

CENTRE FOR LEARNING RESOURCES

Annual Report 2005 - 2006

Background

The Centre For Learning Resources (CLR) was established in Pune in 1984. It is a non-profit educational institution of The Society For Educational Improvement and Innovation which is registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860, the Bombay Public Trust Act of 1950 and the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act of 1976.

Goals

The expansion of elementary education and early childhood education in India has often not been matched by a similar concern for the quality of teaching and learning. This has resulted in dreary and unstimulating classrooms, millions of elementary school dropouts and unacceptably low levels of learning in our classrooms. The main goal of the CLR is to improve the quality of early childhood care and development and elementary education that rural and urban disadvantaged children receive in our country.

Main Activities

The CLR acts as a technical support organisation to NGOs working at the grassroots level, and to government and private schools. It also works with trainers and field workers involved in the care and development of children in the birth to 3 years age group.

The main activities of the CLR include:

- Inservice training of elementary school teachers, instructors in alternative education centres and support classes, and balwadi/anganwadi workers in early childhood education (ECE) programmes.
- Inservice training of teacher trainers and supervisory personnel for early childhood and elementary education.
- Training of personnel in early childhood development programmes which target caregivers of children in the birth to 3 years age group.
- Development of training materials.
- Development of instructional materials in various curricular areas, with an emphasis on functional literacy and numeracy, including audio-visual materials for environmental education, language development, and English as a second language.
- Advocacy – including exhibitions for public awareness.
- Consultancy in curriculum development, educational project design, academic and other research inputs to schools, NGOs and government agencies, funding organisations and international bodies.

Elementary Education

Helping Vulnerable Children Cope With School

CLR has, since its inception, been working with teachers in the formal system. However, of late, we have also been liaising closely in the area of elementary education with non-governmental organizations, who run 'support classes' that enable children to cope with formal schooling. This is a vital extension of our efforts to support universalisation of elementary education.

Research has shown that a majority of children do not acquire even basic literacy skills even after four or five years of schooling. The quality of education in formal schools leaves a lot to be desired, and children have no means of any additional educational support at home. As they find it increasingly more difficult to cope with their studies, children become extremely vulnerable and tend to drop out of primary schools altogether.

In this scenario, NGOs can play a crucial role by providing educational support outside schools. Towards this aim, conducting of motivational classes have proved effective in mobilizing interest in primary education and providing an initial thrust for increasing enrollment. It is CLR's belief that, to prevent dropout and enhance children's learning, additional support classes are vital to preserve the goals of Universal Elementary Education.

As part of its efforts to promote greater effectiveness of support classes, CLR has formulated and continuously implements training programmes for young support class teachers, who conduct such parallel classes in villages and slums, but have no prior teacher training. Learning aids like library and educational games are provided, and these teachers are encouraged to interact with formal schools to stay abreast of student progress. Apart from this, support class teachers also interact closely with parents and the community to inform them of ongoing activities, and also to gauge current needs of the children.

Training of Support Class Teachers of India Sponsorship Committee

India Sponsorship Committee has been running support classes in the Pune slums and in the brick kilns on the outskirts of Pune. Last year, the CLR had designed recurrent training programmes with specific focus on early mathematics skills. This year, ISC requested training on the teaching of reading and writing in the mother tongue - Marathi.

Initial discussions revealed that the ISC support class teachers did not have a clear understanding of the objectives of teaching Marathi at the primary level, and were more focused on teaching the textbook. The CLR designed and conducted a 6-module programme that included an understanding of the importance of reading with meaning, and of learning to write independently. Apart from this, the modules focused on various activities, exercises, games, and teaching-learning materials that help children to develop these skills. While using the textbook as the basis for teaching, teachers were encouraged to use newspapers, storybooks, advertisements, and hand-made materials so that children develop the ability to read and write in different contexts. The importance of encouraging reading habits of children was highlighted. Apart from textbooks, newspapers play a crucial role as they not only improve reading skills, but also help children stay in touch with interesting current events.

Enriching the School Curriculum with Sessions for Self and Social Awareness



Along with CLR's involvement in strengthening the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics at the primary level, we have also considered it equally important for teachers to attend to the affective aspects of education. Children must be helped to build good self-images, develop their creativity, and develop respect for the differences amongst communities in our country, in order to become responsible future citizens.

To fulfil this need within school curricula, we had designed an instructional package some years ago in Hindi and Marathi entitled "Insight / अंतर्दृष्टि", relevant for schools and alternative education programmes for socially and economically disadvantaged children. In 2005-06, we trained rural support class teachers of CASP-Plan in the use of the open-ended, inductive discussion methods embedded in the materials. They, in turn, were able to enrich the school curriculum by conducting periodic "Insight" sessions in local village schools in Maval Taluka of Pune district.



Components of the "Insight / अंतर्दृष्टि" Package

Picture Packet : The content of "Insight / अंतर्दृष्टि" is divided into seven major themes or units. A set of 5 or 6 large teaching pictures have been developed for each unit, totalling 45 pictures altogether. These pictures are designed to serve as entry points for discussion and lesson development.

Picture Texts : These appear in the Teacher's Guide. They are short passages elucidating the theme and subordinate learnings of each picture, written in a style and vocabulary appropriate for the intended age group. Since the children's reading vocabulary is limited, the passages serve as read-aloud texts for teachers.

Teacher's Guide : This contains the overall objectives for each unit, the specific objectives for each picture-lesson, and detailed guidelines for class discussion and lesson development based on the pictures. Suggestions for follow-up activities to reinforce the desired knowledge are also included.

"Insight / अंतर्दृष्टि" is of interest to schools and alternative education programmes that are on the lookout for ways to add this important dimension of self and social awareness, to their curricula for meeting basic learning needs.

Teaching English in Government Schools Through an Interactive Radio Programme

Teaching Spoken English Through Radio

CLR has been actively involved, since 1996, in the teaching of English in government regional medium schools. As a further extension of its goals to improve the standards of education of underprivileged school children, CLR developed a 3-year interactive radio programme for teaching spoken English. This programme aired on All India Radio (AIR), comprises 251 radio lessons - each of 15 minutes duration and has been broadcast to lakhs of students across India.



