PRERNA

Program Report

Sarv Shiksha Abhiyaan, Himachal Pradesh

Contents

INTRODUCTION

Himachal – The abode of snow, which came into being on 25th January 1971, is the 18th state of the Republic of India. The state of Himachal Pradesh has ranks 11th in term of literacy rates in the country. According to Census 2011, the literacy rate in HP is 82.88%. It is 89.53% for the male population and 75.93% for the female population. Education in Himachal Pradesh is administered by the Department of Education which manages 10,710 primary schools and 4617 upper primary schools.

The literacy rates in Himachal Pradesh are higher when compared to other states, due to the state government's compulsory elementary education policy and it is gratifying to note that the Himachal Govt. is giving priority to the education sector.

The future of education in Himachal Pradesh is promising as reflected from the literacy rates and the policies of the state government. Access, enrolment and retention in schools have increased considerably over the past few years, especially at the primary level. The main target of the government is now on improving the quality of education.

PRERNA – OVERVIEW

Studies on education outcomes like Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) and internal achievement assessments conducted at the state level show that despite increase in the enrolment and improvement in physical infrastructure, children are still lagging behind in terms of learning achievement. In order to address this situation and ensure that there is a measurable increase in the learning levels in basic Math and Reading (Hindi) and changing teaching methods through capacity building of teachers, PRERNA program has been initiated by Govt. of Himachal Pradesh to achieve basic literacy and numeracy goals among students.

PRERNA program was initially started in 150 schools of Distt. Hamirpur. The program was supported by SSA in 2015-16 and used the TaRL approach developed by Pratham. In the academic year 2016-17, Sarv Shiksha Abhiyaan, Himachal Pradesh decided to scale up this program to the entire the state.

The PRERNA program is using Pratham's TaRL approach in all intervention schools of the state. The TaRL approach is defined by reorganizing children into groups to focus teaching at their ability level and moving students up a series of defined learning levels to achieve specified learning outcomes over the duration of the program.
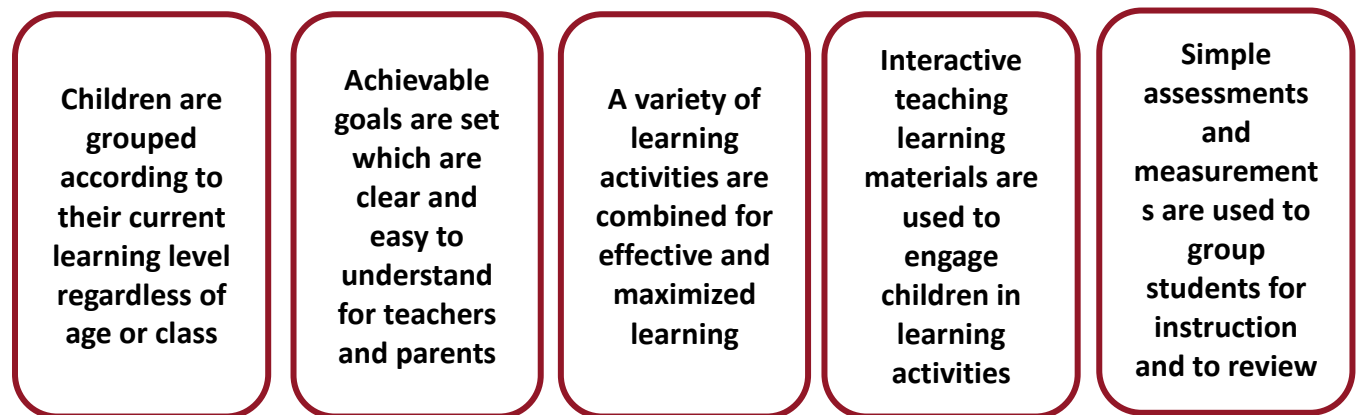
OBJECTIVES OF PRERNA

To improve the reading, writing and basic arithmetic skills of children between 6-14 years, the TaRL framework is used by government teachers. The TaRL framework is a guideline for teachers to lead learning activities for Language and Mathematics with the objective of building up students' competencies for specific and measurable learning outcomes that are assessed regularly. These competencies are around basic reading and simple Math operations for

children in std. 3 to 5. TaRL uses a framework of teaching and learning based on the Pratham developed Combination of Activities for Maximized Learning (CAMaL) approach that has had a proven impact on students' learning.

