

Read India in Gujarat (October 2008 – March 2009)

Highlights - April 08 to September 08 –

Pratham's sustained advocacy efforts for over eight years led to the first ever state-level government owning up the Read India campaign. The state education department took up a Gujarat specific learning enhancement programme under the name 'Chalo Vanchiyae!' (Come Let's Read!). The campaign was launched across the state with Pratham as an implementing partner in 20 districts. Pratham's L2R technique, methodologies and assessment formats were included in teacher training manuals of standard I to IV. Pratham teams trained state master trainers in L2R technique. Consequently, teachers of the entire state were trained. Pratham teams visited schools, and guided teachers on the assessment of the learning levels of children and starting the one hour literacy class. Pratham TLM for the reading campaign was reviewed and printed by SSA Gujarat during this period, though it reached schools in November 2008. In addition, State ICDS department collaborated with Pratham as part of its 'school preparedness programme' and 33,844 anganwadi workers were trained in Gujarat's 26 districts.

Volunteers raised in the villages, conducted alphabet recognition and reading in the community, gram sabhas and informed the Sarpanch/ villagers about Chalo Vanchiyae and also wrote Read India slogans Chalo Vanchiyae (slogan) in prominent places of the village.

October 2008 to March 2009

Table1 : Read India coverage in 20 districts

Districts	Blocks	Villages	Schools
20	169	12,892	21,102

Campaign in schools

In October 2009, time was allotted for during SSA's In- service training of teachers for a review on the reading campaign (Chalo Vanchiyae) Pratham block coordinators participated in these trainings to: (i) establish a first hand contact with the teachers, (ii) discuss the implementation and classroom process. Iii) Teachers of Std I to IV got additional modules containing Read India classroom process guidelines. The module was printed by SSA, and it explained the classroom processes for different stages of children learning levels. Additionally support to the campaign was given through cluster-wise trainings of newly recruited primary teachers (Vidya sahayaks) in a few districts. In December, Pratham's master trainer trained SSA's teacher trainers on data collation methods data entry in the data collection and formats.

Post Diwali, Pratham's Teaching Learning Material (TLM) got distributed to over 32,000 schools in Gujarat state. Subsequently, block coordinators visited schools in their respective blocks. The main focus of these visits was to ensure that TLM had reached the schools, was distributed class wise and was being used by teachers. Meetings with Block Resource Centre coordinators and CRCCs were conducted to increase their involvement in the Chalo Vanchiyae campaign. Pratham teams participated in the monthly block levels meetings of cluster level education officials and shared follow-up points based on their visits.

Several efforts were made to energize the campaign. In early November 2008, Pratham District coordinators and Zone heads went to other districts to motivate teams and support the block coordinators of the ten new districts. During their visits they supported the block coordinators in the following ways: (i) joined the block coordinator in raising volunteers, (ii) helped the block coordinator in strengthening school visits (iii) made presentations for government officials, and (iv) problem solving at the block level. Intensive block-wise coverage was started from 16th January to 16th February to reach maximum number of schools and to invigorate the education system. Pratham teams of a district divided into teams and covered schools cluster by cluster. Thus completing majority of the schools of the block in a period of 5-7 days. The focus was on demonstrating the L2R activities in class and guiding the teaching in improving children learning levels. Based on their visits, Pratham teams shared cluster reports with action points for follow up to the CRCCs and BRCC. The combined team efforts brought about an energy in the CRCCs and they joined the Pratham teams in the school visits. Through the intensive block-wise coverage, 11,377 schools were reached and it brought increased awareness of the Read India campaign in the education machinery. A report was shared with SSA on the implementation of the campaign, with an emphasis on areas that needed focused attention.