Children listening to a radio lesson for spoken English and interacting with the radio teacher

First implemented in Pune District between 2000-2003, the programme has met with great success in enabling significant numbers of rural and urban middle school students studying in Marathi medium government schools to acquire some basic spoken English skills. It has been found, upon subsequent testing, that the speaking skills of students, exposed to the programme, were far superior to older high school students.

A Hindi-English adaptation of the original Marathi-English version was later developed. So far, this programme has been broadcast in :

- Pune : 2001- 2006
- Mumbai : 2002-05
- Delhi : 2002-04
- Jharkhand : 2003-05
- Uttaranchal : 2004 - 2006
- Rajasthan : 2005-06

Teaching Reading and Writing in English through Radio

During the monitoring of our spoken English radio programme, we were often requested to extend the programme to include reading and writing skills. In 2004-05, we took on the challenge of piloting an audio-tape project to teach initial reading and writing skills in English.

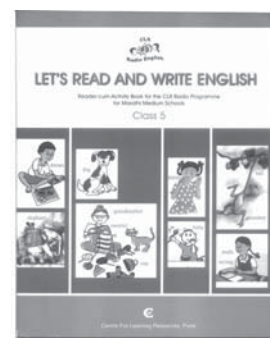
The significant impact of the pilot project on reading and writing skills encouraged us to upscale the project, and add this component to our existing spoken English radio programme in Pune District.

Pre-broadcast Activities : Developing a Reader-cum-Activity Book and Scripting the Radio Lessons

The monitoring of classroom transactions during the pilot project provided us with pointers as to what was needed to develop a reader-cum-activity book, to accompany the radio lessons for Class 5.

The text and illustrations of the Class 5 reader-cum-activity book were completed by mid-May 05. The book contains 144 pages, with 60 theme-based lessons, carefully graded according to language structure and vocabulary. Periodic assessment tests are also included. 28,000 copies of the book were printed and distributed to 896 Zilla Parishad primary schools of Pune District through the 13 Block Education Offices.

The radio lessons for reading and writing skills were closely correlated with the contents of the reader-cum-activity book to be used by each Class 5 child while listening to the radio lessons. Hence, work on the audio-scripts for the radio lessons was started only after the manuscript of the book was finalised. The main thrust of the interactive audio-pedagogy is the emphasis placed by the radio teacher on 'reading with understanding'. During this year, 60 radio scripts were developed, recorded and edited.



The CLR reader-cum-activity book correlated with the radio lessons

Pre-broadcast Activities : Training of Resource Persons



Poster announcing the radio programme for integrated English skills in Pune district

In June 05, the Education Department of the Pune Zilla Parishad organised a 6-day training programme for their resource persons. These persons in turn would return to their blocks and train all middle school English teachers in Pune District. The CLR conducted 7 training sessions for these trainers to orient teachers for the implementation of the CLR radio programme for integrated English skills throughout Pune District. In all, 350 participants received the training. Each resource person was given a guidebook published by the CLR, to help plan and conduct the subsequent local teacher-training for Class 5 English teachers.

Pre-broadcast Activities : Revision of Existing Evaluation Tools

We felt the need for an outside expert to critique the English tests that we had developed internally for English language testing. Valuable interaction with an expert on English language testing enabled us to complete the following:

- Revision of our existing tools for evaluating spoken English of Class 5 students
- Formulation and subsequent revision based on feedback, of items for evaluation of reading and writing skills in English for Class 5 students.

Broadcasting the Integrated English Radio Programme

Broadcasts of the CLR radio programmes 'Let's Read and Write English' and 'We Learn English' for spoken English skills began in

July 05. The former programme was broadcast by All India Radio on Vividh Bharati twice a week, and the latter was aired thrice a week. We were thus able to provide an integrated programme of 150 radio lessons spread over 30 weeks -

60 lessons for reading and writing, and 90 lessons for improving listening and speaking. Each of the 150 radio lessons were of 15-minutes duration, and teachers were provided with assistance to practise for a further 15 minutes the skills taught in the preceding radio lesson.

The range of this broadcast covered all 896 Zilla Parishad schools. As mentioned before, the CLR has arranged to provide a reader-cum-activity book for each of the students and teachers in these schools, to be used in conjunction with the radio lessons for teaching reading and writing skills in English.

Classroom Monitoring of the Radio Programme and Allied Activities

We selected 20 schools in Pune District to assess the impact of the radio programme. From these project schools, 8 schools were selected to monitor the new radio lessons for teaching reading and writing. In monitoring, particular attention was paid to the ease with which children could follow the lessons, and their specific difficulties with doing the activities. As the scripting and production of the radio lessons was going on through the year, it was possible to modify the subsequent lessons based on the feedback received through monitoring.



Children reading along as they listen to a radio programme



Radio club newsletter

A well-attended meeting of all the teachers involved in the 20 project schools was held at the CLR. Valuable feedback was received from teachers on the usefulness of the lessons, problems they faced in implementing the project, and suggestions for the following year.

The CLR also printed three issues of 'CLR Radio English Club News', a four page wall-paper that contains activities and games for learning English, as well as 'news and views' about the radio programme. The Radio Club elicited a good response, with many ZP schools writing in and participating in the contests.



This year's award-winning rural school in the CLR radio Club

Impact of Radio Programme on English Skills

To assess the impact of the project on English skills of Class 5 listeners, a baseline needed to be established. 200 Class 6 students were randomly selected from the 20 project schools in Pune District - 10 students from each school - and tested for all

4 skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing at the beginning of the academic year 2005-06. This was taken as a proxy of the end-of-year achievement of Class 5 students, who did not listen to the radio programme, and was taken as the baseline score to assess impact.

From each of the same 20 project schools, we randomly selected and tested 10 Class 5 students at the end of the academic year 2005-06, who had listened to all 150 radio lessons for teaching listening, speaking, reading and writing. Any statistically significant increase between the baseline and post-test scores could be ascribed to the positive impact of the radio programme. The following tables provide both the baseline and post-test results.

