



indus
TOWERS

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

READING CORNERS WITH LIBRARIES: A READING INTERVENTION

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER: PRATHAM BOOKS



 **SoulAce**
Path to Sustainability

SOULACE CONSULTING PVT. LTD.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations	01
01. Executive Summary	02 - 04
Project Background	02
Project Details	03
Project Activities	03
Key Findings and Key Impacts	04
02. Introduction	05 - 07
About Indus Towers	06
About Pratham Books	06
Background and Need of the Program	06 - 07
03. Research Methodology	08 - 09
Objectives of the Study	08
Research Design	08
Application of Quantitative Techniques	08
Application of Qualitative Techniques	08
Ensuring Triangulation	09
Sampling Framework	09
Data Collection	09
Commitment to Research Ethics	09
04. Major Findings and Assessment of Impact	10 - 24
05. OECD Framework	25 - 26
06. Recommendations	27 - 28
07. Conclusion	29

— ABBREVIATIONS

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development- Development Assistance Committee
LIC	Library-in-a-Classroom
NIPUN	National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy
NEP	National Education Policy
FGD	Focused Group Discussion

01. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

India has one of the largest school systems in the world. One contributing factor is the lack of access to quality reading materials in a language the child is familiar with. The second part of the problem is poor access to books, especially for children from low-income backgrounds. Most children do not have a reading environment at home, and hence, school libraries (often under-resourced) remain the only source of books for them. This lack of exposure affects the development of foundational reading skills, making school-based access to books essential. With the support of Indus Towers and implementation by Pratham Books, a large-scale reading intervention was carried out using the Library-in-a-Classroom (LIC) model.

The program was implemented across 302 government and low-resource schools in six states, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Jharkhand, and Bihar, reaching a total of 3,74,498 children. The program introduced Reading Corners, providing classrooms with multilingual storybooks, including illustrated and level-based books suited to different age groups. These books were made easily accessible within classrooms, encouraging children to read independently, share stories, and participate in group reading activities.

By integrating reading into daily classroom routines, the initiative created an engaging and inclusive reading environment. It not only improved access to books but also encouraged children to develop regular reading habits both in school and at home.



STUDENT INTERACTION,
PANCHMAHAL

PROJECT DETAILS



Project Duration

FY 2022-2024



Assessment Year

FY 2025-2026



Implementing Partner

Pratham Books



Total Beneficiaries

3,74,498



Project Locations

Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Bihar



Alignment with SDG Goals



National Education Policy (NEP) 2020



NIPUN Bharat

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Establishment of curated community libraries with 100 books each.



Capacity Building workshops with librarians on optimal and engaging use of books.

KEY FINDINGS & KEY IMPACT

Key Findings (with Data)	Impacts
70.4% of students reported reading storybooks daily.	Establishment of regular reading habits and consistent engagement with books.
83.1% of students read storybooks independently without teacher instruction.	Encourages self-directed learning, independence, and confidence in reading.
93.8% of students reported feeling happy while reading storybooks in class.	Reading is perceived as an enjoyable activity, increasing sustained interest in books.
84.9% of students frequently discuss stories with peers or teachers.	Promotes collaborative learning, communication skills, and critical thinking.
86.7% of parents reported that their children read storybooks regularly at home.	Extension of reading habits beyond school to strengthen home-based learning.
93.3% of students share their reading experiences with family members at home.	Encourages family engagement and creates a supportive reading environment at home.
93.3% of parents found the reading corner helpful, especially for those with limited access to home books.	Helps bridge the gap in access to reading materials for resource-constrained families.
100% of parents reported improvement in their child's confidence in reading.	Strengthens literacy skills, self-confidence, and overall learning ability.



READING CORNER,
GAYA

02.

INTRODUCTION



ABOUT INDUS TOWERS

Indus Towers is one of the world's largest telecom infrastructure companies, playing a vital role in supporting India's rapidly expanding digital ecosystem. Indus Towers Limited was formed by the merger of Bharti Infratel Limited and Indus Towers. This combined strength makes Indus one of the largest telecom tower companies in the world. Enabling communication for millions of people daily, Indus will continue to provide affordable, high-quality, and reliable services to meet India's growing network connectivity needs. Indus Towers Limited has over 259,622 towers and 421,822 co-locations (31st December 2025) and a nationwide presence covering all 22 telecom circles. Indus' leading customers are Bharti Airtel (together with Bharti Hexacom), Vodafone Idea Limited and Reliance Jio Infocomm Limited, which are the leading wireless telecommunications service providers in India by revenue. The Company is committed to truly living its credo of Putting India First and Connecting Lives Across the Nation.

