

Annual Report

2014 - 15



Context

Prajayatna has been for several years involved with direct interventions aimed at involving communities in the process of education development. More recently, Prajayatna has been concerned with strategic and indirect interventions in the context of scaling up its efforts towards impacting public education in the country.

In the year 2014-15, Prajayatna's focus has been on consolidating and institutionalizing its learnings and experiences of working with communities towards addressing systemic issues in education. With respect to this broader organizational goal, the areas of focus in each of the key programmes have been:

Learning Initiatives:

- Institutionalising Prajayatna's capability based learning approach in operational areas and initiating and expanding the initiative to schools in different geographical locations
- Sustaining its interventions with Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) and demonstrating its effectiveness on teacher empowerment

Educational Governance:

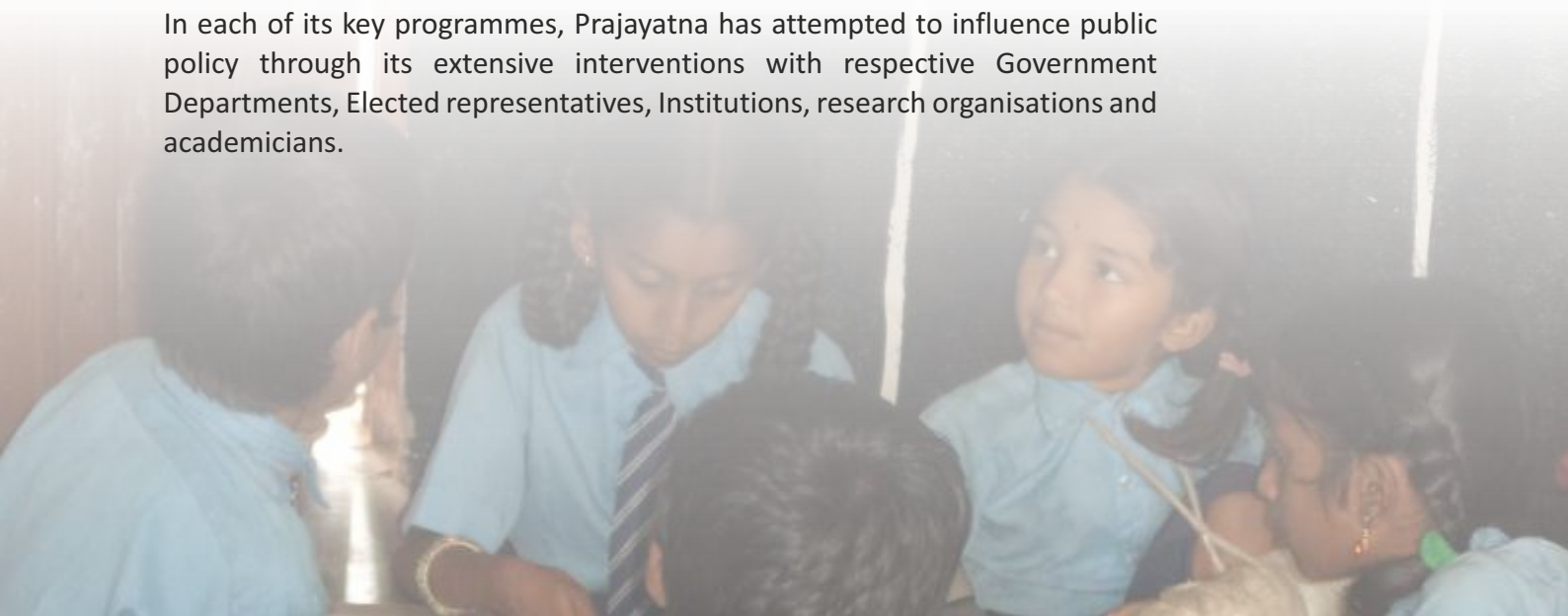
Through different interventions Prajayatna has been able to facilitate community involvement and contribution towards education development. Prajayatna's current focus has been on institutionalizing this process. This has been attempted through two main strategies:

- Strengthening community based constitutional structures, especially the Standing committees responsible for Education at the Block and District levels
- Streamlining the educational planning process through the involvement of School committees and the Panchayat Raj Structures.

Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) :

- Demonstrating the effectiveness of a community based approach for addressing quality in state run ECCE centres

In each of its key programmes, Prajayatna has attempted to influence public policy through its extensive interventions with respective Government Departments, Elected representatives, Institutions, research organisations and academicians.





