

# Pratham/ASER Centre's Partnerships with District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) 2016-17

## Interim Report



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## 1. Background

The Indian government established the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) after the National Policy on Education (1986) called for an overhaul of the existing teacher education system. Keeping this in mind, DIETs were established in almost every district of the country, with the aim of organizing pre-service and in-service courses for elementary school teachers and for personnel working in non-formal and adult education. In addition to these courses and trainings, DIETs are expected to provide academic resource support such as development of locally relevant quality learning material, evaluation tools, educational technology aids etc. The vision for DIETs also included engagement with schools, headmasters, government officials, educational planners, administrators, to conduct research and training for successful implementation of strategies and programs in both elementary as well as adult education in their respective districts.

From the Pratham/ASER Centre perspective, collaboration with DIETs provided a good opportunity to integrate Pratham's teaching methods into the teaching practice of the DIET students in order to:

- Improve understanding of teaching-learning issues faced in schools and classrooms in the district
- Build capabilities of DIET students to improve teaching and children's learning
- Improve learning outcomes of children currently enrolled in schools through implementation of learning camps
- Facilitate a shift in focus towards improving children's basic learning levels in DIET lab schools, including incorporation of more learning-focused methods and materials (for both evaluation and teaching) into the official curriculum of the DIETs

## 2. Introduction

The largest and most ambitious activity in the 2015-16 Porticus grant was the implementation of year-long capacity building collaborations with 76 District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) in 13 states of the country. In 2016-17, Pratham/ASER Centre with Porticus decided to continue implementing its partnerships with 50 DIETs to build capacity of future teachers and improve the learning level of children studying in Std. 3-5 in nearby government schools. Taking from the learnings of the previous phase, this year the program was implemented in a more focused manner by i) forging partnerships with the most supportive states, ii) realigning the training program to suit the DIET calendar by offering the teaching-learning module, i.e. CAMaL on priority, and iii) pilot a program model for making the intervention sustainable in one state. Alongside these major changes, Pratham/ASER Centre also made certain process-level changes to improve training and monitoring during the program.

## 3. Program Reach

In order to maximize institutional interest, cooperation, and thereby the possibilities for future uptake, in all states Pratham/ASER Centre uniformly adopted a bottom-up approach for second-phase partnerships. Teams visited DIETs and informed them about the program in great detail. In two states, a list of interested DIETs was compiled and presented to the SCERT for its approval and support for a state-level partnership, however due to political or logistical reasons this request went unanswered in this phase.

Nevertheless, the program was implemented with the DIET Principal's approval and support in these DIETs. It can be said from this year's experience that results of the previous phase helped a lot in motivating new DIETs to implement the program for their students as well, even without permissions from a higher authority.

As shown in the table below, between July 2016 and March 2017 the program was implemented in 44 DIETs across five states. Approximately 4,000 DIET students were trained on CAMaL for 4-6 days. These students in turn conducted learning camps for 30-50 days in 960 schools.<sup>1</sup>

S. No.	State	Type of partnership	No. of DIETs	No. of DIETs repeated from Phase-1	No. of DIET students trained	No. of schools where learning camps were conducted	No. of children covered in learning camps
1	Bihar	District	8	4	466	90	6311
2	Chhattisgarh	State	18	18	2136	438	22286
3	Madhya Pradesh	District	8	5	513	117	3670
4	Tamil Nadu	District	3	-	115	65	1601
5	Uttar Pradesh	District	7	1	927	250	9129
	<b>Total</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>4157</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>42997</b>

Additionally, the program was also implemented in 46 private teacher training colleges in Chhattisgarh covering 2,500 students and 350 schools. However, the support and quality of implementation from the students and faculty in these colleges was up to the mark in less than half of the colleges.

DIETs from two states had to be dropped in this phase. In Haryana, this was due to change in teaching practice norms for the DIET students and in Rajasthan, because of a change of guard at the state level, resulting in non obtention of permission for the partnership. Learning camps implemented by DIET students in Haryana in the previous phase showed a very high level of improvement in learning levels of school children. A new guideline for teaching practice has been issued by the Haryana government recently; we hope to be able to engage with the DIETs in the state in the next phase.

