Pratham India Education Initiative

Annual Report 2008-09

Every Child in School.... Learning Well

Pratham is the largest non-governmental organization working to provide quality education to the underprivileged children of India. **Our mission is to ensure "Every Child in School and Learning Well."** Every year, we reach millions of children in both rural and urban areas through a range of interventions. Our programs include pre-school education, mainstreaming out of school children, providing learning support to both in-school and out of school children, providing children with access to books, research and analysis, protecting vulnerable children, among others. over the years, Pratham has moved from being a service delivery organisation to one which successfully impacts policy and practice. Senior team members are a part of several policy making bodies both at the Central and State levels.
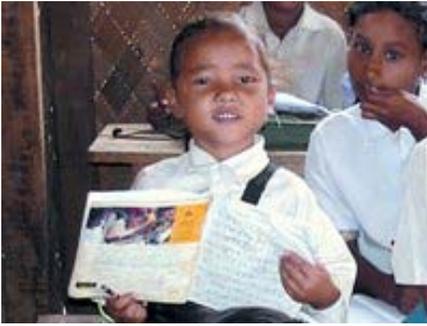
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The Year in Review:
Some Highlights

2008-09 was an important year for Pratham. With the support of our donors, partners, volunteers and other stakeholders, we were able to achieve significant success. Key highlights of the year include:

- Read India has become the largest movement of it's kind, impacting the learning levels of 33 million children. In 2008-09, the movement reached 305,000 villages across 19 states. A total of 600,000 government school teachers and 450,000 volunteers were mobilized and trained in the accelerated learning techniques.

- Full state wide partnerships were formed in 9 states and district level partnerships in 5 states for implementing the campaign. In the remaining states, strong community level partnerships were established with panchayats, village education committees and community members.

- There is a significant improvement in the learning levels of the children, especially in states where there was a state level partnership. According to ASER 2008 and mid-ASER 2009, there is a 20 percentage point increase in learning levels in 5 states alone (Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.)

The Impact of our Programs on Policy and Practice

Read India instrumental in putting quality education on agenda of state and national governments.

- A reading cell has been set up and one hour of reading introduced in most states ever since the campaign has been implemented.
- Supplementary reading material is being developed by most states, a practice non-existent earlier.

ASER has brought learning to center of discussion on elementary discussions.

- ASER referred to in policy documents at state and national level
- Most states now measuring learning using ASER type tools.

PCVC instrumental in making policy changes on abolition of child labour.

- State plan of Eradication of Child Labour formed in 5 states.
- Task forces on abolition of Child labour created in 4 states.

- In February, for the first time, Read India was evaluated by an external Joint Review Mission. The mission comprised of representatives from eight external organizations (Hewlett Foundation, Gates Foundation, Novib, World Bank, DfID, Oxfam, Children's Investment Fund Foundation) along with representatives from Pratham USA, NCERT and five state governments. Their suggestions are being used to strengthen the program.

- The fourth Annual Status of Education Report(ASER) was released on Jan 13, by Shri Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission of India. This year the survey covered the enrollment and learning levels of 700,000 children across 564 rural districts of the country. ASER Center was the Gold Winner in the 2008, Excellence in Information Integrity Awards, USA.

- The urban direct programs benefitted approximately 450,000 underprivileged children living in the slums of 43 cities through a variety of interventions - balwadi, learning support classes, libraries, scholarship and English classes.

- The Pratham Council for Vulnerable Children continued to make headway in bringing about policy changes in protecting vulnerable children and abolishing child labour. A total of 37,000 children were impacted through the range of programs being conducted in 8 states (Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra.

- Significant progress was made in the vocational skilling program targeted at unemployed and underemployed youth. A financial centre was started in Mumbai in partnership with Deutche Bank for providing training in banking and financial services. An agriculture center was started in Satara and a Hospitality Center initiated in Aurangabad in partnership with Taj. A total of 2500 youth were trained through the various programs.

WHERE WE WORKED: THE COVERAGE IN 2008-09

READ INDIA DISTRICTS AND DIRECT PROGRAM IN CITY
Oct. 2009

HEWLETT	
PUSA	
EUREKA	
BPCL	
TATA POWER	
HUL	
HDFC	
NOVIB	
INDIVIDUAL DONORS	★

Progress in 2008-09: Key Highlights of the Programs
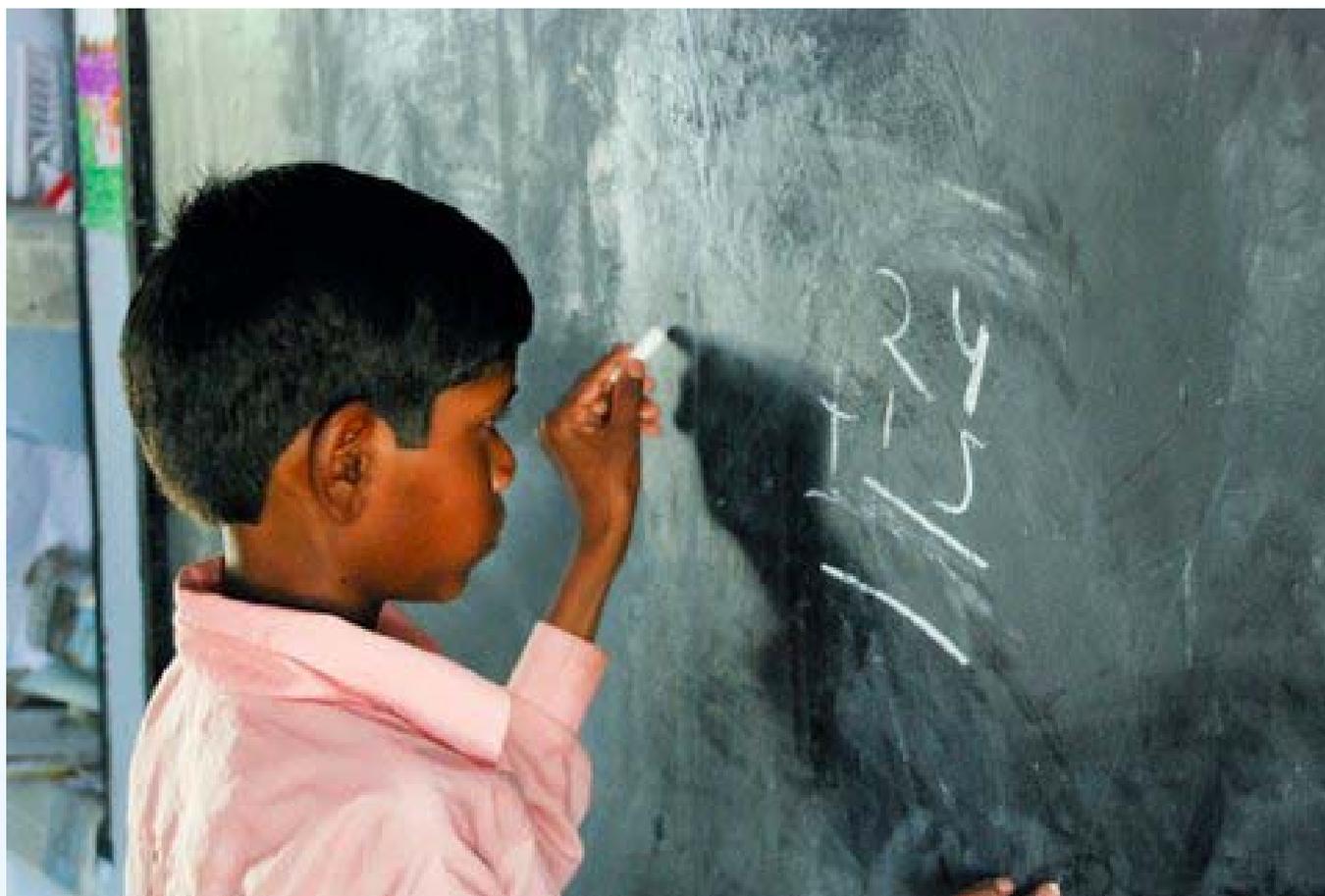
IMPROVING THE READING, WRITING AND LEARNING LEVELS OF CHILDREN AGED 6-14 YEARS IN RURAL AREAS

READ INDIA -EVERY CHILD READING, EVERY CHILD COUNTING.