Test		Listening (Out of 30)	Speaking (Out of 110)	Writing (Out of 57)	Listening (Out of 20)
Baseline		17.7	34.26	18.64	7.63
Post-test		19.35	42.37	21.92	9.16
	t	-2.156	-3.417	-2.277	-2.874
	df	398	374.442	388.709	391.947
t-test for Equality of Means	Sig. (2-tailed)	.032 (Statistically significant)	.001 (Statistically significant)	.023 (Statistically significant)	.004 (Statistically significant)

The above results indicated that the CLR radio programme had a statistically significant impact on all 4 skills of students. It corroborated the conclusions that were drawn from our intensive monitoring of classroom interaction, that children were both enjoying and benefitting from the radio lessons.

Looking Back, Looking Forward

The success of the radio programme was not only based on the quantitative and qualitative evidence derived from testing and classroom monitoring. On-going visits and discussions with teachers regarding the implementation of the radio programme has provided positive and valuable feedback. Many teachers have written or come personally to CLR to express appreciation of the radio programme, and to ask for further support in terms of training and materials. All letters have been replied to and personal visits made wherever possible. A strategy is being planned for providing further inputs to these teachers next year, through the cluster coordinators in a 'cascade mode'.

While we had many years of experience of using radio as an effective tool for teaching spoken English, in 2005-06 we tried for the first time to use it to teach reading and writing skills. The impact of the radio programme validated our belief that with appropriate and interesting interactive radio lessons, supported by a reader-cum-activity book, we could significantly improve reading and writing skills in English.

Work on the radio programme for Class 6 to be broadcast in the academic year, 2006-07 has already begun. We have started developing the new reader-cum-activity book for Class 6 and simultaneously scripting the radio lessons.

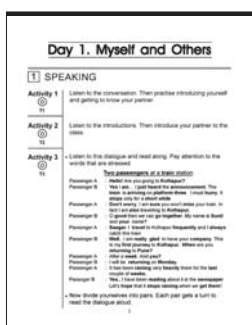
Radio Programme in Uttaranchal and Rajasthan

The CLR radio programme in Hindi-English for teaching spoken English was broadcast in partnership with SBMA-Plan, and SSA-Uttaranchal, in Uttaranchal for the second year.

A training session was conducted by us for resource persons at the DIET in Badkot, Chamoli district of Uttaranchal. We also produced a video film of the training session, to enable SBMA to conduct further sessions at the local level.

The programme has also been initiated in the Jaipur and Alwar districts of Rajasthan, in collaboration with the Rajasthan Prathmik Shiksha Parishad. CLR also conducted resource persons' training.

Developing A Course For Strengthening English Skills Of Teachers In Regional Medium Schools



One of the major deficiencies in the teaching of English in regional medium government elementary schools is that teachers themselves do not know English. The CLR has launched on developing a course for teaching English to teachers, and has recruited an expert resource person for this task.

We have had extensive discussions with this expert and the following tasks have been completed:

- Development of a modular framework, and an outline of the scope and sequence of Module 1 of the course
- Intensive and detailed set of activities have been drafted, including tape-scripts and reading texts.
- Work has also begun on the design and programming for an accompanying CD.

Developing Bilingual Materials For Language Learning

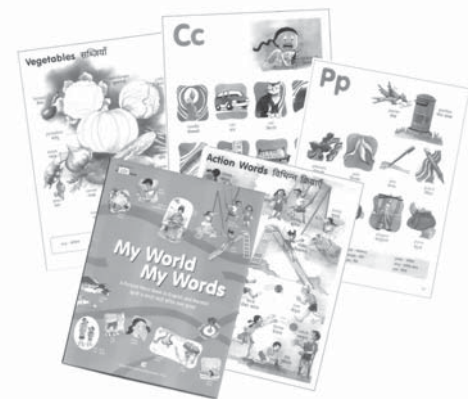
Why a Bilingual Approach

It is a universally acknowledged fact that a known language can fruitfully be used to learn a new one. CLR has followed a bilingual approach in its spoken English radio programme. The new English radio lessons, for teaching reading and writing skills as well as the accompanying reader-cum-activity book, use Marathi and English meaningfully to actively engage learners, develop linguistic sensitivity and to ensure that they are making sense of the text.

Developing a Bilingual Picture Word Book in Marathi-English and Hindi-English

Based on our extensive experience in teaching English in regional medium schools, we decided to develop a bilingual picture word book in English-Hindi and English-Marathi. We had already systematically collected 3000 commonly used English words from which we distilled a basic vocabulary of 1000 words. These words are based on the diverse realities of Indian children, and useful for children to interpret and describe their worlds.

For every English word, a corresponding appropriate word in Marathi and Hindi was selected after perusal of several authoritative dictionaries. The translations were finalised after detailed research by the CLR team, in consultation with leading language experts. The emphasis has been on the 'colloquial' rather than 'literary'.



The bilingual picture word book in English-Marathi and English-Hindi

Extensive draft illustrations for most of the 1000 words were provided to the CLR team by a leading illustrator of children's books. These illustrations, which were often painstakingly revised based on feedback, attempted to capture the rich diversity of the world of Indian children - both rural and urban - besides depicting positive gender roles.

What emerged finally was **"My World~My Words"**, two beautifully illustrated bilingual picture word books in English-Hindi and English-Marathi respectively.

This book is a team effort of the entire CLR staff. The attractive cover has been designed by a Pune-based design consultant, with the printing being done at a leading local press. A promotional brochure was also printed to assist in the promotion of the book. Various distribution modes are being explored. Work is in progress on forthcoming bilingual editions that could then be used in other regions of the country.

Partnering in a Language Research Study

CLR partnered with the Azim Premji Foundation (APF) in its 'Lexicon Survey Study'. APF invited CLR in April 05, to participate in a preparatory discussion on the proposed study to identify English words that are already in use in day-to-day conversation in regional languages across rural India. The Foundation had already collected such words informally from its field staff. We contributed to the discussion and helped to formulate the research design. We also undertook to do the research in Maharashtra, and to help design materials and activities that would help to validate the list with groups of children.