Using Pratham's assessment formats of children learning levels, in reading, writing and arithmetic, teachers of standard I to IV, in Gujarat conducted mid and post tests of nearly 23 lakh children. The mid test and post test in reading, writing and mathematics took place in December 2008 and March 2009 respectively. An improvement of about 5-7% can be seen between the pre and mid tests of the campaign. Post test results are being collated and can be shared subsequently. The first cycle of the campaign in schools got extended because of the late distribution of TLM in schools. (Pre and mid results are attached as Annexure A)

Pratham teams with SSA conducted post tests in 128 schools of the state as part of the evaluation of the campaign till March 09. An evaluation was done in over 100 schools, through participation in the post test with all children of standards I to IV, for reading, writing and arithmetic. Of the 128 schools, Pratham teams conducted post tests in 50 schools and joint teams of Pratham with SSA conducted post tests in 78 across the state. This basically ensured that teachers, BRCCs, CRCCs, principals and even Pratham teams understood the Pratham technique for assessment and gave appropriate levels to the children. Data of the pre mid and post test results for these schools is being collated for a comparative study.

Notifications and circulars were received from the State SSA which helped in the implementation of the campaign in schools. Circulars were issued for: (i) Timely and systematic distribution of TLM in all schools, (ii) Clarifying the roles of block and cluster education officials, (ii) ensuring timely assessment, collection and collation of the children learning levels, (iii) Monitoring implementation and sending the reporting formats on the status of reading classes in schools by block and cluster officials to Dist and state SSA offices, (iv) for preparing teams to conduct the joint post tests in 128 schools of the state, (v) After the intense block wise visits by pratham teams, circulars were sent to district and cluster officials to form teams of BRC with five CRCCs to visit schools in each other blocks for participation and guidance for the campaign. All notifications mention Pratham being the resource NGO for implementation and technical support.

Pratham has participated in state level meetings with SSA and the Department of Primary Education. State level meetings were held to discuss the establishment of a 'Reading Cell' for children in primary schools. The main objective of the reading cell was to focus more

attention on teaching reading in the early stages of primary school. Representatives of the National Council for Education, Research and Training (NCERT) conducted such deliberations in all states across the country. During the Joint Review Mission (JRM) for SSA in Gujarat, Pratham was selected as one of three NGOs working with the state government. The JRM team consisted of members from the Government of India and donor agencies (World Bank). In addition, Pratham participated in a state-wide teleconference with an audience of over 6,000 district and block level education officials. The teleconference reiterated the goals of the literacy campaign and further facilitated its implementation in schools. Pratham also participated in a state-level meetings of the Dept of Education and 26 District Primary Education Officer (DPEO). Participation in such meetings brought in further seriousness in the learning enhancement campaign. Key government officials like the SSA-SPD and Secretary Primary Education were transferred during this period as well. Newly appointed officials were oriented to Gujarat specific literacy campaign and brought on board. Additionally, a proposal has been put up to the state SSA-ALS to train baalmitras and balsakhis with Pratham's TLM and technique for out of school children. Efforts are on to keep contacts with the State ICDS department for strengthening the school readiness programme.

Campaign in communities

October 08 to March 09 - volunteers were raised to strengthen the Read India campaign. Volunteers were raised for the following purposes: (i) taking L2R and mathematics classes in the communities, (ii) writing the slogan 'Chalo Vanchiyae' (Come Lets Read) in prominent places in the village to spread awareness of the campaign, and (iii) talking to important people in their villages about the Read India campaign.

During the Diwali vacation in October 08, 2253 volunteers were trained and given TLM on L2R and mathematics. Volunteers included students from high schools and colleges, Anganwadi workers, and volunteers registered to supervise the Mid day meal in schools. In March 09, 5744 volunteers were raised to take reading classes in the summers with a focus to bring children of word and paragraph level to story level (fluent readers).

Pratham received almost 4000 post cards from sarpanches of 20 districts of Gujarat giving their feedback on the Read India campaign. To spread awareness about the campaign, Pratham teams posted/distributed letters to the sarpanch of over 9000 villages, with a post card attached for a reply. Post cards from sarpanch indicate that they now know about the reading writing and arithmetic campaign, saying it is good for the children in villages, that Reading material was being used in schools and has been useful for the children, that daily news reading has been happening in schools and school. VECs have been active. The sarpanch have talked of participating in the campaign by visiting schools, test children learning levels, hold essay and reading competition and give prizes.

