



Quarterly Programme Update



AHVAAN
A Trust for Education

Lockdown ki
Paathshaala



APRIL –JUNE
2020

Summary

For Ahvaan, the first quarter of the academic year, 2020-2021, April to June, was one of waking up to a whole new way of working under new and very difficult circumstances. With the continued raging of the Covid-19 pandemic, the academic year was disrupted and classes and examinations across the country were cancelled. Social distancing and working from home became the norm, necessitating Ahvaan to re-think ways of responding to the unprecedented situation and yet continue its work of aligning with the Directorates of Education, (DoE) Delhi and Tripura. To ensure continuity in its work, Ahvaan adopted various ways of staying connected online to work with each other, with teachers, students and their parents in the pre-primary levels, as well with the Academic Leaders (ALs) in Tripura.

Following the guidelines of the Delhi Government, Ahvaan opened its office on May, 18th, 2020, and all team members can attend office in small batches. Outlined below are some of the highlights of what Ahvaan was able to achieve during the lockdown period.

- Ahvaan was quick to respond to the situation by donating Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) kits for the frontline workers through the District Collector, Central District, New Delhi.
- With the schools closed since March 2020, Ahvaan has been designing and continues to implement an online forum 'Lockdown ki Pathshala' on Facebook. Age and context specific activities, short stories, poems etc. are created and posted by team members for parents and teachers of the pre-primary students. These are further disseminated through Whatsapp.
- Ahvaan remains engaged working with DoE, Delhi. Weekly activities for parents to engage with their children at home and reduced syllabi for KG & Nursery classes, were submitted. Submissions on assessments & report cards were made to State Council of Educational Research & Training (SCERT), Delhi.
- The Curriculum team developed and submitted the Nursery, KG1 and KG2 Curriculum, workbooks and activity books to the SCERT, Government of Tripura.
- Ahvaan initiated online training sessions for the Academic Leaders (ALs) in Tripura. The sessions continue to provide basic understanding of Pre-primary classrooms & curriculum.
- Curriculum development of Grade-I for DoE, Delhi was initiated. This is in alignment with the existing pre-primary curriculum and NCERT guidelines.
- The Annual Teacher Competency Assessment Report to study the impact of Neev programme was completed. A summary of it has been shared in this report.
- Taking this quarter as an opportunity for learning more, Ahvaan Team organized in-house reading and learning sessions. Several Ahvaan members have taken up online courses to reskill themselves.

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AHVAAN STEERING THROUGH THE PANDEMIC



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Lockdown ki
 **Paathshaala** 

Lockdown ki Pathshala

Ahvaan has been actively using its Facebook page to share activities, stories and rhymes for children. A special series was developed - 'Lockdown ki Pathshala', for teachers and parents to use and create learning opportunities for children at home.

Ahvaan members attended sessions conducted by Sphere India to understand the switch from classroom setting to social media, learning the skills to develop videos, write scripts, record and edit. The initial contents were created to spread awareness of the precautionary measures to be taken during COVID-19 pandemic. Gradually, videos on activities to do at home were developed, followed by stories and poems. To make the material more engaging and responsive, open ended questions and follow up activities became important features of these videos.

The videos shared with Neev & Pathshala schoolteachers were highly appreciated. Teachers shared the videos of their children trying the same activities at home. Some of the videos developed and posted on Ahvaan's Facebook page in this quarter;



Many of the stories and rhymes were written and illustrated by Ahvaan members based on the activities taken from the Pre-Primary Curriculum.

We were happy to work with students of Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE), Ambedkar University Delhi (Our Knowledge Partners), who joined Ahvaan as interns for a month and provided valuable support in developing content for the Ahvaan Facebook page.

Engagements with Delhi Government – DoE and SCERT

Ahvaan has consistently worked and remains engaged with the Primary Branch, Directorate of Education, Govt of the NCT of Delhi. This quarter witnessed the continued development of tools and materials for Pre-primary teachers and parents.