Beyond its core business operations, Indus Towers is also actively involved in corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to improve community well-being. The company focuses on areas such as education, digital inclusion, environmental sustainability, and community development. Through partnerships with nonprofit organisations such as Saksham and Pragati, and local institutions, Indus Towers supports programs that promote access to education and learning opportunities for children.

ABOUT PRATHAM BOOKS

Pratham Books is a not-for-profit children's book publisher established in 2004 with the mission of ensuring that every child has access to books and the joy of reading. It is part of Pratham, one of India's leading organisations working to improve learning outcomes. Rohini Nilekani and other members of the Pratham network co-founded the organisation. Pratham Books focuses on creating high-quality, affordable storybooks in multiple Indian languages, ensuring that children can read in languages they understand. This multilingual approach supports early literacy and makes reading more engaging for first-generation learners. To improve access to books, especially in underserved communities, Pratham Books has introduced innovative approaches such as the Library-in-a-Classroom (LIC) model, which brings curated sets of books directly into classrooms through reading corners. This model ensures that books are easily accessible and encourages independent reading, read-aloud sessions, and peer learning. Through its publishing and reading initiatives, Pratham Books continues to work towards building a culture of reading and making books accessible to children across India.

BACKGROUND AND NEED OF THE PROGRAM

India has one of the largest school education systems in the world, with millions of children enrolled in primary schools across diverse socio-economic and linguistic contexts. However, national learning assessments and secondary data sources such as ASER reports highlight persistent gaps in foundational literacy, with many children struggling with basic reading skills appropriate to their grade level. These challenges are more pronounced among children from low-income households, where access to storybooks and supportive reading environments at home is limited. In such contexts, schools become the primary space for children to engage with books. However, observations from field studies and existing literature indicate that school libraries are often under-resourced, and available books are not always easily accessible to students, as they may be stored away or used infrequently.

To address this gap, Pratham Books, with support from Indus Towers, implemented a large-scale reading intervention titled Reading Corners. The initiative established 1,600 libraries with 1,60,000 multilingual books across government schools in 42 cities spanning six states—Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Jharkhand, and Bihar—reaching 3,74,498 children and significantly improving access to age-appropriate reading materials.

As part of this, the program had a focused implementation in 10 Aspirational Districts across West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Bihar, covering 302 schools and directly benefiting 62,000 students and 1,200 teachers, thereby strengthening reading ecosystems in some of the most underserved regions.

Under this initiative, Reading Corners were set up within classrooms, providing children with curated multilingual storybooks in English and their mother tongue, making reading both accessible and engaging. The books were displayed within the classroom to enable easy access and encourage regular use. Field observations and stakeholder interactions indicate that such classroom-based access significantly enhances students' engagement with books and fosters sustained reading habits.



CHILDREN READING BOOKS

03. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY



To assess the extent to which the intervention improved students' reading abilities, including fluency, comprehension, and confidence in reading in their mother tongue.



To evaluate how increased access to multilingual, levelled storybooks and the Library-in-a-Classroom model influenced students' reading habits, engagement, and independent learning behaviours.



To examine the effectiveness of teacher and librarian capacity-building efforts in enabling structured, regular, and meaningful use of library resources within classrooms.



To assess the overall implementation quality, program reach across states and Aspirational Districts, and identify key challenges, sustainability, and the broader contribution to strengthening foundational literacy.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A Mixed-Method Approach is adopted, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact. This approach ensures a holistic assessment of students' reading behaviours, access to and usage of storybooks, effectiveness of classroom reading corners, and improvements in foundational literacy outcomes, along with changes in teacher practices and household-level engagement with reading.

APPLICATION OF QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES

The study employs structured surveys conducted with 385 beneficiaries, selected using simple random sampling. This methodology ensures a representative sample, enabling analysis of key outcomes, including access to classroom reading corners, the frequency of reading storybooks, students' interest in reading, and their engagement with storybooks during school activities.

APPLICATION OF QUALITATIVE TECHNIQUES

The qualitative methodology involves in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and 4 Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) with 5-9 students in each group to better understand their experiences with the reading corners. These insights helped explore how storybooks influence children's enthusiasm for reading, their conversations about stories at home, and the role of schools in nurturing reading habits.

ENSURING TRIANGULATION

To enhance the credibility and reliability of the research findings, triangulation is employed by integrating multiple data sources, research methods, and stakeholder perspectives. This approach ensures a well-validated and comprehensive assessment of the project's impact.