There was an intense effort on the activation of Village Education Committees (VECs) and their participation in taking up the agenda of education in the village under the UNICEF project in Valsad district. The Read India campaign was discussed in the VEC meetings and Shikshan gram sabhas in the 461 villages of Valsad. Advocacy efforts in Valsad district resulted in a circular being dispatched to all schools making it mandatory to have monthly VEC meetings and to support the literacy campaign. This circular was used as a model for other districts to issue similar circulars which would strengthen the campaign.

Civil society participation

Advocacy efforts at the state, district, and block level encouraged other institutions, NGOs, and civil society, to constructively engage in the Read India campaign. The following table shows the ways in which civil society participated.

Table 2: District wise details of participation of various bodies

Districts	Group/Organization/Agency	Indicators of participation
Kutch	NGOs running seasonal hostels and schools	Teachers were trained to use Pratham's Learn to Read (L2R) technique in their classes.
Bharuch	Individuals	Sponsored postcards to post it to Sarpanches for their feedback on the literacy campaign.
Mehsana, Gandhinagar, Sabarkantha, Banaskantha, Ahmedabad	National Service Scheme (NSS)/ National Cadet Corps (NCC)	Students took supplementary reading class.
Mehsana	Midday Meal Workers	Midday meal workers took supplementary reading class.
Rajkot	Rotary Club of Greater Rajkot	Rotary club printed L2R materials for 1369 schools of Rajkot district.
Junagadh	Dalit Seva Sanghathan, 185 sarpanches (village heads) of Sutrapada and Visavadar blocks of Junagadh	To spread awareness on the literacy campaign (NGO) Dalit Seva Sanghathan: - sponsored postcards - printed 1,00,000 pamphlets - raised 350 volunteers, - contacted an individual who sponsored 2000 banners, - organized shikshan gram sabhas (village assembly on education). 185 sarpanches sponsored plaster of paris to write slogan on prominent walls.

Generation of new TLM

The curriculum design team designed a variety of TLM for the Read India campaign. The following materials were developed: (i) for documentation of daily activities, a 'daily diary' was prepared by Pratham to record all education related information of each block. Additionally the daily diary was also a ready reckoner for district and block coordinators, (ii) early and advanced reader cards for volunteer classes, (iii) higher competency reading cards and manual for fluent readers under Pratham's Read to Learn (R2L) category, and iv) a volunteer booklet for summer class data. Additionally, supplementary material for the school programme with SSA for the next cycle is also being designed by the curriculum design team.

Internal Joint Review Mission (JRM) of Read India

In December 2008, Read India programme was visited by the JRM members, Ms Sunita Burra and Sajjan Shekhawat, from Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh respectively. They met the Read India team heads and got to know about the Read India campaign in school and communities. They also conducted field visits to schools and interacted with the volunteers in Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar and Rajkot districts. On the final day, they shared their observations.

Some of the key suggestions were: (i) further capacity building for team to be able to demonstrate activities in schools, (ii) additional TLM for std 1 and 2 (as number of cards are less in the school kit), (iii) re look at assessment for writing, (iv) next three months focus on word and sentence level children (v) take forward the idea of best schools and best VEC to best

blocks, best clusters and best CRCCs, (vi) strengthen the campaign by using the ICDS partnership even after the summer camp, and (vii) go for an exposure - visit R2L classes in Andhra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh.

Capacity building of teams

National Training Programme

Pratham Gujarat's master trainers in R2L, English, Mathematics and Computers participated in national level trainings as part of Pratham's National Training Programme.

Subsequently, they conducted workshops for potential master trainers of Read India and Direct teams. In addition, they organized and conducted baseline tests at all locations for all Pratham team members. The tests covered R2L and mathematics. Teams were curious and some nervous about the tests. However, the master trainers explained the concept of capacity building and the purpose of the tests. This brought about an excitement among the teams about the future. The state master trainers will be attending further trainings and will plan for the summer capacity building for all team members.