Progress of work in 2014-15

Educational governance

In 2014-15, two key initiatives in the area of educational governance had concluded and Prajayatna has been working towards sustaining these interventions through strategic partnerships and through appropriate advocacy initiatives.

These projects have been able to create substantial developments with respect to educational Governance. One of these projects was implemented in the States of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan where no prior interventions in educational governance were present. The other projects were operational in districts of Karnataka and Telangana where Prajayatna had already been working for few years. The work that was happening in one district - Mahabubnagar of Telangana was being continued with a focus on institutionalising and sustaining the work that was in progress.

The work that was initiated in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan has focused on ensuring essential requirements for good educational governance such as community involvement, formation of essential constitutional structures, creating awareness of roles and responsibilities of key functionaries and institutions, etc. These initiatives have contributed significantly by ensuring aspects such as provision of basic infrastructure in schools, enabling proper maintenance and utilization of amenities, improving attendance and enrollment, addressing teacher requirements, providing proper mid day meals in schools, etc.



The work that was ongoing in select districts of Karnataka and Telangana has focused on more challenging aspects, especially concerned with institutionalizing aspects of good educational governance. Here, some of the developments that have been made possible through Prajayatna's interventions are: activation of constitutional structures such as the education standing committees at the Gram Panchayats and Taluk Panchayats, streamlining the educational planning process, improving budget allocations for education by the Panchayats, better transparency and accountability.

In the year 2014-15, on conclusion of these two major projects of Prajayatna, separate evaluations were conducted by the organization to assess the key impact that was facilitated through Prajayatna's interventions. A few highlights from the assessments are:

In Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, where Prajayatna had been working with 8251 schools in 2279 Gram Panchayats across 16 Districts benefitting around 6 lakhs of children through its various interventions. The main developments that have been recorded are:

Involvement of community members and key stakeholders in education development:

Prajayatna has been able to facilitate unprecedented community participation and involvement in the process of education development.

In most of the villages where Prajayatna had been working, it is through the processes facilitated by Prajayatna that the initial interaction and involvement of community members with the school have taken place.

- Community level interventions in these Districts have been able to reach out to 53469 people (Rajasthan) and 132832 (Uttar Pradesh). This includes School Committee members, parents, teachers, members of the Panchayat Raj and Officials of the education department.

Formation of key structures:

The formation of constitutional structures representing the community at the school and at the Gram Panchayat have been possible across the working Districts. It has been possible to ensure the formation of these structures in a democratic manner.

It has been possible to develop credibility for the School Management Committees (SMCs) among all stakeholders. Prior to Prajayatna's interventions, the SMCs were not given adequate recognition that a constitutional body merits and its very existence was in question.

Roles and responsibility of key structures:

Prajayatna has attempted to develop the institutional capabilities of key structures representing communities. The activation of these constitutional structures has enabled to prepare and implement school development plans resulting in improved school facilities and better learning environments for



children. Communities and representative structures have mobilized resources required for schools from different stakeholders and ensured effective allocation of existing funds and utilization of Government plans and schemes. Through regular processes of reviewing the implementation of school development plans have been accomplished to a large extent.

- 47.9% and 41% (in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh respectively) of school development plans made by School Committees have been implemented
- Similarly, 42.85% and 35% (in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh respectively) of the educational plans developed by the Gram Panchayats have been implemented.

Through these efforts and through the resources that have been mobilized from various stakeholders, essential requirements of schools have been met. Some of the key developments seen in the 8251 schools which have been supported directly by the different interventions:

Infrastructure development:

- Rajasthan: 49 % of working schools have all basic amenities as compared to only 8.14% at the start of the initiative, 4 years ago.
- Uttar Pradesh: 25 % of working schools have all basic amenities as compared to only 3.51% at the beginning.

Meeting teacher requirements:

- 615 teachers have been accessed through different interventions in schools across working districts of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Improvements in enrollment and attendance:

- Addressing basic amenities, addressing teacher requirements and creating a good learning environment in schools has supported in increasing enrollments and improving regular attendance.

- 11895 children have been enrolled across 801 working schools in UP and Rajasthan.
- 2121 schools had recorded significant increase in attendance.

In **Telangana**, where Prajayatna has been working with one district, namely, Mahabubnagar, with 400 schools belonging to 166 Gram Panchayats in 14 mandals, several improvements can be seen with critical areas related to the functioning of the constitutional structures and this has led to developments that can be seen in the schools.