SAMPLING FRAMEWORK

The sampling framework comprises 385 beneficiaries and 15 parents or guardians whose children are part of the reading program, selected using simple random sampling and FDGs with stakeholders. This design ensures diverse representation and captures multiple perspectives on the effectiveness and relevance of the "Reading corners with Libraries" initiative by Pratham Books with support from Indus Towers.



Project

Reading Corners with Libraries (Library-in-a-Classroom Model)



Implementing Partner

Pratham Books



CSR Partner

Indus Towers



Sample Size

385



Stakeholders

Students, Parents, Teachers & Implementing Partners

DATA COLLECTION

Primary data collection was conducted using structured surveys and in-depth interviews. Rigorous tools and protocols were applied to ensure data accuracy, reliability, and completeness in capturing insights on students' access to books, reading frequency, reading preferences, classroom reading activities, and changes in reading interest following the introduction of the reading corner.

COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH ETHICS

The research team adhered to strict ethical guidelines, ensuring confidentiality, informed consent, transparency, and respect for participants' rights. Upholding these ethical standards was essential for maintaining the credibility, integrity, and reliability of the research findings.

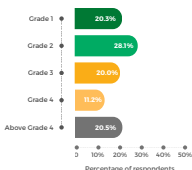
04. MAJOR FINDINGS AND ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

This chapter outlines the major findings of the impact assessment study and analyses the program's effectiveness and impact using data collected from students and parents.

A. Response from Children

Demographic Profile of Students

Chart 1: Class-wise Distribution of Students

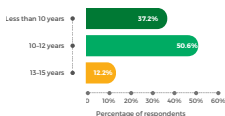


The chart shows that students from different grades in primary education are fairly represented. Early-grade students form a significant portion of the respondents, with those above grade 4 accounting for 20.5% of the respondents, indicating that the library program is reaching children at the foundational stage of learning.

Chart 2: Location-wise Distribution of Students

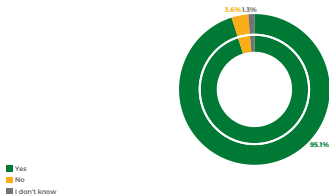
Location	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Gujarat	87	22.6
Uttar Pradesh	110	28.6
West Bengal	83	21.6
Bihar	105	27.3
Total	385	100.0

The table indicates that students from multiple states, Gujarat, Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, are represented in the study, showing that the library initiative has a geographically diverse reach. The presence of students from different regions highlights the program's role in expanding educational opportunities and promoting reading culture across diverse communities.

Chart 3: Age-wise Distribution of Students

The chart shows that 50.6% respondents belong to the age group of 10-12 years, followed by students who are younger than 10 years, while 12.2% participants fall in the older age group of 13-15 years. The strong involvement of younger learners highlights the importance of community libraries in supporting literacy development during critical learning stages.

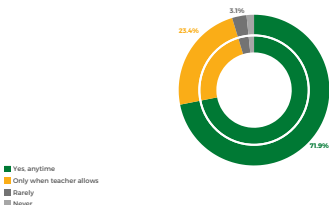
Program Intervention

Chart 4: Availability of Reading Corner or Bookshelf in the Classroom

The chart shows that 95.1% of students reported the presence of a reading corner or bookshelf in their classroom, indicating that schools are making efforts to provide easy access to reading materials. Only 3.6% of students reported that such facilities were not available, and 1.3% were unsure. Some students who were unsure or reported the absence of a reading corner had actually used books from it, as indicated by primary data, suggesting they may not have clearly understood the question or been aware of what a reading corner is. Overall, this indicates that reading resources are widely available within classrooms.

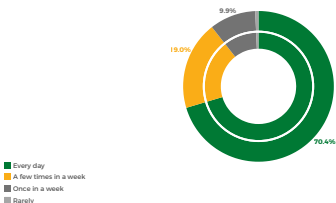
Access to Reading Resources and Student Reading Habits

Chart 5: Permission to Take Books from the Reading Corner

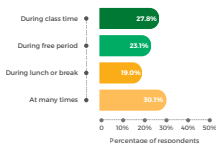


71.9% of respondents said they were allowed to take books from the reading corner freely, suggesting that classrooms encourage independent reading and easy access to books. 23.4% respondents can access books only with the teacher's permission, showing that access is sometimes regulated to maintain order or manage resources. 3.1% and 1.6% respondents reported limited or no access to the books, respectively. Open and accessible storybooks in classrooms promote reading autonomy, curiosity, and the development of regular reading habits among students.