Capacity building in Read to Learn (R2L)

As a next step from L2r, R2L training of Pratham teams was held for conducting the pilots in four districts of Gujarat. After a pilot in the Direct learning centres in Ahmedabad, and finalizing the R2L manual, trainings for taking classes were conducted for Pratham Block coordinators of four districts. The R2L manuals were designed on the basis of R2L campaigns conducted in Maharashtra and Delhi. The R2L pilot classes will be taken by the Block Coordinators for the first cycle, before the classes are scaled up in the rest of the districts. R2L classes in the community would start after mid ASER, in mid April.

ASER and Mid ASER

In Gujarat, ASER survey was organized in 26 districts of Gujarat and two union territories. In October 2008, Thirty two coalition partners and 840 volunteers jointly conducted ASER 2008 across 840 villages in Gujarat, Daman and Diu. Random checks of data collection were done on an average in 6 – 8 villages per district to ensure that there were no discrepancies in the data collection at the field level. Data entry was also done within the state this time so that hands on support to solve any queries were available onsite. In January 2009, ASER 2008 report was released. A four pager on the ASER results was prepared and used for ASER dissemination in Gujarat.

Mid ASER was organized six months after ASER 2008 to measure the impact of the campaign on the learning levels of children. The pilot of Mid ASER took place in Kheda district in the same villages that were covered in ASER 2008. The team members had the chance to speak to the sarpanch about the literacy campaign (Read India Campaign), raise volunteers and involve the parents in knowing the learning levels of the children.

Results of state wide pre and mid tests of learning levels in reading, writing and Math

The figures below show the difference made in the children learning levels - reading, writing and arithmetic, of children, standard I to IV in the **pre and mid test**.