The research design involved meetings with rural primary school teachers, support class teachers, and youth groups to collate an initial 'loan words' list in each state. During May 05, the CLR held three meetings with support class teachers, and augmented the initial list of English 'loan words' currently used in spoken Marathi. CLR also designed picture material which was used for validation activities with children.

Although the session with two school teachers from a rural government school did not yield promising results, the experience with young para-teachers was very rewarding. We were able to gain a good insight into children's everyday language. Preliminary findings indicate that a large number of English words have been absorbed in Marathi and that children are not always aware that they are using English words. Pronunciation of English words varies considerably, to the extent that some words are not recognisable as being English.

A Reading Series in Hindi for Beginners



Some titles from the Hindi edition of the graded reading series : "Aao Padhe"

CLR had earlier published a series of booklets in Marathi entitled , "चला वाचूया" that is being used extensively by school teachers and parents for the early stages of literacy acquisition by young children. These books have now been adapted in Hindi, for use by children beginning to learn Hindi. All the books are in a large format, with covers in full colour, making them very appealing to young readers.

Audio Visual Materials for Inductive, Value-Based Teaching

CLR continues to develop audio-visual instructional slide shows in Marathi and English. The series entitled , "तुम्ही आणि तुमचा परिसर / You and Your Environment", presents environmental and social studies topics that are relevant to the primary and middle school syllabi. It covers a vast range of such topics related to health, ecology, agriculture, industry, geography, history, biology, etc.

Children are generally able to absorb, understand and retain knowledge better when it is in audio visual form. This series helps teachers to create awareness and instill values related to their physical, social and political environment. The slide shows encourage interaction, discussion and analysis, thereby eliminating learning by rote.

CLR conducted two separate orientation workshops for teachers of English-medium and Marathi-medium schools in Pune, to equip them with the necessary skills required to conduct classes using the audio-visual medium, and to promote class discussion.

The CLR Audio-Visual Lending Library

There are 41 slide shows in the series, "तुम्ही आणि तुमचा परिसर / You and Your Environment". These are disseminated through our lending library scheme for Marathi and English medium schools in Pune.

We undertook the annual membership drive in June 05. Currently there are 30 member schools for the Marathi and English series.

The library provided slide shows to member schools according to the schedules decided upon at the beginning of the academic year. About 15 shows were screened every week in different schools.

The CLR audio-visual series, "तुम्ही आणि तुमचा परिसर / You and Your Environment"



Analysis Of The Education Budget Of Pune Municipal Corporation



As part of its new work in budget analysis, the CLR analysed the entire education budget of the Pune Municipal Corporation. This included an analysis of the Pune Municipal Corporation budget and expenditures over a five-year period. Since, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has also recently provided funds for the improvement of PMC schools, we looked at these budgets and expenditures too.

The SSA funds are meant to improve the quality of elementary schooling. Unfortunately, as the following figures indicates a large proportion of these funds have not been utilised between 2002-2005.

A presentation of these and other preliminary findings were made to members of Action For The Right Of The Children (ARC). The issue of unspent budgets will be taken up by ARC for further action with the PMC.

Advocacy Through Networking With NGOs

As the CLR is a technical support organisation within the ARC network in Pune city, it provides perspectives and expertise in the field of elementary education.

This year, the CLR staff were involved in the Convention of Girl Child Labourers organised in Pune jointly by ARC and Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL) in May 05. The convention, that was well attended by about 300 girls, served as a platform for them to air their dreams, ambitions and desire for a better quality of life. Apart from the discussions coordinated by CLR, a meeting with the press was organized during the conclusion of the convention.

Early Childhood Education

Building Capacity Within NGOs and Corporate Programmes For Early Childhood Education (ECE)

CLR has been involved in the area of Early Childhood Education (ECE) for over two decades. Field-based agencies in Maharashtra and other states are helped to run effective ECE centres with comprehensive technical support in various Indian languages. Along with audio visual training materials, CLR offers capacity building programmes for different levels of functionaries. In addition, a wide range of low-cost teaching-learning materials are made available, as also periodically hosted exhibitions for wider promotion of sound, activity-based ECE. CLR continues to receive requests from NGOs and government agencies for technical support that would enhance the quality of their balwadis and anganwadis.

Areas of Focus in the ECE Trainer's Training

- Understanding oneself for ECE work
- Children's developmental needs and rights.
- Activity-based ECE curriculum
- Making and using teaching-learning materials
- Attitudes and motivation of ECE workers
- Classroom organisation and management
- Monitoring ECE programmes
- Gender sensitivity

Inputs for ICDS in collaboration with Jindal South West Foundation (JSWF)

Vasind, Thane District

As part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, JSWF is attempting to strengthen the preschool component of the ICDS anganwadis in 27 villages in the Vasind Sector of Thane District in Maharashtra. The CLR was asked for technical support by way of ECE training and materials for the anganwadi workers (AWWs). A 10-day training programme was planned, conducted in 3 shorter recurrent sessions at the Jindal company premises in Vasind in February, June and October 05.



A rural anganwadi near Vasind in Thane District

Besides the above areas of focus, the training included a participatory discussion with the AWWs based on photos of their anganwadis gathered in advance by the CLR. This is an attempt to improve available infrastructure and learning environment, with a view to follow-up by JSWF. JSWF found the programme to be an effective part of the company's CSR activities. The feedback from ICDS was also very positive.

Tarapore, Thane District

As a result, JSWF decided to expand the programme to the Tarapore plant area, and the CLR was requested to provide training support.

An initial meeting was held with the Assistant CDPO of ICDS in Palghar taluka, and the JSWF representative from Jindal Industries at Tarapore. It was decided that the CLR would conduct training programmes for 27 AWWs of the Dandi beat. An initial survey to assess the existing situation of the anganwadis has been undertaken by JSWF. The first 3-day training session was held in February 06. Further recurrent sessions are planned.