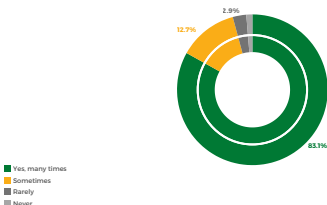
Chart 6: Frequency of Reading Storybooks from the Reading Corner



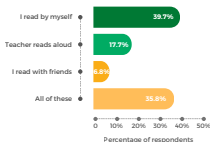
70.4% of students read storybooks from the reading corner daily, indicating strong engagement with classroom reading resources. 19% read a few times during the week, while 10.6% students read less frequently. This is also reflected in the FGDs with teachers.

Chart 7: Usual Time of Reading Storybooks in School

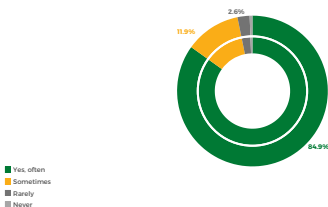
Reading Behaviour and Engagement

Chart 8: Reading Storybooks Without Teacher Instruction

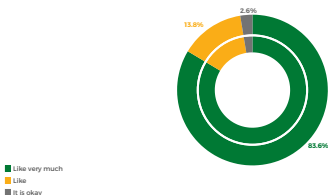
83.1% of respondents reported reading storybooks independently, without teacher instruction, indicating a strong sense of independent reading. 12.7% students read independently only sometimes, while very few do so rarely or never. This suggests that the availability of storybooks encourages self-motivated learning among children.

Chart 9: Ways Students Enjoy Storybooks in Class

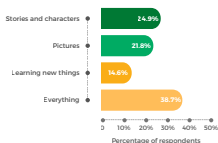
The respondents engage with storybooks in different ways: 39.7% prefer to read by themselves, 17.7% enjoy listening to teachers read aloud, 6.8% read with friends, and 35.8% enjoy all of these. This variety helps cater to different learning styles and keeps students interested in storybooks.

Chart 10: Discussion of Stories with Friends or Teachers After Reading

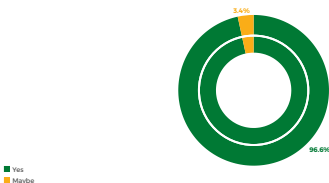
The 84.9% respondents frequently discuss the stories they read with their friends or teachers. 11.9% of students engage in such discussions occasionally, while very few students rarely or never talk about the stories. This indicates that reading activities often extend beyond individual reading into interactive conversations.

Chart 11: Interest in Reading Storybooks from the Reading Corner

83.6% of respondents express a strong interest in reading storybooks from the reading corner, while 13.8% simply like the activity and 2.6% feel neutral about it. When asked about which books they like, some common names, such as Chunmun, Golgappe Wala, Pother Sathi, Sona Sahan, and Nirali Dadi, were mentioned.

Chart 12: Aspects Students Like Most About Storybooks

The chart shows that students enjoy different aspects of storybooks, 24.9% like stories and characters, 21.8% like illustrations, and 14.6% like opportunities to learn new things. 38.7% students appreciate all these elements together, suggesting that storybooks provide a well-rounded reading experience.

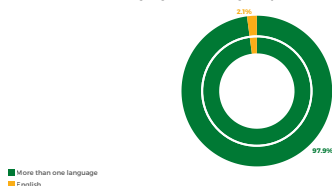
Chart 13: Desire to Read More Storybooks in School

96.6% of students express a clear desire to read more storybooks at school, while 3.4% responded maybe. This indicates strong student enthusiasm for additional reading opportunities. The interest reflects the positive impact that storybooks and reading corners have on students' engagement with reading.



Preferred Language for Reading Storybooks

Chart 14: Preferred Language for Reading Storybooks

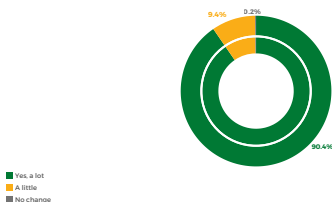


The findings indicate that an overwhelming majority of students (97.9%) prefer reading storybooks in multiple languages rather than in a single language. However, discussions during the FGDs revealed a particularly strong student preference for storybooks in their regional language, as they found them more engaging, enjoyable, and easier to understand.

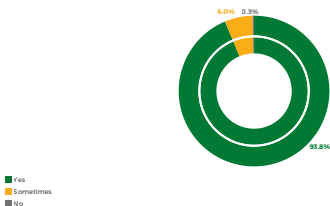
Reading in a familiar language enhanced their comfort, comprehension, and interest in stories. In contrast, only 2.1% of respondents reported a preference for reading storybooks exclusively in English. The results underscore the importance of providing multilingual reading resources to foster greater reading engagement and enjoyment among children.

