

Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)

A possible solution for learning recovery
Experiences from India and Nepal

What to Expect?

- Introduction to Pratham
- What is TaRL? An Overview
- TaRL experiences from India and Nepal



About Pratham

Pratham means *first* or *primary* in several Indian languages. Established in 1995 to provide education to children in the slums of Mumbai, Pratham has grown in both scope and scale across the country.

Pratham facilitates India's well-known nation wide Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) in every rural district in India since 2005. Sample of over half a million children in each survey.

For the past two decades and more, Pratham has developed high-impact, low-cost interventions that help children acquire foundational skills like reading and arithmetic.

Pratham's Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach has demonstrated proven impact on children's learning outcomes and is now being adapted to contexts outside India as well.

In recent years, Pratham has also started vocational skilling programs to enable young people to get a good start in their working life.

Team of ~6000 each full time & part time staff

Identification of gaps & creation of local solutions

Measurement & Evidence core to approach

Presence in 20+ major states of India

Impacting Millions



Teaching at the Right Level: *An Overview*



Problem: Even after 3 years or more of schooling, children are unable to read simple text or perform basic math operations

ASER 2018: % Children at different reading levels
All children : All India (rural)

| Level | Beginner | Letter | Word | Para | Story |
|--------------|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Grade | Cannot recognize letters as yet | Can recognize letters but not read words | Can read words but not sentences | Can read sentences at Grade I level | Can read text at Grade II level or higher |
| III | 12.1 | 22.6 | 20.8 | 17.3 | 27.2 |
| IV | 7.6 | 15.9 | 16.6 | 19.3 | 40.7 |
| V | 5.9 | 11.7 | 13.0 | 19.1 | 50.3 |

- In Grade III, less than 30% are at grade level for reading.
- In each grade, wide distribution of learning levels.
- Only half of all children in Grade V have achieved Grade II learning levels.
- Math levels are often worse.

**Who should the teacher teach?
What should she teach whom?**

Note: ASER model of assessment is currently used in 14 countries in Asia, Africa & Latin America and recognized globally as an innovative approach to assessment for understanding basic issues in children's learning.

TaRL tries to address this problem.

Possible Solution: TaRL moves away from age-grade teaching to focusing on children's current learning levels

| Example: A typical school | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|--------|------|------|-------|-------|
| Grade/Level | Beg | Letter | Word | Para | Story | Total |
| III | 4 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 13 | 40 |
| IV | 3 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 18 | 41 |
| V | 3 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 20 | 43 |

In a usual school:

- Children are organized by age and grade (as shown by rows in the table above).
- Assume one teacher teaches each grade.
- Each teacher has about 40 children but at many different levels.
- She teaches from grade level textbook.
- But in reality she struggles with the wide range of learning levels in her class.

| Example: Session organized for TaRL | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--------|------|------|-------|
| Grade/Level | Beg | Letter | Word | Para | Story |
| III | 4 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 13 |
| IV | 3 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 18 |
| V | 3 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 20 |
| Total | 31 | | 42 | | 51 |

In a TaRL session:

- Children are organized by their current learning level (as shown by columns in the table above).
- One teacher teaches 1-2 groups.
- Each teacher has about 40 children but children are at more or less similar levels.
- She uses activities & materials appropriate for the children's level.

In the classroom, TaRL unfolds through a simple process involving key elements

A big tree stood in a garden. It was alone and lonely. One day a bird came and sat on it. The bird held a seed in its beak. It dropped the seed near the tree. A small plant grew there. Soon there was another tree. The big tree was happy.

Rani likes her school. Her class is in a big room. Rani has a bag and a book. She also has a pen.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|------|------|
| e | d | w | hand | star |
| s | c | | bus | |
| g | h | z | cat | book |
| i | q | | day | few |
| | | | old | bold |
| | | | sing | |



Assessment

Simple one-on-one assessment done to **group children by level instead of by grade** for instruction



Tracking progress

Similar assessments are used for tracking children's progress and formalizing grouping.



Appropriate activities & materials

For each group, there are a set of activities and materials for reading and arithmetic that are appropriate for that group and then enable children to progress.



Big groups-small groups

Children do activities in groups and also individually. Children progress quickly and move into the next level group.