Formation of structures

Prajayatna has ensured that the key structures that represent the local communities at the school have been formed in all the 400 schools. Similarly the Functional committees at the Gram Panchayat that is responsible for education has been formed in the Gram Panchayats where Prajayatna has been operational in. Through different interventions, Prajayatna has ensured that these basic structures that are necessary to ensure the development of education have been formed in a democratic manner and all required procedures mentioned in the applicable bylaws have been followed.

Prior to the initial year when these committees have been formed, in the following years, Prajayatna has ensured the reformation of these committees on the expiry of their terms.

Institutionalization of structures

Prajayatna has conducted several School and GP level processes to ensure that these structures are not only oriented with their basic roles and responsibilities but also work on school development through the preparation of plans, regular reviews of progress and monitoring of implementation.

Prajayatna has also ensured that basic processes such as conducting regular meetings of these committees, maintenance of minutes, maintenance of quorum and other basic procedure required to ensure that the Committees can function effectively have been ensured. Over the years it has been seen that the committees have been functioning more efficiently as can be seen by the number of meetings conducted.

In addition to the SMCs and the Education Functional Committee at the Gram Panchayat, Prajayatna has also supported the parents in school to contribute by meeting regularly and supporting the SMC members.

In order to encourage accountability the GP Functional Committees and the SMCs have been encouraged to follow certain practices. The SMCs for example have been encouraged to share the minutes of all their meetings with the Gram Panchayat Functional committees to ensure that the GP members are aware of the issues faced by schools. The GP members are also encouraged to discuss educational concerns and the school development plans that have been shared by the SMCs in their meetings.

In all 14 Mandals of Mahabubnagar District, Prajayatna has worked with the Mandal Panchayats towards the development of education. Extensive capability development interventions in the form of workshops and several interactions with the Mandal Panchayats have been organized enabling the Panchayats to address several Mandal level concerns. Several school requirements have been directly addressed by the Mandal Panchayats in all 14 Mandals and substantial resources have been allocated by the Mandal Panchayats to address school requirements. The Mandal level workshops have been attended by MPTC members, Mandal Development officers, Mandal Education Officers and Child Development Programme Officers (CDPOs).

Educational planning

Gram Panchayat Educational Plans

162 Gram Panchayats have made Panchayat level educational plans.

153 Gram Panchayats have collected schools plans of all schools in their Panchayat.

139 Gram Panchayats have made GP level plans by having joint meetings of the Gram Panchayat and school committee

Through enabling proper planning at school and Gram Panchayat levels, and through interventions that have supported these structures to regularly review the status of implementation through the involvement of key stakeholders have made it possible to address many of the essential requirements of schools. Both the Gram Panchayats and school committees have directly contributed to school development, have mobilized resources from other stakeholders and have also ensured the effective allocation of funds available with concerned Departments. The members of these structures have also been actively involved in monitoring



of works and review of the development plans made has also been conducted regularly. These activities have ensured that school requirements have been met in several schools across the working Mandals.

Enrolment of children

Through different interventions carried out by key stakeholders, especially the Gram Panchayats and SMCs, the enrollment and attendance in school has progressively increased across the years. It has been possible to identify children who have dropped out of schools and in several cases it has been possible to re-enroll these children back to schools. A total of 2231 drop out children have been identified and a total of 1255 children have been reenrolled by the SMC members

Teachers

- One of the important contributions of the community level processes has been the substantial improvements in teacher accountability that has been made possible through increased interactions between parents, SMC and GP members with teachers. Not only has this contributed in increasing teacher accountability but it has also enabled key stakeholders to understand concerns faced by teachers and support them in carrying out their responsibilities. This has also shown an impact on the learning of the children.

In **Karnataka**, the governance interventions have focused on in 7 districts reaching out to 8810 schools and 1182 Gram Panchayats. Some of the key impact aimed at institutionalizing these interventions that has been facilitated in these Districts through the interventions of Prajayatna are:

- Education has become an important agenda for the local Government bodies, especially the Gram Panchayats. This has been demonstrated through the increase in discussions on education in official meetings such as the General Body meetings, increase in financial allocation for Education by the Panchayats, and finally more developments in schools that have taken place through the Panchayats.
- Key interventions has focused on inculcating specific practices and through attempts to institutionalize these practices, Prajayatna has been able to bring about better transparency and accountability in educational governance.
- Prajayatna has facilitated the involvement of parents, community members and even elected representatives in the process of observing, understanding and getting involved with their children's learning. Several innovative processes have been introduced and adopted to ensure the gradual involvement of a largely illiterate populace with the learning process taking place in schools.