Program Impact

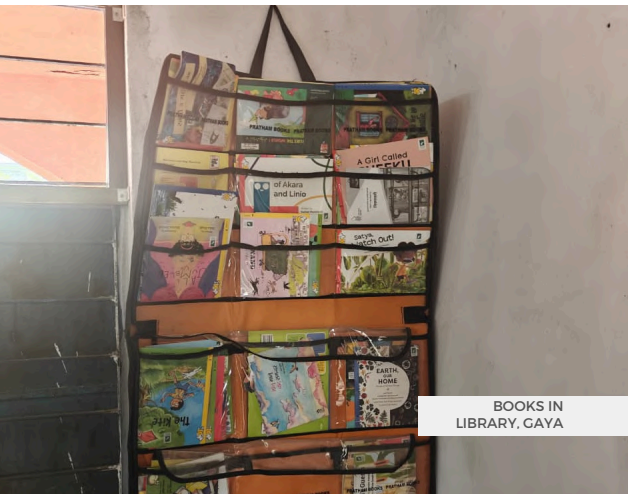
Chart 15: Change in Interest in Reading Storybooks Compared to Earlier



90.4% respondents feel their interest in reading storybooks has increased significantly compared to earlier. 9.4% report a slight improvement in their interest, while only 1 student (0.2%) feels that their interest has remained unchanged. This suggests that the presence of reading corners and storybooks has positively influenced students' reading habits.

Chart 16: Happiness Experienced While Reading Storybooks in Class

93.8% of respondents feel happy while reading storybooks in the classroom, while 6% experience this feeling occasionally. Only 1 student said it does not make him happy while reading storybooks, but the primary data show that he reads more books than before and enjoys looking at the pictures more than reading them.



**BOOKS IN
LIBRARY, GAYA**

B. Responses from parents

Parents Profile & Background

1.RELATIONSHIP OF RESPONDENT TO THE CHILD AND LOCATION-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Chart 17: Relationship of Respondent to the Child

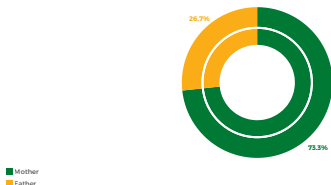
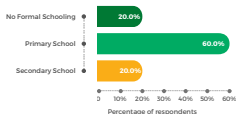


Chart 18: Location-wise Distribution of Students

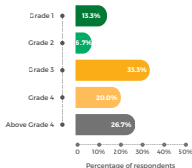
Location	Respondents	
	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Bihar	5	33.3
Uttar Pradesh	6	40.0
West Bengal	4	26.7
Total	15	100.0

The chart shows that 73.3% of respondents are mothers, while fathers account for 26.7%. It reflects the important role mothers often play in supporting children's learning at home.

The respondents are distributed across Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, indicating that the feedback reflects perspectives from multiple regions. This distribution suggests that the reading initiative is reaching families across diverse social and geographic contexts.

Chart 19: Highest Educational Qualification of Parents

60% parents have completed only basic levels of formal education up to primary school, while 20% have no formal schooling, and 20% have higher levels of education, up to secondary school. This highlights that a large proportion of families may have limited educational backgrounds. Despite this, parents remain engaged in their children's learning experiences.

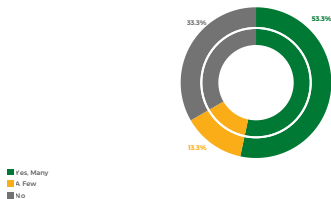
Chart 20: Child's Class Distribution

The chart indicates that respondents have their kids from different grade levels, showing that the reading initiative reaches students across several stages of schooling. 26.7% of parents have their child in an above-grade-4 class, 20% in grade 4, 33.3% in grade 3, 6.7% in grade 2, and 13.3% in grade 1.

**INTERACTION WITH STUDENT, JALPAIGURI**

Program Impact

Chart 21: Availability of Storybooks for Children at Home

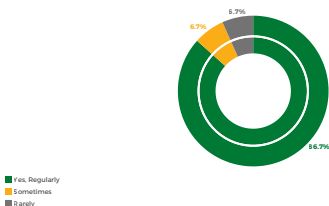


The chart indicates that while 53.3% of households have access to several storybooks, 13.3% have very few, and 33.3% have none at all. Children from households with limited books or no books rely more heavily on school resources for reading opportunities.

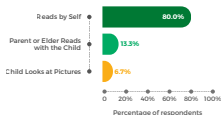
Chart 22: Child Sharing Experiences of Reading Storybooks in School



93.3% of beneficiaries share their reading experiences from school at home, as reported by their parents. This indicates that school reading activities create excitement and encourage communication within families. The remaining small number of children (6.7%) do so occasionally.

