

**A Report on Learning to Read Pilot Project in Baleshwar, Mayurbhanj, Baudh  
and Kandhamal Districts of Orissa (Period : 15.12.2006 to 15.04.2007)**

**1. Back Ground of the Project:**

ASER 2005 revealed the levels of learning at different standards at different states of India. The Table-1 helps in comparing Kerala with Orissa. Most notable is the high percentage of children who cannot even recognize alphabets or numbers in Orissa in Std. I and Std II while this number is quite low in Kerala.

**Table-1: Comparison of Kerala with Orissa in ASER 2005**

		Kerala								Kerala					
Std.	Children who can read						Total	Std.	Children who can solve					Total	
	Nothing	Letter	Word	Para-Level I	Story-Level II	Nothing			Number recogn	Subtraction	Division				
I	10	18.5	39.9	8.2	23.4	100	I	16.8	64.1	10.8	8.3	100			
II	4.8	8.5	26.6	12.5	47.6	100	II	8.3	46.1	26.5	19.1	100			
III	3.9	3.3	13.9	18.1	60.8	100	III	6.2	30.9	37.3	25.7	100			
IV	2.4	1.5	6.4	15.8	74	100	IV	3	17.3	39.3	40.4	100			
V	2.2	1.1	2.6	12.7	81.4	100	V	3.4	12.6	28.3	55.7	100			
		Orissa								Orissa					
Std.	Children who can read						Total	Std.	Children who can solve					Total	
	Nothing	Letter	Word	Para-Level I	Story-Level II	Nothing			Number recogn	Subtraction	Division				
I	51.6	29.5	11.7	3.6	3.6	100	I	68.4	26.6	4.0	1.1	100.0			
II	24.4	31.5	21.1	11.4	11.7	100	II	44.5	39.1	13.7	2.8	100.0			
III	11.9	19.5	24.5	17.3	26.9	100	III	26.1	38.0	28.1	7.7	100.0			
IV	6.7	12.0	15.6	23.4	42.3	100	IV	18.0	28.8	34.8	18.5	100.0			
V	4.7	7.3	9.1	22.4	56.5	100	V	13.5	22.5	33.6	30.4	100.0			

The levels of learning in Std I and Std II undoubtedly determine the learning at higher standards. In Kerala, by Std. V 81.4% children can read Std. II level texts while in Orissa, by

Std V only about 56.5% could read at that level. However, in order to sustain this level of reading and arithmetic, it is now important to strengthen the base of learning in Standard I and Standard II.

The information that we get from the Orissa Child Census (OCC) and from the Child Tracking System (CTS) also is interesting (see Table-2). There are children out of school at a higher extent which shows towards the weak base of the children and need to stabilize and strengthen.

**Table-2: Details of Out of School Children**

<b>No. of out of school children in the block in 2005 (OCC)</b>			
<b>Baleswar</b>	<b>Mayurbhanj</b>	<b>Baudh</b>	<b>Kandhamal</b>
2615		2359	248
<b>No. of out of school children in the block in 2006 (CTS)</b>			
<b>Baleswar</b>	<b>Mayurbhanj</b>	<b>Baudh</b>	<b>Kandhamal</b>
7515			

Pratham Mumbai Education Initiative is working in the field of primary education since 1994 with an objective “to bring every child in education net to learn well”. Pratham is a registered trust. Pratham believes in working with the governments in partnership and bringing people together, to implement different educational programs at the ground level. This initiative is rooted across major cities in India (more than 50) and even in the rural blocks (around 200) with the focus “children should read, write and do arithmetic in a span of two to three months”. There are states like Maharastra, Madhya Pradesh where State Government took the initiative fully to make it a wide success and there are some states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh where the support is in a small scale but the success is a widely discussion point.

Pratham is involved in implementing the “Learning to Read” program and has partnered with various state governments. The L2R program thrusts on ensuring every child is able to read fluently with comprehension write on his/her own and do simple arithmetic sum. It is a time bound program, which ensures that within 2 to 3 months children should be

able to achieve these skills. The reading, writing and arithmetic (3R) skills are the leading skills without which learning of any subject is unachievable.