Training of Trainers for P.R.I.D.E-India and National Institute for Sustainable Development (NISD)



CLR learning materials for ECE provided to P.R.I.D.E. and NISD

This year, P.R.I.D.E. India and NISD requested inputs for strengthening the quality of their existing balwadis and for starting new ones.

P.R.I.D.E. India has been working in over 150 villages in Mahad taluka of Raigad district, and Sastur in Osmanabad district in Maharashtra. The NGO focusses on integrated development of the villages. Apart from a number of other programmes, P.R.I.D.E. also works with primary schools and is running balwadis, study centres for school-going children, and health care programmes for the under 5's.

NISD works in 15 villages in Sangamner taluka of Ahmednagar district, with families of workers in bidi factories. The organisation has been running creches for over 15 years in many villages and also conducts awareness activities for environment, health and child labour. This year, they planned to expand their crèches services to provide preschool education

An intensive 4-day training programme on ECE was held by CLR for a group of 19 trainers from the two organisations, 11 from P.R.I.D.E and 8 from NISD. This session attempted to bring fresh perspectives to curriculum, methods and materials for young children, based on child development principles. Planning and supervision of ECE was also addressed.

Capacity Building for Teacher Fellows from BODH Shiksha Samiti, Jaipur

A team of Teacher Fellows from Bodh Shiksha Samiti made an 'exposure visit' to CLR as part of their fellowship programme. Bodh is a Rajasthan-based NGO working towards bringing equity and quality in education for children. The Teacher Fellowship programme is an attempt to combine sound academic grounding with exposure to examples of innovative pedagogical practices at the elementary level. This would then enable the teachers to undertake action research and documentation as part of their work, thereby strengthening the theoretical underpinning of Bodh's work.

CLR made presentations and conducted interactive sessions to familiarise the team with our own perspectives and approach to ECE and primary education, and with all aspects of CLR work. The group was also taken on a visit to observe the CLR radio programme for the teaching of English at a rural school in Pune district.

Trainers' Training for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in Andhra Pradesh

Strengthening preschool education forms part of the objectives of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in Andhra Pradesh. The CLR was requested for technical inputs that could reach rural and urban ECE centres in the state. A team of 20 resource persons from various districts in Andhra Pradesh received 6 days trainers' training at our Centre in September, 2005. The content of the programme equipped them to conduct effective, participatory training of ECE workers at the district and 'mandal' levels.



A creative activities session during the training programme for ECE resource persons from Andhra Pradesh

Provision of CLR ECE Materials in Telugu



Materials for making the CLR Early Learning Kit in Telugu

Training materials were provided in Telugu, including a CD entitled "Activity-Based Learning in Early Childhood". The manual and cut-out picture supplement comprising the CLR Early Learning Kit entitled 'Athalato Pathalu' in Telugu was also provided to each participant. It contains a range of 50-60 activity-based learning materials that can be prepared by preschool teachers and anganwadi workers.

Feedback from training programme participants

Your training package and materials are very useful for ECE teachers who have only a basic education themselves.

Your Early Learning Kit in Telugu is very innovative and effective for developing different skills in children.

Promoting Story Telling in Early Childhood Education

For both teachers and children, story telling is a mutually satisfying interaction, apart from being a vital source of language learning. It proves to be even more important when the language of instruction is not the same as the home language. Children enjoy story telling, particularly when teachers continuously try to adopt new ways in order to engage the interest of children.

The slide shows developed by CLR in the “Story Time/गंमत-गोष्टी” series are a powerful tool for interactive story telling sessions. Various stories from across the globe can be retold through varying illustration styles- classic, tribal and contemporary. This year, two new stories entitled Catch Tommy/पकडा टॉमीला and The House that Jack Built/जॅकनं बांधलेलं घर have been developed and added to the Story Time series. The former, describing the journey of Tejas and his dog Tommy, acquaints children with the heritage of Pune city. The latter, a popular, traditional English rhyme, is one where children can predict the sequence and have fun repeating rhythmically with the teacher. A follow-up activity sheet is provided for each child after the slide show.



Tejas looks at Kumbharwada, in the slide show Catch Tommy / पकडा टॉमीला



'This is the man all tattered and torn' in the slide show The House that Jack Built/ जॅकनं बांधलेलं घर

The CLR Audio-Visual Lending Library

CLR's “Story Time” slide shows are disseminated through their A.V. lending library scheme for Marathi and English medium schools in Pune. Member schools select at the beginning of every academic the shows that they plan to use. We also lend projectors to schools that need them.

We undertook our annual membership drive in June 05. There are totally 21 pre-primary school memberships for the academic year 05-06. Two orientation sessions were conducted for teachers of English and Marathi medium member schools. The sessions outlined the significance of story-telling in early language development, and demonstrated the effective use of the slide shows for interactive story-telling in the classroom. Teachers got an opportunity to view the new additions to the slide library, make selections and finalise their schedules.

The library provided slide shows to member schools on a regular basis, according to the schedule planned at the beginning of the academic year. On an average, 10 shows were screened each week in different schools.

Raising Awareness on Effective ECE



Viewers at the CLR ECE exhibition held at Goregaon, Mumbai

In September 05, CLR held an exhibition in Marathi and English on Early Childhood Education, entitled “Helping Children Learn / शिक्षण मुलांचे : सहभाग मोठ्यांचा”. It was held in collaboration with Goregaon Shikshan Mandal in Mumbai. The exhibition met with an overwhelming response, with over 5500 people attending it over 3 days. Visitors to the exhibition comprised teachers and principals, teacher educators, teacher trainees and parents. It also generated a great demand for CLR-designed ECE materials.

We also received many enquiries for future exhibitions and training programmes.

Our ECE exhibition raises awareness on the miseducative and narrow focus on the teaching of alphabet and numbers prevalent in most preschool centres in our country.

At the same time, it presents an ECE curriculum based on sound child development principles.

Early Childhood Care and Development

Building Capacity Within NGOs To Promote Early Childhood Care And Development (ECCD)

During the past few years, CLR has undertaken research and educational projects to promote the holistic development of disadvantaged children in the birth to 3 years age-group. The attempt has been to translate the findings of global medical and psychological research into a more general awareness within families about the developmental significance of the prenatal period, and of the first 3 years of human life.

