

prajayatna

We Learn. We Live



Annual Report

2015 - 16

Foreword

Prajayatna's core work on educational governance has been implemented at a significantly large scale, reaching out to several thousand villages spread across districts in the four states where the organization has been operational in for the last fifteen years. These interventions have given Prajayatna substantial experience and understanding of actual issues and conditions to enable the organization to work at different levels through different strategies – both direct and indirect interventions that can have significant impact by addressing larger systemic issues in education.

Direct interventions of Prajayatna have been consolidated and the scope of these interventions has been restricted to areas where it provides the organization opportunity to experiment and develop strategies and innovations in interventions and processes. Direct interventions have also been continued to a certain extent in extremely backward locations such as the Eastern Districts of Uttar Pradesh and areas of Telangana where there is a need for Prajayatna to be directly involved with in educational governance interventions.

A significant development in the educational governance work this year was the initiation of a partnership to implement its educational governance work of strengthening community based institutions through a network of organizations in the state of Telangana. Prajayatna has also begun to explore the possibility of working with organizations and federations in different parts of the country.

In the other key area of Prajayatna's work - capability based learning, the learning approach – Kalikayatna developed by Prajayatna, which is operational in the States of Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, was initiated in the State of Telangana in the year 2015-16 in partnership with the Department of Education.

Prajayatna has also begun work to ensure inclusive educational practices for differently abled children by providing additional focus on this specialized field. Innovative approaches to its already existing work in educational governance and more enhanced focus and effort to address disability related concerns in our inclusive approach towards capability development in primary schools was initiated this year in select districts of Uttar Pradesh.

Simultaneous to these primary areas of the organization's work with schools, its work with pre -schools or its work in the area of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has continued in select areas of Bangalore Urban and in Dharwad District of Karnataka.

Summary of work

During the initial phase of Prajayatna's work on educational governance through its direct interventions across its working areas it has been able to facilitate stakeholder involvement in the development of schools. Its multiple interventions has led to mobilization of resources from different sources, better utilizations of available resources, provision of essential infrastructure and learning requirements for schools , better management of schools and proficient maintenance of school facilities.

In the later phase of its work on educational governance Prajayatna has focused on institutionalizing its efforts by strengthening the capabilities of community based and constitutionally recognized structures such as the school management committees and the Education Standing Committees within the Panchayat Raj Structures.

Some of the major developments that have been enabled through Prajayatnas interventions are: The democratic formation of constitutional community based structures, the strengthening of the capabilities of these structure to carry out their roles and responsibilities on education, inculcating practices that improve accountability and transparency in the functioning of these structures, making education a central part of the agenda of local government bodies and by improving the educational planning processes through the involvement of stakeholders.

Substantial efforts have gone into strengthening and developing institutional capabilities of existing constitutional structures such that it ensures the long term sustainability of key initiatives towards the development of education. In addition, Prajayatna has at present initiated work with other organizations involved in direct interventions by developing the capabilities of these organizations and by supporting the development of appropriate strategies. Simultaneously, work with State level Institutions and the Department of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development towards strengthening key constitutional community based structures has been ongoing.



Progress of work in 2015-16

In 2015-16, Prajayatna had initiated work with a group of organizations with the intention of strengthening the capability of school level community based structures in select schools across urban areas of Hyderabad in the State of Telengana.

This project which is coordinated by the organization – United Way of Hyderabad, works with 5 different organizations that are directly involved with implementation. Prajayatna has been involved with developing strategy that is suitable for the local context and in developing the capabilities of organizations involved in implementation.

Prajayatna had conducted several capability development sessions with the members of partner organizations. Starting with understanding the importance of a community based approach to address public education and understanding the perspective that has guided the development of these interventions. Prior to these introductory sessions the members of the respective implementers were given exposure to different interventions in neighboring working Districts of Prajayatna.

The initial phase of this project has focused on collecting and analyzing school and local information. Based on the reports consolidated from this initial survey the areas that need to be prioritized through the implementation of different community based interventions were identified.

The key interventions have been planned from the beginning of the next academic year and Prajayatna has conducted required preparatory workshops and trainings and for all the implementing partners.