Pratham has been working in Cuttack City and Sadar since last three years in slum communities. The L2R program is implemented in the local bastis for the children in school and out of school. The children involved are given basic test to ensure their reading and arithmetic levels and are taught to achieve these basic skills with the help of local activists. Hence Pratham has an experience in teaching children 3R skills in Oriya.

Thus the L2R project was launched on a pilot basis in four blocks namely Thakurmunda in Mayurbhanj, Basta in Baleshwar, Kantamal in Boudh and Tikabali in Kandhamal district covering all class I and class II children in government schools to see, if the results that other states have got with Pratham's way, can be achieved in Orissa.

## **2. Objective of the Project:**

The objective for both the classes has been defined separately and for higher classes competency has been little higher than the lower class. It states

1. At least 75% children in Std. I are able to read unfamiliar simple sentences of the Balbharati level I, and the rest are at least able to read simple words by the end of Std I.
2. At least 50% children in Std. I are able to recognize numbers up to 1 to 100 with its place values and the rest are at least able to recognize numbers up to 50.
3. At least 80% children in Std. II are able to read unfamiliar sentences of the Balbharati Std. II level and the rest are at least able to read Std. I level sentences.
4. At least 80% children in Std. II are able to recognize numbers up to 1 to 100 & do simple addition/subtraction & the rest are at least able to recognize numbers up to 100.

## **3. Scope of the Project:**

The Table-3 shows the total involvement of children and teachers in four districts. The combined result shows around 1000 villages were covered in this pilot programme taking into around 35000 children. It also gives an idea on the break of schools where UGUP and Nodal schools participation has been shown separately. It was also planned to take up all the EGS centers across the four districts.

**Table 3: Total involvement of Children and Teachers in four districts**

<b>Result for Four Districts in Orissa</b>			
Category of School	No of Schools	No of Children	Teachers in position
Primary schools	388	13623	745
UGUP Schools	59	2925	200
Nodal UP Schools	35	1873	84
EGS Centre covered	195	4053	195
Special/ Other Schools	3	147	5
Total	680	22621	1229

#### **4. Project Implementation:**

The programme was launched at the second stage of the year. The period of the programme was such that it could fit to the existing curriculum as it took two classes everyday for the children without interrupting the regular activities in the class for the rest of the day.

The roles as defined earlier for both Pratham and State Government, is mentioned below.

#### **Pratham's role:**

- Work in coordination with the state language and math resource groups.
- Work in coordination with the BECs and cluster resource persons to monitor and assess the classes.
- Training school teachers in coordination with cluster resource persons
- Create testing tools
- Ensure creation of TLM through local participation
- Appoint three Pratham activists in each selected blocks and a program leader, for the program period.

**Education Department, Orissa - role:**

- Identify districts/blocks for the implementation of the program
- Organize trainings at the district/block level
- Ensure effective monitoring through pre-mid-post tests
- Ensure collection of data by school, by cluster and by block
- Facilitate the resource persons to create TLM
- Ensure timely printing and distribution of TLM
- Facilitate schoolteachers to take the L2R 90 minutes (45 minutes for language and 45 minutes for math) intervention every day during or after school hours.

The implementation strategy was a three-stage plan as shown below.

**Stage I: Dec 15, 2006 to Mar 15, 2007**

Department of Education, Orissa will choose one block from four districts and run block level district pilot program in all rural schools of all suggested districts to attain the above goals.

**Stage II: Mach 15 2007- April 15, 2007**

Review of the results of the Learning to Read Pilot Program and to plan for the next phase of expansion.

**Stage III: July 1, 2007 – December 31 2007(Next academic Year)**

Scale up the program to all blocks of all districts of Orissa.

**Stage I: Dec 15, 2006 to Mar 15, 2007:**

To initiate this pilot programme and smooth running of the project various steps were adopted.

- a. State level Planning workshop:** A state level workshop was organized at the SCERT Conference hall and all the stakeholders were invited to interact and share the experience and information. Table-4 shows the list of participants and the outcome of the workshop.

