

ROUND TABLE ON SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

> Hosted by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation
at the University of Chicago Center in Delhi, July 19, 2018



The Michael & Susan Dell Foundation supports the systemic transformation of public schools in four Indian states: Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Though these states are at different stages of evolution in their transformation journey towards improving learning outcomes of students at scale, all of them have interesting results and learnings to share. This roundtable was convened to facilitate a learning dialogue between stakeholders from the four states, the private partners associated with these programs and NITI Aayog.

There are few common features in these four states:

- Shared aspiration of achieving grade level competencies for more than 80% of the students in government schools
- Adoption of a mix of academic and administrative reforms to achieve improved learning outcomes
- High-quality and diverse partnerships with consulting firms like Boston Consulting Group and Samagra, education organizations like Bodh Shiksha Samiti and Gray Matters India, and funders like UNICEF, Central Square Foundation, and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

In this convening the states shared best practices and deliberated with key stakeholders on how to maximize the potential of this transformation opportunity.



Nine million children, in around 90,000 schools, are impacted by the systemic programs in four states.

This is a huge opportunity.

Prachi Windlass
Michael & Susan Dell Foundation



With the systemic transformation approach, we can give our kids the best opportunities for success, and not only whatever is available.

Barun Mohanty
International Managing Director
Michael & Susan Dell Foundation

> SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATION: APPROACH

Past efforts to improve educational outcomes in India have been limited to isolated academic interventions. In four years of work in India, the groups working towards systemic transformation identified a fundamental truth to achieving large-scale reform: there are no individual silver bullets. Large-scale reform requires coordinated and customizable interventions. These interventions must be developed after including stakeholders from across the entire system.

All the states started with the shared vision of improving learning outcomes of students. Once this shared vision was in place, each state's working group was able to identify systemic gaps that span across agencies, departments, and districts.

For example, the state of Haryana launched several simultaneous interventions like creating remedial programs, developing teacher training sessions on competencies-centric teaching, and developing a student and teacher Management Information System (MIS). These initiatives worked to simultaneously resolve the academic and administrative challenges in the state.

In the report that follows, we share these best practices along with examples of the work being done on the ground to illustrate how states are creating change in their school systems.

> CREATE A SHARED COMMITMENT TO CHANGE AT ALL LEVELS

HARYANA

The Directorate of School Education of Haryana has launched several academic interventions, including the state-launched Saksham Haryana Campaign, which is administered by the Chief Minister's office.

Under this campaign, launched in July 2017, student assessments are conducted in each academic block to certify them as 'Saksham' -- when 80 percent of students attain grade-level competencies.

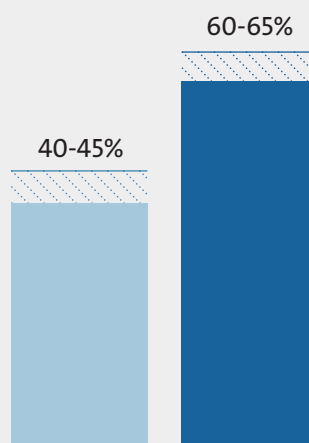


Through customized programs, strategic partners have accelerated the government initiatives in achieving the goal of quality education.

Dr. Rakesh Gupta
Additional Principal Secretary
Government of Haryana



GRADE-LEVEL COMPETENCY



Since 2014, grade-level competency among school children in Haryana has increased from 40-45 percent to 60-65 percent.

> FILL THE GOVERNANCE GAP

RAJASTHAN

The state government addressed the ‘governance gap’ created by an acute shortage of teachers with a data-driven MIS named ‘Shala Darpan,’ which assisted in clearing staff recruitment, transfers, and promotion backlogs. All activities are closely monitored by a dedicated team through a digital platform.

With the right data now available, Rajasthan established fully functional and fully-staffed I-XII schools in 99 percent of Gram Panchayats compared to 40 percent in 2014. Rajasthan stakeholders also stressed the importance of addressing soft infrastructural issues to create an enabling environment for teachers to be functional, including teacher rationalization and effective communication channels.

As a result of such initiatives, the National Achievement Survey (NAS) listed Rajasthan as the top performer in providing quality education – rising from number 10 in 2014. Additionally, student-enrollment has increased from 26.3 lakh to 33 lakh in three years.



In a mere two weeks, one can launch a scheme in ten thousand schools. That is what an efficient MIS system allows you to do.

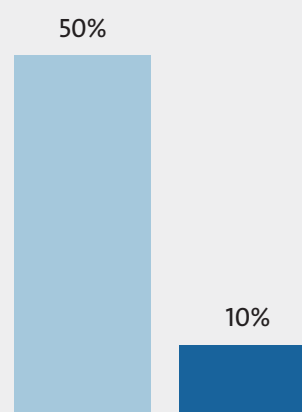
Seema Basal
Boston Consulting Group



Earlier teachers transfer would take 20-22 days. We streamlined this online. Now 90-95 percent of teacher transfer happens online in just three to four days.