For this project, Prajayatna had supported in the development of a mobile application for the management of detailed educational information of public schools in the selected working area. This application was developed on the basis of Prajayatna's previous experience on development and utilization of a web based technology for similar purposes. This mobile application will support with more efficient information management practices as it simplifies the process of data collection from different schools.

In addition to the work with partner organizations, Prajayatna has continued its work on educational governance in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

In Karnataka where Prajayatna has worked for several years covering more than 22 districts the work on educational governance is now concentrated in one district – Chitradurga. Here, the work has focused on streamlining decentralized educational planning processes through the involvement of all three levels of the Panchayat Raj: the Gram Panchayat, Taluk and Zilla Panchayat.

Prajayatna has already attempted to develop and institutionalize practices to improve the process of developing educational plans at the school and Gram Panchayat levels. At present the focus has been to involve both the Block and the Districts levels in the process to complete the educational planning process in the District addressing both specific school level requirements and macro level concerns such as rational allocation of teachers across the District.

In Uttar Pradesh, Prajayatna had been working with the Gram Panchayats and school level structures since the last few years. The work on strengthening key community structures continues with an additional focus to address disability related concerns in schools in select Districts of Uttar Pradesh.

At the beginning of the academic year a survey of detailed school educational and governance data was conducted across the select working districts in Uttar Pradesh covering a total of 1372 schools.

The information from these survey have been utilized in the village level meetings conducted in the working districts to apprise community members and key stakeholders of the educational situation in their localities and to facilitate the involvement of parents and other community members in the process of school development. Hundred and thirty one such meetings have been conducted both in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh covering more than 2600 community members including parents, school committee members, Gram Panchayat members, teachers, anganwadi and health workers and officials from the Education Department and Department of rural development and Panchayat Raj.

In Karnataka, subsequent to village level meetings, interventions at the Gram Panchayat and Block level have been conducted. Through these interventions along with key officials from the Department of Education and members of the Panchayat it has been possible to ensure that several important decisions were taken at the beginning of the academic year. Some of the key decisions that were facilitated through Prajayatna's interventions are:

- To ensure democratic formation of the school management structure in all schools through the support of officials form the Department of Education such as the CRPs.
- To collect comprehensive school information and share it with the Gram Panchayats.
- Ensuring the preparation of school development plans in all schools and ensuring that these plans are shared with the Gram Panchayats.
- To involve the participation of elected representatives in the process of developing school plans.
- Ensuring quarterly joint meetings of school committees and Educational standing committees of the Gram Panchayats.

Summary of work

Prajayatna's learning initiatives have focused on the development of capabilities in children. Through the implementation of its learning approach that was developed in partnership with the SSA in Karnataka, Prajayatna has been involved in improving learning in Government primary schools.

This initiative has received widespread support from different stakeholders including teachers and it has supported in development of capabilities in children and through its enhanced assessment processes supported in introducing and streamlining formative assessment practices in Government schools.

In the last few years Prajayatna has been working closely with State level Government academic Institutions towards ensuring the sustainability of its learning approach and in order to embed key aspects of Prajayatna's learning initiative with the larger Government schooling system in the State.

Prajayatna has also worked on the gradual expansion in the implementation of this approach in government schools in different geographies. The most recent was the initiation of this approach in one cluster or complex of Government primary schools in Mahbubnagar District of Telangana.



The learning approach of Prajayatna has been supported by teacher empowerment initiatives that have been a central part of its learning initiatives. This was given added impetus by the introduction of a project that has taken a cluster level approach towards teacher empowerment. This project with Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) has been implemented at scale in various clusters across different districts of Karnataka and operations has currently been consolidated to one District with a focus on streamlining and demonstrating essential aspects of this approach through the participation of District level academic institutions. This project also supports several education governance or administrative aspects in addition to addressing learning related concerns.



Progress of work in 2015-16

The learning initiative for Primary schools – Kalikayatna which has been operational in two states was initiated in one cluster of Primary schools in Mahabubnagar Mandal of Telengana State reaching out to 1699 children and 42 teachers in 13 Government Primary Schools.