The Goal:

- To improve learning of basic reading, writing and arithmetic among children across India.

- Change the attitude that "these children" cannot learn by showing that they do make rapid progress in a short time on a massive scale.

- Help in catalyzing a larger change inside the school system although that is not a primary design objective.

- Create the springboard to the next level of learning achievement beyond basic 3 R's.

Read India is Pratham's response to the low learning levels of children in the country. The campaign aims to catalyze existing resources and energize structures to strengthen children's learning. To achieve this goal, we work to mobilize village communities and village volunteers to work with children. We also work collaboratively with many state governments to train and support teachers. Partnerships with state governments provide a gateway to reach all students in the primary schools of the respective states as well as the teachers leading to large scale, systemic and permanent change. The basic principles underlying the program are that specific hours need to be dedicated on an everyday basis to reading, writing and arithmetic. This is done both in the schools and communities using Pratham's accelerated learning techniques.

"50% of children in government schools cannot read, write or do basic arithmetic despite being in school for 4-5 years".
-ASER 2005 & 2006.

PRATHAM

Read India

"The need for Read India was felt when Pratham's national survey indicated that only about 50% children in Std V can read a Std II text and even fewer can solve a simple division sum".
- Dr. Madhav Chavan, CEO and Co-founder, Pratham India Education Initiative.

Progress in 2008-09: Highlights

Reach and Coverage:
The campaign reached 33 million children across 19 states. 357 out of the total 600 disctricts were covered last year. A detailed state wise reach is provided in Table I in annexure A.

Building/Strengthening Partners
In 9 states (Chattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Punjab, Nagaland, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh) the campaign was rolled out through a complete state wide partnership with the government. In these states, the campaign was a part of the learning enhancement campaign under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan(SSA) and the entire state education machinery put it's weight behind the campaign. In 5 other states, district level partnerships were formed.

- **In 28 districts of Bihar,** Read India is being implemented through a strong collaboration with the Bihar Education project and UNICEF. The program follows a school based model, with Pratham providing training. From Feb 2009, the Government has implemented the Reading Improvement Program targeted at improving the learning levels of Std I and II students across the state in 28 districts and 49,461 schools.
- **In Chattisgarh,** the government is closely involved in the Read India program and provides Pratham's teaching learning material to the schools at their own cost, in addition to teacher training and monitoring support. **The Chattisgarh government is entering its 3rd year of partnership with Pratham.**
- Looking at the gains made by Pratham in the past year, the state government Gujarat adopted the Read India campaign the name of *'Chalo Vanchiyae'* under the Learning Enhancement Program. The campaign was launched across the state with Pratham as an implementing partner in 20 districts. Pratham's L2R (Learning to Read) technique, methodologies and assessment formats were included in teacher training manuals of standard I to IV.
- **In Punjab,** the government entered into a full state implementation partnership with Pratham and launched Parrho Punjab. Pratham has trained all the teachers in government schools and provided TLM support.

NATURE OF GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

	Informal	Formal
Full State	Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh	Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland, Punjab, Chhatisgarh, Assam, Uttarakhand
Partial State	Haryana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa	Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand

Legend:

- 🟩 Strong program
- 🟨 Medium program
- 🟥 Weak program

- ✴ Multi-year
- ⬤ Full year
- ◗ Short term
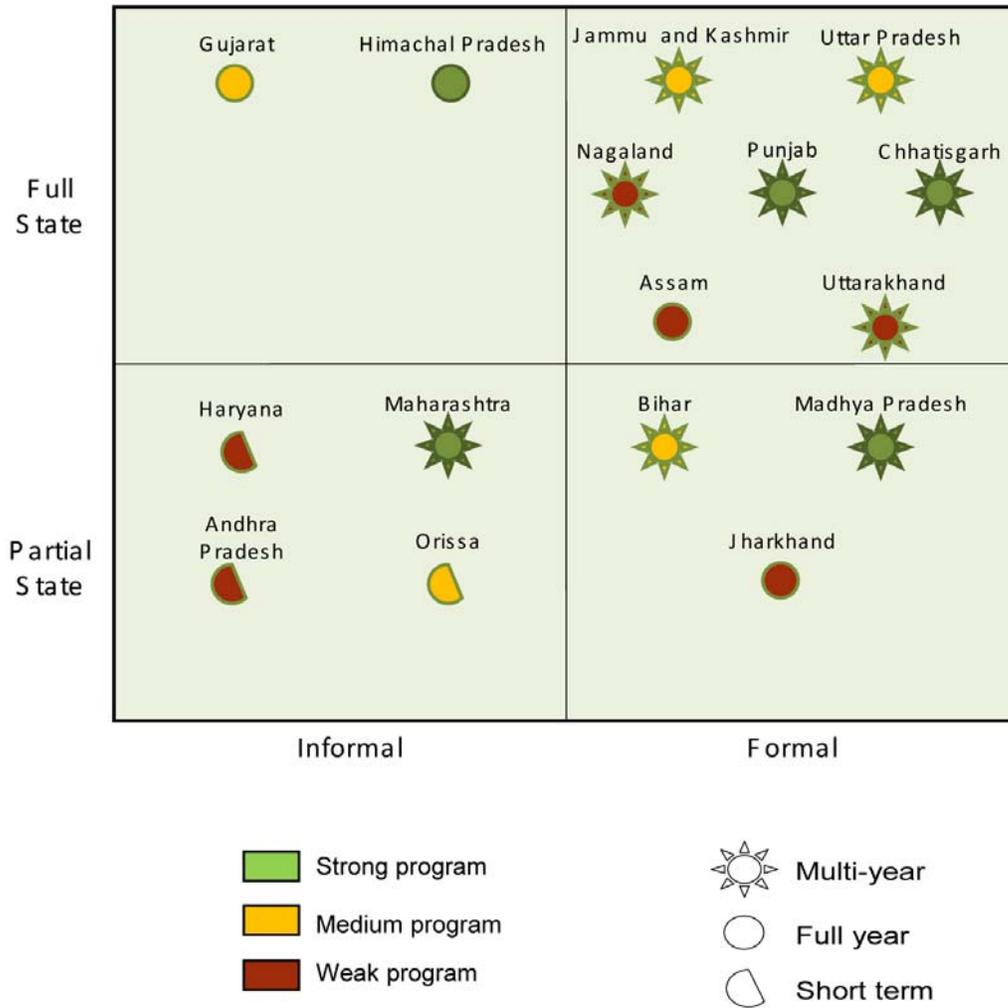
Formal partnerships with the state governments have provided the gateway to reach all students in the primary schools of the respective states as well as the teachers leading to a large scale, systemic and permanent change.

Partnerships at the community level

Read India also seeks to create benchmarks for learning so that accountability improves as does people's awareness about what to expect in terms of learning outcomes from schools. In several states, the panchayats are being involved to monitor the progress of the learning programme. In Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra the panchayat leaders have extended strong support towards the campaign by issuing letters urging community members to support the campaign and participate in it.

Trainings/ongoing support to teachers and volunteers

Over 600,000 government school teachers were trained, in accelerated learning technology. 450,000 unpaid volunteers have been mobilized and trained in improving the learning skills of children. In many villages, more than 1 volunteer has been mobilized and trained in the learning methodologies

Thus far, **there has been no serious progress in changing teacher centric practices to child centric thus far.** However, Pratham's new program that integrates, L2R and R2L along with new activities in state language learning, English, and math all promote a move away from rote learning and towards integration of DO, SAY, READ, AND WRITE activities in class, group, and individual environments. This is expected to have an impact over the year at least as a beginning.

Training government school teachers to create a systemic impact….Some Examples

In Bihar, Pratham trained over 48,000 government school teachers in reading improvement techniques for Std I and II under the *Bodhi Virksh Programme.* In addition, Pratham's L2R technique is a part of the pre-service training package of all new teachers in the state.

In Gujarat, the L2R technology was integrated into the learning enhancement program of the state SSA.