- Ahvaan successfully submitted the revised versions of the following to SCERT, Delhi on pre-primary Student Assessments:
 - Report card checklist for KG & Nursery for pre-primary teachers to document a student's progress and areas to develop.
 - Assessment guidelines for Pre-primary teachers to conduct valid assessments in the classroom.
 - Report card format for parents to understand their child's progress in a comprehensive manner.
- Under the Covid 19, this year has already begun to witness a substantial loss of time for classroom-based learning for Nursery and KG students. On discussion with the DoE, Ahvaan submitted a scheme with reduced syllabi of Nursery and Kindergarten. The document informs that this approximately 30% reduction in the curriculum will impact learning of children in both Nursery and KG. This must be noted and informed to schools and the teachers of the concerned grades for the year 2021-22.

Ahvaan in Tripura

Ahvaan continued working in the state of Tripura to create systems and processes to build a strong foundation of Pre-Primary Education. In this quarter the following programme deliverables were realized;

1. Pre-primary Curriculum for Nursery, KG1 and KG2

The Curriculum Team successfully submitted the following documents to Government of Tripura, Directorate of Elementary Education (Pre-School Education Unit) and SCERT, Tripura:

1. Nursery Workbook
2. KG 1- Curriculum (Weekly Lesson plans) & Workbook
3. KG 2- Curriculum (Weekly Lesson plans) & Workbook
4. Activity Book for Teachers
5. List of references for all curricula and workbooks

The Team is currently working on Daily Lesson plans for both the curricula.

2. Online Workshops for Academic Leaders (ALs)

The Department of Elementary Education, Govt of Tripura, announced that two ALs for each district would act on behalf of the department in coordinating and executing the programme - "Capacity Building of Pre-primary Educators".

Under the current circumstances, Ahvaan accepted to conduct online trainings to orient and integrate the capacities of the selected ALs. They designed a training program for these cadres to help them understand Pre-Primary Education. A baseline assessment of the ALs was conducted before the training to record their previous knowledge. Each session was designed to be rolled out in three stages as follows:

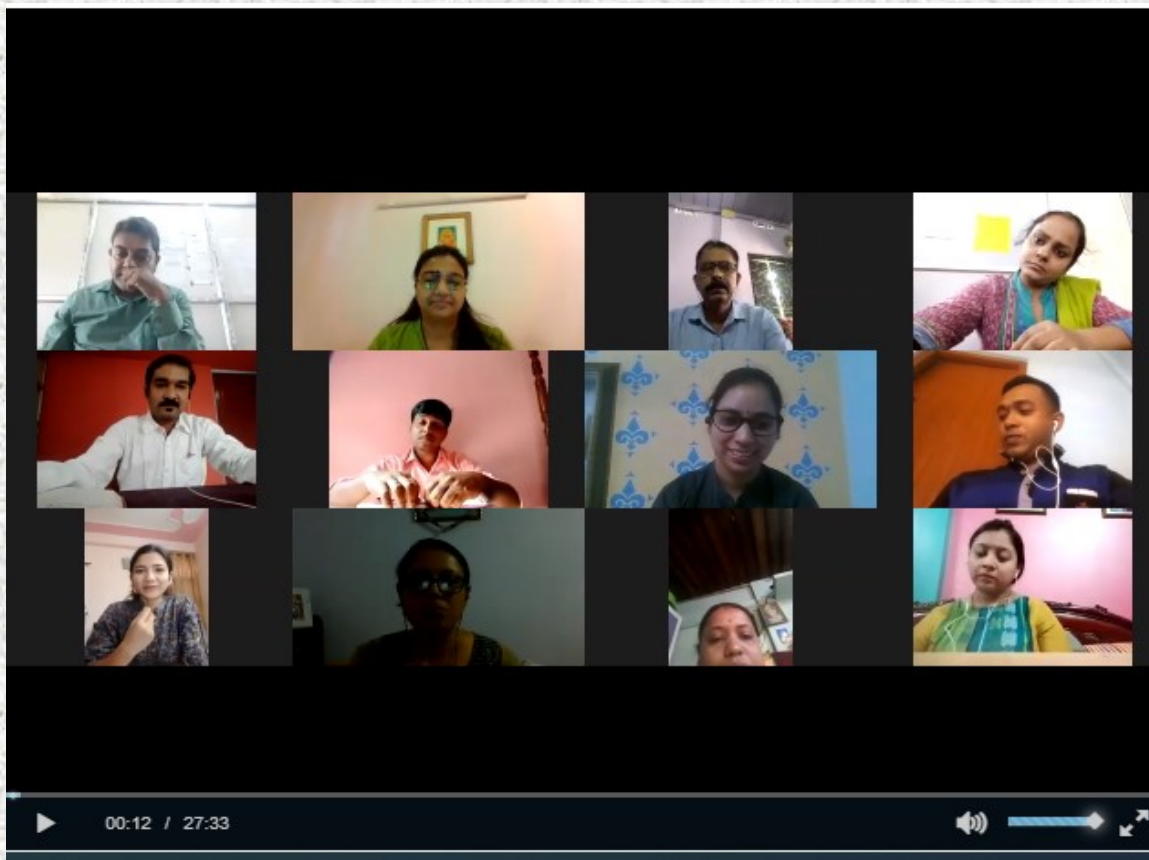
1. A list of recommended reading related to the topic is sent to all the participants by email, before the session.
2. The virtual lesson on the topic is held once a week and is designed for approximately, 1:30 hours. Written assignments are given to the participants.
3. A follow-up virtual class is held to review the responses of the participants on their understanding.