1 Ensuring that there is a measurable increase in the learning levels in Basic Math and Reading (Hindi) for children in std. 3 to 5.

2 Bring a change in teaching methodology of teachers. The new teaching methodology should focus on – teaching children according to their learning levels and not according to their grades; and measuring improvement in learning levels of children on a regular basis using simple and understandable tools.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

| Children are grouped according to their current learning level regardless of age or class | Achievable goals are set which are clear and easy to understand for teachers and parents | A variety of learning activities are combined for effective and maximized learning | Interactive teaching learning materials are used to engage children in learning activities | Simple assessments and measurements are used to group students for instruction and to review |

CAPACITY BUILDING

As an important part of the program, capacity building workshops were conducted for different cadres of government officials as well Pratham team members. The capacity building workshops had four major components:

| PROGRAM OBJECTIVES | CONTENT for building foundational | PEDAGOGY – Use of TaRL and CAMaL* | ASSESSMENTS |

TaRL – Teaching at Right Level
CAMaL – Combined Activities for Maximized Learning

Workshops were conducted at the State Project Office to discuss, review and finalize the material for the program. Leadership groups were identified at different levels to lead impactful implementation of the program across the state (described in detail in the following section). Considering that the cluster schools are on focus and can serve as a resource centre for PRERNA, the district level group (DIET) was given the responsibility of capacity building of the Cluster Head Teachers (CHTS) directly at the DIET level. CHTs from all the districts were trained directly by Government and Pratham district level cadre. Post the training, CHTs implemented the TaRL framework in their own schools after which they oriented teachers from branch schools in their cluster.

A carefully designed teacher and children specific material was provided to schools under the program. Leadership groups at state, district and block levels took the responsibility of mentoring and monitoring of the cluster schools.

CAPACITY BUILDING AT DIFFERENT LEVELS:

A State Resource Group (SRG) was formed to support capacity building of CHTs at the district level. DIET faculty members, teacher training in-charges and Pratham district resource group together formed the SRG. The SRG was trained by Pratham's national/state team.