In Uttarkhand, Pratham provided training to teachers as part of the annual training of the state

Teacher Learning Material (TLM)

Special graded reading material which includes manuals, graded reading cards/books, currency notes, word charts etc has been developed by Pratham. The material has been distributed in schools by the government (for example in Punjab, Gujarat, Uttarakhand) and in villages by Pratham.

Steps have also been taken to build local capacity of states and school systems to create their own content. In Chattisgarh, for example, **Pratham held content creation workshops with the senior teachers and not only generated local content but also trained them in how to do it on an ongoing basis as a means for creating supplementary, background information on lessons that would encourage learning.**

There is an increased demand for supplementary reading materials across the states. *In Bihar, the need for supplementary reading material that is age and grade appropriate has been acknowledged by the system and expenditure by the government has been increased to almost INR 350 mln on the same. Across all regions, 2% of the district budget is being earmarked for additional reading material.*

[1] Village government

The impact on learning outcomes and Policy and practice
The impact of the campaign varies across the states based on the model and the scope of the campaign. Impact has been measured through three parameters:

1) ASER 2008: ASER is a reflection of the improvements in the learning levels across the state. The sample includes both children who have been a part of our interventions directly and those who have not. **A review of ASER results suggests that the campaign has received greater success in states where there was collaboration with the state government as against those where only a community based model was followed. As measured by ASER 2008 and mid ASER 2009, there are at least 5 states that show a major change (approximately 20 percentage points) in the learning levels of the children across the state i.e. U.P., MP, Maharashtra, Chhatisgarh, HP**

2) Internal Assessments: The assessments comprise of pre and post intervention evaluations conducted in all the regions. The sample here includes only the children who have been a part of the interventions and is conducted by the volunteers. The results show that there is a considerable increase in the learning levels of the children who have been a part of the intervention. In states, where a state wide level partnership was not formed, the improvements have not translated across the state.

Chhatisgarh

67% 36% 68% 31% 91% 70%

2006 2007 2008

Std. 3 — Std 1

Uttar Pradesh

33% 35% 44% 53% 55%

October April October

Historical avg — 2008
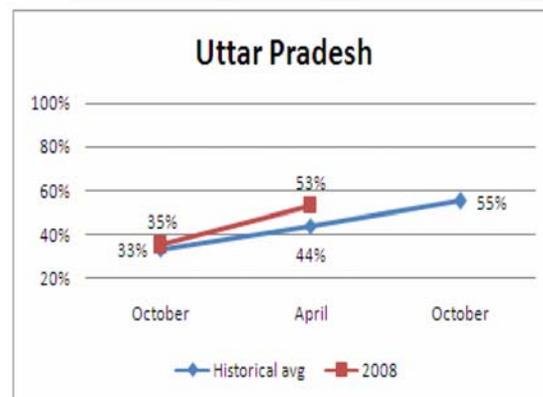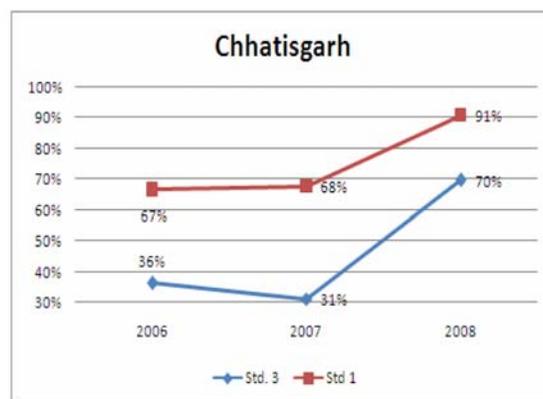
3) **External review:** In addition, the program was externally reviewed by a Joint Review Mission, facilitated by the Hewlett Foundation, comprising of donors, government representatives, educationists and representatives of other international organizations. The mission visited 6 states (Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Punjab and Maharashtra) and reviewed the programs against various parameters and submitted their feedback and reports to Pratham. The Mission suggests that the government system has begun to focus on learning outcomes, there is a demonstrable increase in the learning outcomes of the children and testing tools and assessments seem to have become a part of classroom practices. They have also pointed out to the challenges in terms of sustainability of impact, appropriate use of materials etc. Their suggestions are being used to strengthen the program.

Read India has also begun to make substantial impact on policy and practice. **In most states in the country today, one hour has been set aside for reading. Both the central and state governments are increasingly allocating more importance to the learning levels of the children. 24 states have taken up learning improvement programs.** In states where the campaign has been implemented in partnership with the government, the campaign has had an impact on the systems where the results can be seen in the class room practices, attendance rates etc. **Pratham has also started a movement for extra reading material in schools. Graded reading material is now being developed across the country.**

Read India has become the largest national movement of it's kind

Learning levels of 33 million children impacted across 305,000 villages

Central and state governments are increasingly according more importance to learning levels today.

24 states have taken up learning improvement programs.

A movement for supplementary reading material has begun. Graded reading material is being developed across the country.

FROM A VOLUNTEER TO A MASTER TRAINER - THE JOURNEY OF KUMODINI

This is the story of a young girl who has seen many ups and downs very early in life but never lost the will to prove herself. Kumodini is 21 year old girl living in village Maharamau, in district Umao, UP. Though she did her graduation in sociology, her parents married her very young. Her life was perfect for the first one year until she gave birth to a baby girl. Just then her world changed....her in-laws and husband started harassing her for not having given them a son and started demanding dowry from her parents. This was inspite of the huge dowry her parents had paid at the time of marriage. They regularly beat her and did not give her any food. One day her husband left her and their daughter at Kumodini's parents' house. At this point she heard of the Pratham summer camps and joined as a volunteer. She worked for a year and with her dedication and commitment she now works as a trainer monitor for Pratham.

As the UP team explains that it is great to see the same girl who until a year back could not speak 5 sentences in front of people take on large groups in her village. Today she contributes to her family's monthly income and now wants to do her Masters in social work. She has also enrolled her daughter in a private school. The daughter's school is a few kilometers away from the village and she sends her child in an auto rickshaw. Today Kumodini has the confidence, means and will to make decisions for her and her daughter's life.

There are many such Kumodini's in the 305,000 villages we have reached. Though a large reason of their achievement has been their individual commitment and hard work, we like to believe that by giving them an opportunity, we have had a small role to play in helping transform their lives.

IMPROVING ENROLLMENT AND LEARNING LEVELS OF UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN LIVING IN URBAN SLUMS

THE URBAN DIRECT PROGRAMS

The Goal:

- Every child in the age group 3-5 years has access to pre-school education.

- Every child in the age group 6-14 years goes to school.

- Every child in the age group of 6-14 years knows how to read, write and do basic arithmetic.

- Every child has access to books.

The "direct" programs are located in low income or educationally backward communities in close to 43 cities. Activities include pre-school education, school-readiness programs, "bridging courses" to prepare and mainstream out of school children into the formal system, learning support and remedial teaching to in-school children who are lagging behind, children's libraries to create an environment for learning in the community and teaching basic conversational English.

PROGRESS IN 2008-09: HIGHLIGHTS

Pre-school education, the Balwadi

Regular preschool classes were run in the community for children who did not have access to a pre-school facility being run by the government or any other NGO. The classes provided school preparedness programs to the children and also focused on the all round development and health of these children.

Pratham has also been working closely with the government as a technical resource group for training anganwadis teachers in early childhood education. In Delhi, Pratham signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Women and Child Development whereby the Pratham balwadis were integrated into the anganwadis is two locations in the city. In Patna, Pratham balwadi teachers were supporting pre-school education activities approximately 120 anaganwadi centers under the ICDS scheme.

1) **Learning support classes:** aim to improve the reading, writing and arithmetic levels of the children. The programs target both out-of-school children and those who are in school but require additional help. This year, while the Learn to Read (L2R) activities were continued, there was an expansion of the Read to Learn (R2L) program. R2L is an extension of L2R where once the basic skills of the children are built, efforts are undertaken to develop their comprehension and self-expression skills. Pilots of R2L classes were organized across different regions and efforts are now underway to scale up the programme.

