tables can be accessed from the QR Code above