At district level, capacity building of Cluster Head Teachers (CHTs) from every cluster was done by the SRG. The BEEOs and BRCCs of each block were also a part of this workshop.
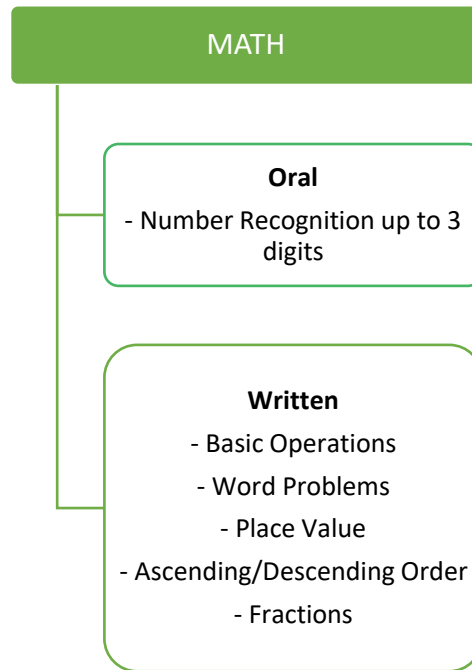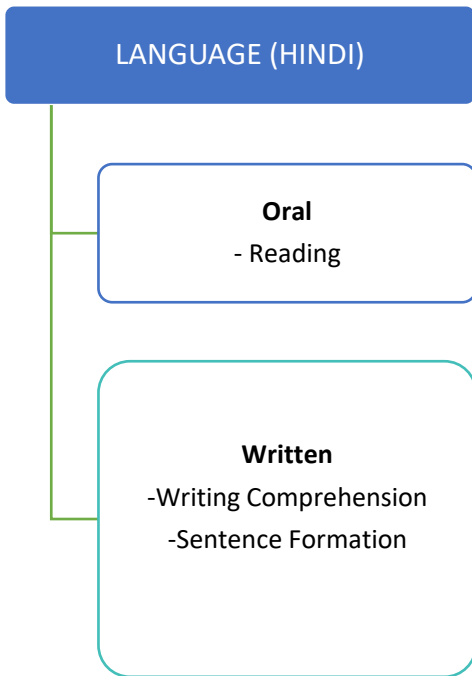
The CHTs from each cluster were responsible for orienting and mentoring school teachers in their clusters for implementation of the program. Once the CHTs implemented the program in their respective schools, they oriented teachers from the branch schools.
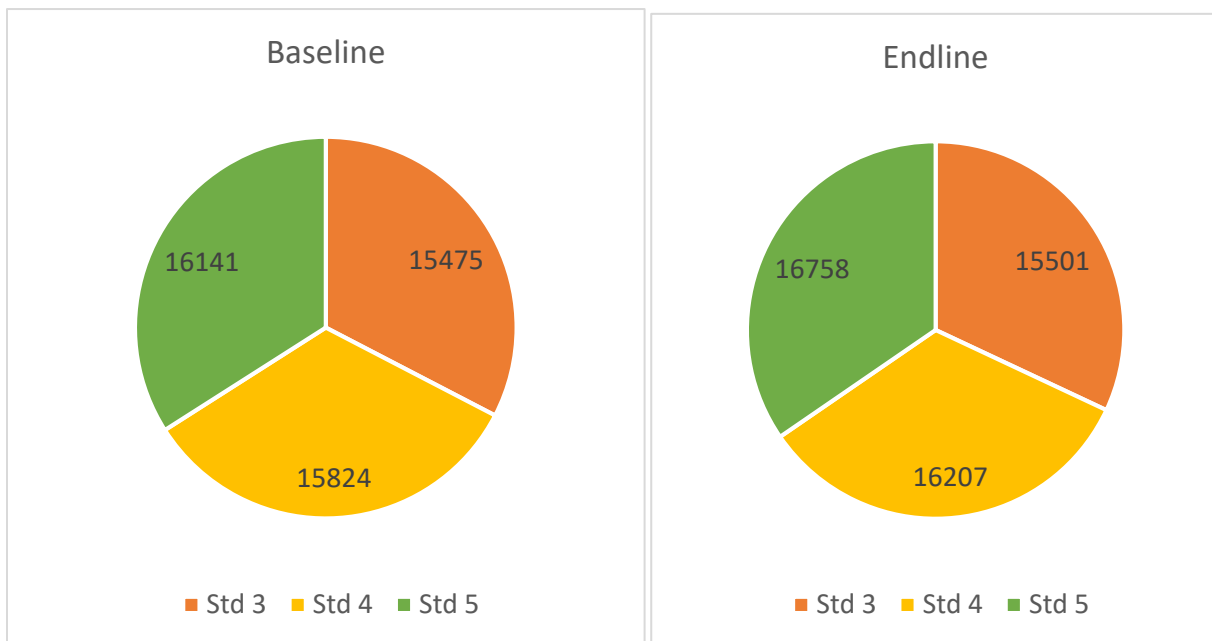
PRERNA 2016-17 – COVERAGE