2) **Libraries:** The Libraries aim at sustaining children's interest, strengthening their reading skills and providing support to all round learning. In 2008-09, the libraries were run in 14 states and over 500,000 books were borrowed and read.

3) **Scholarship program:** was run in Delhi, Mumbai and Maharashtra to help Std IV and VII children take the mandatory scholarship exams held by the state. The exams test the aptitude of children in language, maths and analytical skills. Pratham conducted classes in schools to help children acquire the basic skills to negotiate these exams, thereby improve their overall learning levels. Meetings were also held with parents to explain to them the importance of the scholarship examination and facilitate their greater involvement. In Maharashtra, 97% if the children who were a part of Pratham classes sat for the exam held in February.

4) **English Program:** The English program is focused on improving children's basic comprehension, listening and speaking abilities. Both rural and urban programs are operational 6 states (Maharasthra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Chattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh). In urban areas, 30% improvement in reading and 46% improvement in oral skills was observed. Results were better in rural areas. Almost 86% children attending classes now have letter recognition (less than 13% at the beginning of the module) and are able to attach sounds to letter. Children are confident of greetings, expressing likes, dislikes and wants. They can answer direct factual questions and are able ask 'what, how and who' questions correctly.

I Can read English program was started from October 2008 in Mumbai. the program was designed for volunteers who were interested in teaching children to spend two hours of their time each week to teach the underprivileged children basic English. The program covered 355 municipal schools of Mumbai

From Doing Housework to Homework

Neetu is the eldest daughter of her family in Kasaibada(Balda) in Sadar, Lucknow.

Her parents are sweepers and go out to work every day. Though only 11 years old, she has to do all the housework. For this reason, when she started going to the Pratham library, she could devote little time to it.

On her first day in the library, "Didi" took her learning test, and got to know that she couldn't read or write anything. Then she told Neetu: "If you come to this library everyday, soon you'll be able to read and write."

She wanted to read and write. So she started completing her housework early so that she could

save 2 hours of her day to visit the library. Gradually, she was able to read and write. Later, Didi convinced her parents and helped her in taking admission to school.

Today Neetu goes to school and studies in std 5th. There are many such Neetu's whom we have reached and helped access the world of education.

Assessment, Survey, Evaluation and Research - The ASER Center

The Goal:

- Measure the enrollment and leaning levels of the children aged 6-14 years

- Create awareness regarding learning levels among the citizens and government

- Build capacity to design and implement ASER and ASER like rapid assessment efforts.

- Build a network of researchers who will strengthen various aspects of ASER, and explore how ASER data can be linked to other academic work
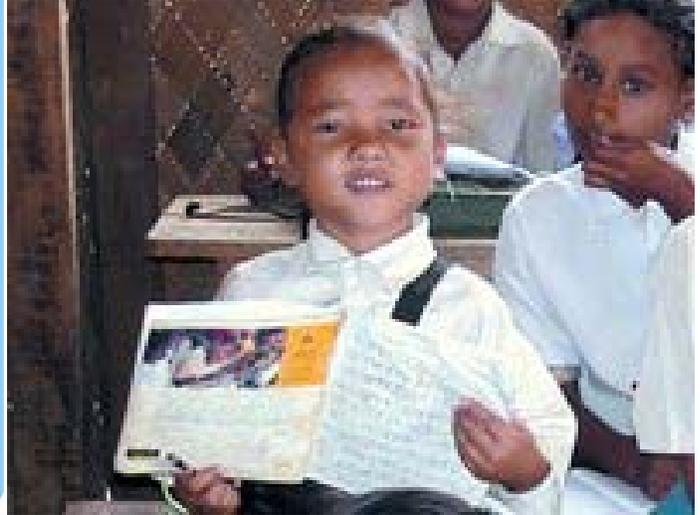
Facilitated by Pratham, ASER(meaning impact in Hindi) is the largest household survey undertaken in India by people outside the government. It annually measures the enrollment as well as the reading and arithmetic levels of children in the age group of 6-14 years. Each year, the entire ASER effort from fieldwork to release of survey results takes only 100 days. The widespread dissemination of the annual ASER results has helped to focus government attention on the issue of learning. The ASER centre was established in 2008 to institutionalize and strengthen ASER and ASER -like initiatives.

Progress in 2008-09: Highlights

- The Annual Status of Education Report 2008 was released on January 13, by Dr. Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission. In 2008, ASER reached over 7,04,000 children in 16,198 villages in 564 rural districts in India. More than 32,000 volunteers from NGOs, colleges and universities, youth and women groups participated in this effort. The report is available at www.asercentre.org.

- Replication of ASER in other countries: ASER is also being replicated in other countries. Pakistan is carrying out a national ASER exercise under the umbrella of SAFED. In Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, an ASER like initiative called UWEZO is being designed. Training and support for both these efforts is being provided by ASER Centre.

In October, ASER Centre was the Gold Winner in the 2008 Excellence in Information Integrity Awards, awarded by the Information Integrity Coalition, U.S.A.

- The ASER Centre has designed and conducted a series of long (2 year) and short duration courses aiming to build basic capacity for assessment, survey, analysis and research. Under the long duration course, a first batch of ASER associates was recruited from almost all parts of the country. These were young people with significant field experience but not much experience in assessment and survey. In the first year, they were provided training in statistics, data analysis, survey methods and communications. In addition, several online courses are also being developed.

- ASER Centre is collaborating with other institutions on a range of research projects. Current studies include,

- A study of teaching and learning in government primary schools in 5 states(in collaboration with UNICEF)

- A study of Village Education Committees in Bihar (with the National University of Educational Planning and Administration);

- A study of fund flows in primary education (with the Accountability Initiative and the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy);

Enrolment isn't education

WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY 2009
NEW DELHI
Business Standard

Pratham, the non-governmental organisation engaged in education, has come out with its fourth Annual Status of Education Report (Aser) for rural India. The results are as interesting as in previous years: there is a steady increase in school enrolment and attendance, but not much (if any) improvement in the level of education attained. Drop-out levels remain high, and the majority of students in Class V are unable to do the work that they should have mastered three classes earlier. These are decidedly mixed results when there has been massive recruitment of teachers, and more money spent under a variety of schemes, including the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan for building the physical infrastructure for schools.

The survey confirms the continuation of the trend towards private schools accounting for more enrolment than before (22.5 per cent in the latest survey, up from 16.4 per cent three years earlier). This should not be a surprise, because Aser finds that private schools do a significantly better job than state schools. Despite this trend, the over-all level of educational attainment across the country remains unchanged, when judged by the standard Aser test of whether a student in Class V can undertake a reading or arithmetic test that should be done by a student in Class II. An earlier survey had highlighted a clear bias towards wanting to learn English, as the aspirational language as well as the language of the job market. Both trends run counter to the thrust of state government policy, which is to discourage private providers of education and also to focus on education in the mother-tongue. However, in recognition of societal trends, states like West Bengal and Gujarat have started re-introducing public school education in English.

The most encouraging finding of the survey is that states that have so far been considered backward when it comes to literacy and providing education have started on a course of rapid improvement. Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh have done very well on many parameters, as has Bihar—unlike Uttar Pradesh, which remains a laggard. Gujarat too shows up poorly, although its chief minister, Narendra Modi, makes special mention of how much he has improved the education attainment of girl children in his state. The big shock however is that Kerala, for long the poster boy when it came to mass literacy and education, has now been overtaken by Madhya Pradesh on key parameters. Tamil Nadu too does not show up well.

The broad lesson to be drawn from a survey that seems to throw up contradictory findings (but which remains credible, regardless, because of the sheer scale of the sampling—3 lakh households and 7 lakh children) is that education attainment needs to match the significant improvements in school enrolment. This is not easy in an environment dominated by teachers who are government employees and who can be neither rewarded for good performance nor punished for non-performance. However, to the extent that many state governments are experimenting with different solutions (teachers hired on contract, at substantially lower salaries, are the new norm in many states), and since an annual survey helps generate a sense of competition among the states to do better than the others, there is hope that the picture will improve before long. This is a vital issue because, if India is to benefit from the "demographic dividend" of a larger percentage of the population entering the workforce in the coming quarter century, it has to be ensured that those new workers are properly educated so that they can be fully productive. If not, the country will have lost a once-for-all opportunity at the time of its key demographic transition.