#### 4. Program Implementation

##### *i) Training*

- Training manuals for DIET students were revised to emphasize on the key principles of CAMaL in the introduction. A fresh orientation of Pratham/ASER staff was conducted in all the states for delivery of this section during the training in the DIET.
- The training session plan was modified to help trainers plan their trainings according to the minimum time required to conduct each session.
- The time allotted for giving feedback to DIET students on the field pilot was also increased to facilitate more detailed discussions. Hence, the duration of training was increased from 4 to 6 days in three states.
- Mid-way through the camp a 1- or 2-day refresher was organized in almost every DIET, during which the students discussed the progress made and challenges faced in implementing learning camps in schools. Besides guiding the students on these matters and planning for the remaining part of the camp, the trainers also used these sessions to demonstrate some activities as revision.
- In Uttar Pradesh, considering very high enrollment, in some DIETs only select students were trained and monitored for camp implementation.

<sup>1</sup> As of data entered till mid-March 2017

## ii) Monitoring

- In this phase, dedicated efforts were made to improve and maintain quality of learning camps by relocating a specific number of trainers (usually 2) to the camp district for the duration of the camp. These trainers were required to visit 1-2 schools every day. Such schools were known as focus schools and at least 3 visits were made by the trainer to most focus schools, to provide support to students implementing camps in a more sustained manner by comparing student performance and children's progress over each visit.
- Taking from IDinsight's feedback on the need to improve students' administration of testing process in the field, a recheck process was introduced in this phase. All monitors were required to randomly recheck up to 5 children during baseline, midline and endline and record the number of children assessed correctly.
- The monitoring format for assessing the quality of learning camps was also revised for this phase and weekly calls were administered from a central location to all monitors to provide timely on-site support and collect data on some key indicators. The table below summarizes the data collected for all monitoring visits between September 2016 and February 2017.

State	No. of camp schools	No. of schools monitored in a focused manner	Total no. of visits during CAMaL camps <sup>2</sup>	No. of visits during CAMaL classes	% of visits in which children were found grouped as per their learning level	% of visits in which DIET students were found teaching in their own groups	% of visits in which lesson plan was prepared by DIET students for the CAMaL class	% of visits in which DIET students were found carrying out CAMaL activities properly
<sup>3</sup> Bihar	90	83	194	124	79	58	15	57
Chhattisgarh	438	438	384	364	93	92	84	86
Madhya Pradesh	125	81	131	82	90	89	78	88
Uttar Pradesh	228	200	218	144	83	84	51	72
Tamil Nadu	65	38	120	61	97	44	30	83
Total	<b>946</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>81</b>

## 5. Experiment in Sustainability – Case of Chhattisgarh

In view of the program objectives and the DIET's academic calendar, Pratham/ASER Centre and SCERT Chhattisgarh partnered to implement the program in 16 DIETs and 2 BTIs<sup>4</sup> in 2015-16. In 2016-17, a pilot to make the program sustainable was conducted in which Pratham/ASER Centre and SCERT created and trained a cohort of master trainers comprising two senior students trained in the previous year and two DIET faculty for each DIET. This group delivered the CAMaL training to the incoming first year of DIET students and one teacher from each school selected for conducting the learning camp, with support from Pratham/ASER Centre teams.

33 second year students and 37 DIET faculty were trained by Pratham/ASER teams in a state-level training organized in the SCERT. The performance and support of student master trainers in all DIETs and DIET faculty in most DIETs was excellent. Approximately 1673 first year students and 482 school teachers were

<sup>2</sup> This includes visits during baseline/midline/endline and CAMaL class

<sup>3</sup> In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh the percentage for quality indicators (last 4 columns) has been taken out of 113 and 65 visits, respectively. The new method for collecting monitoring data was introduced in Sept. Hence, data for visits prior to September could not be compiled.