TaRL transforms practice in many ways, and helps shift the system from schooling for all towards learning for all

| | Business as usual | | Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| GOAL | Goal is to complete the grade level textbook. | | Clearly articulated goals for basic reading and arithmetic. Goal is to ensure basic foundational skills for all . |
| ASSESSMENT – MEASUREMENT | Pen-paper grade level test done at the beginning of a phase and at the end. | | Simple quick one-on-one oral assessment used at start for grouping. Similar assessment used periodically to track progress. Data discussion and review at all levels. Aggregate school or class-level data used to propel program not child-wise data. |
| GROUPING | Full class teaching at grade level. | | Children grouped by level rather than by grade for instruction. Children move quickly from one group to next as they progress. “Teaching at the Right Level” . |
| TEACHING & ACTIVITIES | “Chalk and talk”. Textbook driven. | | Simple framework of daily activities that can be adapted as children progress. (CAMA L – Combined Activities for Maximized Learning) . Activities in big groups, small groups and individually. Children learn to work in groups. |
| TRAINING & MENTORING | Resource persons as trainers. Hardly any follow up after training. | | “Leaders of practice” created via “learning by doing. Select Government cadre “practice” the approach for 20-25 days and taste “success”, then train teachers and provide ongoing on-site monitoring and mentoring. |



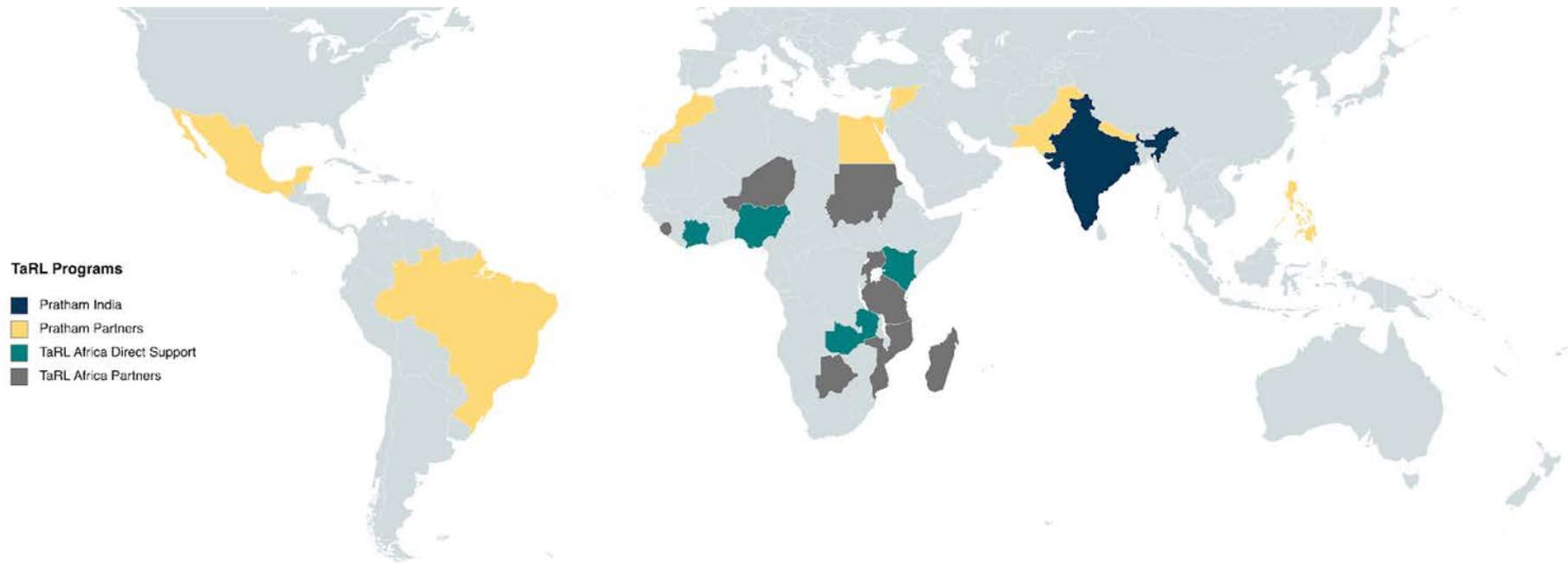
Multiple models through RCTs in 6 Indian states over 13 years

| Who facilitates? | Where? | When? | For how long? |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| School teachers | In school | During school hours | Daily, 2 hours a day |
| School teachers | In school | Outside school hours | Daily or intensive camps |
| Paid instructors | In school | During or outside school hours | Daily or intensive camps |
| Paid instructors | In community spaces | During or outside school hours | Daily or intensive camps |
| Volunteers | In school | During or outside school hours | Daily or intensive camps |
| Volunteers | In community spaces | During or outside school hours | Daily or intensive camps |

Link to RCTs on various models: shorturl.at/AFKX1



Has TaRL been adapted outside India?