Chart 23: Child Reading or Looking at Storybooks at Home

86.7% of beneficiaries engage with storybooks at home regularly, while a smaller group does so occasionally or rarely. This suggests that reading habits developed in school continue in the home environment.

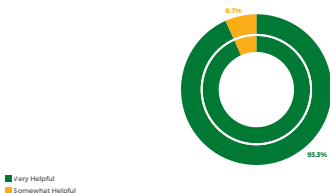
Chart 24: Usual Reading Practices of the Child at Home

80% of beneficiaries prefer to read storybooks independently at home, while 13.3% read together with parents or elders. Only 6.7% children engage with books mainly by looking at pictures. This indicates varying levels of reading ability and family involvement in reading activities.

Chart 25: Weekly Time Spent by Child on Reading Storybooks at Home

The parents' responses show that 53.3% children spend time reading storybooks at home regularly during the week. 26.7% read for a few days a week, and 20% children read less frequently, once a week. This indicates that reading is gradually becoming part of children's daily or weekly routines. Consistent reading habits at home significantly improve children's language skills and academic confidence, as parents and teachers observe.

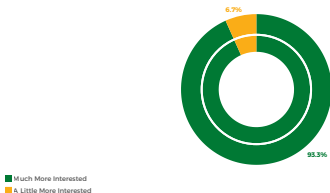
Chart 26: Helpfulness of the School Reading Corner for Families with Few or No Books at Home



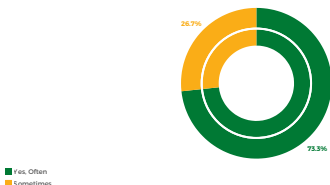
93.3% of parents find the school reading corner highly helpful, especially for families with limited access to books at home, while 6.7% view it as somewhat helpful but still beneficial. This shows that school-based reading resources provide important learning support for children from resource-constrained households.

Overall Interest Development and Confidence in Children

Chart 27: Change in Child's Interest in Reading After the Library-in-a-Classroom Program



93.3% of parents report a clear increase in their children's interest in reading after the introduction of the classroom reading program. While 6.7% parents report a smaller but noticeable improvement in reading enthusiasm. This suggests that easy access to storybooks in school encourages children to engage more with reading.

Chart 28: Child Talking About Stories Read in School

The chart shows that 73.3% of children frequently talk to their family members about the stories they read at school. The remaining students occasionally discuss the stories they read.

Chart 29: Improvement in Child's Confidence with Books and Reading – Analysis

The chart shows that all Parent respondents (100%) observe an improvement in their children's confidence when interacting with books and reading activities. Teachers also observe changes in students' confidence, as discussed during the FGD. This suggests that regular exposure to storybooks and reading opportunities builds familiarity and comfort with reading.

IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM ACROSS MULTIPLE LEVELS



Student Level

Significant improvement in reading habits, with 70.4% students reading daily and 83.1% reading independently, leading to enhanced fluency, confidence, and interest in reading.

Increased enjoyment (93.8%) and peer discussions (84.9%) indicate stronger engagement and comprehension.



Teacher/Classroom Level

Integration of reading corners into daily classroom practices enabled structured reading time and improved student participation. It supported diverse learning methods such as read-alouds and peer learning, enhancing overall classroom dynamics.



Household Level

Spillover effects observed: 86.7% of children read at home, and 93.3% share stories with family members, strengthening home-based learning and parental engagement despite limited book availability.



School/System Level

Improved access to age-appropriate, multilingual reading materials within classrooms reduced dependency on traditional libraries and created inclusive learning environments, especially in low-resource schools.



Community Level

Fostered a broader culture of reading, with increased awareness among parents and communities about the importance of reading, contributing to long-term behavioural change and support for children's education.

05. OECD FRAMEWORK



Relevance



Coherence



Effectiveness



Efficiency



Impact



Sustainability



RELEVANCE

The program addresses a critical gap in access to age-appropriate, non-curricular reading materials among schoolchildren, particularly in resource-constrained settings. At the local level, schools often lack functional libraries or adequate reading resources beyond textbooks, limiting children's exposure to diverse reading materials. By introducing a Library-in-a-Classroom model with multilingual storybooks, this program directly addresses the challenge of ensuring books are readily accessible in the classroom. This approach reduces dependency on separate infrastructure and creates inclusive reading spaces, thereby effectively addressing both access and engagement barriers.