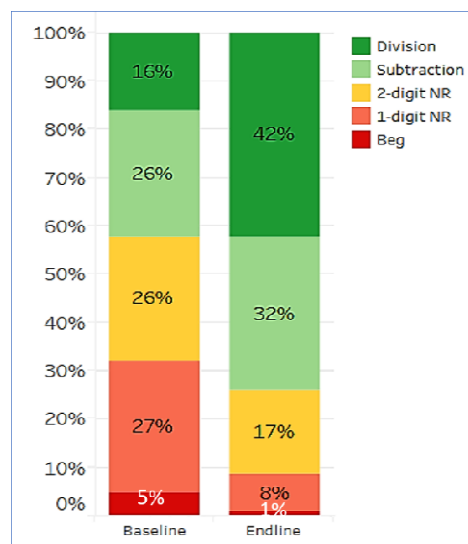
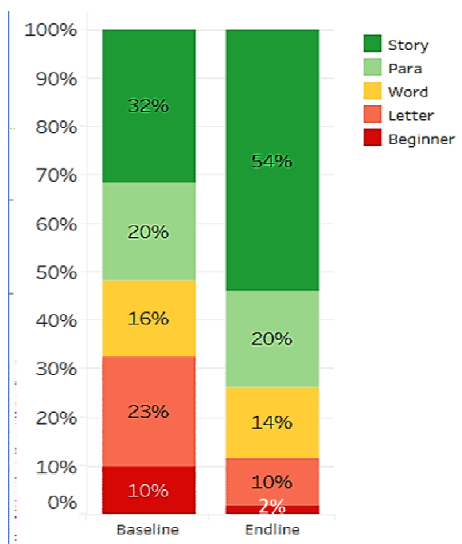
<sup>4</sup> BTI – Basic Training Institute. This teacher training institute is like a DIET but functions at the block level. When the administration has surplus funds, and plans to invest them in the BTI, the institute can be converted into a DIET.

trained by these master trainers. During their trainings the student master trainers showed a lot of enthusiasm, ownership of CAMaL teaching methods and quite often had anecdotes to share from their experience of implementing CAMaL during their teaching practice in schools in the previous year. Pratham/ASER Centre have recorded a few interviews of student master trainers and DIET faculty on their positive experiences of training other people on CAMaL and their thoughts on importance of the method and the need to incorporate it in the pre-service training system.

The areas for improvement which emerged from this experiment were: i) In most districts, where the DIET faculty was not very demanding or participative, attendance and participation of lab school teachers in trainings in the DIET was difficult to sustain; ii) Change of guard (SCERT Director) towards the end of the program resulted in teachers not implementing CAMaL methods (as planned at the outset) after DIET students had concluded their teaching practice days and left from the school, as no clear guidelines were given by the new administration; iii) It was also observed that quite a few school teachers during and post training continued to express concerns about the completion of the curriculum. This highlighted a gap in the coordination between two parallel education administration systems, the SCERT and the SSA, which made teachers unsure of their role after the training. Pratham/ASER Centre are looking forward to partnering with SCERT Chhattisgarh on a similar model of collaboration for 2017-18 and hope to be able to mutually resolve many of these issues.

## 6. Learning Camp Results

After the trainings, DIET students conducted learning camps according to the CAMaL methodology in different schools to improve children’s abilities in basic reading and arithmetic. The graphs below show improvement in children’s learning levels after these camps in about 1236 schools in 5 states<sup>5</sup>.



### a) Learning Level in Reading

The proportion of readers in Grades III-V (children who could read at least paragraphs) increased from 52% to 74%, i.e. a 22 percentage point increment. Percentage of children in Grades III-V who could read only letters or less decreased from 33% to 12%, i.e. a 21 percentage point decrease.

### b) Learning Level in Arithmetic

The percentage of children in Grades III-V who could do at least subtraction increased from 42% to 74%, i.e. a 32 percentage point increment. Total percentage of children in Grades III-V who could only recognize single-digit numbers or less decreased from 32% to 9%, i.e. a 23 percentage point decrease.

<sup>5</sup> Based on data entered till mid-March 2017. Data entry for more schools is ongoing. 1200 includes 960 schools covered with DIETs and the remaining with private teacher training colleges.