



Gyan Shala

GYAN SHALA 2014-15

Education Support Organization



MISSION

1. To evolve a total system solution-model for school education that deliver quality education on a large scale.
2. To find such schooling policies and solutions that would allow children from poor families to attend the school regularly without fear or apprehension.
3. To find such schooling policies that would allow first generation learners from poor families to match the learning levels of children from higher socio-economic categories.
4. To minimize and try to eliminate gender based inequalities in school attendance and learning attainments.
5. To develop organizational capacity to implement the program at a substantial scale, in many geographies, so as to directly impact the education of large number of children, and to establish that the new solutions are not merely a one-off demonstration units but a policy option to be considered by adoption by the Government and others, on a large scale.
6. To generate credible evidence of the program impact through commissioning of independent assessment of program performance.
7. To join the process of informing the overall policy-program formulation by the Government in the area of school education

Gyan Shala 2014-15

Highlights

Gyan Shala emerged as one of largest non-Government school education program in India in 2014-15, which (i) ensured high learning outcomes for around 45000 urban slum children in its own school-classes, in nine cities in four states, and (ii) worked with almost half a million children in around 7,300 Government schools for quality improvement to strengthen foundation stage, grades 1-3.

Gyan Shala has not initiated skill development which, in our judgment, requires a foundation of effective school education, if aimed at better employment. Our program for adolescent girls, therefore, focused on overcoming their weak schooling base. Gyan Shala also did not take up supplementary education programs for government school children, since evidence of their utility for long-term sustainable improvements in learning levels is yet to be established.

Continuing past trend, Gyan Shala obtained independent evidence of its children performance, which was found to be at an average level of India's best schools, though its per child cost was a small fraction of elite or Government schools' cost. Gyan Shala also consolidated its record of being effective on a large scale, while addressing the specific issues faced by poor urban and rural children.

The success of Gyan Shala is built on its innovative schooling model whose three key design features are (i) focus relatively more on children's capability to learn than on enhancing teachers' capacity to teach, and (ii) re-engineer class teacher role into a team effort of a 6 tier team, thus brining high quality curriculum designing

close to the classroom, on a large scale, and (iii) take an overall system-organization perspective to the design a school program, instead of looking at only teaching-learning-curriculum processes. Gyan Shala runs school classes close to the residence of children so young, 6 years old, children, particularly girls, do not face any social or economic constraint in attending classes. The classes are furnished with good furniture and are well lighted and ventilated. The children are provided high quality learning material, including daily worksheets for each subject streams, and other stationary items, free of charge. The curricular plan and schedules reflect world-wide best practices, while meeting state-national curricular norms. The teachers are provided continuous training, teacher guides for each day, and supervisory support.

Program Evolution

Gyan Shala had started its elementary program, covering grades 1-3, in Ahmedabad, and its initial expansion, both geographical and vertically up to grade 10, took place in Gujarat. Starting with the study by Poverty Action Lab in 2004, and later annual assessments by the Educational Initiative (EI), over 2008-2015, and through program rating by CfBT in 2010 & 2013, a considerable body of evidence has been accumulated to indicate that Gyan Shala children perform on par with India's and UK's good schools, though extra-curricular aspects are inadequate. This level of performance has been achieved in spite of the absence of parental support for studies which is common in middle and upper income families, absence of pre-schooling, and other socio-economic handicaps that poor children face, including lower program cost.

Gyan Shala initiated replication of its program in Bihar in 2007-08, which later attracted support from Government

of Bihar, through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and DFID. This support enabled expansion of the program to a size even bigger than the one at Ahmedabad, which was much older.

In the assessment of Bihar program by the Educational Initiative (EI), in April 2013, Gyan Shala grade 3 children performed a little ahead of the average of children in elite CBSE schools of India, and also ahead of older program of Gyan Shala at Ahmedabad,

Overwhelming majority of Gyan Shala children belonged to weaker economic sections, including minorities and migrants to cities, and proportion of girls exceeded 50%. The success of Bihar program indicated that Gyan Shala model could be replicated without any dilution of quality. The year 2011-12 saw the conclusion of DFID support, due to the end of agreement between DFID and the Government of India for DFID's support for elementary education, but Gyan Shala could receive acceptance from Qatar Foundation of the Government of Qatar to continue and further expand its program. Starting 2012, Gyan Shala expanded the coverage to three cities in UP, while a small size demonstration unit had started in Kolkata in 2009 itself.