TaRL began in India and has now spread to Africa, Latin America and other parts of Asia



TaRL
Experiences
from India
and Nepal

Reading Performance over the years in Karnataka

- ASER 2020 was conducted in March 2021 with 18,000 children in 670 villages.
- The table below shows proportion of children in govt schools who can read Std II level text (on right)

**Trends over time: Govt schools
Reading in Std III, Std V and Std VIII
2014, 2016, 2018 and 2020**

| Year | % Children who can read Std II level text (Govt schools) | | |
|------|---|-------|----------|
| | Std III | Std V | Std VIII |
| 2014 | 16.4 | 45.7 | 70.1 |
| 2016 | 19.0 | 41.9 | 69.7 |
| 2018 | 19.4 | 47.6 | 70.1 |
| 2020 | 9.8 | 32.8 | 66.8 |

Std II level text

ಅಮೆ ಮತ್ತು ಮೂಲ ಸ್ವರ್ಗ ಏರ್ಪಾಟು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡವು. ಯಾರು ಮೊದಲು ಪಕ್ಕದ ಊರನ್ನು ತಲುಪುವರೋ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಬಹುಮಾನ ಎಂದು ಘೋಷಿಸಿದವು. ಮೊಲ ಕುಡುತ್ತಾ ಮುಂದೆ ಸಾಗಿತು. ಅರ್ಧ ಸಾಗಿದ ಮೇಲೆ ಮೊಲ ವಿಶ್ರಾಂತಿ ಪಡೆಯಲು ಬಯಸಿತು. ಅಲ್ಲೇ ಮರದ ಕೆಳಗೆ ನಿದ್ದೆ ಮಾಡಿತು. ಅಷ್ಟರಲ್ಲೇ ಅಮೆ ಬೇಗನೇ ಸಾಗಿ ಊರನ್ನು ತಲುಪಿತು. ಸ್ವರ್ಧಯಲ್ಲ ಅಮೆ ಜಯಿಸಿದಾಗ ಮೊಲ ಸಜ್ಜೆ ಮೊರೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಕುಳಿತುಕೊಂಡಿತು.

Substantial drops are visible in the '20-21 school year as compared to earlier years:

- The % of children in Std III who can read a Std II text has decreased by 10 percentage points – **half of 2018 level**
- The % of children in Std V who can read at this level has declined by 15 percentage points over 2018 levels. **Less than one-third students can read at Std II level.**

Program Highlights



Leaders of Practice within govt

A **cadre from the government** is identified to lead the program, oversee key processes, monitor, review progress and plan ahead.



Hands-on Training

The 'LoP' are trained on TaRL approach who in turn conduct **practice classes(15 days)**for hands-on understanding Thereafter LoP in turn train the teachers



Low-Cost Material

Content and materials(low-cost and contextualised) in Kannada, Marathi, and Urdu were used depending on the **medium of instruction**.



Measurement

Lean data collection through **GP App** & **real-time access** to monitoring and assessment data on the reporting dashboard



Monitoring

The intervention is monitored by leaders of practice from the government. Regular **review meetings** at block, district, and state-level for due course-correction