- Substantial efforts have gone into strengthening and developing institutional capabilities of existing and legitimate structures such that it ensures the long term sustainability of key initiatives towards the development of education.

Streamlining the Educational Planning process

In the 7 districts of Karnataka, Prajayatna had conducted separate interventions that were aimed at addressing issues with the educational planning process. On extensive interactions with the education department and through involvement in the annual process of developing school plans, Prajayatna had identified several issues with the processes followed. With the intention of addressing these issues, Prajayatna had attempted at including the following aspects in the planning process:

- The participation of community members and School committees in the school development process.
- The sharing of school level plans with the Gram Panchayats so that the Panchayat members are involved with this critical process of planning and also become aware of school requirements and issues.
- The inclusion of school plans in the overall GP plans
- The consolidation of GP Education plans to prepare a Block and District level Educational Plan

In the select districts, Prajayatna had participated with the officials of the Department of Education in developing school plans through processes that included the above aspects. The details of plans developed are given in the table below.

District	Blocks	Gps	Schools	Schools that have completed planning process	Gps that have formed education plans
Chitradurga	6	185	1603	1191	126
Bijapur	6	199	1610	1610	128
Bellary	2	47	248	248	0
Chamarajnagar	4	120	709	649	120
Gulbarga	7	220	1652	1611	78
Mysore	7	235	1816	1816	235
Yadgiri	1	42	312	312	0
Koppal	4	134	860	860	65
Total	37	1182	8810	8297	752

Prajayatna has been able to streamline and address critical gaps in the educational planning process and attempts to institutionalize these practices have been made. The interventions that have been initiated with respect to the development of education plans have supported in making planning an integral part of the annual itinerary of schools and Gram Panchayats.

Prajayatna had also conducted workshops and meetings with members of the Panchayat and key officials at the Block and District level. Some of the important decisions that have been made in these workshops organised by Prajayatna are:

- All schools in the Block should prepare school development plan and submit it to the Gram Panchayat. This process should be ensured by the Cluster Resource Person (CRP).
- Elected representatives at the Gram Panchayat level should participate in the school development process in their respective localities/ wards.
- All Gram Panchayats should prepare a plan for the Development of Education, based on the plans made by the schools in the Gram Panchayat.
- Gram Panchayat should take responsibility to implement the planned activities that are possible within its limit. For certain aspects that cannot be implemented by the Gram Panchayat, it can refer to the Block or District Level Panchayats.
- The Consolidated Gram Panchayat plan should be sent to the Block Panchayat.





Learning Initiatives

Prajayatna has worked towards facilitating holistic learning in public schools through a capability based learning approach – Kalikayatna and through a project on strengthening Cluster level institutions, aimed at a decentralized approach towards teacher empowerment.

Kalikayatna

In learning Prajayatna's current focus has been on streamlining and institutionalizing the learning approach for primary schools - Kalikayatna which has been operational in Karnataka. In addition to the ongoing work in Karnataka, Prajayatna had recently initiated this approach in schools across districts of Uttar Pradesh.

As on 2014-15 the Kalikayatna initiative had reached out to more that 25,000 children belonging to Government primary schools:

- Karnataka – approximately 6500 children in 83 schools
- Uttar Pradesh – approximately 18500 children and 468 teachers in 387 primary schools.

Prajayatna has also planned to initiate the Kalikayatna approach in one cluster of schools in Telengana from the next academic year. Preliminary discussions with the Department of Education have been conducted with positive response from concerned officials.





In Karnataka the Kalikayatna initiative has focused on institutionalization through the respective DIETs in each of the district where the approach is under implementation. Work has also been carried out with the intention of involving the department of education in a more proactive role. Extensive interactions with the District Institutions for Education and Training (DIETs) have been undertaken with this intention.

Towards streamlining the approach by addressing key concerns and to improve existing practises, Prajayatna had conducted a study of the effectiveness of Kalikayatna approach on developing children's capabilities. The study was conducted in schools belonging to the 7 clusters of Karnataka covering students who had completed five years of schooling in the Kalikayatna approach. To understand the effectiveness of the approach, the study compared students in Kalikayatna with students in non Kalikayatna Government schools belonging to the same geographical location.

Some of the key findings from this study are:

The study had analyzed learning levels across three areas: Information, Conceptual Understanding and Capabilities. In each of these categories, students across Kalikayatna were compared with those in other schools and the key findings have showed:

Information level of students

- Majority of students (53.08 %) in Kalikayatna schools are at level 2(average) while majority students (67.31%) from non Kalikayatna students are at level1 (poor).
- In Kalikayatna schools 8.56% of students are at level 3 (good) while only 3.53% of students are at the same level in non-Kalikayatna schools.

