



**Organisation for Early Literacy promotion (OELP)
Annual Report - 2010 - 11**



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During this time period it was decided to build upon, consolidate and expand the achievements and learning of ELP Phase 3 (2009-10), through our own resources, since none of our grants had come through. Work within the Government. schools in rural Rajasthan (Silora block, Ajmer district) was shelved for the time being, as the Government. of Rajasthan had taken a decision to introduce the 'Lehar 'programme within these schools, based on the ABL programme from Tamilnadu.

Work with the SWRC non-formal night schools up scaled to 110 night schools and 3 day schools across five districts of Rajasthan i.e. Ajmer, Jaipur, Nagaur, Chittorgarh and Barmer to cover approximately 2500 out of school children from the poorest and most marginalized communities. This work was taken up in partnership with the Barefoot College in SWRC, Tilonia. ELP has functioned as a technical support group and provided on going resource inputs through training workshops; regular monitoring and evaluation inputs to the 30 workers and 115 teachers from a network of NGOs that are being supported by the Barefoot College in five districts of Rajasthan

Activities undertaken During this period the activities of the ELP project may be categorized into two:

- A. Implementation of the ELP intervention, which were undertaken in partnership with the Barefoot College, SWRC, Tilonia
- B. Research

A. Implementation of the ELP intervention

. This work included the following:

1. Teacher Trainings

A. Capacity building for ELP / SWRC teachers and field level workers

- 6 to 15 June 2010 – 10 day teacher training. A total of 90 teachers from the participated in four groups.
- 1 to 3 August 2010 – teacher trainings – for all the 13 field clusters.(100 teachers)
- 29 to 30 October 2010 – teacher trainings for all clusters (100 teachers)

B. Trainings for external agencies / NGOs

OELP signed an MoU with Jan Sahas, an NGO working in Dewas and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, to support the establishment of the ELP intervention in their schools, over a period of nine months; and then to follow up with the up-scaling of this intervention to a larger number of schools over a longer period of time. This work is being supported by SRTT. As part of the MoU the following activities were undertaken

- 16 to 20 November 2010– Orientation Training for the Jan Sahas Team from Madhya Pradesh and for newly appointed teachers in 25 night schools.
- 4 to 9 January 2011 – Field Visits of ELP team to Ujjain and Dewas to monitor Jan Sahas Schools, and follow up review and planning meeting.
- 13 to 16 March 2011 – field visit of OELP team to review the work of the past year and plan for Phase 2

2. ELP school based intervention

- June 2010- **Tracking for all children across the 13 SWRC field centers**

ELP undertook the exercise of tracking the children's progress in the night schools located Silora and Jawaja blocks of Ajmer district and the Dudu block of Jaipur district .The exercise was also undertaken in the schools of Barmer and Chittorgarh district. However in the latter two districts all the evaluations were not undertaken .In all the exercise was undertaken in a total of 84 night schools covering a total of 2411 children.

After the baseline survey the children were categorized into levels A , B, and C. Children from Classes 1and 2 were tested for alphabet recognition and sound symbol correlation. Those scoring less than 50% were level A and those who scored more than 50% were level B. Children who were comfortable with alphabets and the sound symbol correlation

and were constructing words were put into level C. The complexity of the skills tested increased with each evaluation.

The overview of the Tracing procedure is as follows:

First Evaluation

- Level A and B – tested for alphabet recognition, sound symbol correlation
- Level C – tested for sound symbol correlation as well as word recognition.

Second Evaluation

- Level A and B – tested for sound symbol correlation and word recognition, meaningful word construction..
- Level C – construction of meaningful words, sentences, completing poems, and making a picture by following written instructions.

Third Evaluation.

- Level A and B – construction of meaningful words and sentences.
- Level C – Construction of meaningful words, sentences , and question answers.

Compilation of the final tracking data for the night school children, across four evaluations was undertaken, and the data was analysed for field center wise trends. Factors related to drop in performance level, for a particular field center were then identified. In most cases the drop was directly linked to irregular attendance on account of migration

3. Capacity building through exposure visits for the ELP team

- 16 to 21 August 2010- Exposure visit for SWRC and ELP team to Pragat Shikshan Sansthan – Phaltan. This organization has a well conceptualized reading programme based on the ideas of Sylvia Ashton Warner under the leadership of Dr. Maxine Berntsen. They are also working on a reading programme for pre school children based on the Emergent Literacy Perspective under the leadership of Dr. Neelima Gokhle. Both these programmes provided rich learning opportunities to the ELP / SWRC team. The OELP team also got to observe and reflect upon the Reading Improvement Programme (RIP) which was g being implemented in Zila Parishad Schools.