The Kalikayatna programme currently reaches out to 483 Government Primary Schools in three States covering more than 45000 students.

The programme has focused on the clusters where the approach was newly introduced, working closely with teachers and department officials to enable them to understand the fundamental principles on which the learning approach is based on.



In Karnataka, where the approach has been under implementation for several years, Prajayatna has focused on addressing weak areas of the approach and on streamlining implementation. Attempts to address aspects that were identified through studies conducted in the recent past have been conducted across the different clusters where the programme is operational in Karnataka.

In the States where the approach has been recently introduced the implementation has focused on creating a sound understanding of the fundamental principles of the learning approach amongst all important stakeholders such as head teachers, CRPs and DIET officials who will have important roles in the implementation of the approach in the selected government primary schools where the programme is being implemented.

Several meetings with key officials from the Department of Education have been organizing and workshops for both teachers and officials have also been conducted during the initial phase of the programme.

As a regular and integral part of the programme teachers collective meetings have been organized at the cluster level involving all teachers and the respective cluster level official. These meetings support the teachers in understanding the different aspects of the capability based learning approach and also support in addressing concerns related to implementation. In addition, Prajayatna has supported by conducting regular classroom observation and feedback sessions across all schools that are covered by the Kalikayatna programme.

Strengthening of Cluster Resource Centres

The learning and educational governance programmes of Prajayatna have been supported by this Project of Prajayatna which has so far been implemented at scale in clusters spread across different districts in Karnataka. This project has now been consolidated with a focus on streamlining certain aspects and demonstrating the effectiveness of a cluster based approach on addressing

specific critical governance and learning concerns. This project is now operational across clusters in Madhugiri Educational District in Karnataka.

Through the implementation of this project in several districts Prajayatna has been able to realize the advantages and possibilities that exist in a cluster based approach towards bringing about better decentralized governance and towards addressing teachers' empowerment concerns.



Some of the key areas that this project has attempted to address are:

Better management of educational information through an online system managed at the cluster level.

Decentralized and need based teachers empowerment processes.

Processes to support the development of local learning resources that compliment and enhance class room based education by contextualizing and providing opportunities for experiential learning.

This project has worked by taking advantage of existing structures in the educational bureaucracy thus avoiding major structural changes and minimizing the need for additional resources. This makes it simple to introduce different modules of the project across the State and to replicate specific components of the project across different States.

To institutionalize key aspects of this approach, Prajayatna has involved the District Institute for Education and Training (DIET), the key Government academic institution at the district level that is involved with teacher development and other academic concerns. A district level implementation committee was formed with members from the DIET and other officials of the Department of Education in order to oversee the implementation of the programme. This committee has conducted several review meetings with Prajayatna to ensure that the project is progressing as per plan.

Several capability workshops and trainings have been organized for the CRPs who are the key stakeholders of this initiative. Prajayatna, through this project has also worked with the Panchayat officials to bring about efficient collaboration between the education department and the local governing bodies.

In addition to these interventions, several school, Cluster and Block level initiatives to develop local learning resources have been conducted on an ongoing basis and this has contributed to the development of useful directory or database of learning resources across different clusters that has been utilized by several schools across these clusters. This initiative has also effectively facilitated community participation in enhancing and addressing learning concerns in schools.





Early Childhood Care and Education Initiatives

Summary of work

Prajayatna's work on Early Child Care and Education began with community based interventions in urban and semi-urban areas. These initiatives later lead to Prajayatna's work with State run anganwadis with the intention of addressing systemic issues through stakeholder engagement. In the last few years Prajayatna has been able to address several concerns related to the functioning of anaganwadis across its working Districts in Karnataka through the involvement of the parents, key functionaries & officials of the Department of Women and child and the Gram Panchayats.

At present, Prajayatna works in the Districts of Dharwad and Bangalore Urban in Karnataka. The work focuses on strengthening capabilities of important structures – the parents' committees, Gram Panchayats and key functionaries – the anganwadi teachers and supervisors.