**Table-4: State level Planning workshop**

<b>Duration</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> October 2006
<b>Venue</b>	SCERT Conference Hall
<b>Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ State Project Director, OPEPA &amp; Director, Elementary Education, Orissa and the Director SCERT, AD Teachers training and state team</li><li>▪ District Project Coordinators, the District Inspector of Schools, Pedagogy Coordinator of the Districts, Block Resource Center Coordinators, few Sub Inspectors of Schools, few Cluster Resource Center Coordinators and few teachers were present from the state.</li><li>▪ State Leaders from Mumbai, New Delhi and Orissa &amp; volunteers from Pratham Orissa</li><li>▪ State Leader of Mahavir Yuvak Sangh and Team</li></ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ It was the base for the initiation of the pilot programme L2R.</li><li>▪ Discussion on the process and strategy for different districts by each district team along with one or two member organizations in groups.</li><li>▪ A rough plan was made for the future action on different points i.e. teachers availability, training, initiation of programme, finance etc</li></ul>

**b. District level Planning Workshop:** The district level workshop was in continuation of the above planned approach and it extends its participatory group to the major stakeholders in the block. Table-5 shows the outcome and the participants of the workshop at district level.

**Table-5: District level Planning Workshop**

<b>Duration</b>	November 9 <sup>th</sup> to 11 <sup>th</sup> 2006
<b>Venue</b>	District Point
<b>Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ District Project Coordinators, the District Inspector of Schools, Pedagogy Coordinator of the Districts, Block Resource Center Coordinators, Sub Inspectors of Schools, Cluster Resource Center Coordinators, few PEOs and few teachers.</li><li>▪ State Leader/Programme Coordinator of Pratham Orissa</li><li>▪ State Leader of Mahavir Yuvak Sangh and Team</li></ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ It was informatory and sharing of the experiences and concerns</li><li>▪ Discussion on the process and strategy for different districts by each district team.</li><li>▪ A final plan was made for the future action on different points i.e. teachers availability, training, initiation of programme, budget requirements etc</li></ul>

**c. Teachers engaged of the work:** The Table-6 shows the number of teachers who were part of the Learning to Read project at block level. The plan was to include all the Head masters of the schools and the teachers who are involved in teaching of the Std I and Std II children.

**d. Involvement of Community teachers:** The information supplied from different districts showed there is shortage of teachers in different blocks. Though there were plans to recruit new teachers in some later part of the year, for immediate action Community Teachers were appointed by VECs at the village level. The community teachers were the major involvement of community people and were responsible for the attendance of the children in the class room.

**Table-6: Number of Teachers involved in the Learning to Read Project**

<b>Result for Four Districts in Orissa</b>	
<b>Category of Teachers</b>	<b>Numbers</b>
Head Masters	330
Other Teachers	1344
Community Teachers	213
Total	1887

- e. Training-cum-Material development:** The training programme was planned in the following two stages.

**Stage I: The cluster resource persons**

Three days – demonstration on testing children on one to one basis, methodology and practice class at least for three days.

**Stage II: The schoolteachers**

Three days – demonstration on testing children on one to one basis, methodology and practice with the children at least for three days.

**f. Material used:**

In addition to the textbooks and other related materials already available at the school, the program will need the following:

1. For each child:
  - a. Simple picture, alphabet, and story cards
  - b. Padhibaku Sikhiba Book
2. For the class: a set of alphabet, word, and story cards
3. For each teacher/ school
  - a. A set of story cards to be read out to children.
  - b. Matrakshara and Number Charts
4. Textbooks of Std. I and II

**g. Monitoring:** Monitoring is the key to success and thus it was given maximum attention. There were teams ground who had given specific tasks at the ground level and the teams from District and State office time to time monitored the programme.

- Visits were done by the State Project Director, Assistant Director and other senior members from OPEPA Office.
- In districts DPC and the DI of schools were directly involved with the programme. Programme Leaders both from Pratham and MYK were traveling profusely to set the ball rolling.
- For monitoring Pratham appointed following personnel at block and district level.

1. Project Coordinators: 2 (one for each zone of two districts)
2. Training Leaders: 16 (4 per district)

They got the major support from the CRCCs who made the real wheel move at the ground level.