Figure 1: Reading levels of std 1 and 2

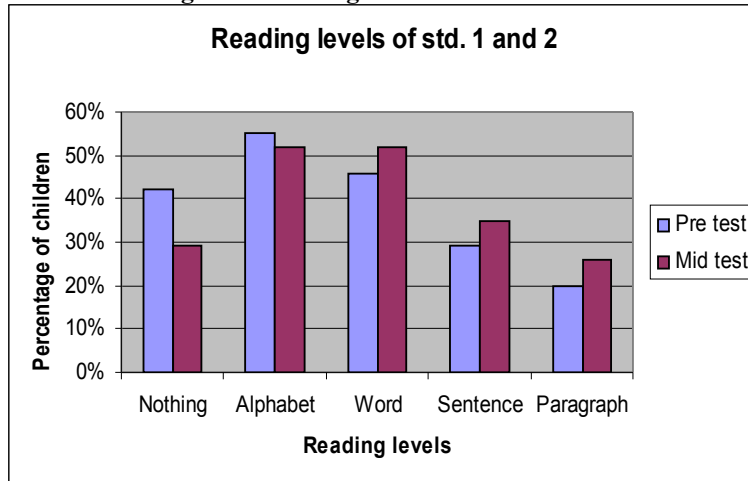


Figure 2: Reading levels of Std 3,4,5

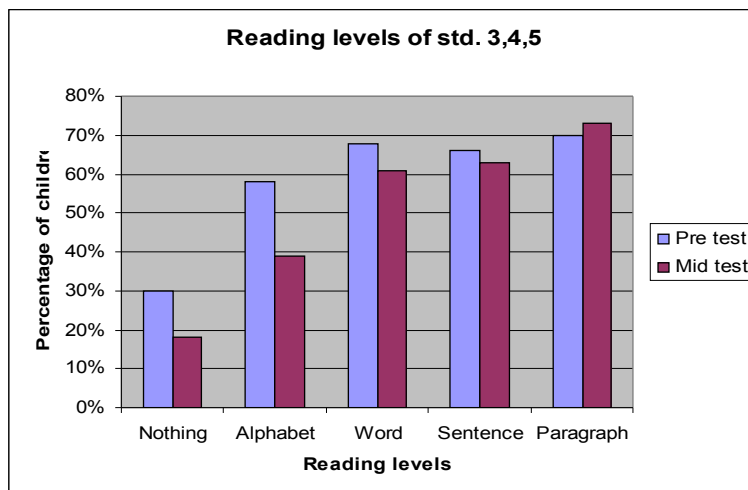
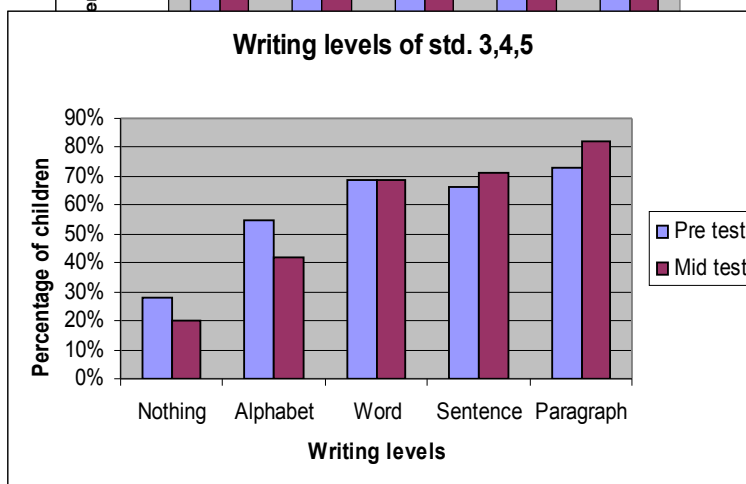
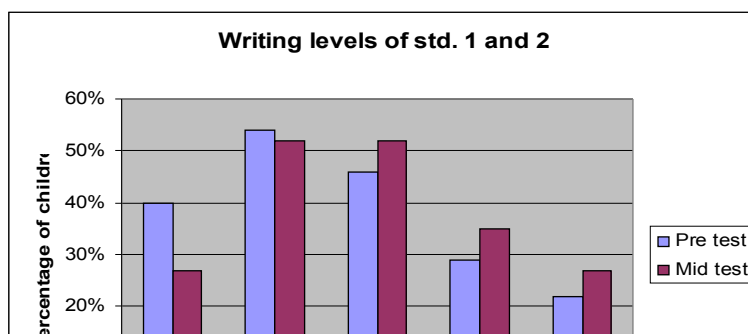


Figure 3: Writing levels of Std 1 and 2



In the figure below, children of std. 1 and 2 who were at ‘nothing’ level in arithmetic has decreased and children who understand place value, addition, and subtraction has increased. Moreover, children of standards 3 to 5 who are at ‘nothing’ level in arithmetic has decreased, and children who can multiply, divide, and solve problems has increased.

Figure 5: Arithmetic levels of std 1 and 2

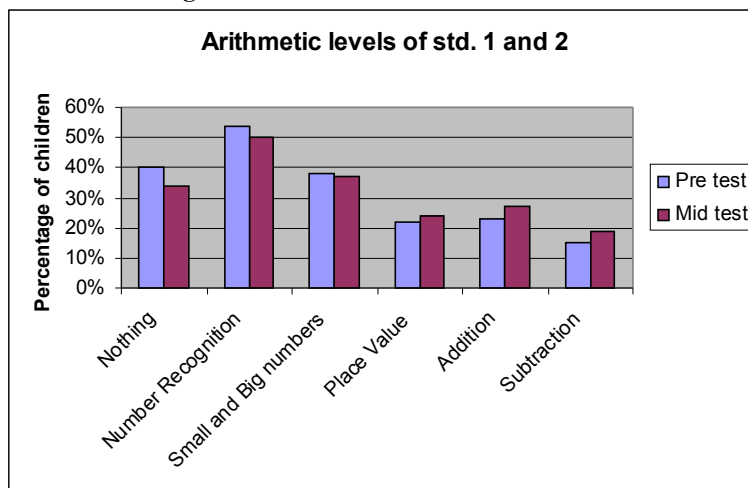


Figure 6: Arithmetic levels of 3,4,5

