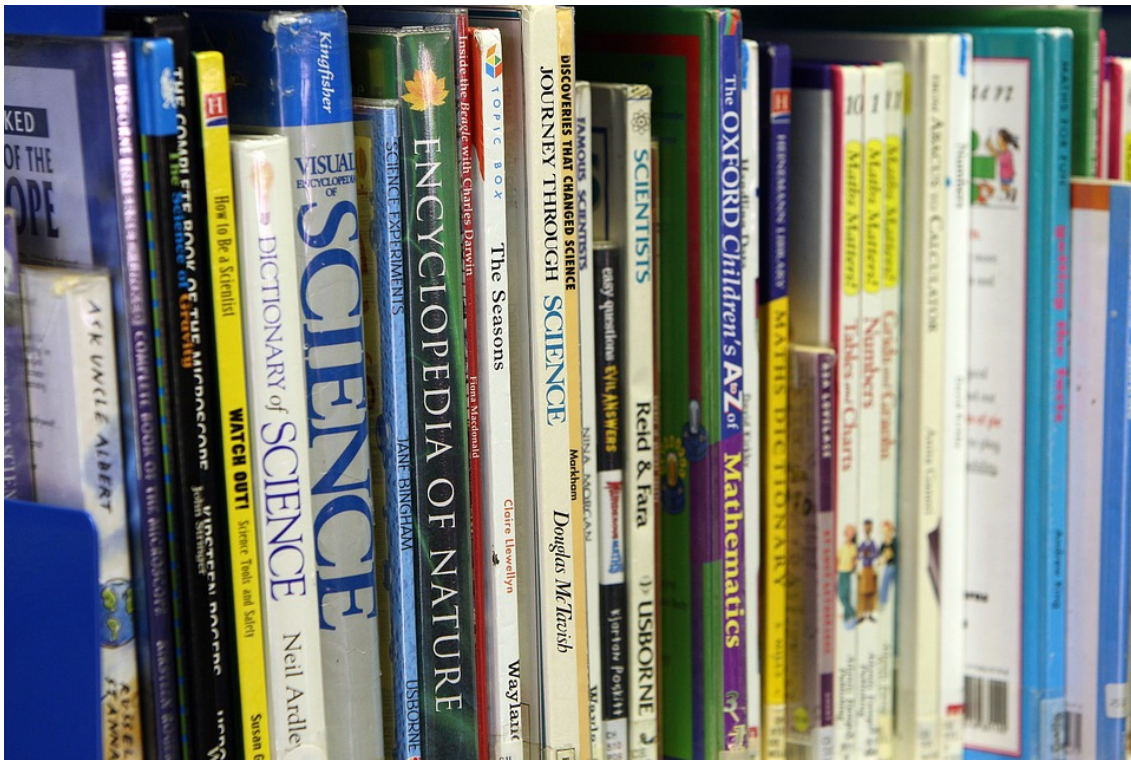


PROPOSAL TO SET UP A CHAIN OF CHILD FRIENDLY LIBRARIES IN THE STATE



The Scenario

Gujarat has made rapid strides in the field of education especially in rural areas in the last few years through various government initiatives. It has ensured that infrastructure for schools is in place across all its villages, and has managed to significantly improve school enrolment and reduce drop-out rates.

Unfortunately, however, the Pratham study for Gujarat has revealed that 'though school enrollment is up to 95% in rural Gujarat, learning levels remain shockingly low. 55% of rural students in Standard 5 cannot read a Std. 2 level text, and 65% of these students cannot do simple subtraction.' Visits to rural schools during the Gunotsav and other programmes show that a large number of them do, in fact, have well-stocked libraries. Under the SarvaShikshaAbhiyan programme of the government, the schools are given adequate annual grants to buy books for their libraries. However, most of these libraries remain unused by children as the schools have procured books which are not suited to the relevant age group and are poorly produced. While procuring library books, wishes of the children are never considered and are usually kept locked and inaccessible. Further, the collection of books that are housed in the libraries is often not appealing to children. The reality is that rural children are not reading these books.

It appears that our well paid primary school teachers are not taking adequate interest in imparting proper language skills among their students and there is a need to inculcate among the young students the habit of self-reading through interesting and child friendly books.

Education in India's villages needs to go beyond the narrow focus of academics. Its schools and institutions ought to help the children mature into strong adults by becoming a window to the outside world. All too often, the general knowledge of children is so poor that they do not know the immediate history or current affairs of their own country. They live cocooned away from the rest of the society, and there is no system within our education to set this right.

Opportunity for CSR: Creating Access to Vernacular Libraries in Rural Gujarat

There is an opportunity to improve the reading skills and general knowledge of rural children by providing access to child-friendly books in school libraries.