- There were monthly and fortnightly review meetings arranged in every blocks where DPC/DI of schools presided. The progress and hindrances were discussed and the future action was planned. In different districts modifications done for monitoring suiting to the conditions. In Kandhamal two four members monitoring team was made along with the existing structure and they used to sit together weekly to plan for the next week's visits.
- Focus was given on the result and following of methodology. Even the attendance was the other important factor to consider while monitoring in every class. After the mid test the strategy was followed to look at the weakly developed pockets than the steady running classes.
- A weekly structure for monitoring the programme was much successful in the districts. Firstly it showed how much attention has to be given to which class in a week and hence in a month. Secondly it showed the regularity of the visits to any class, which showed the focus of individual in his/her circle. Thirdly it helped the monitors to evaluate their last week's effort and revise their new plan of action

**Stage II: Mach 15 2007- April 15, 2007:**

Due to several prolonged holidays and elections the regularity and the duration of the project got shortened. This showed an adverse effect on the learning ability of the children in the class. A discussion was done at the end of February and the decision taken was to extend the programme for a month. Thus the duration from Mach 15 2007 to April 15, 2007 was devoted to class room teaching for the children.

**5. Achievement:**

Notwithstanding the constraints the findings of the project revealed the following result. The Table-7 shows the percentage increase in Language and arithmetic Learning in different districts from Pre Test to Post Test.

**Table-7: Percentage increase in Language and arithmetic Learning in four districts**

<b>Thakurmunda</b>					
<b>Language</b>	<b>PreTest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>PreTest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>
<b>Story</b>	3	23	<b>Sub</b>	3	23
<b>Para</b>	5	23	<b>Add</b>	4	22
<b>Word</b>	14	31	<b>51-100</b>	13	29
<b>Letter</b>	41	19	<b>1-50</b>	32	22
<b>Nothing</b>	37	4	<b>Nothing</b>	48	4
<b>Total</b>	100	100	<b>Total</b>	100	100

<b>Tikabali</b>					
<b>Language</b>	<b>PreTest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>PreTest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>
<b>Story</b>	5	39	<b>Sub</b>	4	32
<b>Para</b>	7	39	<b>Add</b>	7	31
<b>Word</b>	13	17	<b>51-100</b>	10	27
<b>Letter</b>	30	4	<b>1-50</b>	25	9
<b>Nothing</b>	45	1	<b>Nothing</b>	54	1
<b>Total</b>	100	100	<b>Total</b>	100	100

<b>Kantamal</b>					
<b>Language</b>	<b>PreTest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>PreTest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>
<b>Story</b>	3.00	22.00	<b>Sub</b>	1.61	14.00
<b>Para</b>	3.00	26.00	<b>Add</b>	2.85	20.00
<b>Word</b>	8.00	32.00	<b>51-100</b>	4.60	40.00
<b>Letter</b>	26.00	15.00	<b>1-50</b>	24.74	20.00
<b>Nothing</b>	60.00	5.00	<b>Nothing</b>	66.20	6.00
<b>Total</b>	100	100	<b>Total</b>	100	100

<b>Balosore</b>					
<b>Language</b>	<b>PreTest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>PreTest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>
<b>Story</b>	9	38	<b>Sub</b>	9	34
<b>Para</b>	14	28	<b>Add</b>	10	26
<b>Word</b>	24	22	<b>51-100</b>	20	22
<b>Letter</b>	34	11	<b>1-50</b>	27	14
<b>Nothing</b>	19	1	<b>Nothing</b>	34	4
<b>Total</b>	100	100	<b>Total</b>	100	100

#### **4. Conclusion**

- a. **Difficulties or hindrances in the smooth running of the programme:** The difficulties encountered could be divided into two parts. One part known difficulties other part is unforeseen difficulties. Known difficulties include Irregular attendance of teachers, Insufficient Teachers positioned, Non Availability of Classrooms, Teachers other Involvement reducing the effective classroom teaching even present at the school, Geographical Case where very difficult to reach there and stay for the whole day. Unforeseen difficulties include Prolonged Holidays, heavily monitoring, Not interested teachers to take up L2R as a challenge, Incomplete Data availability at various stages, insufficient time for whole process as it clubbed with elections and examinations, children names in both schools & EGS.

**b. Up scaling Proposal:**

The above results show there is improvement in all the four districts. The results has been skewed as around half of the children crossed the mark and the rest are very near to reach the target. Thus there is a strong empirical justification to upscale the project to upgrade the quality of learning and to check the drop out problem which is rampant in early stages.