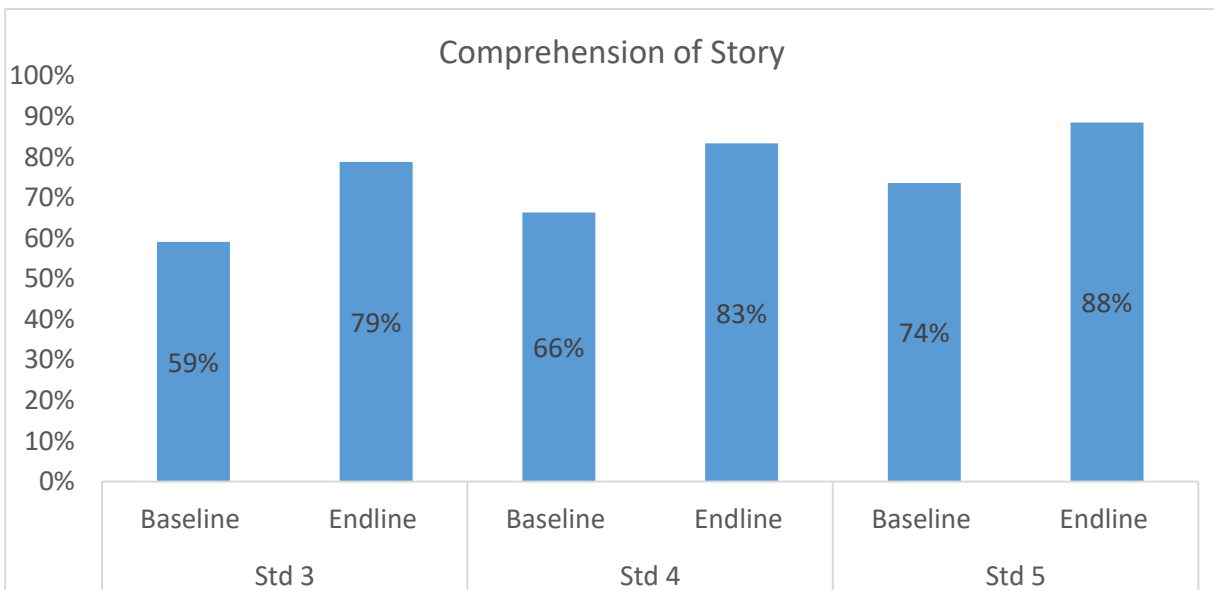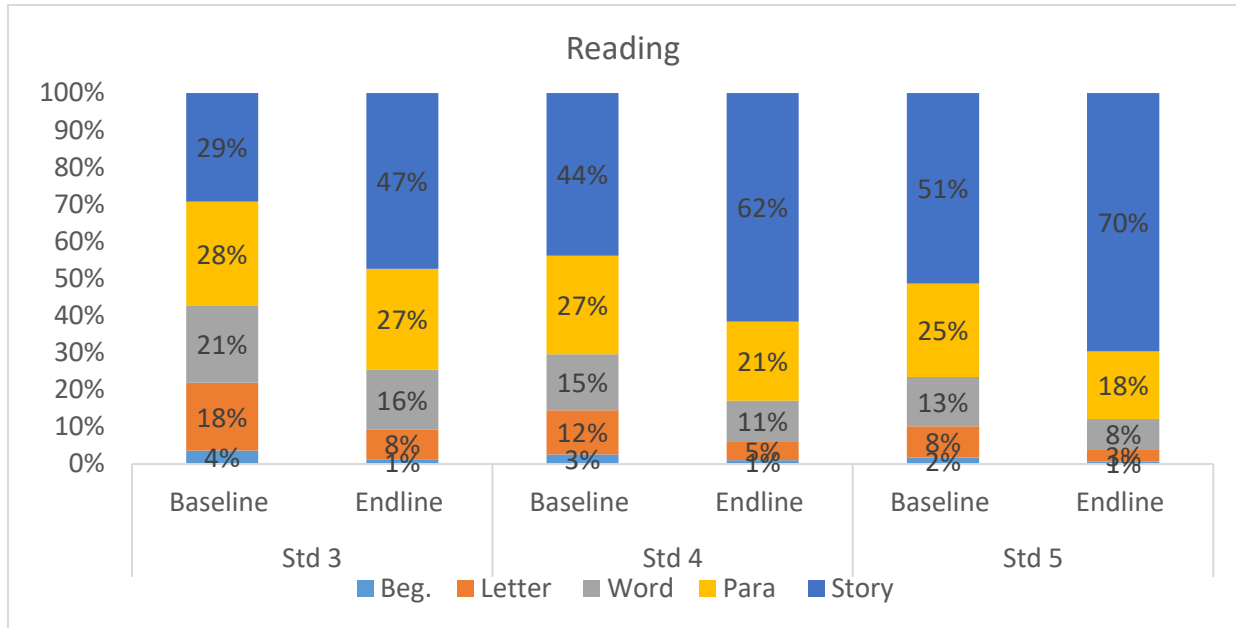| S.No.	District	No. of Blocks	No. of Primary Schools	No. of Primary Cluster Schools (Focus Schools)	No. of Non-Focus Schools
		District-wise Status of PRERNA Coverage			
1	Bilaspur	5	591	117	474
2	Chamba	15	1163	208	955
3	Hamirpur	6	489	105	384
4	Kangra	19	1707	353	1354
5	Kinnaur	3	183	37	146
6	Kullu	6	754	130	624
7	Lahaul & Spiti	4	198	38	160
8	Mandi	20	1733	350	1383
9	Shimla	20	1605	321	1284
10	Sirmour	13	1022	189	833
11	Solan	7	766	149	617
12	Una	5	499	105	394
	Total	123	10710	2102	8608