More children joining school in rural India

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: Indicating a sharp rise in school enrolments in rural India, the Annual Status of Education Report released by NGO Pratham shows that only 2.7% children in the age group of 7-10 and 6.3% in the 11-14 years group, weren't attending school in 2008.

Bihar showed remarkable progress in bringing its out-of-school figures (of children aged 6-14 years) down from 13.1% in 2005 to 5.7% in 2008. On the other hand, Gujarat showed a decline in most learning indicators. The survey, covering most of rural India, also notes the good progress made by children in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in reading ability and arithmetic. **P 15**

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2009

TIMES NATION

More kids going to school: Survey

Figures Point To Success Of Govt's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Scheme

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

New Delhi: The country's progress report on education finally makes for happy reading. The Annual Status of Education Report on rural India released by NGO Pratham shows that only 2.7% children in the age group of 7-10 and 6.3% in the 11-14 years age group are out of school — squarely proving the success of the government's flagship Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.

The NGO's survey in 2007 had put the proportion of out-of-school children in the 6-14 years age bracket at 4.2%. In 2006, the figure was 6.6%. Though the changed age bracket in the 2008 survey makes comparisons with past years difficult, the figures do indicate a continuation of the downward trend.

The second good news from the survey — which covered 564 districts, 16,198 villages and 3.35 lakh households — is that Bihar has done remarkably well in getting children to go to school. From 13.1% out-of-school children in the age group of 6-14 in 2005, the state has brought the number down to 5.7% in 2008. Similarly, the proportion of out-of-school girls in the age group of 11-14

REPORT CARD

- NGO Pratham's survey shows that only 2.7% children in the age group of 7-10 and 6.3% in the 11-14 years group are out of school
- It states that Bihar has done remarkably well in getting children to go to school
- Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have shown dramatic improvement in reading ability and arithmetic since 2007
- Private school enrolment shows a 37.2% increase over the baseline of 2005

in the state has dropped from 20.1% to 6.8%.

On the other hand, Gujarat, busy attracting investors from around the world, has shown steady decline in most learning indicators. In fact, in many parameters, it has fallen below the national average, be it the percentage of children who can recognize numbers, read text, do subtraction, tell time or do currency tasks.

As for learning abilities, the Pratham report, qualitatively far behind NCERT's rigorous surveys, shows that Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have shown dramatic improvement in reading ability and arithmetic since 2007. The proportion of children in class III who can read a Class I level text has increased from 31% in 2007 to 70% in 2008. The proportion of Class V children who could read Class II level text in 2007 was 58% that has gone up to 75% in 2008. In Chhattisgarh, 91% of children in Class I can identify numbers 1-9 or more.

In MP, 87% of government school children in Class V can read Class II level text. In fact, MP tops the survey's scale of reading among all states, including Kerala and Himachal Pradesh. In arithmetic, 91% children in Class I can identify numbers 1-9 or more. In Class III, the proportion of children in MP who can solve subtraction problems has jumped from 61.3% in 2007 to 72.2% in 2008, while in Kerala it is 61.4%.

However, Pratham's learning ability survey asks students to read or do arithmetic of lower level than the class they attend, while NCERT's survey tests students' abilities in science, mathematics, social science and English from the class they are in. Therefore, Pratham founder Madhav Chavan's claim that both learning ability surveys are basically the same is questionable.

Another claim made by Chavan, that there is no other survey like Pratham's, also needs to be put in perspective. The district information system for education of the National University for Education Planning and Administration (NUEPA) is not a sample survey like Pratham but is based on actual tabulation of the status of 1.25 million recognized schools, teachers, social classes, retention and other things. In addition, NUEPA compiles data on infrastructure in schools.

Yet, the Pratham survey does give a picture of the country's state of education. For instance, it establishes that there are primary schools within 1 km of 92.5% rural habitations while 67.1% villages have government middle schools.

However, there are private schools in 45.6% villages. In fact, as already established by the more rigorous NUEPA survey, there has been a mushrooming of private schools, which increased from 16.4% in 2005 to 22.5% in 2008.

Private school enrolment shows a 37.2% increase over the baseline of 2005. The survey shows that half of all school-going children in Kerala and Goa are in private schools. It is another matter that 95% of private schools in Kerala and 70% in Goa are government-aided. Looking at the rising enrolment in private schools in rural India, Planning Commission deputy chairperson Montek Singh Ahluwalia has pushed for the PPP model in elementary schools. But this has found few takers in rural areas.

THE IMPACT OF ASER

The President of India, speaking recently on behalf of the newly formed government at the centre, announced that **the government will bring out five annual reports in the areas of education, health, employment, environment, and infrastructure.** This, we believe, is a direct consequence of Pratham's practice of annually bringing out the Annual Status of Education Report, which was supported by the Prime Minister and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. The ASER reports have been exercises in advocacy and practice?, demonstrating not only the importance of generating current and reliable data but also the feasibility of low cost strategies for gathering such data and processing it in a timely manner.

ASER has been instrumental in bringing the issue of learning to the center of the education debate both at the national and state level. For several years ASER has been mentioned in policy documents and in discussions on the quality of education. ASER has led to more measurement, timely analysis, and evidence-based planning by government. For example, at national level there have been more independent studies commissioned by Government since ASER. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) District Annual Work Plan guidelines for 2008-2009 include a new item for learning enhancement efforts, which enables districts to spend 2% of the district outlay learning improvement programs in primary schools.

At the state level, there has been an increase in the number of government programs to strengthen the foundations of basic learning in primary grades. As many as 13 states are using ASER-like tools in schools to measure the progress of reading and arithmetic (Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir,UP, Bihar, Assam, Chattisgarh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka) . Several states mention ASER findings in their own policy, planning and review documents

WORKING WITH VULNERABLE CHILDREN-
PRATHAM COUNCIL FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN

The Goal:

- Reach out to children in vulnerable conditions and alleviate their condition.

- Bring them into Education net and Mainstream them into schools

- Sustain them in schools and improve their levels of learning

- Prevent children from being exposed to vulnerable and abusive conditions

- Create Scalable City and Rural Models across India for the prevention and abolition of child labour

Pratham Council for Vulnerable Children has been working since 2001 with vulnerable and working children to help them receive basic education and live a better life. The Council's programs include prevention, rehabilitation, repatriation, rescue and education of vulnerable and working children. It is working in 8 states which form a network of the source states (from which child labour migrates) and the receiving states (where the child labour migrates to).

PROGRESS IN 2008-09: KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2008-09, the campaign reached 37,500 children through a range of programs. The percentage distribution is given in the graph below.

National Advocacy achievements:

PERCENTAGE WISE COVERAGE BREAKUP — Rescue, Educational, Shelters, Prevention, Skill, Disability — 1.27, 3, 10.3, 42.8, 1.34, 41.27

- Mrs. Faida Lambay, Director PCVC, became the member of the **State Commission for Protection of Child Rights.** The commission will review provisions under various laws for protection of children's rights and implement them effectively in Maharashtra.

- PCVC became a part of the district review team of UNICEF looking into activation of task forces across Maharashtra.

- PCVC was invited as a **Resource organization in the National Convention on Right to Education and Abolition of Child Labour,** organized by the National Commission for Protection of the Rights of the Children (NCPCR). Ms. Farida Lambay chaired the session on issues of Migrant Child Labourers and recommendations were made to the National Panel.

- In **Andhra Pradesh,** PCVC was invited to be a part of the State Consultation on the Draft of the State Plan of Action for Eradication of Child Labour. The suggestions and remarks made by Pratham were incorporated in the final document.

- In **Rajasthan,** PCVC became a member of three- member state level committee for revising the NCLP guidelines. The committee was constituted in July 2008 by the Principal Secretary, Dept of Labor and Employment. The District Collector, Jodhpur also involved Pratham in a pilot project, Navjeevan Yojna (principally approved by Govt of Rajasthan), for rehabilitation of people engaged in production and selling of illicit liquor. The project is targeted four child labor prone slums of Jodhpur city.