- 12 – 13 October 2010– Visit to Kriti Sansthan, Nimbaheda , Chittorgarh.for a capacity building workshop

4. External evaluation

An Impact Assessment Study of the Early Literacy Project (ELP) which is being implemented by OELP, was undertaken as an external evaluation over two years under the leadership of Professor K. B. Rath, HOD, Education, and presently the acting Principal of the Regional Institute of Education (RIE) Ajmer. The study has included components for quantitative, as well as qualitative analysis. A detailed report of the study was submitted to SRTT .

December 10, 2010 – A presentation of the findings of the above mentioned Impact Assessment Study was made by Professor Rath, , HOD Education and Principal, RIE. This presentation was made in the Academic Staff College, University of Rajasthan. It was chaired by Professor Shantha Sinha, Chairperson NCPCR. The presentation was well attended by an audience which consisted of representatives of GOs, NGOS, academics, senior members of civil society and students. The response to the study and to ELP's work was extremely positive and several suggestions were made for taking this work forward. Prof. Sinha appreciated the fact that the ELP interventions had been conceptualized keeping in mind theoretical perspectives, as well as the needs and challenges of field situations.

5. Networking

- July 14, 2010, in Pune – Keerti Jayaram, Secretary, OELP participated in a National Consultation on the **Impact of the RTE Act on Alternative /Innovative Schools**
- 3-5 September,2010 OELP participated and made a presentation of our work at the Magical Years Conference organized by Katha and NUEPA in New Delhi
- October 25, 2010 – OELP and SWRC organised a joint workshops for NGOs from Rajasthan on **The implications and means of implementation of the RTE**. A list of suggestions was compiled and forwarded to the government of Rajasthan.

- October 30-31,2010 - OELP made a presentation titled “ Building foundations for Reading and Writing with Understanding “at a seminar on **Linking Universities and Schools: Towards Equity and Quality organized by the School of University – School Resource Network - JNU, New Delhi**

B. Research

Data collection and analysis was completed for two research studies being supported by SRTT:

1. A study of school retention in eight rural Government Upper Primary Schools of the Silora Block, Ajmer District, Rajasthan
2. A study of the reading processes of primary school learners from Classes 3 to 6 in four villages in the Silora Block of Ajmer District, Rajasthan

The research work undertaken during this time period included:

- Preparation of lists of the dropout children across all 13 field centers for the previous academic year.
- Preparation of lists of new admissions for all clusters.
- Case studies for a select sub sample dropout.
- Compilation and analysis of the dropout research data and case studies, teachers
- Data analysis for both the above studies
- Report writing for both the above studies

1. A study of school retention in eight rural Government Upper Primary Schools of the Silora Block, Ajmer District, Rajasthan

During ELP Phase 2 in 2008 -2009, in which the ELP intervention was implemented in 8 rural upper primary schools in Silora Block, the problem of irregular attendance, often leading to school dropouts had posed a major challenge. To a fairly large extent the failure of sustained school retention was believed be rooted in the overall socio-economic and geographical situations within which these schools are located. In this drought prone area most of the land remains arid and uncultivated, and the marginalized communities struggle to maintain livestock or seek daily wage work. Thus migration in search of daily wage employment is rampant and is one likely factor which is responsible for the both

these problems of irregular attendance and school retention. The constraints of a subsistence economy too put an additional burden on the children, who are often compelled to contribute towards the family income. Apart from these there maybe reasons located in the school – for instance the quality of teaching; the social distance between the teachers and learners and the attitude of the teachers towards the learners; the physical location of the school and so on. Although these issues have been the focus of academic and policy level concern, we felt it was important to get an insiders perspective and build a deeper understanding of this complex issue and how it impacts children and their families. ELP believes that this will facilitate effective engagement with the local communities and schools while implementing the ELP intervention.

Significant findings

1. In the total dropouts girls are always above 60% of the total dropouts .Out of the total dropouts for all villages girls form well above two-thirds of all dropouts – in other words, roughly twice as many girls dropout as boys.
2. The dropout rate from government schools is about 20% . It varies from about 10% in Deendwada to more than 41% in Tolamal.
3. The dropout rate for girls is more than double that for the boys when considered across all 8 villages (28.5% for girls as against 12.4% for boys).
4. The overall exit rate from government schools (boys & girls combined) is a little over 31%. Government schools lose about 20% of their strength to dropouts and an additional 10-11% to private schools.
5. There is a clear gender bias against girls that is at work in private school attendance. Although the proportion of boys and girls going to govt schools is not very different (roughly 48% and 45% respectively), as many as 43% of all boys go to pvt schools whereas the corresponding figure for girls is only 22%.
6. There is also a big difference between the exclusion rates (or the proportion of those who have never been to school) for girls and boys, with the latter being under 3% whereas it is more than five times higher for girls at almost 16%.
7. There are strong differences between the upper castes (UCs) and the other two caste groups with respect to school attendance. Only about 4% of UC kids are

out of school whereas the figures for OBCs and SC-STs are much higher (20 and 26% respectively).