ASSESSMENTS AND LEARNING IMPROVEMENT

At the start of the program, the learning level of each student is identified through a simple assessment to use the assessment tool, and students are then grouped to participate in the appropriate level of TaRL activities. Two types of tools were used to assess the children – oral and written. The oral assessments were conducted one on one with children whereas the written tests were taken in groups of children. The oral assessment tool tests and identifies students for teaching in one of five learning levels (Beginner, Letter, Word, Para, and Story) according to their Hindi and Math competencies at the start of the program, and then at intervals during the program to graduate the students up a level. The program assessments tested children on the following competencies:

LANGUAGE (HINDI)	MATH

Oral
- Reading

Written
-Writing Comprehension
-Sentence Formation

Oral
- Number Recognition up to 3 digits

Written
- Basic Operations
- Word Problems
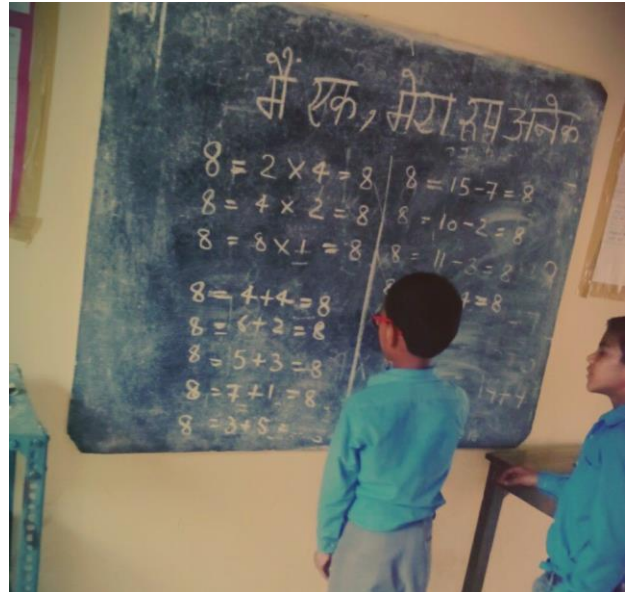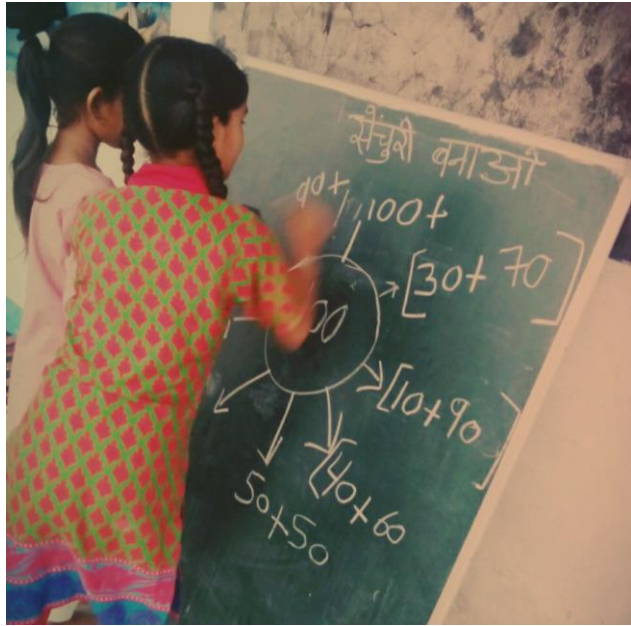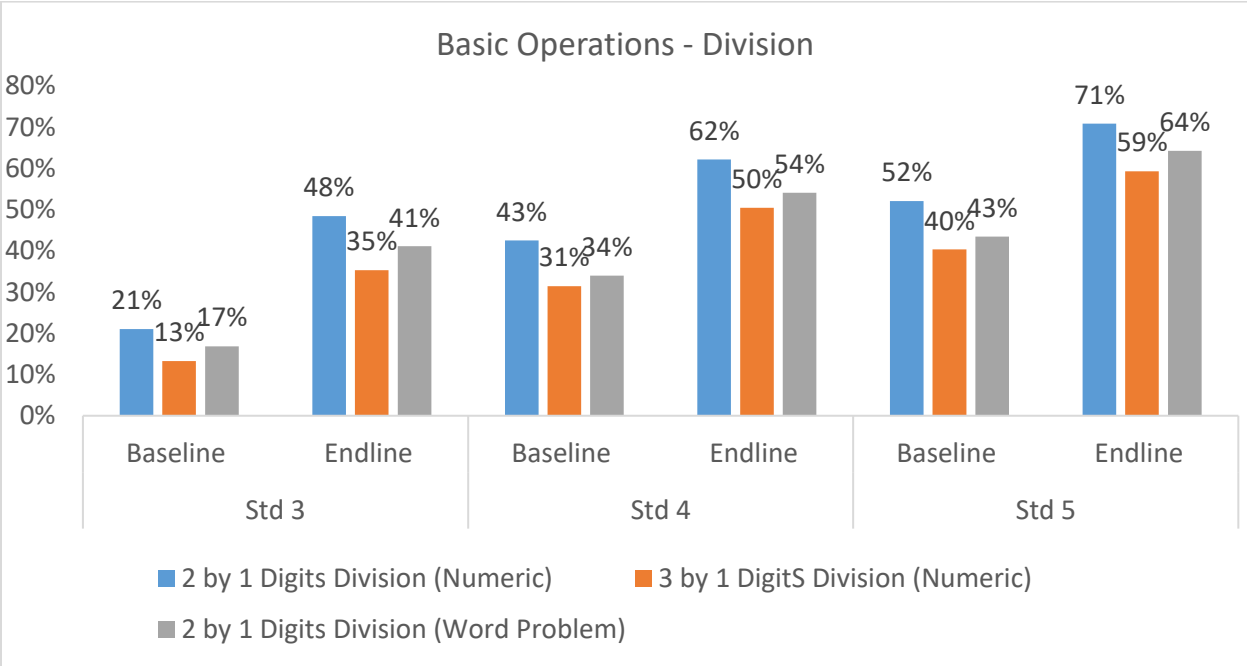- Place Value