- In collaboration with Save the Children Foundation, a prevention model through education was demonstrated in 25 villages in the district of Rajsamand which is one of the high sending districts of working children.

- In **Uttar Pradesh,** PCVCs efforts saw the Child Welfare Committee getting activated in the city of Kanpur with two weekly meetings. Every day raids in Lucknow by the Labour Department were initiated.
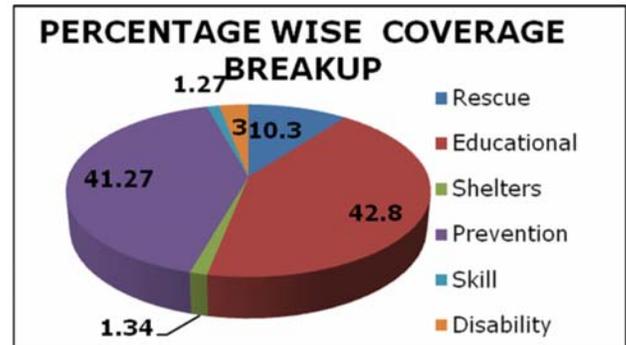
At the programmatic level too, major headway was made.

- In **Gujarat,** 73 children were jointly rescued by PCVC and the Labour Department. Out of the 73 children 60 were migrants from Patna. All the 60 children were successfully repatriated back through coordination with the CWC in Patna and the Juvenile Aid Police Unit.

In the shelter homes in Mumbai three boys cleared the Standard 10th Examination through the National Institute of Open Schooling. They are now going to the nearby Junior Colleges.

- PCVC made efforts to initiate educational programs in the Government run institutions across the PCVC network. The network reached 2 homes in Mumbai, 1 in Ulhasnagar, 1 in Pune, 2 in Hyderabad and in Luckow and Kanpur were covered.

- The Life Style Education program promoting sports and hygiene, in collaboration with the Australian NGO Red Dust was conducted across 5 shelters in India. Stalwarts in cricket like Allan Border, Damien Fleming, Vinod Kambli and Abey Kuruvilla gave children important tips on the game.

- Expanding the definition of Vulnerability of children, the Mumbai program piloted a community based program for children with disabilities. Camps were organized for mentally challenged children wherein they were tested and accordingly Disability certificates were issued to the children. This year **871** children were covered through the camps. For children with physical impairment physically impaired children, calipers, Jaipur foot, wheelchairs tricycles and hearing aids were distributed.

FROM A RAILWAY PLATFORM TO A SHELTER HOME....THE STORY OF PINTYA

10 year old Somnath alias 'Pintya' met Pratham staff at midnight at the CST Railway Station. A run away from Pune, he had been to 3 different shelter homes before.

During the interaction it was found that he had been through an extremely traumatic childhood. He was caught by the police in Pune Railway Station and was badly beaten up. Pintya was a victim of verbal and physical abuse at his home front. He was used to being beaten up by his drunkard father. Fed up of his circumstances he eloped from home and reached Mumbai. It took a lot of convincing and dialogue with Pintya to get him to the shelter home. He came to the shelter home in April 2008. During his initial days he disliked the rules and regulations in the shelter. He abused everyone in the shelter home and wanted to run away.

Just when we thought Pintya would not be able to stick around for long, he proved us wrong. He was engrossed in the drawing and would not get distracted for a second. After about ten minutes he would go up to the shelter staff and proudly showed them his drawing. That was his first step towards getting used to the routine of the shelter.

Within no time he became the biggest prankster and regular member of the educational classes. He was seen engrossed trying to write and spell basic alphabets in Marathi. He struggled his way through the textbooks but kept trying hard to match his friends.

In June 2008, he was admitted in the Janabai Rokade Municipal School, in Std. I at age 10. Looking at his progress the teachers promoted him to Std. II. This year Pintya stood Second in his class and has made it to Std. III. He aspires to be first in his class next year.

Facilitating the use of IT - The Computer Aided Literacy Program (CAL)

The Goal:

- To Bridge the digital divide

- To use IT to impact the learning levels of underprivileged children.

CAL is operational in 7 states (Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab) and since its inception has served over 1,25,000 children and youth. CAL is a school based program and today over 189 centers are operational in different schools including Government unaided, Government - aided, Private, Government schools. The program uses information technology to improve the learning levels of the children and familiarize them with the use of computers. For children in primary schools the focus is on using computers and educational software to enhance the child's basic competencies such as knowledge of number, operations on numbers, geometry, recognition of vowels and consonants, word formation, basic etc. The programs for children of higher secondary schools focus on programming and graphics.

Progress in 2008-09

Trainings: Several trainings were conducted across all the CAL centers to upgrade the skills of the sancharaks(instructors) and to familiarize them with the new and revised syllabus. They were also trained to use the updated educational software Jigar I, II and III. Trainings were also organized to upgrade the hardware skills and MIS skills of the Sancharaks. The core objective of the trainings has been to teach Sancharaks to provide education to the children through 'Project Based Learning Method which helps students learn faster.
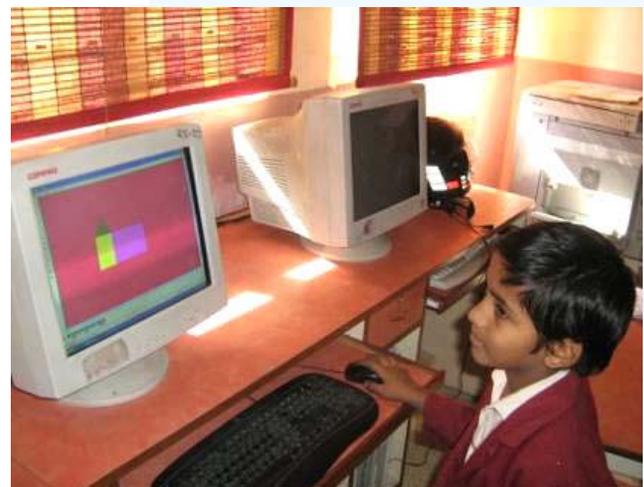
Activities: Competitions, Exhibitions and other activities were also organized throughout the year for children of the CAL program. In Jaipur, on the occasion of Teacher's Day, a hand-writing competition was organized for the children of standard I and II; and a drawing competition for children of standard III and IV. In Delhi, an IT competition was organsied for students of I to X of Dilshad Public School. In November, art and essay competitions were organized in the school of Lucknow. Children actively participated in all these events.

Impact

- Experience has shown that computer learning has a positive impact on the children's learning, motivation, concentration and application. A study by MIT, USA concluded that Math scores of children who participated in the CAL program improved by a 0.47 deviation. Our experience also shows that the Centres are instrumental in attracting children to school, creating enthusiasm around the learning process, improving MIS systems of schools, developing teacher capacities, involving parents more in their children's education, training local youth etc. Thus the benefits and beneficiaries are numerous.

- Assessments were conducted in a sample of 24 schools and 2,059 children. The results show that the percentage of children in Std.I who could read a paragraph increased from 11% to 41%. The percentage of children who could do subtraction increased from 21% to 51%. Similar improvements were observed among students of other classes.

- Among children of Std V, 65% of the children could do sound recording, 54% image variation and 33% slide making.

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO UNEMPLOYED AND UNDEREMPLOYED YOUTH

THE VOCATIONAL SKILLING PROGRAM

The Goal:

- Train unemployed and underemployed youth with employable skill sets.

- Help economically disadvantaged youth start their own businesses.

In 2007, Pratham started skilling centers across Maharashtra, which were targeted at providing underemployed and unemployed youth vocational skills to make them employable. There are four different types of skilling programs. Tier 1 programs are knowledge centers that provide industrial training. To this end, Pratham partnered with different corporations like Taj Hotels, Larsen and Toubro, Deutsche Bank and Godrej Agrovet, which provide the expertise in their respective fields. Tier II centers are located in semi-urban and rural locations and teach a wide variety of market relevant skills. Tier III programs are grassroots centers that are village or community based programs and teach specific skills like cooking and tailoring. Tier IV programs are entrepreneurial support programs at the village or slum level where support like financial training or market linkages are provided.

