

# Second Chance

Pratham Education Foundation

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## INTRODUCTION

Statistics suggest that although most children in India go to primary school, close to 70% of students drop out before completing Grade 10. This means that a very large proportion of India's children will be ineligible to apply for jobs in any sector that requires a secondary school education. Among these, the number of girls is significantly high. In other words, as a country not only are we far from reaping the benefits of the "demographic dividend", but also our progress towards women's empowerment seems to ignore some basic issues that need urgent attention.

In the last ten years, sustained efforts made by the government have led to significant progress in terms of the availability of school infrastructure, particularly at the elementary level. However, poor quality of education, children's inability to cope with expectations of the curriculum, and poor socioeconomic status results in a steep drop in the number of students who transition from elementary to secondary school. Furthermore, the mandate of free and compulsory education only applies through the elementary stage (up to Class VIII). The availability of secondary schools is insufficient, which compounds the problem for children who complete the elementary stage, particularly for girls.

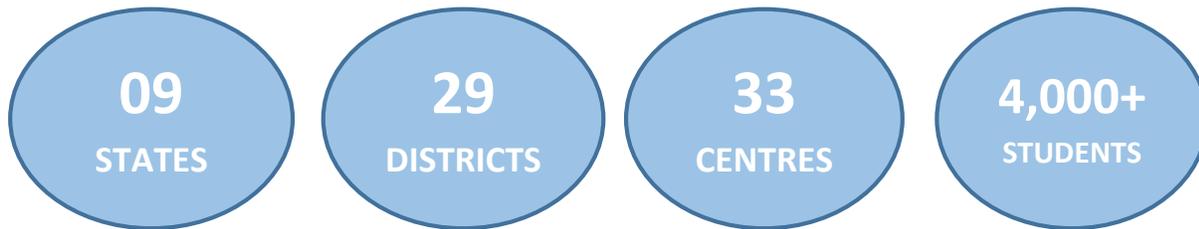
## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SECOND CHANCE PROGRAM

The story of The Second Chance program is rooted in this context. Understanding the challenges faced by students, Pratham decided to take a step towards filling these gaps. The task at hand was two-pronged in nature. At one level, POSE had to find ways to give opportunities to those who had dropped out of school for a variety of reasons. Two, special focus was needed to bring back women/girls who were often excluded from continuing their education owing to gender constraints. This meant not only rekindling their and their family's interest in education, but also preparing the girls and women adequately in terms of honing their confidence and ability to manage and live a better quality life.

The objectives of the Second Chance program respond to these needs. They are to:

- Help girls and women from underserved communities to complete their secondary school education by succeeding in the Grade 10 board exam.
- Provide an opportunity to study in an environment that encourages progress and success.
- Focus on personality development and confidence building to empower the girls/women in their daily lives as well as their studies.

## ANNUAL OUTREACH



## ACHIEVEMENTS

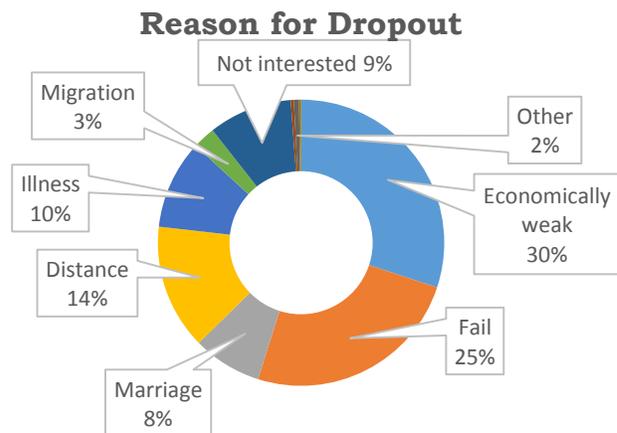
Since its inception, the Second Chance Program has seen a steady increase in both coverage and success. In 2011, the program reached 394 girls. By 2015 this number had increased to 4,383. Similarly, girls' performance in the board exams has shown enormous improvement over the years. In 2011-12, very few cleared the exams, but four years later, 89% of the students who appeared passed their final board exams.

Many Second Chance graduates go on to further studies or to paid employment. For example, In Gujarat, the Centre in charge was able to link 11 women with jobs in a local pharmaceutical manufacturing unit. Second Chance alumni who took a short course on Health and Hygiene were recruited as nursing assistants. In another instance, after completion of the Class X exams in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, Second Chance alumni attended a Government run vocational skilling program were employed at different cities of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, in addition to pursuing their studies through open schooling. The vocational wing of Pratham, Pratham Institute (PI), has been a great source of support to provide skill-based training for Second Chance students.

## ABOUT OUR STUDENTS

Majority of Second Chance students have dropped out of schooling due to economic reasons or failure. Even the latter, is often by triggered by the inability to attend school and study due to familial pressure.

35% of our students have passed Std. 8, which forms the largest portion; those who have passed Std.7, 8 or 9 make up 75% of the total. In Rajasthan, majority of the students have passed Std 8 or 9, with failure cited as the key reason for dropout.