Topics were carefully selected keeping in mind the role of an AL in providing support to the pre-primary teachers. Sessions planned for them are as follows:

1. Domains of Development- Holistic Development in Pre-primary classes.
2. Classroom Environment-Physical space and its impact on learning
3. Personal, Social & Emotional (PSE) Development- Development of PSE in classroom.
4. Creative Development- Enabling creative thinking in classroom.
5. Early Math- Experiencing concepts in math and applying them in classroom.

6. Physical Development- Development of Sensory, Gross motor & Fine motor skills.
7. Understanding of the World- Learning from environment and surroundings.
8. Language & Literacy- Functions of language in a child's life and its acquisition.

The Introductory session was held on 22nd May 2020 and the training sessions will continue till the month of August 2020. Despite the network issues and weather conditions, the sessions held so far have been highly engaging and ensured active participation of the ALs. To help them understand and implement better, new ideas, videos and photographs of Ahvaan's experiences in the Delhi Government Schools are also shared.



Tripura ALs and Ahvaan trainers in an online session on Pre-Primary Education

AHVAAN EXTENDING BEYOND THE USUAL PROGRAMME PATHS



Curriculum
Class 1



Assessment
Teacher
Competencies

The Pathshala Programme

The Pathshala Programme continued in SBV, Rouse Avenue and SKV, Pandara Road. The schools remained closed but Ahvaan members continued providing support to them.

The Pathshala team submitted their Annual reports to their schools. To extend support to parents a collection of activities for children to be done at home was shared with Pre-primary and Primary Teachers (for Grades I & II).

This Quarter, the Pathshala team initiated the development of a Curriculum for Class 1. This need was expressed by the Primary Branch, DoE, Govt of NCT of Delhi based on:

- a. Successful implementation of Ahvaan's Pre-primary curriculum in Sarvodaya Schools in Delhi;
- b. Ahvaan's continued intervention in teaching Class 1 and 2 in selected schools;
- c. The need to bridge the pre-primary curriculum with the Class 1 NCERT curriculum that is being followed;
- d. A need to develop daily lesson plans on the same lines as Pre-primary for Class 1 too. This has been a consistent demand from schools and teachers in the foundational learning years in the Delhi government schools.

The Ahvaan Team is developing the curriculum after studying the NCERT Class I learning outcomes, Satya Bharti Curriculum and other related documents.