Conceptual understanding in students

- Majority of students (58.90%) in Kalikayatna schools are at level 2(fair but incomplete or unclear understanding of concepts) while majority students (69.87%) from non Kalikayatna students are at level1 (poor understanding of concepts)
- At level 3 (thorough understanding of concepts) there is not much difference between Kalikayatna and non-Kalikayatna students. In Kalikayatna schools, 4.79% % are at this level and in non Kalikayatna there are 3.21% of total students.



Capabilities of students

Sixteen different abilities were assessed and for majority of the capabilities, there are more students at level 3 in Kalikayatna schools and fewer students in level 1 as compared to non- Kalikayatna schools.



The institutional development of the Cluster Resource Centres

The CRC project was initiated by Prajayatna in several districts of Karnataka with the intention of building the institutional capability of the cluster resource centres (CRCs). Consolidating the initial approach, Prajayatna has solely focused on the process of Teacher Empowerment through the CRCs.

Towards this end the CRC project which has been operational across 9 districts of Karnataka has worked on the following areas:

- Making the Cluster Resource Centres into useable and active resource centres for teachers: this involved ensuring both physical infrastructure and learning resources.
- Build the capabilities of the Cluster Resource Persons (CRPs) to enable them to provide academic support and enhance classroom processes.
- Facilitate better information management that will improve administration and reduce the work load of CRPs, thus enabling them to spend more time on providing academic support to teachers.

Besides several interventions that have been carried out with the above mentioned objectives, Prajayatna has also focused on institutionalizing the approach at the District level by working with key institutions.

Towards supporting teachers the key activities have been :

- Developing the CRPs capability to support teachers
- Identifying places and resources persons in the locality and supporting teachers to utilize these in enhancing and contextualizing lessons
- Supporting the teachers to improve classroom processes by providing relevant feedback and support to conduct activities to support lessons

The capability development of Cluster Resource Persons was conducted through several workshops and trainings. This included support in developing the capabilities with respect to the main areas of academics and administration. Computers trainings and support in utilizing the online application developed by Prajayatna have been provided to all CRPs. The use

of the application has reduced the administrative workload of the CRPs, allowing them to spend more time on work related to classroom activities and teacher support.

Workshops have been conducted for teachers and CRPs to support them with the preparation of lesson plans. This was done at the beginning of the academic year and has supported the teachers in planning and organizing for classroom processes according to the required learning outcomes that needs to be met.

Besides these workshops, Network meetings were conducted with teachers and CRPs to identify and plan for the optimal utilization of local learning resources. Resource persons from the local community were also part of these meetings and these meetings have supported all teachers in the cluster to make a plan for the utilization of various learning resources available in the surroundings of their schools. In several schools, these identified local resources have been utilized to enhance and supplement lessons and classroom activities by providing children with opportunities for experiential learning.

Addressing information management practises

A key part of the CRC project has been the development and utilisation of an improved system of cluster level information management. Prajayatna had developed and demonstrated a system of decentralised information management through a web based application that supported in obtaining recent information of schools for administration and decision making.

This system has not only supported in simplifying the work of CRPs but also in ensuring better information management practises. Prajayatna intends to utilise the learnings from developing and using this system to streamline the process of school information management at the State level.

Institutionalizing the CRC approach

Prajayatna has attempted to institutionalize the important learnings and practices that have been possible through the implementation of the CRC project in select clusters by working with the District Institution for Education and Training (DIETs). In each of its working districts, Prajayatna has worked closely with the DIETs in to ensure that they play a key part in implementation and in ensuring that the initiatives of Prajayatna are taken forward.

At the beginning of the academic year, District level Implementation Committees comprising of key officials from the DIETs and the Education Department was constituted. This committee has been responsible for steering the project in each working District by conducting regular reviews of implementation. An annual plan was also made in consultation with this committee at the beginning of the academic year to ensure effective implementation at the Block level.

Along with the interventions implemented in the working districts, Prajayatna has engaged with the concerned institutions and Government Departments at the State level, to ensure that the key features of our approach become an integral part of CRCs across the State.



Early Child Care and Education

Prajayatna's work with Anganwadis seeks to bring about quality in the State Run ECCE Centers through facilitating and institutionalizing community involvement. In 2014-15, Prajayatna had worked with 1769 Anganwadis in Karnataka. The details are of working areas are given in the table below.