- Ascending/Descending Order
- Fractions

CHILDREN TESTED: The following graphs covers   the data collected from 2104 cluster primary schools who have been considers Focus Schools for PRERNA intervention

Baseline

16141
15475
15824

■ Std 3 ■ Std 4 ■ Std 5

Endline

16758
15501
16207

■ Std 3 ■ Std 4 ■ Std 5

LEARNING IMPROVEMENTS

Reading

	Std 3		Std 4		Std 5	
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline
Story	29%	47%	44%	62%	51%	70%
Para	28%	27%	27%	21%	25%	18%
Word	21%	16%	15%	11%	13%	8%
Letter	18%	8%	12%	5%	8%	3%
Beg.	4%	1%	3%	1%	2%	1%

Comprehension of Story

	Std 3		Std 4		Std 5	
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline
	59%	79%	66%	83%	74%	88%

Basic Operations - Subtraction

Std 3 — Baseline: 54%, 37%, 28% — Endline: 78%, 62%, 53%
Std 4 — Baseline: 67%, 49%, 39% — Endline: 84%, 70%, 62%
Std 5 — Baseline: 74%, 62%, 46% — Endline: 88%, 78%, 69%

Legend:
- 2 by 2 Digits Subtraction (Numeric)
- 3 by 3 Digits Subtraction (Numeric)
- 2 by 2 digits Subtraction (Word Problem)

