

**EARLY GRADE READING PROGRAMME AN INITIATIVE OF COMMUNITY**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Universalization of Elementary Education is the prime focus of Government of Maharashtra. Government of India's Educational Development Index shows Maharashtra has made significant progress in access and infrastructure facilities in the recent years. A good progress in bridging equity gap. Access and Availability of school is adequately available in the state. 98% of the children are enrolled in the schools.*

*Information available with various sources of the School Education Department of Government of Maharashtra indicating that School Development Plan (SDP) data for the year 2012 reflects 2.23 lakh children are out of school. We analyzed data from District Information System of Education (DISE) from the year 2006-07 to 2012-13 and found that the enrollment in Government and Private Aided Schools at primary level has declined by 12% (11 lakhs). Changing Trends of enrollment during the year 2006-07 to 2012-13 is clearly indicating shift of*

*7% enrollment from Government and Local Body Schools to Private Schools and 10% Shift of Class-I enrollment from Marathi medium to English medium.*

*Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) is largest survey to assess learning level in Rural India. Pratham is a NGO who have released ASER report for 2012. Some of key findings of the report are -although % of out-of-school children is lower than the national average but it increased over the period. Learning levels declined during 2011 and 2012. Focus is required on Maths. Student and teacher attendance rate is better than the national average. Toilet is available in schools but usability of toilet is an issue. In Maharashtra only 8% children of class-IV can read easy sentences, 12% children of class-IV can read easy sentences 4% children of class-IV can not read even letters.*

### **Keywords**

*RTE-Right to Education, SMC- School Management Committee, DISE- District Information System for Education, EDI- Educational Development Index, ASER- Annual Status of Education Report, SDP- School Development Programme*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Government of India has enacted The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, and came into force since 2010. Government of Maharashtra took initiatives for effective implementation of the Act and has framed Maharashtra Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2011, notified notifications and issued Government of Resolutions time to time. The RTE Act focuses on every school and teacher to be child friendly and promote child centered teaching learning processes with ample freedom of expression for every child to learn and develop to full potential. Section 29 Of the Act is as about child centric and child friendly Schools. So it is essential for every teacher, child and member of school management committee (SMC) to make own school and society RTE compliant, and ensure of the rights of every child irrespective of her or, his background and education levels.

Government of India and State Government of Maharashtra took initiative on the lines of above facts and figures and Learning Enhancement Programme with focus on Early Grade Reading and

Writing for Primary Classes. I facilitated entire process and introduced Community Reading Programme. We conducted state level workshop for development of programme, in consultation with Government of India, Government of Maharashtra, UNICEF, Mumbai, Civil Society partners, Educationist and we developed guidelines and design of programme and started its implementation in the academic year 2013-2014 across the state of Maharashtra in all Government Primary Schools.

**Objectives of Programme:**

- To improve achievement levels of students and enhancement of Quality of Government Schools.
- To empower supervisory machinery for academic support and monitoring of the programme.
- To build confidence amongst students
- To provide supportive teaching learning opportunity to children lagging behind in certain competencies.
- To participate NGOs, Community, School management Committee etc. and takes their support in the Enhancement of Quality Education.
- To create awareness amongst parents about learning of their children and sensitize them.

**MATERIAL AND METHOD**

Programme has been started in Government of Schools. Design of programme based on enrollment of schools having enrolment up to 100 organize the Reading Program in a single group .Those schools having enrolment greater than 100 should divide the students in suitable groups. All the students will intimate the schedule to their parents through a letter written under the guidance of their teachers, at least three days prior to the program date .Students will have the letters signed from their parents .Head Master and cluster coordinators will ensure that all parents and community representatives are invited to the programme.

**Participation in Programme:**

1. All the students from class I to IV from Government schools of all medium.
2. All teachers and Head masters from local body schools of all medium.
3. All Cluster coordinators, Village development officers from various departments of Block level- Extension officers ,Ward officers, Subject experts ,Block Education Officers and Block Development Officers
4. Community Leaders , Individuals having interest and concern for education , Educationist, Experts ,Youth, Social Workers ,Members of Teacher-Parent / Mother-Parents Associations or SMC and other community members .
5. All Chief Executives Officers of Zilla Parishad, Commissioners , Municipal Corporations, Directors of Educations ,Education officers (Primary /Secondary /Adult ), Zilla Parishad ,Administrative officers, Municipal Corporations , Principal, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers from District Institutes of Education and Training

**Participation of All:**

All the students from class I to IV including CWSN should be given opportunity to participate in PRP. Meena -Raju Manch has been organized in every upper primary school .Assistance of the members of the forum will be taken to enhance the participation of students of class I to IV.

**Schedule of Programme:**

The HMs and teachers will arrange practice sessions of reading on any convenient day of by students in their respective schools/classes.