COHERENCE

The initiative demonstrates strong alignment with broader development and education frameworks. It contributes to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education), particularly by improving foundational literacy and ensuring inclusive and equitable learning opportunities for all children. At the national level, the program aligns with key policy priorities such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasises foundational literacy, multilingual learning, and experiential education. It also complements initiatives such as NIPUN Bharat, which aim to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy. By integrating reading corners into existing classroom settings, the program ensures coherence with ongoing school practices and strengthens the overall learning ecosystem without duplication of efforts.



EFFECTIVENESS

The program has been effective in achieving its core objective of promoting reading habits and improving student engagement with books. Primary data from field visits and FGDs indicate increased student interest in reading, with 83.1% actively participating in independent reading activities during and beyond classroom hours. Teachers reported noticeable improvements in students' reading fluency, confidence, and classroom participation. Parents also observed that children are increasingly engaging with books at home and sharing stories with family members. The regular use of reading corners and positive stakeholder feedback suggests that the program is successfully meeting its intended outcomes of fostering a reading culture within schools.



EFFICIENCY

The program demonstrates efficient utilisation of resources by leveraging existing school infrastructure rather than establishing separate library systems. The Library-in-a-Classroom model ensures that books are directly accessible to students without requiring additional space or significant financial investment. Human resources, including teachers and implementing partners, are effectively utilised to facilitate reading sessions and monitor usage. The involvement of school stakeholders, such as teachers and school management, further enhances program efficiency. Additionally, the streamlined distribution and use of reading materials minimise logistical challenges, making the model cost-effective and scalable.



IMPACT

Immediate impacts of the program include increased student engagement with reading materials, improved reading habits, and enhanced classroom interaction. Students show greater enthusiasm toward books, and reading has become a more regular and enjoyable activity. Long-term impacts are reflected in the development of sustained reading behaviours, improved language skills, and greater confidence in learning. The program also extends its influence beyond schools, as children engage with books at home, thereby contributing to a broader culture of reading within families and communities. Over time, such behavioural changes are likely to support improved academic outcomes and lifelong learning skills.



SUSTAINABILITY

The program demonstrates strong potential for sustainability through multiple factors. It promotes behavioural change by embedding reading habits into daily classroom practices, ensuring that students and teachers continue to engage with books regularly. There is clear support from the community, with teachers actively encouraging reading activities and parents understanding the importance of reading at home. Using existing school facilities also makes the program easy to manage and continue over time. Furthermore, the program helps teachers build skills by equipping them with methods for integrating reading into classroom activities. It also strengthens institutional structures such as School Management Committees (SMCs) by encouraging their involvement in maintaining and supporting reading resources. These factors collectively ensure that the initiative can be sustained and scaled over time.

Overall, the initiative effectively addresses the critical gap in access to quality reading materials among children, particularly in underserved schools. By embedding multilingual storybooks within classrooms and promoting both independent and shared reading, the program fosters a strong culture of reading. The evidence suggests that it not only enhances student engagement and learning outcomes but also creates lasting impacts at the household and community levels, contributing to long-term literacy development.



Relevance



Coherence



Effectiveness



Efficiency



Impact



Sustainability

06.RECOMMENDATIONS

STRENGTHEN READING COMPREHENSION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES



Introduce Structured Reading Comprehension Activities

While the assessment demonstrates strong reading participation and interest, it provides limited evidence on improvements in reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and learning outcomes. Structured post-reading activities such as story discussions, comprehension quizzes, reflection exercises, and storytelling sessions may be integrated into the Reading Corner model to strengthen literacy outcomes.



Establish Grade-wise Reading Milestones

Develop simple reading benchmarks aligned with age and grade levels to track children's progression from basic reading fluency to comprehension, interpretation, and critical thinking. Periodic assessments can help teachers identify children requiring additional support.



Promote Higher-Order Thinking Through Books

Introduce activities such as predicting story endings, character analysis, creative writing, and problem-solving discussions to encourage analytical and creative thinking beyond reading fluency.

DEEPEN TEACHER CAPACITY FOR EFFECTIVE LIBRARY UTILISATION



Institutionalise Continuous Teacher Mentoring

Although reading corners are widely available and used, sustained effectiveness depends on teacher engagement. Periodic refresher training, peer-learning workshops, and mentoring support can help teachers continuously improve classroom reading practices.



Develop Classroom Reading Facilitation Toolkits

Provide teachers with simple activity guides, read-aloud techniques, storytelling methods, and discussion prompts that can be easily integrated into daily classroom routines.



Build Teacher Champions

Identify enthusiastic teachers within schools who can serve as Reading Ambassadors and mentor fellow teachers in promoting reading culture and innovative use of reading resources.