At the same time, the largest proportion of students belong to the 16-22 age group, indicating that some years have passed since they dropped out of school. This begins to explain the learning gap that exists when students enroll in our program.

## THE APPROACH

The initial implementation in post elementary space was done in the Learning Labs in Mumbai in 2008, and was taken to in 2011 to pilot locations in Maharashtra. The Learning Lab offered lessons for the academic



schedule, both covering basics and for the Std. 10 syllabus. This has been later taken up for the Second Chance program as the Foundation Course and Main course. The model has evolved considerably over the years. Currently there are variations across states in order to better suit the needs of the students and the cultural and social norms of each location. Currently, most Second Chance centres operate in one of three alternative delivery models, depending on local conditions and preferences.

- **Residential Hub Model:** Also known as the “Hub and Spoke” model, in this model a central teaching hub caters to students from 3-5 cluster-centres set up in the area. Each cluster-centre enrolls a group of 10-20 girls from nearby villages. During 20 days of the month the girls work with a tutor at their cluster-centre, and for 5 days a month girls from all cluster-centres travel to the teaching hub where they stay and attend classes and receive more intensive instruction.
- **Non-Residential Hub Model:** The Non-Residential Hub model operates along the same pattern as the Residential Hub model, except that instead of living at the hub centre for 5 days each month, students commute from their homes. In contexts where commuting is not a problem for the girls, this structure makes it easier for families to allow their daughters to attend classes.
- **Roving Model:** Parents are not always open to having their daughters stay away from home or commute to a central hub. In the roving model, students are not required to travel beyond their local cluster-centre; instead, faculty members rotate through a set of 5 cluster centres in the area, spending 5 days a month at each centre before moving to the next. This model is particularly useful in the more rural locations, where it can be difficult to find individuals with the qualifications required to become tutors in the cluster-centres.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

The Second Chance program is broadly divided into two modules: the **Foundation Course (FC)** and the **Main Course (MC)**.

- **Foundation Course:** The Foundation Course is a 3-4 month bridge program designed to help girls, who may have had several years gap in their schooling, regain confidence and core study habits as well as basic reading and writing skills and content knowledge. The FC content builds on Pratham’s experience of over twenty years in developing methods of accelerated remedial education. The Foundation Course helps learners achieve several foundational competencies – listening, speaking, reading, writing and doing. Students’ current levels are assessed and activities are designed to progress from there onwards. This approach has proven to be very effective in designing course materials and methods that help Second Chance students’ bridge the gap. FC consists of classes in Math, Language (Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Urdu, Odiya), English and Science/Home Science, as applicable. At the end of the FC, students are assessed through an internal exam to understand progress and to inform the decision of continuation to the Main course.
- **Main Course:** The Main Course is designed to cover the Std. 10 curriculum in a period of 9 months. Subjects offered in the MC vary across states and so does the medium of instruction. A typical set of courses would include Hindi or the state language, Math, English, Science/Home Science, Social Science, Computer Literacy and other electives. Extensive time and effort goes into creation of materials for the MC. This process includes identifying priority topics (those with more weightage in



the Board exam), simplifying lessons in terms of language and complexity, creating charts and other teaching materials, and identifying other techniques for better understanding and applications of lessons and required content. In addition, a month-wise calendar is prepared to ensure that the course is completed in a time bound manner.

- **Certification:** Students appear for their final exams, held in the months of March/April/May annually. Bihar, Maharashtra and Odisha students are certified through the respective state examination boards as external students. Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Chhattisgarh students are certified by the respective State Open Schools and Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan students are certified by the National Institute of Open Schooling. Pratham and National Institute of Open Schooling have a partnership for bringing synergy in their efforts to provide academic and skilling benefits to disadvantaged and underprivileged youth and children
- **Other ideas and innovations:** In addition to the Foundation Course and Main Course, the Second Chance program has also been experimenting with the objective of imparting life skills to all students. While this is still at a nascent stage, we believe that this program will help students in building their confidence and communication skills, both of which are necessary in the present job market. In 2015-16, Pratham introduced digital content for the first time at three centres in Maharashtra. Based on the premise of encouraging self-learning and supplementing available teaching materials, digital content has proved to be a useful resource in remote areas where access to teaching resources is limited.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Over the past four years, Pratham has had the experience of delivering the Second Chance in 9 states across the country covering 6 languages. Given the success of the programs till date, we are now in a position to streamline, revise and repackage our content, materials, processes and tools so that they are useable by others. We are currently working on:

- **Course materials** for foundation course and for subjects
- Test materials, **assessment** tools and preparatory materials for taking exams
- **Modules** which describe how to set up a Second Chance program & important tracking and measurement processes

Building on the above activities, we are willing to collaborate with others working in the secondary education and related segments to understand impact of programs and processes when implemented outside of the organization. Our experience of collaboration in the primary education space has given us the adequate expertise and capacity to implement collaborative activities geared towards creation of impact.