Gyan Shala had initiated its middle school program in 2006-07, and high school program in 2011-12. The aim of Gyan Shala is to establish and demonstrate a new approach to school education, that ensures quality on a large scale, is cost-efficient, and addresses the specific needs of urban poor.

Program Profile in 2014 - 15

Gyan Shala educated around 39,212 children in 1,539 classes in nine cities in four states under its elementary program, covering grades 1-3. The middle school (grades 4-7) and high school (grades 8-10) pilot programs,

both at Ahmedabad, covered around 2100 and 250 children respectively. A pilot program to educate school drop-outs, adolescent girls, also at Ahmedabad, continued to work with around 200 girls.

As earlier, Gyan Shala children took ASSET test of Gyan Educational Initiative (EI), which enables comparison of the performance of our children with those in leading CBSE schools. This test is translated by EI in local language. In the ASSET test in 2014, grade 3 children in Gyan Shala scored a little better than the average of India's leading CBSE schools, both in Gujarat and Bihar. The performance of grade five and seven children was, though, a little less than this average for ASSET. Gyan Shala also get its school program rated periodically by CfBT, which allows bench-marking against the average of UK public schools and international schools in Dubai, which are rated by CfBT. Such a rating in 2013 gave Gyan Shala an overall rating similar to 35% UK schools and 50% International Schools of Dubai. The rating of teaching-learning processes was even better. The summary of ASSET results and CfBT ratings are given in Annex-I.

Average total annual cost of elementary program per child was in a range of Rs. 2800-3200 at different places. Middle school cost was Rs. 5000/- per child, and adolescent girl's program too costs @ Rs. 5000 per student. These costs were all inclusive, covering teaching, classroom rental, learning material and management-administration.

The Programs

1. Elementary Program (Grades 1-3)

Gyan Shala starts this program in such slums where it finds lots of children loitering in streets during regular School timing,

which is taken as a more effective evidence of children dropping out of school system compared to any formal survey which might or might not show universal enrolment. Gyan Shala program is run like any formal school, except that various grade classes are not held in a same building, and are instead held in nearby rooms hired within the community where children live. This ensures that the parents have no hesitation in sending even a girl child to the school, and there is no cost of commute to school, either of time or transport cost.

Classrooms have furniture suitable for children and functional lighting and ventilation. The State-national curriculum is fully implemented so children can transfer to any other regular government or private school into the next grade class on completion of any grade education in Gyan Shala. Class duration is kept 3.5 hours, without any break (here, children are allowed to have individual break for either drinking water or attending natural requirement on an individual basis as per their needs, so as to avoid academic time loss of the group.) Classes are held for a minimum of 220 days in an academic year. Our reviews have shown that the number of hours of class-time devoted to the core subjects of language, math and pre-science/ math/ EVS was comparable to full day schools, as there are no breaks or intermission in 3-5 hours of class. On completion of three years elementary module, most children are mainstreamed in regular schools in grade 4, except for a small group in Ahmedabad who continues in grade 4 Gyan Shala classes, who are mainstreamed in higher grade classes later in recognized schools, according to the preference of children-parents, using the provisions under the Right to Education (RTE) act.

The children get a free education, including free supply of books, stationary and learning material. An attempt is made to secure part financial support of the Government through

Middle School Program

After stabilizing the elementary program by 2005, Gyan Shala initiated Middle School program for grades 4-7 in the year 2006, with a major change in program design, by introducing subject teacher for each subject. Another major change was elimination of the cadre of supervisor between the teachers and curriculum design and teacher training team. The frequency of teacher training, too, was doubled in middle school compared to elementary.