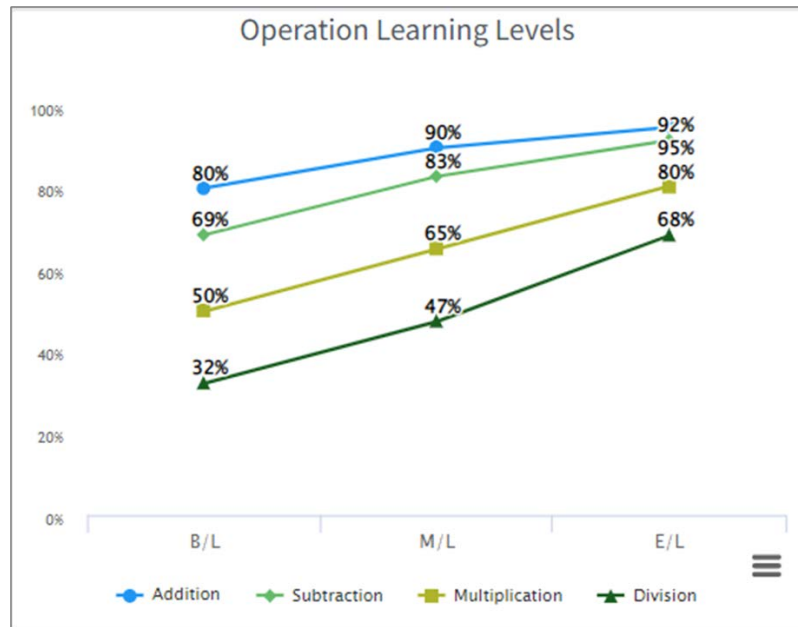
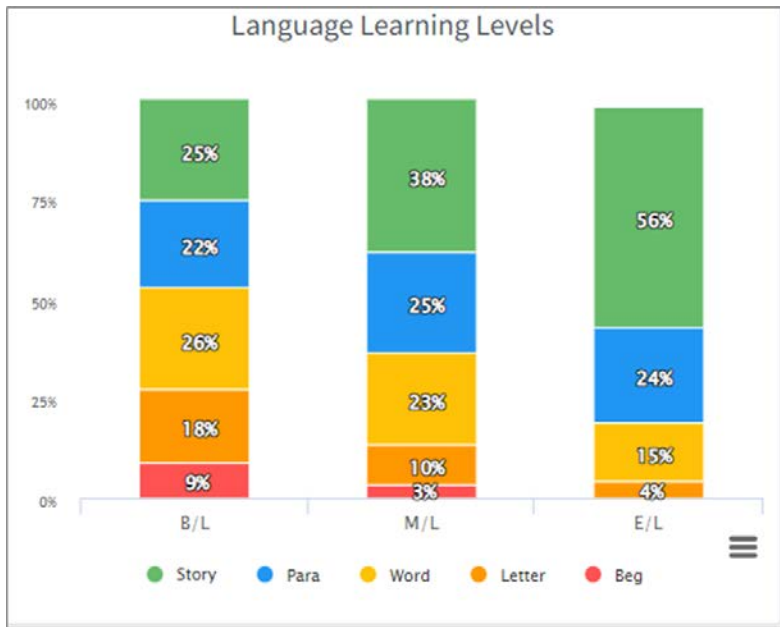
Key Learnings

- The program was effective in improving the learning levels of children at the same rate as in the previous years, even though this cohort of children had missed almost two years of schooling.
- Dedicated team appointed at the district & sub-district level for training, mentoring & review enabled smooth communication, coordination and course corrections.
- Continuous review of assessment and monitoring data through review meetings at block, district, and state level, helped in quick action for supporting progress.
- Lean data collection & real-time access to monitoring and assessment data on the reporting dashboard
- Regular online content through the 'Odu Karnataka' YouTube channel provided continuous support to teachers during program implementation.



Program Impact

- The program was implemented for **60 teaching days** with 45 min dedicated to language and math each.
- The data below, represents data from **~37,400 schools** and **~878,000 children**.
- **31%age pt improvement** in the ability to read a **Std II level text** and **36%age pt improvement** in the ability to solve a **2 by 1 division problem**





Overview of the TaRL pilot in Nepal



Target group: Grades 4 and 5



Scale: ~2,500 children in 64 public schools across 3 local local governments



Period of implementation: December 2021 - March 2022
(10 weeks) for about 2 - 3 hours every day for both reading and math in Nepali



Key stakeholders: Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (Nepal), local governments, Street Child of Nepal, Aasm an Nepal, Pratham



Master Trainers: Street Child of Nepal

Instructors: Public school teachers + Paid Instructors

Mentors: Aasm an Nepal + Retired Headteachers recommended by the local government