Programme would be organized in for parents and community between 8 am to 11 am or any slot of 3 hours as per their convenience.

All Programmes will be conducted either of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday for the following month.

- First- October 2013
- Second - December 2013-
- Third Proramme-February 2014

Schools would organize practice programme in the months other than those included in the schedule, at the schools level.

### **Activities to make programme Child Friendly**

Following activities have been suggested for day to day teaching of Maths and Language, practicing and also for Programme.

- Performing as per instructions : Students will perform activities as per oral instructions .For example : clap for three times , produce sounds of animals
- Act /mimic after reading given word /sentence strip Frog jump ,peacock walk ,driving a vehicle etc
- Perform as suggested on the card : Students read instruction on a card and perform accordingly
- Picture Reading: Identify birds on cards, describe the event shown, and count birds /animals in the picture.
- Match the cards : word card -word cards ,picture card word cards , number card -picture card , number in words card - picture card
- Puzzles /Quizzes: word Puzzles, number quiz, picture quiz, mathematical play activities, traditional verbal puzzles.
- Students to create /write items and answer them .Students to write verbal examples based on day to day life and answer them.
- Multiutility educational concept designs like dispensary, post office, shop, exhibition, Puppet Theater etc should be used to demonstrate skills from language and mathematics.
- Vacant space in the school/school premises should be used to demonstrate ground activities from Mathematics /Language like hopscotch, preparing different shapes numbers, designs using beads /pebbles, writing alphabets /numbers in sand. Oral or written "Antakshari" .connecting words using dominos on flannel/ magnetic board.

- Material available in the school building or neighbourhood should be used .For example measuring length and height of a table / reading or writing the boards of shops, counting bars of windows, reading a clock, measurement by judgment etc.
- Exhibition of the martial created / collected by students where students will present information to the viewer's .e.g. manuscripts, pictures, collection of articles, creations/crafts in work experience, science experiments etc.

### **Report of Programme**

All the teachers will submit a brief report along with appropriate photographs to their HM and HM in turn will consolidate class wise reports .The school level report shall be presented in the next SMC meeting. Appropriate measures should be taken as per the discussion about the progress in the programme.

### **Monitoring of Programme:**

Block Education Officer(BEO) will co-ordinate schedule of Programme in all the schools .BEO and Extension Officers will jointly plan this schedule in such way that one field officer shall be able to attend each Programme. A proforma for data capture in programme has been developed .The information gathered through these formats will be compiled and sent to Education Officer (primary).ZP

### **Standard Instructions:**

- No inauguration, welcome formalities, speeches, guidance etc.
- Concern persons may give their comments in written form .They may discuss about programme with HM, if necessary after programme.
- Students should be encouraged during programme. Utmost care should be taken that students are not discouraged and will not be under mental stress of any kind.
- Programme should be carried out in joyful and informal environment .Few child friendly activities should be carried out at the onset of the programme for the sake of informal environment building.

- Programme is a part of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation; hence student preparation for the same should be done through day to day teaching learning process.
- One period should be reserved for preparation and practice of programme, after mid day meal.
- Appropriate alternative reading material should be used along with the textbooks while practicing for programme.
- Publicity should be given to programme at the local level.

**Reference Material for Programme:**

Each of the primary school has been supplied with the educational material either from the state/local level, developed or procured at school level. The list of selected items is as mentioned below-

- Self Learning Material Cards
- Mathematics /Science /English kits supplied under LEP
- The reading cards developed for training to facilitate joyful reading to class I students.
- Books from library.
- Reading corners supplied under Learning Enhancement Programme.
- Learning material developed for special training of out of School children enrolled in age appropriate classes
- Self Learning Exercises
- Teaching Learning Material developed by teachers
- E-learning material
- Mathematics / Language charts
- Textbooks /exercise books on the previous curriculum for the same class
- "Kishor" magazine and other suitable magazines /periodicals
- news -papers ,weekly /fortnightly /monthly publications
- Rappers of differ packing of household goods.
- Supplementary reading material supplied through school /other grants

- Any other Educational material supplied by the Government or voluntary organizations at the instance of various projects

## CONCLUSION

Government of India insisted state Government to implement Early Grade Reading Writing Programme and made it mandatory for improvement of reading skills. This is Project Approval Board commitment to implement it. Accordingly programme has been initiated. This is significant programme and effective implementation of Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation. Community and parents will know the learning levels of their children. Teacher will understand gaps and help in designing supportive teaching or special training to improve achievement levels of students. Students feel confident and perform better to showcase their performance. Government of India appreciated this programme. Documentary of the programme will be developed. Impact of the programme will be assessed through District Institute of Educational Training and SCERT.

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