Most children joining middle school program come from Gyan Shala elementary classes, though occasionally a child might join from some other school too. Gyan Shala holds that the State and national curriculum for science and math needs to be somewhat speeded up in early middle school classes, so the transition from middle school to high school stage is less abrupt, so Gyan Shala children could cope with this without additional tutorial support, which a majority of children from economically higher income group avail of. Gyan Shala also holds that middle school is the critical stage to institute conceptual and theoretical clarity which shall shape the good performance in secondary and higher secondary stages. But, unfortunately, the household responsibility of most children does not permit them to devote any more than 4.5 hours of class time to their studies, with other time spent on supporting their household's economy.

As yet, Gyan Shala has not discovered an effective mix of large scale financing of the middle school program. There is no Govt. scheme under which this program could be supported even by sympathetic officers. We charge Rs. 100/- per month from the parents, which is close to the top of the paying capacity of poor parents that Gyan Shala serves, but it amounts to only 25% of program cost. No children, however, is denied education in case of inability to pay. The donor support is deterred by the perception that this program might be

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which also enables the supply of mid-day meal. More than 70% of program cost is mobilized through private donations.

The educational support to the children is delivered by a 6 tier academic team. The class teachers are recruited from the community so they are comfortable in working in poor community setting. The class teachers for grade 1-3 are required to have passed higher secondary, though many young graduates too take up the job. One senior teacher is engaged to supervise every 8-10 classes, who must have a graduate education. The teachers-teams are supported by a two tier team of curriculum designers and teacher trainers for various subject streams. A group of senior supervisors takes care of administrative aspects in the field and insulated educational processes from other disturbances.

In 2014-15, the number of classes and children at various locations were as under.

S. N.	Location	Centers	Children	Boys	Girls
1	Ahmedabad	411	9236	4468	4768
2	Surat	64	1534	728	806
3	Patna	488	12650	5745	6905
4	Muzaffarpur	155	4627	2185	2442
5	Bihar Sharif	102	2594	1161	1433
6	Kolkata	78	1837	919	918
7	Lucknow	75	2168	1052	1116
8	Kanpur	90	2453	1082	1371
9	Farukhabad	76	2113	1012	1101
		1539	39212	18352	20860

The program team conducts two written and two oral assessments in each grade to assess children's progress and plan remedial-corrective steps. These records are kept along with monthly attendance of all children.

violating RTE provisions which it does not. This has kept program expansion under check.

In 2014-15, the middle school program had classes covering 1600 children, as per details in the following Table 2.

Grades	Centers	Children	Boys	Girls
4	27	812	378	434
5	23	582	268	314
6	18	413	202	211
7	16	351	179	172
Total	84	2158	1027	1131

The summary of ASSET test results for grades 5 and 7 are indicated in the tables in the earlier section on elementary program.

High School Program

Gyan Shala noticed that most parents in the slums are extremely reluctant to send teen-aged and adolescent girls to distant schools at high school stage. Further, household demands to contribute to family's economy makes it difficult for the adolescent boys also to find time for a full day high school. Gyan Shala has, therefore, launched its High School program in 2011-12, under the provision of open Schooling, which enables a flexible duration study program close to the residence of children. The educational goals of high school program, however, have not been diluted and we are targeting that this program too would generate children's performance on par with India's leading schools, thus opening the possibilities of professional education and future life trajectory for Gyan Shala children coming from poor families.

State Board Examination Performance of Grade 10:

In the year 2014-15, the second batch of the students took the Board Exams for Grade 10. Out of 55 students, 41 students passed the test, which shows 74.54 percentage of students passing. In the same year, in the state of Gujarat, for all the students, percentage was only 55. Thus, passing percentage of Gyan Shala is worthy of appreciation, as the program deals with all lower socio-economic strata of the population compared to the entire state. While comparing the same with the first batch's passing percentage which was 72, there is also some improvement. In the coming years, more efforts are being planned, so as to get the good results.

We expect the program design to stabilize over the next 4-5 years. Being a pilot scale program in its development phase, per child cost of this program is high, but it should stabilize at around Rs. 7500/- per child per year when it reaches the scale of existing middle school program. In 2014-15, this program had 3 classes of grade 8 and 2 classes each in grades 9 and 10, covering a total of 223 children, as mentioned in the Table 3.