In 2005-06, CLR conducted capacity-building programmes for 5 NGOs - 3 located in different districts in Maharashtra, one on the outskirts of Pune city in an urban cantonment area, and another in Rajasthan.

The organisations are :

P.R.I.D.E. in Mahad Taluka, Raigad District.

NISD, Ahmednagar District

Social Work and Research Centre (SWRC), Tillonia, Rajasthan

Sadhana Society in Dehu Road

CASP-Plan in Maval Taluka, Pune District

CLR training and communication materials equip organisations to implement home-based interventions in rural and urban communities for improving the health, nutrition and psychosocial care of babies and toddlers within poor families.

Training of Trainers and ECCD Workers of Field-Based NGOs

P.R.I.D.E. is successfully implementing the caregiver education programme in 40 villages, subsequent to the intensive training imparted by CLR. CLR staff first undertook a 2-day field visit in May 05 and held discussions with the P.R.I.D.E. field staff. A 3-day training of trainers (TOT) was conducted for 11 trainers at the CLR in June 05, as part of a 6-day TOT programme. The second session of the TOT was conducted in November 05 at Pune. This has equipped the trainers to train the 40 “communicators” at the field level to conduct effective caregiver meetings and home-visits, using the CLR Caregiver Education Package. They are also being trained to monitor the interventions in the villages.

NISD is implementing the caregiver education programme effectively in 11 villages. Here too, initial visits were made by CLR staff. Eight NISD trainers participated in the TOT, held jointly with P.R.I.D.E. They, in turn, are now training their “communicators” at the field level, using the CLR Caregiver Education Package.

Detailed feedback through further field visits was obtained, after the observation of training sessions of field level communicators. Several village level meetings were also observed by our staff and the feedback was shared with supervisory staff of the two organisations.



A field-based ‘communicator’ role-plays an activity during a training session related to home-based child care

CASP-Plan Over the past few years, we have been training staff from CASP-Plan to enable them to implement the caregiver education programme in 76 villages. In May 05, we also conducted a 2-day Refresher Programme for their “communicators”.

Sadhna Society : A dialogue with Sadhna Society was initiated in April 05, followed by a field visit. This organisation works with marginalised urban slum communities in Dehu Road, on the outskirts of Pune. It aims to enhance self-esteem and confidence in Dalit women and children, as also women and children of nomadic tribes and other disadvantaged groups. Sadhna's activities include ECE, adult education, self-help groups, legal aid and health awareness. Sadhna's field staff are serving as "communicators" in their recently initiated caregiver education programme. Recurrent training sessions are being conducted by CLR staff for them, interspersed with the caregiver meetings they have started to hold in the Dehu Road slum areas.

The CLR caregiver education programme will serve as a very initial exposure to home-based care messages within these communities.

Social Work and Research Centre (SWRC-Plan), Tilonia, Rajasthan

SWRC-Plan is involved in various child development initiatives. This year, they requested CLR inputs towards assisting them, as also a number of neighbouring NGOs, to implement home-based interventions for better child care within their project villages.

We organised an intensive 6-day training of trainers at village Sangla, 25 km from Tilonia. Seventeen master trainers from 13 field based NGOs affiliated to SWRC-Plan, participated in the training programme held in March 06.

The participating NGOs were as follows :

Prayatna

Shodh

Antakshari

Manthan

SWRC Dhanau

Chota Narena

Sara Aadhar

Brijpura

SWRC, Jawaja

Tikawada ,Dist Jaipur, Ajmer, Badmer

The TOT was designed to equip trainers to independently conduct training of village-level 'communicators' so that these communicators could then hold meetings of caregivers of children from birth to 3 years of age along with home visits. The CLR education package for caregivers in Hindi, with a manual and accompanying visual materials, was provided to the trainers. In addition to this, CLR also provided a guidebook containing modules in Hindi to be used by the trainers to conduct recurrent field-level sessions for "communicators".

A unique feature

Upon CLR's suggestion, one participant each from the communication unit and toy-making unit "Kabad se Jugad/कबाड़ से जुगाड़" of SWRC also attended the training. This helped the units to participate in the caregiver education programme by developing puppet shows, songs, skits, play materials, etc. that would disseminate care messages according to local needs.

The CLR ECCD poster exhibition in Hindi was also hosted for the participants. A participant from the SWRC toy centre organized a toy-making unit at the exhibition, and visitors were taught how to make simple paper toys. The communication unit along with other participants sang songs appropriate for young children and enacted a short skit highlighting some of the messages from the CLR package. These activities demonstrated replicable possibilities within other NGO and government interventions.

Action Research Related to Early Childhood Care for Survival, Growth and Development

A caregiver education programme is being implemented by CLR in 17 villages in Mulshi Taluka, in collaboration with the ICDS project, Paud and a field based NGO, Gomukh. Three of these villages have been selected for a research project to understand the impact of the inputs.

Three research tools were developed during the preparatory phase of this action that commenced prior to April 05. All 3 questionnaires were administered in a sample of 124 rural households. CLR also analysed the baseline survey data and the data related to existing knowledge and care behaviours.

On account of the unusually heavy rains in this area during July and August 05, the entire programme was delayed. This necessitated revisits to the baseline sample households surveyed, from the point of view of longitudinal research covering the age group birth to 3 years. It was thus necessary to add households with recent births or pregnant women and update the research data to include 12 new households.

CLR is currently formulating strategies for training that now incorporate the insights gleaned from the survey. In progress are ongoing activities like understanding of the local health care set up, efforts to invite the doctor from the PHC to talk about the service itself to the communicators and the community.

New communicators were identified in the 3 research villages. After discussions with the CDPO and the Deputy CEO, the involvement of anganwadi workers (AWWs) of the Paud ICDS project was sought as communicators in the other villages. The selection and induction of 11 AWWs is a very positive development, as involvement of ICDS in this crucial area is to be welcomed.