The Neev Programme

1. The Teacher Competency Assessment Report – 2019-20

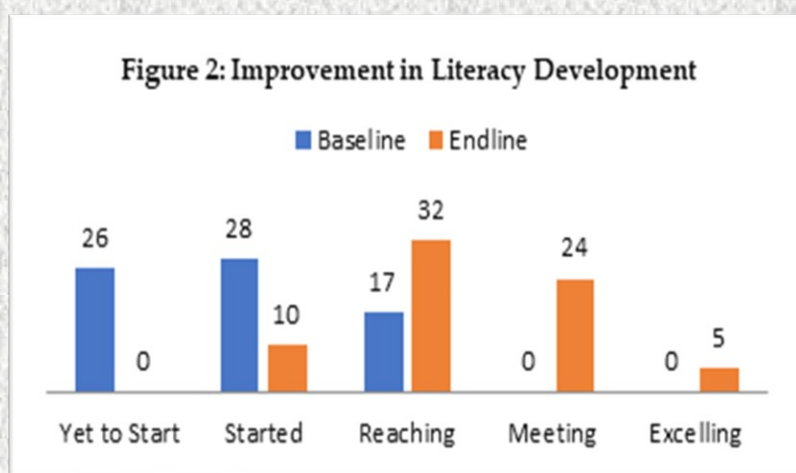
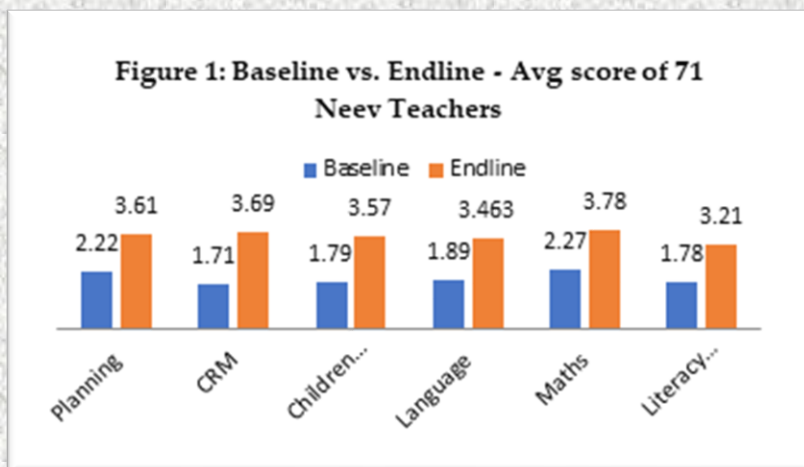
As part of the NEEV program cycle, Ahvaan has been conducting an annual assessment of the pre-primary teachers (PPTs) every year since 2017-18. This is an assessment of selected critical competencies which are considered essential for the designed curriculum and the learning context of the students entering these government schools in the early childhood levels. This summary is of the teacher readiness assessments conducted in 2019-20. Data was collected in March 2020 prior to school closures. In this quarter the data has been duly processed and the main finding/s have been shared here very briefly. A detailed report has been prepared to be submitted to the DoE and other interested stakeholders.

A. Objective: The main goal is to assess the impact of the yearlong coaching and mentoring of the pre-primary teachers in terms of their:

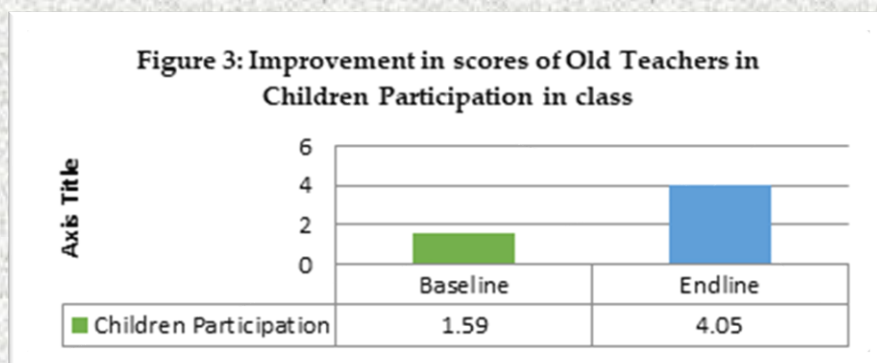
- receptivity to coaching to improve on their critical competency areas as effective teachers of the pre-primary curriculum;
- movement along the competency levels as defined by the observation rubric;
- time taken to show the overall improvement in competency levels;
- difficulties faced in areas of teaching competency.