Grades	Centers	Children	Boys	Girls
8	3	101	62	39
9	2	64	30	34
10	2	58	41	17
Total	7	223	133	90

The cost per child of various programs in Gyan Shala comes to less than $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ of per child cost in Govt. schools, and even lower compared to private schools, whose quality Gyan Shala matches.

Adolescent Girls Program

India has succeeded in ensuring close to universal school enrolment but the rate of drop out before school completion remains very high, particularly among girls. This was more so in the past so in all states, a majority of adolescent girls, particularly in backward states are as if un-schooled. Since women/mothers' education is a key determinant of family's welfare and children's future, the education of adolescent girls to a state close to school completion is an important national priority. India has had many programs of 'training' of adolescent girls, in skills related to reproductive health or employment, but not many have tried to compensate for the absence of school education. With support from Packard foundation, Gyan Shala launched a 3 year program of the education of adolescent girls living in slums of Ahmedabad in 2009. The aim was to develop and implement such a module that would bring the girls to a level close to grade 7 level education.

The design and implementation of this program has posed complex challenges, the biggest of which related to very large diversity of capability-interest among the target group of girls, and the competitive demands of normal life, which made it very tough for the girls to attend the classes located in their community regularly even for 3 hours of duration, and continue the process for 3 years. After detailed review of first 3 year's experience, this program has been re-casted as a two year program with less academic orientation, but which shall still aim to inculcate educational mind-set of a grade 7 student. This new design has been launched in 2013, whose impact has been determined by tests conducted by Vidya Bhawan Society, through comparison of base-line and end-line tests

administered by external expert agency. Also, Gray Matters India Pvt. Ltd. also carried out Program Impact Assessment through the detailed comparison of Control group and Treatment group, which showed that treatment group has achieved more with compared to the Control group in subject specific skills namely Language, Math and Science. It was also found that treatment group also showed higher percentage in non-cognitive domain such as socio emotional well being.

Prof. Leela Visaria, of Gujarat Institute of Development Research (GIDR), also has been invited to understand and analyze the program impact from development perspective.

Should Gyan Shala succeed in developing a cost-effective and functionally sustainable model, this could emerge a strategically important program and growth area. In 2014-15, a total of 200 girls have continued studies in 15 centers which is going to end in July 2015.

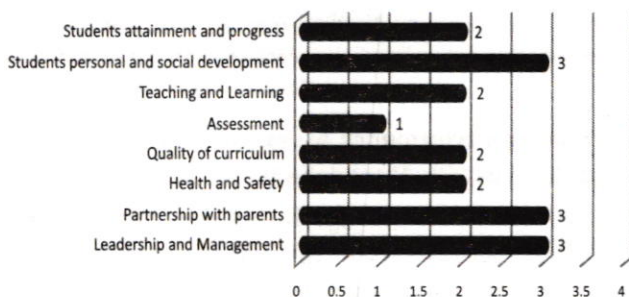
Government Schools Program

Due to excellent learning levels in our slum classes, 9 Gyan shala has been invited to introduce similar model practices in selected Government schools. This program was first taken up in 37 municipal schools in Ahmedabad over 2008-2011, which showed improvements in children's learning levels of 25-65%, across subjects and grades. In 2012-13, Gyan Shala was invited for similar partnership for 7300 government schools in four districts of Bihar. In 2014-15, around 0.6 million children in grades 1 and 2 were brought under this program. Over years, the program will expand to cover grades 1-3, and Gyan Shala hopes to expand that to other states too.

External Assessment :

- 1). CfBT Rating: As mentioned, Gyanshala strives to improve its practices by involving credible agencies to rate various organizational processes with a focus of students achievements. CfBT India Pvt. Ltd. has conducted review and rank different aspects of the organization. Snap-shot of some of the interesting findings of the CfBT report is presented herewith. Internal assessment is considered weaker, in both cases, in Ahmedabad as well as in Patna, compared to other parameters. Gyan Shala has planned to improve that in the coming years.