Two training sessions for the communicators and AWWs, included a demonstration of a caregivers' meeting, followed by activities for developing the communication skills of the communicators.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)

Collecting qualitative data

The quantitative data collected by CLR on caregivers' understanding of holistic child care gathered in the three research villages, revealed that the caregivers' knowledge on reproductive health, health care and nutritional care of the under-three's and understanding the need for mental stimulation from babyhood onwards was insufficient. This quantitative data did not seem enough to initiate a programme to bring about change in care practices. There was a need to augment our own understanding of the various childcare practices, the reasons behind them, and the various social factors which influenced them. Before initiating the programme, some of the issues we needed to understand were :

- Caste/ class dynamics
- Spread of the village
- Spread of the households with pregnant women and children in the birth to 3 year age group
- Reasons for pregnant women not following healthy practices
 - Problems in exclusive breast feeding for first six months
- The amount and types of caregiver-child interaction, including the role of male caregivers
- Reasons for caregivers not playing with babies and toddlers.

CLR found the Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) approach to be very effective in gaining an insight into these issues. Though the method has hitherto not been used for the understanding of caregiving practices and the factors influencing related behaviour change, we decided to apply it, considering its success in other development initiatives.

At the outset, a multidisciplinary team of CLR staff received training in the RRA approach by an expert. After analysing the quantitative data collected on caregivers' understanding of the holistic child care, a list of questions was drawn up for the RRA. Appropriate RRA tools and techniques were used to aid communication with the community for collecting and analysing the qualitative data. This helped our staff to gain a deeper understanding of the various care practices and reasons behind some of the care behaviours.

Efficacy of the RRA approach

Combining the RRA approach with the conventional method of data collection helped us to initiate a dialogue and collect relevant information in an informal manner from the communities where the caregiver education programme was to be implemented.

Involvement of the intended beneficiaries of the programme in the situation analysis helped our team to plan more focussed inputs.

We are modifying the curriculum of our Caregiver Education Package based on some of the findings. Along with a documentation of the RRA exercise, video footage of the use of selected RRA techniques has also been gathered from 2 villages.

Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) also helped us to understand the lives and daily routine of the caregivers, within which desirable care practices had to be advocated.

Information-Education-Communication (IEC) for the Survival, Growth and Development of Young Children

To propagate important messages on holistic child care, CLR has designed locale-specific photographic exhibitions in various regional languages. This year, we converted the existing Marathi table-top version into poster form. It is entitled "Vikaas Balaacha-Sahabhag Sarvaancha / विकास बाळाचा : सहभाग सर्वांचा".

We decided to incorporate additions to the script as well as the visuals, so as to bring into sharper focus all messages relating to the recent national policy on child survival. UNICEF was consulted before finalising the additions.

These Marathi poster exhibition sets were published in October 05, and are now available for NGOs and government agencies involved in community-based advocacy for early child care. Several organisations have already accessed copies.



The ECCD Poster Exhibition

Features of Our Poster Exhibition

A colourful, laminated set of 40 posters, with simple poetic text, photographs and visuals designed specifically for an illiterate or semi-literate audience.

Explains holistic child development and how parents, families and communities can promote it.

Conveys prime child care messages for babies and toddlers, related to :

- Reproductive and child health
- Nutrition
- Emotional well-being
- Psychosocial stimulation

Includes a focus on gender equity in caregiving practices.

Can be staged indoors or outdoors, using the accompanying hanging device.

Child Budget Analysis

The CLR has recently undertaken an analysis of budgets devoted to children's development and education. Budget analysis by civil society can deepen the debate around budget policies and decisions and help bring a higher degree of accountability to the process of policy formulation.

We undertook a study of the Maharashtra government budgets devoted to children in the age-group, 0-6 years for the period, 1998-99 to 2002-03. The main objectives were:

- To evaluate the efficiency of the budget planned in terms of funds allotted, and their respective expenditures.
- To understand trends in budget allocation
- To recognise the major areas of budget allocation and expenditure within the budget.

No state government provides a separate budget for children. All the budgets devoted to schemes for children in various state departments were collated. A draft report of the analysis of these budget was completed in 2005-06, and entitled ; 'Budget Analysis of the Funds Dedicated to the Children of Age Group 0-6 Years, in the State of Maharashtra'.

The main findings were :

- For every rupee spent by the government on young children, 72 paise is spent on administrative costs and 13 paise on grant-in-aid, professional service and other charges. Only 15 paise is actually spent on children.
- Efficiency of utilisation of the total administrative (96.4 %) much better than that of beneficiary costs (67 %)
- During the five-year period, both budgets and expenditures registered growth.
- Actual expenditure was rather irregular during the five-years period with extreme highs and lows for the years 2001-02 and 1999-2000 respectively. In 2001-02, the expenditure overshot the budget by 33.72 %, and in 1999-2000 remained underutilised at 34 %.change where required.

Advocacy Through Networking with NGOs

CLR, in collaboration with Sadhana Society, organised the ECCD exhibition at Dehu Road, on the outskirts of Pune, in March 06. The exhibition, entitled "Vikas Balacha : Sahabhag Sarvancha/ विकास बाळाचा : सहभाग सर्वांचा", was inaugurated by Mrs. Sunanda Avale - member of the Dehu Road Cantonment Board. The event elicited an overwhelming response, with about 1000 visitors in a single day. There were about 600 parents, while the rest were older children, who interact with younger siblings within their families.

All messages highlighted in the posters were explained in detail to the visitors by the staff of Sadhana Society.

Other Professional Activities

Workshops / Conferences / Meetings Attended

Ms. Anjali Gokhale conducted an interactive session at Gurukul School, Pune as part of the school project "Health and Hygiene" in September 06. The CLR slide show on nutrition, entitled "The Food We Eat" was shown during the session for children of Classes 4 and 5. She also conducted a follow-up question and answer session.

Ms. Hema Kulkarni gave a presentation on the CLR English Radio Project in July 05 at an event organised by YASHADA, Pune, for teachers, cluster-co-ordinators and other education personnel of the Satara Zilla Parishad. On the request of SBMA-Plan, she also visited Barkhote, Uttaranchal to train resource persons for the implementation of the CLR radio programme for teaching English in 2 districts of the state.