District	Circles	Anganwadis
Mysore	1	35
Koppal	1	52
Dharwad	12	302
Ramnagara	12	327
Benguluru Urban	26	708
Tumkur	12	345
Total	65	1769

Prajayatna's approach on facilitating community involvement has been through the process of strengthening key structures representing communities – the Parents committee within anganwadis and the Gram Panchayats. In addition to this focus area of developing the capabilities of these structures, Prajayatna has also worked to support and develop capabilities of key functionaries such as anganwadi teachers and supervisor.

In this period (2014-15), Prajayatna has worked with the parents committee at the anganwadi – the ALMSC and the Gram Panchayats towards addressing basic requirements of the Anganwadis. Through these interventions concerns related to facilities available in the centers, basic health requirements of children, and other management related concerns have been addressed.

Prajayatna has also worked with teachers and anganwadi supervisors with the intention of addressing learning related needs in the anganwadi centre in addition to the basic facilities and health related concerns.

Through different interventions it has been possible to develop practises that have supported key stakeholders in taking initiative, carrying out their responsibilities effectively and address early child care requirements of communities in a sustainable manner.



Advocacy initiatives

Prajayatna has worked with the Departments of Education and the Department for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj in order to influence policy that can support better decentralized governance of education. Prajayatna has also worked with State level Institutions to develop and implement trainings and capability development programmes for Panchayat Raj structures throughout the State.

In 2014-15, in addition to the ongoing advocacy efforts, one of Prajayatna's main efforts to influence policy and legislature has been in the form of bringing about amendments in the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act which governs the functioning of the Panchayat Raj institutions.

In the State of Karnataka, the Government has initiated a process to review and amend the existing Panchayat Raj Act. The Act which was brought to force in 1993 has not undergone any major amendments. To review the Act and to identify necessary changes to the Act, the Government had formed a committee to suggest relevant amendments. In few of the working Districts in Karnataka, Prajayatna had supported this committee to elicit suggestions from different stakeholders related to educational governance, by conducting District level workshops. The suggestions that have come forth from these workshops have been consolidated and Prajayatna has supported the committee in identifying relevant amendments to the Act that can contribute towards effective educational governance. These suggestions will be included as amendments to the Panchayat Raj Act on approval of the State Government.

Some of the important amendments that were suggested are:

- The terms of Panchayat Presidents and Vice Presidents need to be increased to five years. Along with this, the restriction on passing a no confidence motion should be extended from the first 6 months to 30 months.
- The term for candidates elected under reserved category for backward castes should be increased from 5 to 10 years.
- Activities which had been listed for each level of the Panchayats have been redefined and more responsibilities (including those related to education) have been handed over to the Gram Panchayats.

These amendments to the Act will create a more suitable environment for the Panchayats to carry out their responsibilities with minimal impediments.

Conclusion

Prajayatna envisages that its initiatives will also contribute to outcomes that can be assessed only in the long term. Some of these possible long term outcomes are:

- The community level processes have been able to create a demand for quality education and there is an understanding that education is a fundamental right of every citizen. Through our work with community representative it has been able to broad-base this demand for quality education and it is understood that there will be an increased demand for quality education in the long run amongst the larger community.
- Practices of transparency and accountability that have been initiated through different processes of Prajayatna will result in better governance and contribute towards improving quality in the long run.
- Different possibilities in providing learning opportunities for children have been explored with communities and other stakeholders, making it possible for them to look at learning beyond schools.
- Several initiatives of Prajayatna that have been implemented with respect to Educational Governance are applicable to other domains such as public health, provision of civic amenities, etc.
- Through Prajayatna's work with the Standing Committees that are also responsible for other areas in addition to education, the work has indirectly contributed to addressing these social areas of public interest.
- By making learners out of the students in Kalikayatna, the learning path of the children is ensured as it has been seen that the children from these schools go on to higher classes with a marked increase of interest, self confidence and curiosity which helps them to explore and have a better understanding of concepts.
- Making facilitators out of teachers have ensured that they develop various skills and abilities which has made them better teachers in the long run, creating learning opportunities for the children.
- Perspective of learning has been changed amongst the different stakeholders in the Kalikayatna process. Instead of perceiving learning as information driven and students assessed only from a content point of view, it has changed to that of development of abilities and the need to look at the holistic development of the child.
- Perspective of viewing Early Childhood Care and Education has changed in the community with it being given an importance that was never given before. This has increased the expectations of the community from the anganwadi which in turn has had an effect on the expectations from the schools as well.



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