

Angreji Seekho – Idea Cellular and Pratham Pilot Programme

Background:

According to ASER 2014, even after completing 8 years of schooling, only 46.8% children can read simple English sentences and of these, only 43% can comprehend the sentences that they have read. With an increasing demand for English as an important skill for employment attempts to simplify the language keeping in mind the background of the learner hasn't been successfully achieved.

India has a mobile penetration of approximately 51% with a subscriber base of almost 700 million users. By 2016, this subscriber base is expected to grow by another 21% hitting the 71% mark. At its core, the proposed pilot is simply trying to provide easy access to good quality content for individuals who wish to learn basics of English. To achieve this, the project aims to leverage cellphone technology and the massive subscriber base (with a good reach in rural areas as well) to teach English to students through combined use of mobile phones for listening and print material for reading.

To implement this programme, an “English Club” of about 30 to 50 children (pre-dominantly Std 5-8) is formed around a Cell-Phone Librarian in different communities, largely in urban or periurban areas. The children, individually borrow cell phones from a ‘library’ of 5-8 phones for about 15 minutes every day at certain appointed times. They get lesson cards to go with it, which vary from learning alphabets at Zero level to learning phonemes, words, and sentences. Each level or Manzil has several sub-levels or Safars. Each card has lessons to be heard upon dialing an Idea number followed by interactive questions to be answered by pressing appropriate keys. Children can also form sentences by pressing a sequence of keys.

The Librarian is not supposed to help children with learning but is expected to encourage them.

The hypothesis is that children may be able to learn by themselves with the aid of the printed text and audio.

ASER Centre is conducting learning assessment of children to understand progress made during the course of this programme.

Rationale of the study:

The objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of the intervention programme on English skills of the students/young adults who have joined the “English Clubs”. Along with gauging the impact of the programme on English skills, the study also tries to understand the perception of students, parents and librarians regarding the usage of mobile phone as a learning enhancement tool. Library visits are made to understand the activities that are taking place in the clubs.

Extent of study:

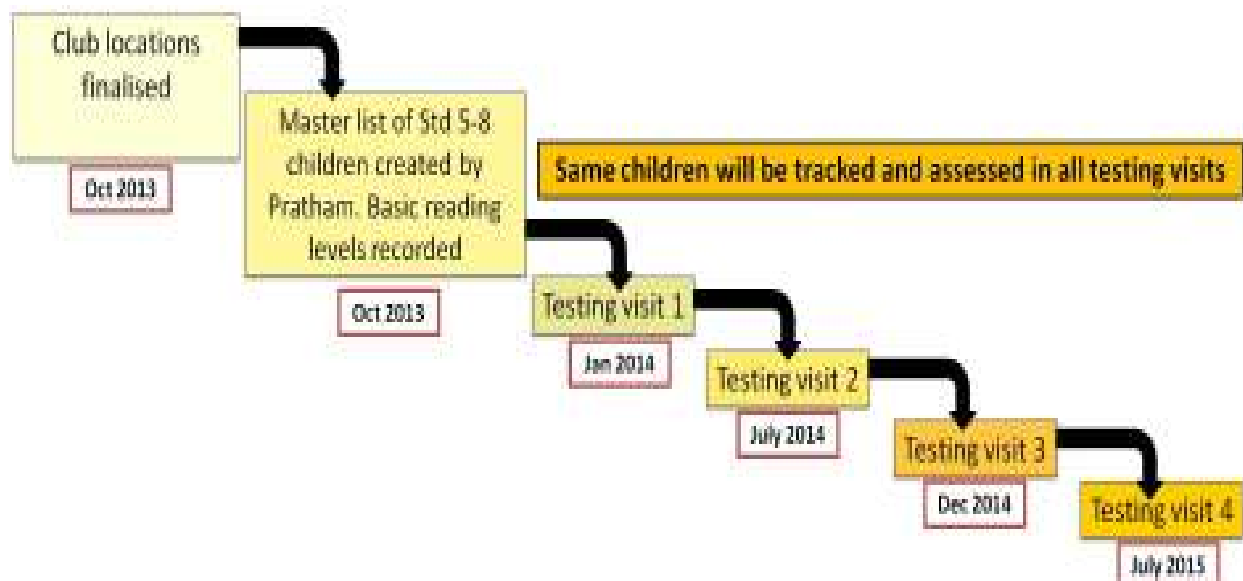
The pilot programme is being carried out in

- North India – Delhi, Dadri and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), Pilani (Rajasthan)
- West India (Maharashtra) – Mumbai, Pune, Talasari and Vikramgarh (Thane)

The assessment study is also being carried out in all the above locations to draw comparisons.

Timeline of the Assessment:

To gauge the impact of the intervention programme assessment visits are conducted during different phases of the programme. After each phase, data is analyzed for individual visits and comparisons are made with previous visits.



Methodology of the study:

- **Sampling** – The sample for the assessment study includes all children who were initially assessed by Pratham before rolling out the programme. The study assumes that the entire universe included in the intervention is being assessed. As and when new students join the library clubs they are included in the assessment roster and are assessed in the subsequent assessment visits.
- **Assessment framework** – For the purpose of the student assessment, 2 types of assessment tools were created:
 1. **Reading tool** – This tool assessed the basic reading and comprehension of English using letters, simple words and sentences (their meaning) and a short story with 2 simple questions.
 2. **Programme specific tool** – This tool assessed specific content and included phonological awareness, prepositions, who, what and how questions.

Apart from the assessment tools following formats were made to collect other critical information:

- **Household indicator sheet** – To collect information on child’s schooling, tuition and household indicators like reading material, etc
- **Questionnaires for parent, librarians and students** – When the programme reached halfway mark, ASER team conducted in-depth interviews with selected students, librarians and parents to gauge their opinion and thoughts about this programme.
- **Library observation format** – To collect information on how clubs are being run and what activities are happening in the club.

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