8. There is a lack of strong class differences when it comes to school attendance. All class groups are fairly close to the overall average of 80% in school and 20% out of school. However the proportion of rich children out of school is 21% which is more than the proportion of poor children out of school, which is 18.8%.

A monograph based on the study has been submitted to SRTT. It can be viewed on the OELP web site.

2. A Study of the individual reading behaviours of school going children in Classes 3 to 6, in four villages of the Silora Block, Ajmer District, Rajasthan

Over the past year's work in early literacy in Classes 1 to 3 of 8 upper primary schools in the Silora Block of District Ajmer, ELP has been able to develop some insights of the reading and writing processes of beginning level readers and writers in Hindi. Assessments of reading and writing that have been done as a part of this work have focused on aspects of phonological processing and meaning construction at the word and sentence level. Some assessment has also been undertaken on reading comprehension; however a need was felt for more in- depth study of reading comprehension processes. Since reading comprehension appears to be a problem area ELP believes that doing focused individual reading observations will help to build deeper insights and more informed methodologies for addressing various aspects of reading with understanding.

Children studying in classes 3 (i.e. children who have just entered Class 3) to 6 in 4 villages of the Silora Block were included in the study. The four villages selected were those in which the ELP team has not worked, so that there isn't a bias in the sample. All children whether from government or private schools that were present in the village have been included in the study. For this purpose the team first visited each selected village and made village wise lists.

Significant Findings

1. Almost 25% children remained at Level 1 in classes 5 /6 and 7. Practically no movement is visible in their reading behaviours. In fact, only 25 to 30% of these children responded at the mastery level for the simplest reading comprehension

- tasks which require a visual response. This clearly shows that almost 25% of the total sample was stagnating in the higher classes.
2. An important finding across all the sample categories is that fluent and non fluent reading behaviors play a major role in defining the reading level of a child. This has important implications for early reading interventions. The findings suggest that it is important to identify and address non fluent reading behaviours through specific improved reading strategies which equip the readers for fluent reading.
 3. The findings have indicated that the nature and complexity of a response item on a reading comprehension task plays an important role in determining the readers' response. This became evident through the following findings :
 - a) All groups of the sample responded well to reading comprehension tasks that require visual responses, making these the simplest reading comprehension items.
 - b) The readers responses based on a selection of de- contextualized words suggest that such response times are beyond the level of difficulty of young readers, as was seen across all categories of the sample in this study. Although this finding may need to be probed further, it is supported by literature from the field of Child development and Early Literacy, which has highlighted the importance of embedding and contextualizing learning opportunities and learning materials, so as to make them meaningful for young learners. This literature concomitantly suggests that disembedded learning is too abstract and therefore difficult for young learners.
 4. The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analysis suggest that children from Private Schools have an edge over the children from government schools

Both the quantitative and qualitative analysis suggests that gender is not an important factor for influencing reading behaviours.

A monograph on the study was submitted to SRTT and is on the OELP website.

Balance sheet and profit and loss accounts for year ending 31.03. 2011

Presented to and passed by the OELP Executive Committee on 22nd July 2011

Receipts*	3,35,000
Expenditures	4,20,054
Excess of Expenditure over Income	(85,054)

*Receipts included

Grants Rs. 17,48,000

Grant from SRTT	Rs. 2,00,000
Grant from SDTT	Rs. 9,98,000
Grant from NRTT	Rs. 5,50,000

Local Contributions Rs. 2,51,903

S. No.	Name of the Donee	Amount
1.	Mrs. Shaila Sondhi	20,000
2.	Seth Sohan Lal Educational and Charitable Trust	20,000
3.	Mr. Monojit Kumar	1,00,000
4.	Leelajit Sikhdar Memorial Charitable Trust	25,103
5.	Contributory donations for resource pack	60,000

Bankers

Axis Bank Ltd

Chartered Accountant

Adeesh Mehra & Co, Chartered Accountants
7/3 IInd floor,
Jangpura Extension
New Delhi 110014

Secretary OELP

May 2011