Progress in 2008-09: Key Highlights

- The **PACE Financial Services Knowledge Centre was inaugurated** in Bhandup, Mumbai in partnership with **Deutsche Bank** for those who want to make career in Banking, Financial Services and Insurance.

- The **PACE Agriculture Knowledge Centre** was started in Satara in partnership with **Godrej Agrovet.** This was later also expanded to Sangli, Solapur and Ralegaon.

- The PACE Agriculture Knowledge Centre at Sangli has been set up with the support of **EdelGIve Foundation.** A **Farmer Service Centre (FSC)** has also been set up in Satara and Sangli with Government approved soil testing laboratories, through which the center provides complete crop solutions to farmers. These FSCs have benefitted 500 farmers covering aprox 1,000 acres in Maharashtra. **The Agri Department of Maharashtra Govt. is very impressed with the center and wants to tie up with PACE for Agri Consultancy,** farmer training and soil testing. Some of the local sugar factories and agro-based companies are also keen on getting consultancy from us for which we propose to charge a fee.

- The **PACE Construction Knowledge Centre was set up** in Latur in partnership with **Larsen & Toubro (L&T).** This course is free of cost and residential facilities are given to the trainees. The batches commenced in August. Temporary dormitory facilities were provided to the trainees. Two courses - Masonry and Barbending - have been initiated and the third course of Formwork will be started soon. With the help of L&T, a stipend of Rs. 3750 was provided to each trainee, for the course duration of 2-3 months.

- The **PACE Hospitality Knowledge Centre** was initiated in Aurangabad in partnership with **Taj Hotels, Resorts and Palaces.** Construction is in progress. Batches for Food & Beverages and Housekeeping will start in 2009 - 10.

- Saksham Centers: small, low-investment grassroot centres imparting skills like Beautycare, Tailoring, DTP, Tally, Spoken English, Mobile Repair etc. were started at locations where Pratham's CLCs existed as an initiative to enable rural youth to set up their own village - based enterprises. Currently, these centres are located in Kolhapur, Nashik, Umerga, Mangaon, Satara, Solpaur, Ralegaon, Anjangaon Surji, Panvel, Katol, Ghansoli, Pimpri-Chinchwad and Nigdi. We have observed that about 80 per cent of our trainees at these centers are women from disadvantaged backgrounds. We are now tying up with local mahila mandals to run our centers as an initiative to economically empower women.

- The Tier IV or **Entrepreneurship program** has been launched in partnership with **Barclays Bank** and will be fully operationalised in 2009-2010.

The Prison Program

A training program for inmates at Ratnagiri Special Prison was started during the end of last year. This initiative was taken to impart computer and communications skills training along with literacy to the thousands of undertrials who languish in jails for years spending more time in prison than their convictions would merit. This program was expanded to three more prisons - Taloja, Alibaug and Sawantwadi. Libraries were also started in prisons which are well attended by all inmates. The Hon'ble I.G., Government of Maharashtra has appreciated this program and granted permission to conduct similar training in 11 more prisons.

Impact:

- Overall, over 2,500 youth were covered in 2008 - 09 through all the training centres.

- Through Knowledge Centres (Tier I), 50% of the trainees were placed. At PACE Financial Services Centre, the trainees have received salary offers as high as Rs. 18,000. In PACE Agriculture Training Centre, the trainees have had an approximate income increase of Rs. 1500 - 2000. Most of the trainees in Agriculture went back to use the training in their own fields.

- Through PACE Foundation Course Centres (Tier II) 34% of the trainees were placed, while most of the remaining trainees pursued higher education after the course. Of those who were unemployed at the time of joining the course, 45% were placed, 8% started their own business while most of the others joined college.

- At Saksham Cetres (Tier III), 60 - 70 % of the students were unemployed before getting enrolled. 40 - 50% of the trainees have some earning after completing the course. Income range of these trainees is Rs. 500 to 2500. 20 - 25% of the trainees are self employed with an income range of Rs. 500 to 5000. The types of work they are involved in are Beauty Parlors, Tailoring, Embroidery, Construction, Retail, Office IT and Teaching.

I used to work as a contract employee with Axis Bank in their backoffice processing earning a salary of Rs.4500/- per month. But I wanted to get into the permanent roles of the bank. I tried a lot but failed due to poor English speaking skill, poor presentation skills and lack of knowledge about the industry. I quit my job and completed the course offered by Pratham InfoTech Foundation and now I am working with Axis Bank as their confirmed Employee earning Rs.12800/- per month.

Early Childhood Care and Education Center

The Goal:

- Build Capacity of government and private school teachers and volunteers in early childhood education and care.

- Help strengthen the government pre school anganwadi program

- Promote entrepreneurial effort in the field of ECCE.

The Early Childhood Care and Education Center was set up in 2007 to leverage and institutionalize the experience Pratham has in early childhood care and education. Through the center, Pratham is taking forth the learnings in this field and allowing for the experience and insight to be mainstreamed, through an institutional framework. The curricula is provided in English, Marathi and Urdu given the diversity of linguistic communities who access the trainings. The various training modules include courses on Early Childhood Education and Development: An Introduction; Child Psychology; Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development (Gross and fine motor skills); Cognitive Development.

Progress in 2008-09: Key Highlights

- A total of 11 centers (4 in Maharashtra, 2 in Hyderabad, 1 in Allahabad and 4 in Mumbai) were operational.

- 4 sub-centers were started in Mumbai to address the issue of drop-outs. Many trainees dropped out of the main centers as they were unable to traverse the long distance and hence these sub-centers were started. The sub-centers impart training in 3 medium of instructions - Hindi, Marathi and Urdu.

- A library was set up in each center in Mumbai to provide the trainees with access to books and encourage the habit of reading. This was critical as most trainees admitted that they did not have a habit of reading and did not even read a newspaper. Each library has an average of 100 books which cover ECCE related topic as well as health and fiction.

- Currently most of the trainees enrolled in the program are the teachers of Pratham program only. In order to get more enrolled for the program it is necessary to promote the program to external stakeholders. A survey was therefore undertaken to assess the need and interest of people. Consequently meetings were organized with Mahila MAndla, NGOs and municipal schools.

A Book in Every Child's Hand........Pratham Books


The Goal:

To provide underprivileged children with access to colorful books at prices they can afford and in languages they can read
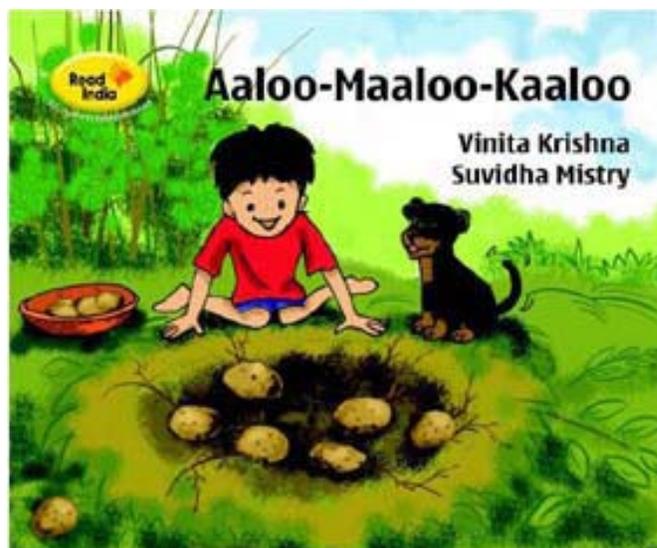
Pratham Books, a not-for-profit trust was set up in 2004 as a response to a large need gap in India for good quality and affordable books for children. They hope to reach those children who the market ordinarily would not reach, and therefore democratize the joy of reading. Till date they have produced 170 unique titles, most of them under Rs. 25, published in 10 Indian languages and English. They have spread the joy of reading to 7 million children with the aim of seeing, **"A book in every child's hand".**

Progress in 2008-09: Key Highlights

- One of the key highlights of last year was the work undertaken in Bihar. The "Bodhi Vriksha Karyakram" which was launched by the Bihar government, utilized 2% of the funds given to them through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to buy storybooks and resources for students of Stds 1 and 2. They invited a few publishers (including Pratham Books) to participate in Pustak Melas (book fairs) held in 37 districts of Bihar. The schools were encouraged to come to these melas and buy books for the children of their school. Through this initiative Pratham Books reached out to 6 million children in just one state.