Progress of work in 2015-16

In 2015-16 the ECCE initiatives on strengthening key structures have continued in select circles of the two working Districts and several interventions have been conducted with community members and representative structures. Starting with village level interventions and subsequent interventions at the Gram Panchayat and block levels has supported to facilitate involvement of respective structures at these levels to address issues and to initiate anganwadi development works.



In addition to these workshops and interventions with community based structures, Prajayatna has also focused on developing the capabilities of anganwadi teachers and helpers. In this period, Prajayatna has worked with a special emphasis to redefine the roles of the anganwadi helpers and to develop their capabilities in the context of their new roles. Prajayatna's understanding of the critical role of anganwadi helpers in managing the anganwadi has led to these attempts to redefine their roles to take on more responsibilities and play the role of an assistant teacher. With all anganwadis having only one teacher, it became critical for the helpers to manage aspects related to child care and learning instead of only being involved with cleaning, maintenance and other supportive works.

Trainings have been organized for all the assistant teachers in order to enhance their capabilities. Many of the participants expressed their joy in being able to attend such trainings and most of them had not got the opportunity to attend any training prior to these trainings organized by Prajayatna.

In addition to the training workshops for the assistant teachers, ongoing teachers' collective meetings have been organized for anganwadis in all circles with the intention of developing teachers' capabilities.

In Dharwad district Prajayatna had organized a Taluk level workshop for the Gram Panchayat Presidents, Panchayat Development Officers (PDO) and the Anganwadi Supervisors. Discussion pertaining to importance of ECCE, roles and responsibilities of Gram Panchayat in anganwadi development was discussed in detail amongst the participants which included: 21 Gram Panchayat Presidents, 32 PDOs and 12 supervisors.

Through the workshop participants were supported to identify important issues faced by anganwadis in their localities. It was noticed that anganwadi issues and concerns were not discussed in the General body meetings of most Gram Panchayats. It was found that only 4 out of 39 Panchayats had conducted any discussion on anganwadis in their meetings.



In order to make them aware of the issues faced by the anganwadis in their vicinity, the GP President, PDO and anganwadi supervisor were supported to conduct a discussion on main concerns and prepare an action plan towards developing anganwadis of their Panchayat.

Some of the Gram Panchayat representative expressed their concern with regard to the issues faced by anganwadi teachers as they felt that the teachers were underpaid and overburdened with work. One of the supervisors requested Gram Panchayat Presidents to pay attention to the centres in their locality and to develop good relationship with concerned stakeholders.

Decision to include anganwadi plans in the overall development plans of each Gram Panchayat was taken by all participants in the workshop.

Besides interventions with community members, parents committees, functionaries (teachers, supervisors, helpers) and Gram Panchayats, Prajayatna has also worked with the officials of the Department of Women and Child Department. In addition to sharing the progress of different interventions and conducting joint reviews, Prajayatna has also attempted to address policy related aspects that can have considerable impact on the functioning of anganwadis in the State.



Conclusion

Prajayatna has been engaged with the aim of transforming government schools and anganwadis into institutions offering quality education and child care services for the past 15 years.

The initiative has been focusing on engaging communities and their elected panchayat raj institutions (PRI) to own and develop schools jointly with the department of Education in addition to creating a learning approach that focuses on developing capabilities in children.

Prajayatna's initiative in Early child care (ECCE) involving communities and Government Anganwadis (preschools) have again resulted in interesting insights into the way Government Anganwadis and private preschools need to be designed and managed.

With a huge experience of direct implementation in varied contexts and challenges, the organisation presently looks to taking forward its learning and insights to impact state and national policy and to support like minded organisations in other states of the country. The Educational governance work in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan has already inspired networks of organisations in eastern Uttar Pradesh to take up similar processes in their respective work areas. Similarly Kalikayatna- the learning initiative is presently being piloted by various organisations and state governments in the states of Bihar, Meghalaya, Chattisgarh, Uttarkhand, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

To take this work forward, Prajayatna envisages impacting policy measures through strong research, advocacy and communication measures and active engagement with various partners to take this work at a national level.



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