EXPAND HOME-BASED READING ECOSYSTEMS



Create Family Reading Engagement Activities

Develop simple parent-child reading challenges, storytelling evenings, and reading logs that encourage family participation in children's literacy development, particularly in low-literacy households.



Develop Parent Orientation Modules

Brief orientation sessions can help parents understand the importance of reading habits and equip them with practical ways to support children, even if they have limited formal education themselves.

IMPROVE MONITORING, MEASUREMENT, AND EVIDENCE GENERATION



Track Reading Progress Longitudinally

Future program phases may incorporate baseline and endline reading assessments to measure actual improvements in reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and academic performance.



Develop School-Level Reading Dashboards

Simple monitoring tools can track book utilisation, reading frequency, participation in reading activities, and student progress, helping schools monitor implementation quality.



Document Learning Success Stories

Regular documentation of student journeys, teacher innovations, and school-level best practices can provide valuable evidence for scaling and advocacy.

STRENGTHEN SUSTAINABILITY AND INSTITUTIONAL OWNERSHIP



Integrate Reading Time into School Timetables

Formal allocation of dedicated reading periods within school schedules can ensure sustained utilisation of Reading Corners even after project completion.



Build School Management Ownership

School leadership and School Management Committees may be actively involved in planning, monitoring, and supporting reading activities to institutionalise the intervention.



Develop Sustainability Plans for Resource Maintenance

Schools should establish mechanisms for maintaining books, replacing damaged materials, and expanding collections through local contributions, community support, or convergence with government education initiatives.

07. CONCLUSION

The Reading Corners with Libraries initiative implemented by Pratham Books with the support of Indus Towers has made a significant contribution towards strengthening foundational literacy and fostering a culture of reading among children in underserved communities. By establishing classroom-based reading corners stocked with multilingual and age-appropriate storybooks, the project successfully addressed one of the critical barriers to literacy development—limited access to quality reading materials. The intervention reached a large number of children across multiple states and demonstrated that when books are made easily accessible within children's everyday learning environments, they are more likely to engage with reading regularly and develop a sustained interest in books.

The assessment findings indicate that the intervention has been highly effective in promoting reading habits and independent learning among students. A large majority of children reported reading storybooks regularly, with many engaging in reading without teacher instruction, reflecting increased confidence, autonomy, and self-motivation. Students expressed strong enthusiasm for storybooks, frequently discussed stories with peers and teachers, and showed a clear desire to read more books. The reading corners transformed reading from a purely academic activity into an enjoyable and meaningful experience, helping children associate books with curiosity, imagination, and learning.

The project also demonstrated important outcomes beyond the classroom. Reading habits cultivated in schools extended into the home environment, with parents reporting that children regularly read or engaged with books at home and often shared stories and learning experiences with family members. This is particularly significant considering that a substantial proportion of households had limited or no access to storybooks. The initiative therefore played an important role in bridging educational inequities by providing children from resource-constrained families with opportunities that may otherwise have been unavailable. The multilingual approach adopted by the program emerged as a key strength. Children showed a strong preference for reading in their mother tongue and regional languages, which enhanced comprehension, enjoyment, and confidence. By providing books in languages familiar to children while also exposing them to additional languages, the project created an inclusive learning environment that supported diverse learning needs and encouraged greater participation in reading activities.

Parents and teachers consistently observed positive changes in children's confidence, communication skills, and enthusiasm for learning. The availability of books encouraged children to explore stories independently, engage in conversations around what they read, and express themselves more confidently. Such outcomes contribute not only to literacy development but also to broader educational and personal growth, including creativity, critical thinking, and social interaction.

From the perspective of the OECD-DAC evaluation framework, the project demonstrates strong relevance by addressing a critical educational need aligned with the National Education Policy 2020 and NIPUN Bharat objectives. It has been effective in improving access to reading resources and encouraging regular reading behaviours, efficient in leveraging classroom-based infrastructure for maximum reach, impactful in strengthening reading culture among children and families, and well-positioned to contribute to long-term literacy outcomes. The intervention also exhibits promising sustainability potential, particularly where schools, teachers, and communities continue to actively utilise and support the reading corners.

Overall, the Reading Corners initiative stands as a successful and scalable model for promoting foundational literacy in low-resource educational settings. The project has not only increased access to books but has also nurtured a genuine love for reading among children, strengthened home-school learning connections, and created supportive environments where reading can flourish. Continued investment in expanding book collections, strengthening reading engagement strategies, and deepening community participation can further enhance the program's impact and contribute meaningfully to the goal of ensuring that every child experiences the joy of reading and the opportunity to become a confident lifelong learner.



SOULACE CONSULTING PVT. LTD.