- **Selection of books-** A long list of good quality books, in various languages, preferred by students will be prepared by taking a group of students to various book shops and book fairs and negotiations will be held with their publishers for offering reasonable prices for their bulk purchase.
- **Library:** The books provided to the school library could be of a wide variety to appeal to all children – they could be educational, literature or even comics. A small cupboard and an issue register will be sufficient to start such a small and students managed library on experimental basis.
- **Cluster of schools:** A cluster of 100 schools could be funded by the interested company.
- **Field workers:** A group of four field workers could be engaged to manage the cluster of 100 schools. These field workers would be responsible for training the students in management and issue of books, ensuring that child-friendly books are selected for each library in consultation with the school children; replacement of damaged books at the end of every year; and ensuring that the library is used by children. They will also be responsible in conducting at least two language tests in each school to assess the improvement in the language skills of the students. Monitoring will be done through a specially designed App and the data will be uploaded on a website.
- **Management of each library:** A committee of children would be appointed in each school to manage the library. This committee would be trained by field workers in the daily business of running a library such as maintaining a register, overseeing the borrowing and return of books, categorising the books, etc.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** Review of number of books issued in individual schools during the month and use of books per student, along with the status of the libraries and the language related progress of every student will be monitored through a specially designed App. Information so compiled will be uploaded on a website.

Gujarat Alkalies and Chemicals Limited, Vadodara has already initiated the concept of students managed libraries in some of the Government run Primary Schools where they are providing 15-20 tablet computers with internet connectivity and good quality books in Gujarati language. The students can get the books or tablets issued for one or two days and take them home. The initial response of this experiment is encouraging.

Estimated Project Duration

The project would be implemented for a minimum period of three years.

Main cost components

The cost for this initiative will consist of (a) Selection of books, enrolment of Government and private schools and setting up the libraries, (b) Training of Field workers cum trainers, management of libraries and periodic replacement of books, (c) Monitoring, evaluation and documentation, and (d) Programme management. Major expenses during various years will be as follows-

Year 1:

1. Library books worth Rs. 10,000 per school;
2. Cost of one cupboard per school for the first year of the project to store the books;
3. Salary to four field workers to manage a cluster of 100 schools; and
4. Language tests of students and their certification.

Year 2 & 3:

1. Salary to four field workers to manage a cluster of 100 schools; and
2. Augmentation of books and replacement of damaged books in each school.

Acknowledgement of Sponsorship

The contribution of Sponsoring Companies will be acknowledged by (a) Naming the Students managed library programme in the blocks of 100 schools after the sponsoring company, (b) providing a printed sticker on every books and other assets purchased through their sponsorship mentioning the contribution of specific Company, (c) sending at least 20 photographs of every block of 100 schools to the Sponsoring Company which can be used in their annual reports, (d) sending the assessment results of the students to the Sponsoring Company.

Project Benefits

- **Improvement in reading habits among children in rural Gujarat:** Library books that are of good quality and of interest to children will be available to rural schools. Having access to quality and appealing books will help instil the life-long habit of reading and self-learning.
- **Increase in proficiency in Gujarati:** The library books will be in the local vernacular language, and will facilitate proficiency in Gujarati among school children.
- **Improvement in general knowledge and appreciation for literature:** The books will expand the world-view of the children and take them beyond life within their villages. Books will also help them to cultivate an interest in literature and language. Both these aspects are key preparation for adult life, when as adults, they will be required to know about the world and communicate effectively in the workplace.

Developing the CSR Project

The Gujarat CSR Authority (GCSRA) can be approached for further details and assistance for developing the Students Managed Library Project. GCSRA can also provide support, on charge basis, for development of a project report, execution level support and monitoring.

This initiative can be implemented either directly by the Sponsoring Company, in consultation with the local schools or through GCSRA. In case, a Company wants to implement it through GCSRA, the Authority will provide help in selecting an implementing partner, procurement of books, training and monitoring. For supervision of the entire project, Authority will charge 2.5% of the project cost.

Students Managed Library Project						
COST ESTIMATES OF PROJECT FOR 100 SCHOOLS						
	Activity	Units	Unit cost	Year-1	Year-2	Year-3
1	Books	100	10000	1000000		
2	Books- Augmentation & replacement	100	3000		300000	300000
3	Cup board	100	2500	250000		
4	Salary of Field worker cum trainer	3	8000	24000	24000	24000
5	Travel & communication grant to FW&T	3	2000	6000	6000	6000
6	Cost of mobile	3	4000	12000		
7	Development & maintenance of App & website	1	200000	200000	100000	100000
8	Training	3	5000	15000	15000	15000
9	Testing of students	100	2000	200000	200000	200000
A	Contingencies	0.05%		85350	32250	32250
B	Total cost without GCSRA Intervention			1792350	677250	677250
C	GCSRA Management cost (optional)	0.025%		44809	16931	16931
D	Total cost with GCSRA Intervention			1837159	694181	694181