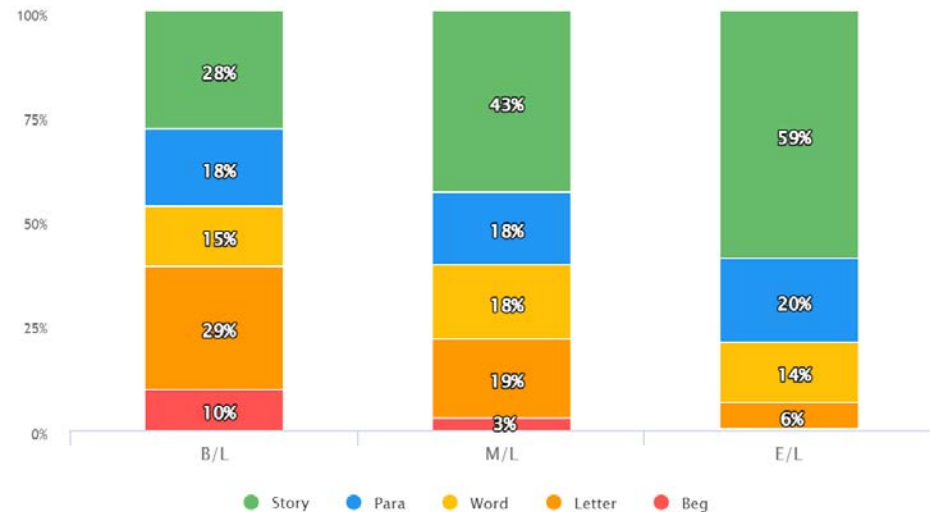


Role of the NGO: Implementation lead, training and pilot oversight

Role of the Government: Strategic Orientation | **Funded by:** World Bank

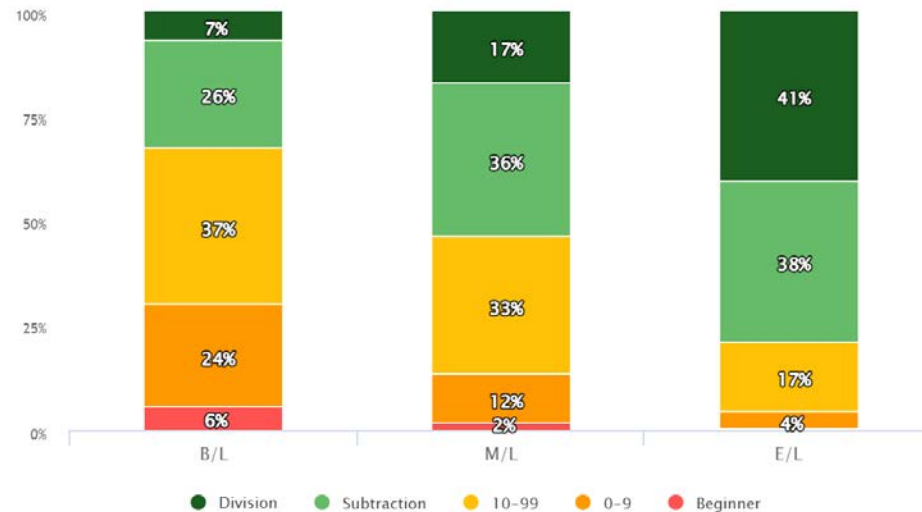
Impact

Reading



~80% children by endline were able to read at least a simple paragraph (or grade 1 level text) in Nepali as compared to 46% at baseline.

Math



~80% children were able to perform two digit subtraction with borrowing by the end of the intervention as compared to 33% at baseline.

Highlights and Takeaways

Highlights

- Political commitment towards learning recovery across levels
- External mentoring cadre introduced to interact with the government system
- Strong focus on capacity building of mentors on effective use of data in the classroom
- Potential scale up of the intervention being explored

Takeaways

- Variation in the program locations have to be kept in mind while planning the program design, content and strategy
- For an NGO led model - having dedicated teams that have **practiced TaRL** themselves is important!
- Quick and large gains can be made in a very short span of time!



Thank you! www.pratham.org |

Poll Question (1 of 2)

Q. What does TaRL stand for?

- a) Teaching at the Random Level**
- b) Taught at Right Level**
- c) Teaching at the Right Level**



Poll Question (2 of 2)

Q. Do you think there is a need for an intervention like TaRL in your context?

- a) Yes**
- b) No**
- c) Maybe**