Overall performance of Gyan Shala centres in Ahmedabad is Acceptable



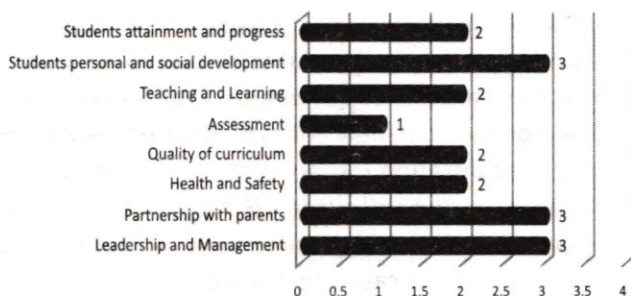
Progress in all key subjects of Science, Math and Project Work in both primary and middle schools was judged as Acceptable

Key Strength

All students listen to their teachers who are their "gurus" leading them to light and wisdom from darkness and ignorance. A sense of brotherhood pervades the centares.

Relationship with other students and staff were respectful and cordial. They actively participate in the day to day activities of the centare. They adhered to the centare's rules and regulations and followed healthy hapits promoted by their teachers.

Overall performance of GS centres in Patna is Acceptable



Key strenghts

Internalization method of learning

Activities that engages all students.

Emphasis on key subjects that fits the instructional time of three hours.

Recommendations

Introduce indoor activities such as chess, carom board, business, Chinese checker etc for extended learning

Develop partnership with companies/ schools that allow the students to use their ICT facilities

2). **Student Performance Assessment by Education**

Initiatives (EI), Ahmedabad:

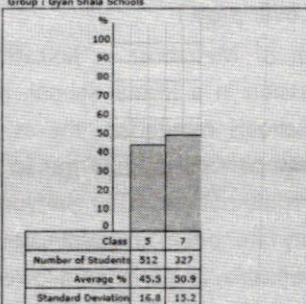
Education Initiatives conducted their benchmarking ASSET assessments of students in Grade 3, 5 and 7. ASSET tests are taken by students of good CBSE schools for children coming from elite class. In Grade 3, learning in Math and EVS subjects was tested, while in Grades 5 and 7, three major subjects Language, Math and Science have been tested. Snap shots of the result is shared herewith. In Grade 3, Gyan Shala students have scored better scores than average scores of children in good CBSE schools. In Grades 5 and 7, scores of Gyan Shala children is lesser. Gyan Shala middle school team has started active efforts in this direction, so that the children can perform better

Medium: Gujarati

Test : March 2015

Language

Group : Gyan Shala Schools

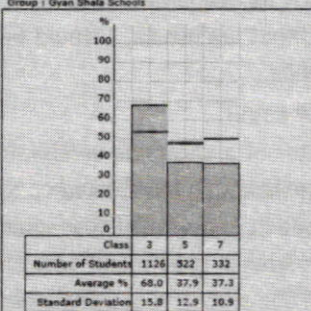


Medium: Gujarati

Test : March 2015

EVS

Group : Gyan Shala Schools

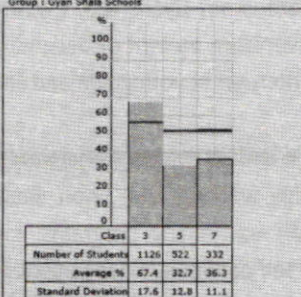


Medium: Gujarati

Test : March 2015

Maths

Group : Gyan Shala Schools



* The Average Performance is calculated from the number of correct responses given by students to the questions in the paper.

* The Standard Deviation (SD) represents the variation in the performance as a the test expressed as a percentage.

* A low SD implies that differences between the students is not very high.

* N/A - Class not tested.

* All Programme schools are schools listed from your Programme.

* Control Schools are government schools / govt aided schools/ or schools which are similar to Programme schools. These schools are not under the Programme.

----- ASSET Average %

Sharing from the communities :

Suhana : (Her picture on the cover page)

Suhana Khatoon from a slum of Metiabruz in Kolkatta, shares, "I could not get admission in a formal school, as having no arms since birth. Schools categorized me as a special child and suggested my parents to send me to a special school. But my parents could not afford my everyday travel. They thought that it is my fate to remain uneducated. But, it was not my fate, as Gyanshala, in our slum allowed me to study. I can read and also write with my two legs and participate in group activities. Now my parents, with lots of dreams for me, want me to study further. Gyanshala helped me to realize my potential. Without Gyanshala, I would be idle at home tagged as special child..."