Gaurav Goel
Samagra

TEACHER VACANCY RATE



The teacher vacancy rate in Rajasthan reduced from 50 percent to 10 percent over two years.



In Himachal Pradesh, 5.5 lakh students in 15,000 schools received textbooks on the first day of the academic year for two consecutive years.

> LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY THROUGH MICRO-INNOVATIONS

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Partners working in Himachal Pradesh delivered 5.5 lakh textbooks to more than 15,000 schools on the first day of the academic year, solving an ongoing problem for teachers and students who were traditionally not able to access textbooks until well into the school term. The state uses new online platforms to track data and progress across systems, so that specific responsibilities to achieve textbook delivery can be assigned to every block-level officer.

Himachal also completely reformed its communication channels by adopting tech-based communication systems between the state and teachers. Given the terrain of the state, written communication via letters would take multiple days to reach the field. With the help of instant messaging technologies, the state has become much more agile. The state has used these technologies to create a strong feedback system, for example, more than one lakh comments were received on various education-related initiatives, helping the state to verify the ground-level impact, with increased accountability and knowledge-sharing among all stakeholders.



Partners involvement in capacity building of the system has helped us to scale the programme, thus strengthening the administration.

K. Sandhya Rani
Commissioner of School Education
Andhra Pradesh



> STRENGTHEN THE CORE

ANDHRA PRADESH

The Andhra Pradesh Education Department aimed to assess the outcomes of various state policies and education initiatives. To ensure the validity of the assessments, the department launched an in-house assessment system that facilitated training and coaching for a dedicated group of assessment experts. Assessment experts go through a comprehensive training program over two to three years from the best national and international faculty.



Andhra Pradesh rose up from 17th position in 2015 to 3rd position in 2017, as per the National Achievement Survey (NAS) report.



The state has been conducting student assessments and use the data for targeted interventions. For example, the data was used to identify the students who needed the most academic support and a Summer Remedial Residential Program was launched to help more than 60,000 students.

> CREATE INTERVENTIONS AT SCALE

Interventions in silos can create islands of excellence but may have limited sustainable impact on government school systems at large. Therefore, it is critical to create a comprehensive change roadmap for improving learning outcomes at scale.

While individual organizations have gained success in respective states, Alok Kumar, Advisor to the NITI Aayog, encourages groups to continue to think at the broader systemic level. “We can think of leveraging private funding and evaluate policies at a lower level. If the policy is successful, the model can be passed on to the various state governments to implement it at the state level,” he said. Kumar suggests

that this model of testing locally before scaling state-wide will reduce risks and enable the government to scale the model through its own resources, reducing reliance on private funding.

NITI Aayog is aiming to impact an additional 20 million students through its program to enhance the quality of education in another three states, and the learnings coming from Haryana, Himachal, Andhra and Rajasthan will be critical in informing their journey. The fundamental approach to systemic transformation will continue to underpin their work. Speaking from his experience at The Bridgespan Group, Jeff Bradach said, “We have found 15 innovations globally which have scaled successfully, and 80 percent of them involved deep partnerships with governments and multi-stakeholders.”



> INVOLVE INNOVATORS

One of the major goals of the Systemic Transformation work is to include a diverse set of stakeholders to develop new ideas.

Partner organizations like Avanti Learning Centres, TheTeacherApp, Million Sparks Foundation and Gray Matters India are sharing different innovations by focusing on the role of technology to improve student-learning outcomes.

As the education technology sector continues to grow to reach more students, these partners shared their own best practices for the tech sector when working on systemic transformation:

- **Align your work and outcomes with the goals of the government.** For example, the team working on TheTeacherApp aligned development with Himachal's existing teacher training programs.
- **Design technology for the realities of Indian classrooms.** Bodh's pedagogical innovations for multi-grade classrooms in Rajasthan helps teachers address the complex challenges they face when students from several grades with different learning levels are in the same classroom.
- **Focus on mobile-first and low data footprint apps to expedite adoption.** In Haryana, teacher communications are now facilitated by WhatsApp – a platform educators are familiar with and already use for personal communications.

Across all groups, it was determined that a deep focus on, and continuous measurement of, learning outcomes is vital in transforming education in India's public schools.

For example, Rajasthan is experimenting and measuring impact of several technology interventions before scaling to reach more students.



> CONCLUSION

As a team, the key stakeholders working to improve learning outcomes in Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh states believe that students who have access to quality education have a greater opportunity to move on to university and other higher education, which in turn provides greater opportunity for employment and financial stability.

The shared aspiration to improve learning outcomes – with a strong commitment to measurement, iteration for improvement, and sharing best practices – is a testament to the commitment for change so many across India wish to see for our children and the future.



We have improved the learning outcomes in the immediate terms, however, we want the entire education sector to look very different in three to five years so that it can fly off on its own trajectories.

Seema Bansal
Boston Consulting Group

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