Ms. Mini Shrinivasan participated in the following :

- A discussion forum in Delhi in May 05 organised by Sesame Workshop, producers of Sesame Street, a popular TV programme for pre-schoolers. The forum discussed issues related to making an Indian version of the show.
- As a resource person at a workshop organised by Tathapi in October 05, to help develop a workbook for children on issues related to sexuality.
- As a resource person at an NGO Partners' meeting of NAVAM, Pune, in November 05. She gave a presentation on "Issues in Elementary Education".

Ms. Mini Shrinivasan and Dr. John Kurrien participated in a workshop to discuss the draft report on the Functional Review of the Department of Education of Government of Maharashtra, conducted by YASHADA in September 05.

Ms. Mini Shrinivasan and Ms. Zakiya Kurrien attended the following :

- A workshop in October 05 on the National Curriculum Framework and the Draft Education Bill, organised by the Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, Pune
- A meeting of municipal education officials in Pune City in January 06 convened by the Deputy Municipal Commissioner to prepare a vision statement for elementary education in Pune, with a focus on the city's poor. This was part of the process of formulating the City Development Plan. The final vision statement was prepared and presented by Ms. Shrinivasan later in the same month at a follow-up meeting of the different groups involved in the City Development Plan, organised by YASHADA.

- A meeting organised by the Azim Premji Foundation in Bangalore in April 06 to discuss issues related to the use of English vocabulary within Indian languages. The meeting concluded with a tentative design for a lexical study involving rural and urban children, which would be a useful resource when preparing materials for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

Ms. Anurata Tribhuvan participated in a workshop in December 05 organised by UNICEF in Jaipur on "Communication for Girls' Education".

Ms. Zakiya Kurrien attended two meetings of the National Expert Group for Assessment in Elementary Education held at the NIE Campus, NCERT, New Delhi in May and October 05. In the first meeting, members deliberated on the overall issues to be addressed by the Group. The second meeting focused on measures to enhance the scope and utility of national achievement surveys, to re-analyse available data and the School Quality Indices developed by the NCERT.

Ms. Zakiya Kurrien was invited as a guest speaker by the Sociology Department of Pune University in March 06. She gave a presentation for students of a course in the Sociology of Education on the status of elementary education in India, and the work of CLR in addressing issues of educational quality in primary schools and preschool programmes.

Dr. John Kurrien attended the National Conference on "Partnering Initiatives in Elementary Education" organised by Reach India Project in New Delhi. He made a presentation on "Issues in Reading in Primary Schools".

Presentations and Allied Activities

A presentation on CLR's activities in ECE and ECCD was made to :

- Students from the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, SNTD College of Home Science, Pune, in July 05.
- Students of Karve Institute of Social Service, Pune in October 05.
- Students of the Department of Human Development, Lady Irwin College, Delhi, in December 05.

The Director of Global Outreach and the Research and Educational Content Consultant of Sesame Workshop requested a consultation with CLR in May 05. CLR made a presentation on its mission and vision, while the discussion agenda included CLR's approach to developing educational resources for children's "unmet needs", on the creation and distribution of CLR learning materials, and the principles guiding our Interactive Radio Programme for the teaching of English. The feasibility of incorporating radio/audio options into Sesame India production and outreach initiatives was also discussed at length.

A slide show and discussion on activity-based learning in early childhood was conducted in May 05 for ICDS supervisors, as part of the ICDS training programme held in Pune.

CLR staff conducted an orientation session in Jaipur in August 05 for resource persons of the Rajasthan Prathamik Shiksha Parishad to equip them to train teachers on the use of the CLR English radio lessons that were to be broadcast for students of Class 4.

A 35-member group of balwadi teachers from SEWA, Ahmedabad visited CLR in May 06. An interactive session on CLR's ECE activities and materials was organised for them.

A presentation on the design and use of CLR communication aids was made to students of the Masters' course in Communication Media for Children, SNTD University, Pune.

Ms. Anurata Tribhuvan was a visiting lecturer for the Masters in Children's Media programme at the SNTD University, Pune.

Ms. Hema Kulkarni was invited by the Council for International Fellowship (CIF) in April 05, for a month-long orientation and initiation programme in the Netherlands. She interacted closely with Jarabee, an umbrella organisation specialising in education and with Onderwijscentrumhet Roessingh, a government school that caters to the needs of children with cerebral palsy.

Committee Memberships

Dr. John Kurrien served as a member of the following :

- Executive Committee of the National Mission for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) set up by the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- National Focus Group on the Teaching of English, constituted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) as part of the National Curriculum Framework Review.

Ms. Zakiya Kurrien served as a member of the following :

- National Expert Group for Assessment in Elementary Education constituted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- National Task Force for developing evaluation tools for quality in Early Childhood Education.

Ms. Mini Shrinivasan served as a member of the Executive Committee of ARC (Action for the Rights of the Child) Pune, as a representative of CLR.

Funding

The CLR gratefully acknowledges the grants received from The Karuna Trust, U.K., and the Social Initiatives Group (SIG) of ICICI Bank Ltd. towards the capital and recurrent expenditure on its activities for 2005-06.

We are grateful to the SIG of ICICI Bank Ltd. for the grant to develop and publish a Class 5 reader-cum-activity book to accompany the CLR radio programme for teaching integrated English skills.

We are also grateful to the Sir Ratan Tata Trust for funding the development and production of the CLR bilingual picture word book in English-Marathi and English-Hindi, entitled "My World~My Words".

Acknowledgements

The CLR is grateful to Mr. Nicholas Thirkell and Ms. Priya Thirkell for donating generously towards its activities.

We gratefully acknowledge the guidance and cooperation of the members of our Governing Council. The members are:

Ms. Shirin Darasha	Ms. Zakiya Kurrien
Ms. Shridevi Mukhi	Mr. Ardeshir Dubash
Dr. John Kurrien	Mr. Dharmasukh Nanavati
Dr. Statira Wadia	Mr. Milon Nag
Mr. Gautam Patel	