B. Approach and Methodology: Ahvaan has used the approach of continuous visits and direct observation by the coach in classrooms to conduct this assessment. It has used the following methodology:

- All the teachers were observed on a five-scale assessment rubric throughout the year in five major areas: Planning, Classroom Management, Children's Participation, Language development, Mathematics development and Literacy development;
- Teachers were observed for the entire duration of a 40-minute class and then given feedback on the basis of the rubric filled on all the above-mentioned areas;
- Each visit had a pre-defined agenda to work on one particular domain. The first visit data is considered as baseline and the last visit as endline data points.
- The assessment is further compared to the midterm review and feedback report given by the teacher to the DoE to substantiate the teachers' high and low competency areas.
- The assessment till this year been conducted by taking a census approach of all the PPTs coached and mentored by Ahvaan. This being an unusual year of early school closure, only 71 of 134 (53%) teachers' assessments were completed with due diligence.
- Of the 71 teachers, a differentiation of teachers in terms of time given for coaching was made. 27 of 71 teachers were trained by Ahvaan starting from 2017-18 and the remaining 44 were new teachers who were coached over the year 2019-20.



The improvement is clearly visible from the graph above where majority of teachers (54) were at level 1 and 2 in the baseline, however, in the endline majority (56) of them reached to level 4 and 5 i.e. meeting and excelling. This is an exceptional improvement in this critical competency category.



C. Major Findings 2019-20: Figure 1 clearly indicates that the average score of all 71 teachers have shown a two level competency jump especially in classroom management and children's participation. There is over one level competency jump in early Math, Language and Literacy.

Literacy Development (Figure 2) clearly stood out as an area in which the competency level of teachers was considerable. This is so, because Literacy Development is a difficult skill and teachers take time to understand that writing follows listening, speaking and reading. The general trend seen in any traditional institute is rote learning with a lot of focus on copying from board. Ahvaan took it as a challenge to help teachers overcome this myth.

The growth in children participation in class was led by the old teachers. They increased their score of 1.59 in baseline to 4.05 in endline. All old teachers attained at least level 3 by the end of the academic year. (Figure 3).

The detailed report highlights many aspects of this assessment and is available upon request. Other points worth noting and are briefly stated as follows;

- PIs need to be more involved in coaching of teachers to institutionalise this role within the school and accessible to the teachers on an ongoing basis. This may be extended from pre-primary to cover all the primary years too.
- More demonstration classes are needed to be incorporated in the process;
- The longer the teacher engages with the Ahvaan mentor, the greater the impact. However the teacher develops a greater dependency on the mentor. This must be made a constantly available service in school.
- Development and availability of a technology driven platform for PIs and teachers to reach out to coaches for all the pedagogy related and specific academic queries;
- Classroom management and Children's Participation have improved the most and hence there is merit in having them in-built in every visit by external coaching agency or PIs in classroom interaction with the teacher;
- Special attention needs to be given to language, mathematics and literacy development to address the problem stated above of shifting the rote learning to more active and experiential learning;
- Special sessions on language development need to be included in training calendar in addition to regular coaching and mentoring so to give more exposure of language approaches to HoS, PIs and teachers;

The teacher competency needs to be compared with children's assessment to see the full impact of coaching and mentoring in children's learning outcomes in improved and supported classrooms.

Ahvaan's high touch model of Neev Programme made a difference in the functioning of pre-primary Delhi Government schools. The Team aspires to reach out to more schools and provide similar support system for them. Their aim is to create a self-sustainable system, that can function even after Ahvaan's exit from it. In order to achieve this, the programme is undergoing a functional change, and is focusing on strengthening the role of Primary In-charges in schools.

2. Communication with Neev Teachers during lockdown

The Neev Programme Pre-Primary Teachers have been actively interacting with the team on WhatsApp group 'Happy Teachers'. Activities, Stories and poems are shared with them on weekly basis. Ahvaan received videos from Teachers where they are trying some of these activities. These efforts were highly appreciated.