Tulsi : (Her picture on the cover page)

Tulsi Khetaji Meghwal, a daughter of a vegetable vendor, is one of the bright student of GyanShala. She has studied up to Grade 7 in Yogeshwar nagar Vasna in Ahmedabad. She could score Distinction in Grade 12 in Science stream and now on her way to become an Engineer. She shares, "Gyan Shala has given me an opportunity to study within community, so girls like me from migrant marwadi population has been able to start in the middle school. If there is not Gyanshala, I would not reach up to this stage or never have dreamt of becoming an Engineer. My elder sister got married at young age and she has not studied like myself."

Shaikh Habibi: (Community Teacher in Bombay Hotel area, Ahmedabad)

Shaikh Habibi shares that " While working with Gyan Shala and having been exposed to various training programs, my personality has changed and my self confidence has boost up. I was not going out alone from my house before, but now I am so much confident and also travel in the city, my family members, my father and brother, ask me about routes to reach at particular destination if they have to go somewhere."

Financials and donors

The key financials for the last three years are indicated below. The trust income has risen up by 25% over a period of 3 years, in spite of onset of RTE, which had put severe constraints on the growth of Gyan Shala model.

Items	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Total Earnings	87674564	99976517	141847963
Total Expenditure	86495281	96712632	140313299
Surplus	1179283	3263885	1534664
Total Assets	14048651	12434079	84829635

The Program cost per child's education in different programs was as follows.

Program	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Elementary-Guj.	2749	3431	3137
Elementary-Bihar	2369	2389	2548
Middle School	4214	4938	4423
High School	12497	13100	13279
Adolescent Girls	4573	5545	4573

A relatively high cost of elementary program in Gujarat compared to Bihar is due to its age, with most employees having much longer experience, and hence higher salary. High School program is of very small size and is in development phase, but its long-term cost will be only a little higher than of middle school program.

Major donors in the last 3 years were as under.

Donor	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
DFID	47154338	0	0
SSA-Government	6273158	11745132	13720312
EAC-Doha	8075020	43457824	70875408
MSDF	18097374	21601468	23835628
Nalanda Foundation	218983	7780945	5000072
Packard Foundation	3396406	3993036	4329895
E& H Foundation	0	2003835	3746165
Key Individuals	2466986	3936775	1196952

Publications about Gyan Shala:

Print links

1. PAL, MIT/USA research report at:
<http://www.povertyactionlab.org/evaluation/complement-or-substitute-effect-technology-student-achievement-india>
2. DFID, UK Gov. research report at:
http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/pdf/outputs/ORIE/GyanShala_Scalibility_Replicability_through_Private_Investment.pdf }
3. Report in Indian Express by the Professors of Hong Kong University and New York University, USA about Gyan Shala program, available at:
<http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/schooled-against-innovation/#.VB0U5RdXgt8.email>
4. The book by Fenton Wheelan of McKinsey and ACASUS has described Gyan Shala of India and BRAC of Bangladesh as exemplar program meeting UN development goals for education of 2020, available at: www.acasus.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Acasus-The-Learning-Challenge-Report.pdf

5. "California Management Review" paper by Sushil Vachani and N. Craig Smith, <http://cmr.berkeley.edu/search/articleDetail.aspx?article=5471>.
6. Journal of Educational development", paper by Colin Bangay and Michael Latham, {<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0738059312001198>}.

Video Links

1. 1.Interview with Founder by Insaan: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2-z9yb66Uc>
2. 1.Video by Insaan of GS: <https://vimeo.com/139109942>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWiMNfGVnVM>
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-d5cgKhYEQ>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x35CXeAJSkc>
6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gjbn2cPMgas>
7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDXjOqrfeR8>
8. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=844dmSjkzws>

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Gyan Shala

Gyan Shala Project

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