- Last year , Pratham Books published 3.6 million books and sold 3.4 million books. Over 4 million story cards were printed and sold.

- Many titles of Pratham Books were included as curriculum books in leading schools across the country.

Financials

Source of Funds, 2008-09

- US Foundations — 26%
- Corporates — 22%
- Indian Foundations — 3%
- Pratham USA — 22%
- PIEI — 5%
- International Foundations — 14%
- Indian Government — 5%
- MNC — 1%
- Others — 2%

Use of funds, 2008-09

- Read India — 44%
- Direct — 20%
- Know How Centre — 28%
- Resource Centre — 3%
- Admin — 5%
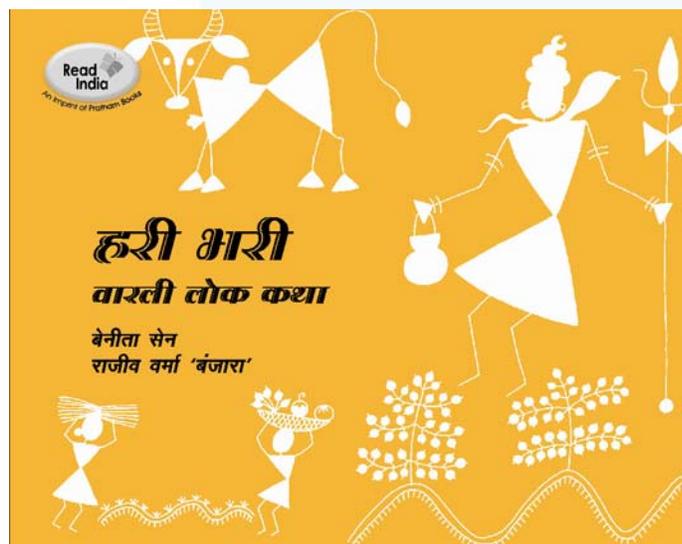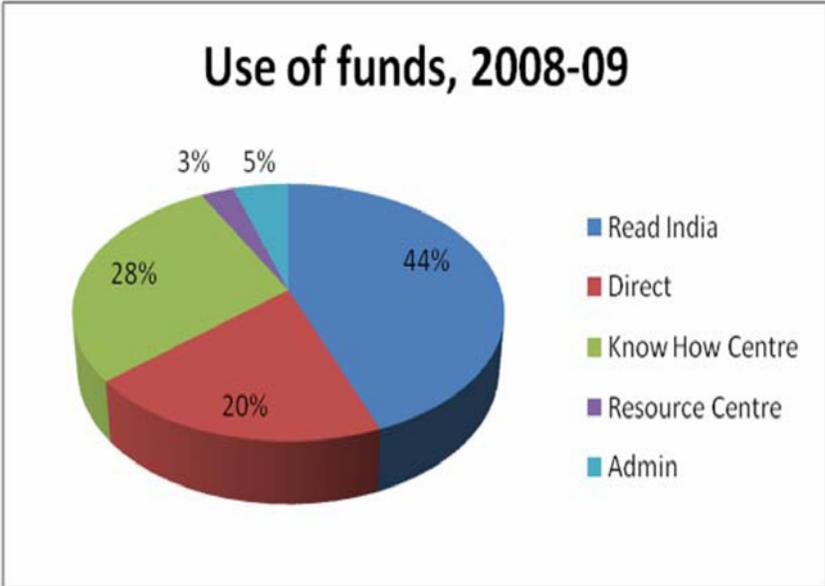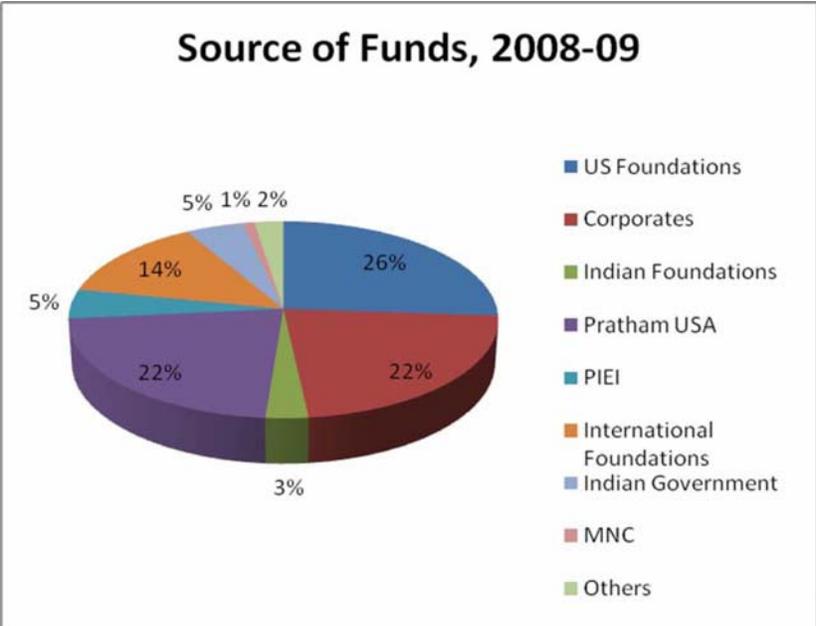
The Way forward

2008-09 was an important and productive year for Pratham. The flagship program Read India ran for the second year and improvements in the learning levels of the children reached under the campaign are clearly visible. The campaign, along with ASER has focused attention on the provision of quality education and impact. Last year saw several states introduce learning enhancement programmes and assessment tools to measure the impact of their programmes.

In order to be ready for the next era, Pratham has identified its need to focus more and more on learning quality and depth of learning, moving from being an organization that provides programs for basic reading and arithmetic to an organization that can deliver full academic support all year round to students whether it be English, Math, Sciences, Social Sciences, computers etc. The idea being that the basic literacy programs should now evolve to being implemented in a catalytic mode. In order to meet this requirement, we need to have stronger demonstration models and there are many internal challenges to be met- the first one being training and capacity building of our teams in readiness for delivery of more advanced content. The next most obvious one is the creation of the content and the methodology for delivering this content.

Efforts are already underway to move into the next phase of the Read India campaign - Read India II. This will focus on higher levels of academic content. The campaign will also reach out to children of Std VI-VIII.

Pratham will strengthen Read India through some changes in structures, some changes in campaign phasing, and through improvements in the content of training. In 2009-10, approximately 25 District Resource Centers are being set up in key states and there will be about 130 block resource centers, which are primarily teams of skilled trainers working on a district or a block scale respectively. Over the next three years, Pratham expects to create about 60 strong District Resource Centers through which it will continue to impact the 600 districts of India.

In the urban areas, Pratham aims at moving towards setting up and integrating our existing direct programs under one umbrella of the Urban Learning Centre which will be a dedicated space where existing programs will operate and new ones for higher learning will be developed. In order to encourage sustainability, the cost of each child must be covered either through fee or sponsorship by Pratham through its donors. **It is envisaged that these ULCs will push the government into action through demonstration of success and provide an alternative to parents. These programs will be rolled out as an alternative to community classes, only where we do not have strong catalytic campaigns in partnership with government schools.** Through the selective support mechanism, Pratham will ensure that vulnerable children in vulnerable communities are targeted and sponsored by Pratham/ donors to ensure that the education reaches the neediest children

PCVC continues to advocate against child labour and achieve success both at the policy and programmatic levels. The computer assisted learning programmes and the vocational skilling project are also likely to be scaled up.

We believe that with sufficient commitment, collaboration, and strategic focus, our goal of ensuring that every child is in school and learning well can be realized. In 2009-10, Pratham remains as firmly committed to this vision as always.

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HELPING CHILDREN DREAM............