Basic Operations - Division

Std 3 — Baseline: 21%, 13%, 17% — Endline: 48%, 35%, 41%
Std 4 — Baseline: 43%, 31%, 34% — Endline: 62%, 50%, 54%
Std 5 — Baseline: 52%, 40%, 43% — Endline: 71%, 59%, 64%

Legend:
- 2 by 1 Digits Division (Numeric)
- 3 by 1 DigitS Division (Numeric)
- 2 by 1 Digits Division (Word Problem)

Fraction

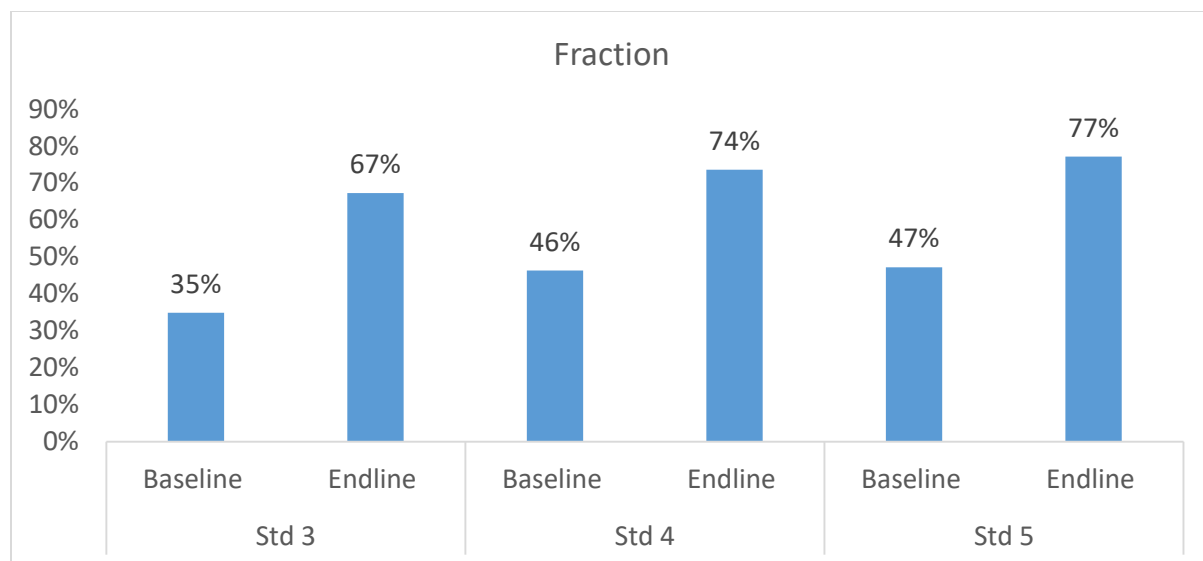|	Std 3		Std 4		Std 5	
	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline	Baseline	Endline
	35%	67%	46%	74%	47%	77%

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE INDEX

SSA and Pratham have together prepared a School Performance Index (SPI) to regularly track and monitor the progress of each intervention school. The School Performance Index serves as a basis to government's district, block and cluster level functionaries for selecting schools which need more on-site academic support.

The SPI serves as the basis for selection of the type of intervention (basic and advanced) in intervention schools after the first phase of the program. The School Performance Index also categorizes schools in three levels on the basis of cumulative baseline result in basic Language and Mathematics. Any school that scores 75% and more on the achievement level in the index, is considered for advanced intervention in the next phase of the program. The schools with achievement level between 50% to 74% is considered as 'average schools' whereas those with achievement level less than 49 % is considered 'special focus schools'. For non-reader children, basic content is delivered for a period of 45 days and for children who are able to read, the advanced content including competencies to write and comprehend is taught for the same period. Teachers decide at the school level which type of content should be taught to any particular class based on its learning levels. School Performance Index also serves a basis for selection of schools for academic support and monitoring visits.

KEY SUCCESSES

- DIET faculty along with TTIs acted as SRG due to which they worked in more accountable manner in comparison to previous years.
- A successful 4 days' training with Center Head Teachers, BEEOs, BRCCs at DIET levels was completed at DIET level.