Ahvaan Learning and Growing

This quarter, Ahvaan rigorously worked on its 'Institutional work plan'. This detailed document maps out the goals and objectives Ahvaan aims to achieve during this academic year. Each team member's individual work plans aligned with institutional work plan will guide the team throughout the year. The document is still a work in progress as the year has too many uncertainties. New Contingency plans are being drawn up for the same.

Social distancing and working from home, did not limit the team from learning and growing. Regular discussion sessions were conducted, where the team read ECCE related articles and books and discussed them in the context of the Government School Systems. This created a safe space for each one to learn and grow together.

Ahvaan team members shared their experiences of this newly explored way of working.

Some Reflections on working from home

“इस लोक डाउन के समय मे घर से काम करना नया सिखाव है जिसमे खुद की गतिविधियों को समय के अनुसार विभाजित करना और कैसे एक अध्यापक या अध्यापन के क्षेत्र मे लगे सभी गण सिखाव को अपने विधाथियों तक ले जा सकते है आदि बातें आती है। जिसमे इलेक्ट्रॉनिक माध्यम हमारी सहायता कर रहा है। मेरे लिये मजेदार कार्य कहानी लिखना, चित्रांकन और वाचन करना है जिसमे नए वाचन के तरीको का भी प्रयोग कर रही हूँ। बच्चों के नजरिये को ध्यान मे रखते हुए क्रियाकलापो पर काम करना बहुत ही सीखने वाला अनुभव है। पाठ्यक्रम के निर्माण कार्य जिसमे हर बार कुछ बेहतर करने की प्रक्रिया जारी है और रुचिपूर्ण भी है। अन्य लोगों के सुझावो से कार्य को और बेहतर करने की सीख मिलती है। वही प्रकृति को जानना जहाँ आसमान और पक्षियों जिससे सुबह, शाम का पता लगना, एक छोटा बीज का पौधा बनना इन सभी को देख, नई ऊर्जा का संचार होता है। जो यही कहते है आगे बढ़ो भई, आगे बढ़ो। मैं छत पर एक बच्चे को पतंग उड़ाते देख रही थी और अचानक ही मन में कहानी बन रही थी और विचार आ रहा था कि आसपास की दुनिया में कितना सिखाव है, बस दृष्टिकोण बदलने की जरूरत होती है।” - पूर्णिमा

“The pandemic made us follow norms of social distancing and “work from home”. It was an empowering experience. I realized that nothing could stop me working, if I am dedicated and motivated towards my work. During this lockdown I achieved many of my learning goals by completing a few online courses, investing my valuable time in reading research papers related to language teaching, activity-based classes, relevance of storytelling in class and many more topics. I tried story narration for Ahvaan's Lockdown ki Paathshala and received heartwarming responses that inspired me to continue.

As each situation has its assets and liabilities, in this lockdown I faced communication gaps with my team members. I miss the way we used to meet in the office and sit together for our discussions and conferences. I miss that physical teamwork. Too many visual meetings were causing eyestrain but I continued with my work hoping that one day everything would become normal and all of us will walk on roads without fear. One day I will meet my hardworking teachers and young curious learners. Keeping some positive attitude has helped me to be victorious.”

- Mridula Pandey

Ahvaan's contribution to combat COVID-19

Ahvaan as an organisation located in Central Delhi, reached out to the District Collector of the Central District. A contribution of PPE kits and screening equipment to frontline health workers was made since this was their most urgent need. This gesture was appreciated and the following pictures were shared:



Way Forward for Ahvaan

Social distancing will remain a necessary practice for the foreseeable future. Before the lockdown, a major part of Ahvaan's activities required social interaction, be it field work in Neev programme or working directly with children in the Pathshala programme, or even training teachers and school administrators in Delhi and Tripura.

The lockdown demanded that the team formulates and executes a plan that is viable on the internet and mobile devices. After the lockdown Ahvaan looks forward to continuing some of its activities via online avenues.

School reopening for the Pre-primary seems uncertain. During these times we are continuing and preparing to pursue the following:

- Online Training of Heads of Schools, Primary In-charges, Academic Leaders and Teachers;
- Online parent orientations as necessary
- Releasing video on activities for parents to do with their children at home
- Preparation of Curriculum and related materials for Pre-primary and Class 1.

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