- Printing and distribution of material in most of the districts was done as per the given specifications. Material was available in all the trainings.
- Schools have allotted special time for PRERNA program.
- District administrations in Mandi, Shimla, Hamirpur and Lahul & Spiti have provided additional support to the program.
- School Performance Index which categorizes schools according to their performance, resulted as an effective insight for schools and helped to take actionable input for mentoring/ monitoring.
- The main highlight of the monitoring program was that the DC's of District like Shimla, Hamirpur, Bilaspur, Mandi, Lahaul & Spiti, Una took active part and involved SDMs and other district officials in observing the schools under Prerna program.
- Regular inspection by officials from SSA and other stakeholders brought about accountability. The process of recognizing good teachers also led to building of confidence among them which made the initiative a success. Monitoring was done at regular intervals and appropriate planning at State, District and Block levels was done for this purpose. The SPD SSA motivated and interacted all the CRCs - 2104 in number, personally, in a series of specially designed workshops across the State.
- The scale of this intervention can also be listed as one of its achievements as over 3.7 Lakh students understood the idea of group dynamism and level appropriate learning which is likely to benefit them in their regular studies and infuse a new sense of togetherness among children. Teachers who were a part of the program have also gained valuable inputs on imparting level appropriate learning during PRERNA.

CHALLENGES

- A transmission loss was observed during orientation of teachers by Center Head Teacher.
- Prior to orienting school teachers from other schools, the Center Head Teachers were supposed to conduct PRERNA program in their own schools. However, this practice was seen in very few schools.
- There is a lack of clarity on how to establish link between grouping of children, activities and material in most of the schools which have been observed.
- Delayed and varied timeline.
- The program has major focus is on cluster schools only. There seems to be no concrete strategy for branch schools except Mandi. Moreover Una has only provided material for cluster schools.

WAY FORWARD

For the next academic year, the program strategy is being designed to cater to two groups of children in each classroom:

- Intervention to build Foundation Skills: To improve basic Language and Math skills of the 30% to 40% children who have scope for improvement in terms of foundational skills.
- Intervention to build Advanced Competencies: To introduce advance competencies to 60% to 70% of the children who are already readers and are able to solve basic Math questions.

The plan for building foundational skills will remain the same as the previous year. However, a new set of material will be introduced to the teachers. For designing this material, Pratham proposes a content workshop in the first week of February 2017. Two teachers/cluster level cadre/DIET faculty, nominated from each district of the state, will together work with Pratham's national and state team on building content for the next academic year. The workshop will not just be a platform to develop material in localized and contextualized forms for the PRERNA program, but also to build a cadre of teachers who will act as mentors and will support the government and Pratham in designing and implementing the program efficiently. This cadre will be an integral part of building, piloting and editing and finalizing the material as well providing training to cluster and branch school teachers.

The plan for introducing advanced competencies will be designed by the Pratham national team in consultation with the state government officials. The main aim of the intervention would be to bridge the gap that exists between foundational competencies and grade-level competencies in Language and Math. Though 60%-70% are now equipped with basic foundational skills, they may still lag behind in terms of grade-level competencies. Hence, the aim would be to be bridge this gap. A first draft of the strategy to achieve this aim will be shared by the end of January

2017 which will include the advance competencies to be covered under the intervention and implementation plan for the same. The draft can then be discussed in detail with the state government, PRERNA program leadership and government content experts.

ENGLISH

Along with advanced competencies, English is also proposed to be introduced in the next year of the program. The program aims to enable primary school children to achieve basic competencies in reading, writing, listening, and speaking English. The English Program would be running across all of the state's 12 districts.

The initial focus will be on building and strengthening students' elementary skills in the language, namely:

- alphabet recognition
- identification of common vocabulary words
- word decoding skills.

Subsequently, the program will focus on developing intermediate skills such as:

- reading and comprehension of level-appropriate and context-appropriate texts
- communicative competence

Eventually, the program will also aim to develop an understanding of grade-specific English curricula.

Resource Manuals will be developed for teachers to understand the techniques of transacting content in the classrooms. Teachers will be trained on the Resource Manuals as well as the methods of managing and teaching multi-level classrooms. The training will also focus on the methods of administering assessments, grading students and analyzing data.